

DESIGN

Supplementary Planning Document



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Figure 1
Foundry Wharf, an extra-care apartment building on the edge of St Helens town centre.

1.1 Purpose

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are documents that add detail to policies contained in a Local Plan. They do not add new planning policy or unnecessary financial burdens. SPD guidance can be a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan. The requirements for producing SPDs are set out in Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The St Helens Borough Council Design SPD comes at a time when design is high on the national planning agenda with the Office for Place advising that improving design standards is a “*noble and honourable mission*”. Through a landscape and place-led approach, the Design SPD will set a new standard for the Borough, providing clear guidance to applicants, developers, the community, and landowners on the quality of new development the Council will expect.

The SPD will sit alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Design: Process and Tools National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code and the St Helens Local Plan, as a key material consideration in planning decision making.

It provides further guidance and interpretation on how a high standard of design can be met and supplements the Local Plan’s policies covering high quality design

The SPD supports the Council’s six strategic priorities that are set out in Our Borough Strategy by providing a comprehensive guide to inspire and guide the delivery of high-quality development. It will help shape the kind of places where people want to live, work and visit, by delivering accessible, beautiful and sustainable development and environments.

There are a number of intended benefits the SPD will provide for the Borough, which include:

- Providing clear, transparent and consistent guidance.
- Inspiring high standards in design and placemaking.
- Speeding up the approvals process.
- Setting out a structured process for design irrespective of the complexity of a proposed development.
- Ensuring that communities are engaged in the process at the appropriate time.

Once adopted the SPD will replace the Design Guidance SPD (2007) and the New Residential Development SPD (2010).

Links

Office for Place
OfP is part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and aims to help create beautiful, successful and enduring places that foster a sense of community, local pride and belonging.

St Helens Borough Strategy 2021-2030
This strategy sets out the vision for St Helens Borough, the themes that identify our place, the priorities the Council will focus on and the outcomes we will strive to achieve.

1.2 Planning Policy

Local Plan Policy and Guidance

The Government stresses the need for local authorities to develop robust and comprehensive policies that will ensure that new development will **function well** and provide a **strong sense of place** reflecting local **character** and **distinctiveness**, where residents will feel **safe** and **comfortable**, with a good **quality of life** and level of **community cohesion**.

The Local Plan forms a fundamental part of the development plan for the Borough. It sets out the **spatial vision** for the Borough, which affirms how the Borough will provide a range of attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest.

The provision of **quality development** is a strategic aim of the Local Plan and supporting proposals for high quality development and a well-designed environment is a key strategic objective.

The Local Plan and the SPD set out *'a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.'* (National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 132)

Policy LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development requires new development to be well-designed, taking account of local distinctiveness. New development should optimise the potential of the site in terms of form, height, scale, siting, layout, density, orientation, materials, parking, and open space/green infrastructure, through good architectural design; with a requirement for development to provide tree-lined streets as an integral part of the development, whilst also protecting landscape features. All new development must be designed to enable safe and easy movement into and through the development for all, including those of limited mobility, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, car users, and for servicing, deliveries, and collection.

Policy LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing, requires new residential development to be of a high quality, good architecture that respects and / or enhances the character of the surrounding area in terms of appearance, materials used, scale, mass, and pattern of structures, spaces, and streets, and provides a satisfactory level of privacy, outlook, and natural lighting for its future residents and for occupiers of neighbouring properties. This policy should be a key consideration when preparing the layout or masterplan for any development site.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Securing good design is a key element of delivering sustainable development and a core objective of the NPPF. By *'fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places'*, the NPPF emphasises how achieving 'beauty' in design should be a key objective. **Paragraph 139** of the NPPF is unequivocal that development *'that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes'*.

The NPPF is also clear that good design goes beyond aesthetic considerations and that policies and decisions need to *'create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'* (**Paragraph 135, f**). This approach requires design policies which are grounded in an understanding of an area's defining characteristics as well as based on stated objectives for the future of the area.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

PPG is an online resource which provides further guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the NPPF. PPG Design: Process and Tools, states that local Design Guides should set out the general design principles and standards that development proposals should follow in the area, building on policies in the development plan. Design guides should be informed by the 10 important characteristics of good places set out in the National Design Guide.

Both the NPPF and PPG point to the value of pre-application engagement with regards to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system. Design outcomes can be significantly enhanced by proactive and positive dialogue between the parties (see section 1.12).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Where a development will have significant effects on the environment, a comprehensive EIA may be required. The definition of specific types of development that require, or may require an EIA are set out within Schedules 1 and 2 of the Regulations.

Links

[St Helens Borough Local Plan](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHC)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#) Design: Process and Tools

[Environmental Impact Assessment](#)
Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

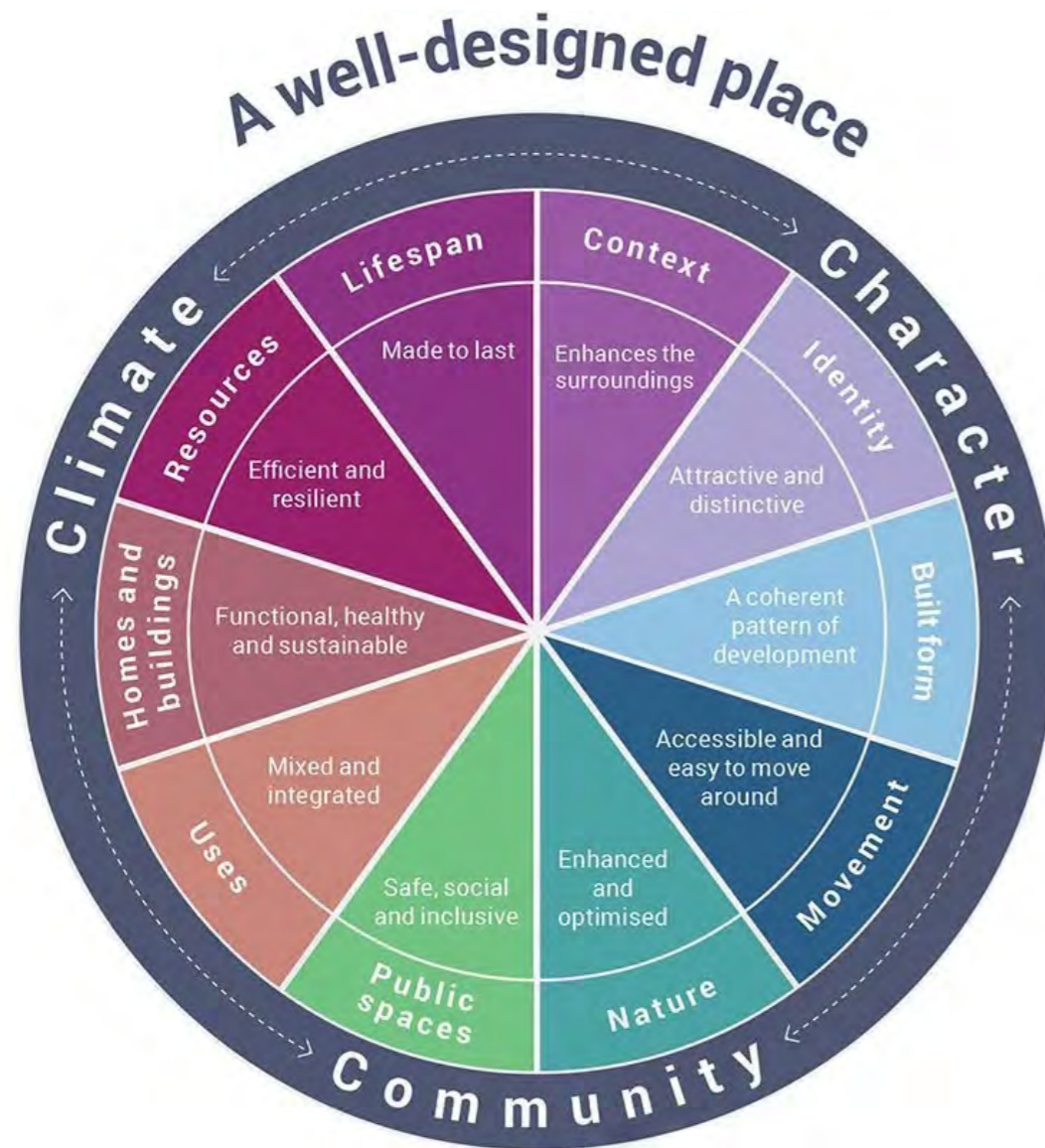


Figure 2
The ten characteristics of well-designed places, as defined in the National Design Guide.

National Design Guide (NDG)

The NDG sets out how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities in the form of ten characteristics. It describes the components of good design and moreover a process by which a systematic approach can be taken as design proposals move from concept to detailed development.

The NDG is the default guidance to be used in the development of planning applications. The requirement for Design and Access Statements is an integral aspect of demonstrating the design evolution of a proposed scheme.

The NDG states that *'Well-designed places and buildings come about when there is a clearly expressed 'story' for the design concept and how it has evolved into a design proposal'*. One of the principal objectives of the SPD is to establish a structured process for the preparation of Design and Access Statements for developments at a range of scales.

National Model Design Code (NMDC)

The purpose of the NMDC is to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the NDG.

A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the development of a site or area.

In addition to the guidance in the SPD, more detail may be required for larger development projects, where the use of design codes might be appropriate. Design codes should be informed by the SPD as well as the NMDC both in terms of their aims and content.

Whilst design codes should provide more certainty for projects, by setting out what is expected in a particular development site, they should generally be strategic, aiming to define key placemaking qualities and ensure these are delivered through the detailed design process.

Following the adoption of the Design SPD the Council will look to develop design codes, potentially at Borough, locality, site level or topic-based as appropriate. Where a developer intends to prepare a design code, the scope and content should be agreed with the Council.

Links

National Design Guide

DLHC. October 2019

National Model Design Code

DLHC. October 2021



Figure 3
A typical spread from the SPD with written guidance on the right hand side and illustrative photographs / diagrams on the left. The colour-coded side bar relates to the 5 design themes and contains definitions and further reading.

Design Variable	Relevant to site	Design Coding	Analysis	Response
2.1 Community				
Aligned with Local Plan Vision				
Aligned with Local Plan Strategy				
Aligned with Local Plan Policy				
Use Mix Site Plan				
Local Facilities Site Plan				
Public Transport Site Plan				
Existing Site Use Analysis				
Noise Pollution Analysis				
Air Pollution Analysis				
Social / Economic Prosperity Analysis				
Community Profile				
Consultation Strategy				
2.2 Identity				
Figure-ground Site Plan				
Topographical Survey				
Landscape Character Assessment				

Figure 4
An extract from one of the checklists that conclude and summarise each chapter.

1.3 How to use this SPD

The SPD seeks to;

- Promote a better understanding of design,
- Identify examples of good design locally and nationally,
- Promote a user-friendly process that identifies relevant design issues for consideration relative to a particular site and location,
- Promote a structured approach to design, better dialogue with developers and a greater understanding of the design process by communities to encourage positive input,
- Provide more certainty as regards to development outcomes and bringing forward appropriate development in a timely manner commensurate with achieving good design outcomes.

Design, from concept to implementation, includes a broad range of interests and expertise. The SPD sets out a method for determining which issues are relevant to the development of a particular site. A structured process allows for the appropriate planning and design issues to be considered at the appropriate time.

As a general rule, the larger the site, the wider the range of issues that might be relevant.

A very large site for housing or commercial development will require the resolution of key issues at a strategic scale. These matters will require resolution prior to consideration of the detailed site layout and ultimately, the design of buildings and open spaces. The SPD process aims to avoid circumstances in which detailed matters are put forward for discussion whilst more strategic issues remain unresolved.

Small scale development, whilst still important, will not usually require the same depth and breadth of analysis as larger forms of development.

A major aspect of the SPD is therefore identifying how a particular development proposal might be considered i.e., its strategic impacts and its more localised effects. The whole range of design factors that might be appropriate to the development of a particular site are included within the guidance.

When first considering a development proposal, it will be appropriate to identify the 'Design Variables' that are applicable to the site. These are set out at three 'tiers' in the form of checklists. A developer will be expected to assess the checklists at the outset and identify the relevant issues for consideration. These should be agreed with the Councils planning service, particularly in the case of major developments

Definitions

Structured Approach to Design
Successful design outcomes should be the result of a structured approach that considers relevant aspects of design at the appropriate time, in a logical sequence, and relating to the scale of the proposed development.

Design Variables
Factors or issues that are relevant to the development of a particular site, which require consideration and resolution or 'analysis and response' and are highlighted in the Checklists at the appropriate level of design.



Figure 5
The St Helens Design Tiers applied to a large site.

1.4 Site & Context

An analysis of the site & context or **Baseline Study** will be required for any site, irrespective of its scale. The larger the site, the greater the range of analysis that may be required.

The **Baseline Study** should include an assessment of **policy context** as well as **physical constraints and opportunities** of a site.

The type of issues for consideration should be discussed with the Council's planning service, particularly in the case of major development proposals.

An analysis of the **Baseline Study** should result in a **design response** that will influence the emerging design.

1.5 Design Tiers

The SPD identifies three 'Tiers' of design, namely **Strategic, Neighbourhood** and **Streets & Buildings**. The Design Tiers relate to the range of issues under consideration in the context of a development proposal, depending on its scale. Figure 5 illustrates how this concept applies to a large site.

The larger the scheme the 'higher' the design input will apply. Typically, **parameter** and **master plans** for a site will be considered the 'Strategic' Design Tier.

Smaller sites – for example housing developments of 30 – 50 units, or the more detailed consideration of zones within larger sites that have been the subject of a master plan, would fall within the 'Neighbourhood' Design Tier.

For development within an existing street or a larger site, the 'Streets & Buildings' Design Tier would apply, considering detailed matters.

It is not necessary to see the process as a linear progression. It may be appropriate to consider some smaller scale design issues at the Strategic Tier, if these are considered to be fundamental at the outset.

The process is flexible with the main objective being 'a means of identifying and considering design issues in a logical sequence that can be shared and understood by all of the parties at the appropriate time'.

1.6 Checklists

Each chapter concludes with a checklist (see Figure 4, pg 10). The checklists set out issues for consideration relative to the Design Tier. Whilst these are comprehensive, they may not cover every conceivable issue, and much will depend on the site in question. The process of identifying the relevant issues and undertaking the necessary analysis is the key objective of the checklists.

Links

St Helens Planning & Regeneration

The council's website has information on how to apply for planning permission and to see or comment on a planning application.

1.7 Design Themes

The NDG gives ten characteristics of a well-designed place. The SPD has amalgamated some of these, for ease of simplification and lists five Themes, cross-referenced to Our Borough Strategy priorities.

The SPD describes these Themes at each of the Design Tiers, with references and illustrations.



Health

In addition to the five Themes, there are also 'health points' throughout the document that highlight opportunities to design a healthy St Helens.

Our Borough Strategy Priority 2
Promote good health, independence and care across our communities.



Figure 6
The Design Themes are addressed at each Design Tier and chapter of the guide.



Community

Our Borough Strategy Priority 4
Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy.

“Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play”

NDG



Identity

Our Borough Strategy Priority 3

Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all.

“The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them.” **NDG**



Nature

Our Borough Strategy Priority 5

Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture.

“Nature contributes to the quality of a place, and to people’s quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places.” **NDG**



Movement

Our Borough Strategy Priority 5

Increasing the number of people choosing active travel and public transport.

“Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places. They include walking and cycling, access, parking and public transport.” **NDG**



Resources

Our Borough Strategy Priority 6

Be a responsible council.

“Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change.” **NDG**



1.8 Analysis and Response

The SPD is written as a **checklist**, summarised in tables at the end of each chapter with the expectation that the design variables which require analysis will be followed by a design response. These should be summarised in the table and cross referenced to the appropriate supporting drawings or reports. This will allow for a structured and sequenced '**Analysis and Response**' approach.

The type of response will vary in complexity, depending on the particular variable under consideration. In the case of some variables it may be appropriate to present response 'options' for consideration and discussion.

1.9 Good Design Principles

Design responses, can be **factual** - for example site constraints that impact on the layout development - or, **creative** - using **good design principles** referenced in the document under the design Themes.

In preparing design responses for sites, the Council's planning service will expect to see how these principles have been applied at the appropriate stages of the process.

1.10 Design & Access Statements

These documents are required by statute (Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013) to accompany Major Developments or, smaller sites deemed particularly sensitive e.g. conservation areas or listed buildings.

The **Analysis and Response** approach presents a structured process to assess the relevant design variables and explain the rationale behind the response, having regard to the good practice guidance principles contained within the SPD.

This process should form the basis of a **Design and Access Statement**.

1.11 Engagement & Consultation

Good design is shaped by its context and by communities. The Council wishes to significantly raise the standard of design in the Borough to help create sustainable and inclusive communities and improve the quality of people's lives. Therefore, the Council is not only committed to raising the bar in terms of design but also improving engagement to achieve the best results.

Community Engagement should be sought at the earliest opportunity in the design process to ensure that the development will meet the needs of the local community. It needs to be appropriate to the scale and location of the development, recognising that some aspects of the development process are complex, some community groups are harder to reach, and that the occupants of new development are hard to identify.

St Helens' communities and businesses should be involved at an early stage in the process to enable them to have their say, which will ultimately help shape development in their locality.

Figure 7 (page 18) illustrates how community engagement should be integrated into the St Helens design tiers.

Benefits

Community engagement is not only good practice but the benefits of effective public consultation for developers can also include:

- The early identification of local issues helps to better shape an application through successful design by overcoming and addressing these concerns at an early stage. This can also save resources in the long-term.
- Better relations with the community (including elected members). Early engagement fosters positive transparency at an important stage in the planning process.

- It can help developers and planning officers work better together, as the whole planning process runs smoother from submission to determination, as it can define what is fixed by policy and what is not.
- It can focus everyone's attention on planning and design principles before getting caught up with details.

How much and when?

Any community / stakeholder engagement should be agreed at pre-application stage with the Council's planning service.

The extent of engagement will depend on the size, complexity and significance of the development and its likely impact. It is recognised that the parties involved at this stage will vary on a case by case basis, and the level of engagement needs to be proportionate to the nature and scale of a proposed development.

Each party involved has an important role to play in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of any engagement.

Developers are strongly encouraged to liaise with the Council's planning service as early as possible, continuing this in parallel with community engagement and to help them think creatively about the advice provided in this document and best practice both locally and further afield.

Links

Design and Access Statements

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013. Article 4.

Planning Practice Guidance: Making an Application. DLHC. Para 30.

Planning Practice Guidance. Design: process and tools. DLHC 2019.

NPPF Section 12 references the importance of community engagement relative to design issues.

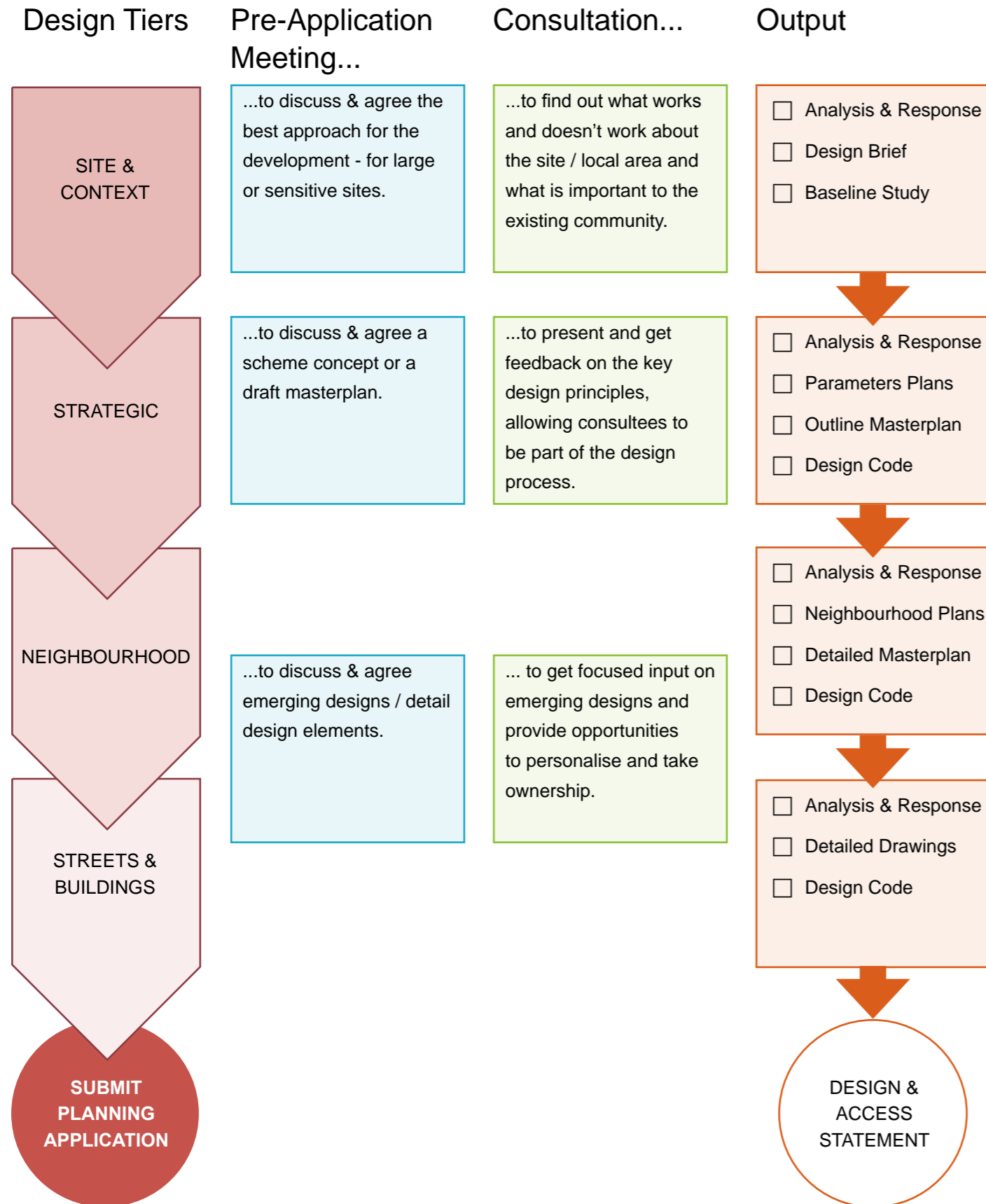


Figure 7
A flow-chart illustrating when to seek pre-app advice from the Council's planning service and when to consult the public.

1.11 Engagement & Consultation (cont.)

Engagement can be delivered using multiple methods to reach the different ages and parts of the community, including harder to reach groups. Consider establishing a community liaison panel, a newsletter or leaflet, and use technology such as social media and virtual collaboration alongside more traditional surveys, events and workshops to maximise your reach.

Getting the right people around the table at the right time is key to collaboration. Early and active discussions of options and alternatives for proposals form an integral part of the design process, allowing participants to have their questions answered by those best placed to do so.

Engagement continues throughout the design process and feedback received is accurately fed back to stakeholders at each stage and show how the design has evolved as a result.

1.12 Pre-Application Advice

Government advice is that pre-application discussions are critically important. The NPPF imposes a duty on all local planning authorities to work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. This duty is effectively discharged in most circumstances during a collaborative pre-application process. Therefore, applications that have been submitted in the absence of any pre-application discussions are more likely to be refused without further negotiation if significant amendments are required to make the development acceptable.

The NPPF (paragraph 39) identifies early pre-application engagement as having significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties, enabling better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community and ultimately improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success. Furthermore, National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) contains a section dedicated to the pre-application stage of the planning application process.

Links

Planning Practice Guidance: Before submitting an application

St Helens Guide to Planning & Building Control including information on the pre-application process.

1.12 Pre-Application Advice (cont.)

Pre-application engagement is a collaborative process between a prospective applicant and other parties which may include:

- The local planning authority;
- Statutory and non-statutory consultees;
- Elected members; and
- Local people.

The level of information necessary for effective pre-application engagement will vary depending on the scale and nature of the proposed development. In all cases, the level of information requested would be considered proportionate to the development proposed. A prospective applicant would not necessarily be expected to provide all of the information that would accompany a formal planning application, but it needs to be sufficient to allow the Council (as local planning authority) to take an informed view.

The Council encourages early engagement on proposed developments through the Council's comprehensive pre-application advice service. The benefits of using this service include:

- Understanding the Council's planning policies and other material considerations of a proposed development.
- Identifying amendments to a proposal to improve the quality.

- Increasing the likelihood of a successful planning application submission.
- Possible resource savings in not proceeding with a planning application if officers identify difficult issues to overcome which suggest a high risk of refusal.
- Identifying other bodies such as consultees on applications, you should contact prior to submission to identify and resolve critical issues.
- A better understanding of likely timescale and procedures for dealing with your planning application as well as the requirements to submit a valid application with all information required to fully assess and determine the application.

Pre-application engagement can be particularly important on large developments, prominent gateway sites or sites with particular constraints or challenges for development. Pre-application submissions and our response to them will not be available publicly as they can be commercially sensitive.

Pre-application advice provided by the Council cannot pre-empt the democratic decision-making process or a particular outcome, in the event that a formal planning application is made. The advice could, however, be a material consideration to be taken into account and given weight in the planning application process.

1.13 Viability

It is the responsibility of the applicant to take into account any costs including their own profit expectations and risks, and ensure that proposals for development are policy compliant.

Where the principles set out in the SPD impact upon the viability and deliverability of a development, the applicant can argue a case for non-compliance, by preparing a viability appraisal to be shared with the Council.

This does not, however, exempt the developer from adopting the design process set out in the SPD in order to achieve the high quality design outcomes required by the NPPF and National Design Guide.

Site & Context

The Setting and Context of a site are vitally important as all new development will need to relate to its surrounding locality and contribute to the aesthetic and functional characteristics of the area.

Development that enhances its local area is dependent on a good understanding of context. The area of study will be different for an urban, suburban or rural setting, but should include the area within which the site and its proposed buildings can be seen, or a 400m radius: i.e. walking distance from the site to public transport and other basic services and facilities.

Analysis of the Setting and Context should form part of the **Design and Access Statement** submitted with the planning application. This should take the form of a map-based or graphic analysis with annotation.

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Figure 8
A diagram illustrating examples of how the design themes and variables apply to the site and context analysis of a large, complex site.

Key		
1 Greenfield site	1 Local high street	1 Hedgerows
2 Brownfield site	2 Landmark (church)	2 Stream
3 Derelict buildings	3 Urban grain	3 Greenway
4 Residential use	4 Site boundary conditions	4 Off-site feature (nearby lake)
5 Industrial use	5 Heritage asset	5 Protected trees
1 Main road	1 No-build zone	
2 Active travel route		
3 Potential site access		
4 Rural lane		

2.1.1 Policy

- a. The Local Plan sets out the spatial vision for the Borough, affirming how development will provide a range of attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest. Good quality housing will be well connected to employment areas, local facilities and green spaces. The Borough’s unique heritage, and its wide range of important natural environmental assets will be both recognised and valued.
- b. Ensuring quality development and supporting regeneration and balanced growth throughout the Borough are strategic aims of the Local Plan. Development that contributes to stronger and safer communities, helping reduce deprivation by supporting proposals for high quality development are also key strategic objectives of the Local Plan.
- c. **Policy LPA01: Spatial Strategy** directs new development to sustainable locations that will enable movements between homes, jobs, key services and facilities.
- d. **Policy LPA02: Development Principles** requires new development to create sustainable communities with a strong sense of place.
- e. Further policies including **LPA08: Green Infrastructure, LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development, and LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing** require development to take account of local distinctiveness, that functions well, is visually attractive and resource efficient, responding positively to the Borough’s character and history.
- f. St Helens has a unique heritage, based upon its history connected with the railways, mining, glass and other industries. **Policy LPC11: Historic Environment** sets out how the Council will seek to conserve the Borough’s historic environment and promote awareness of its shared heritage.

2.1.2 Place

“A place is more complex and multifaceted than a building. it is a setting for a diverse range of uses and activities, and is experienced by many people in many different ways.”

National Design Guide

The following prompts consider existing uses and activities that may contribute to the sense of place. The applicant should consider how the proposed development will integrate with the existing patterns of use and character of place.



Definitions

A sense of **place** is the distinctive character of a town, neighbourhood or street, relating to the physical context, activities and people.

Placemaking is the art of conserving adapting, regenerating or creating places that are healthy, distinctive, contain appropriate mixed uses, are sociable, attractive, economically buoyant, well connected, safe and well maintained.

Links

Planning Practice Guidance : Air Quality DHLC 2019

Planning Practice Guidance : Noise DHLC 2014

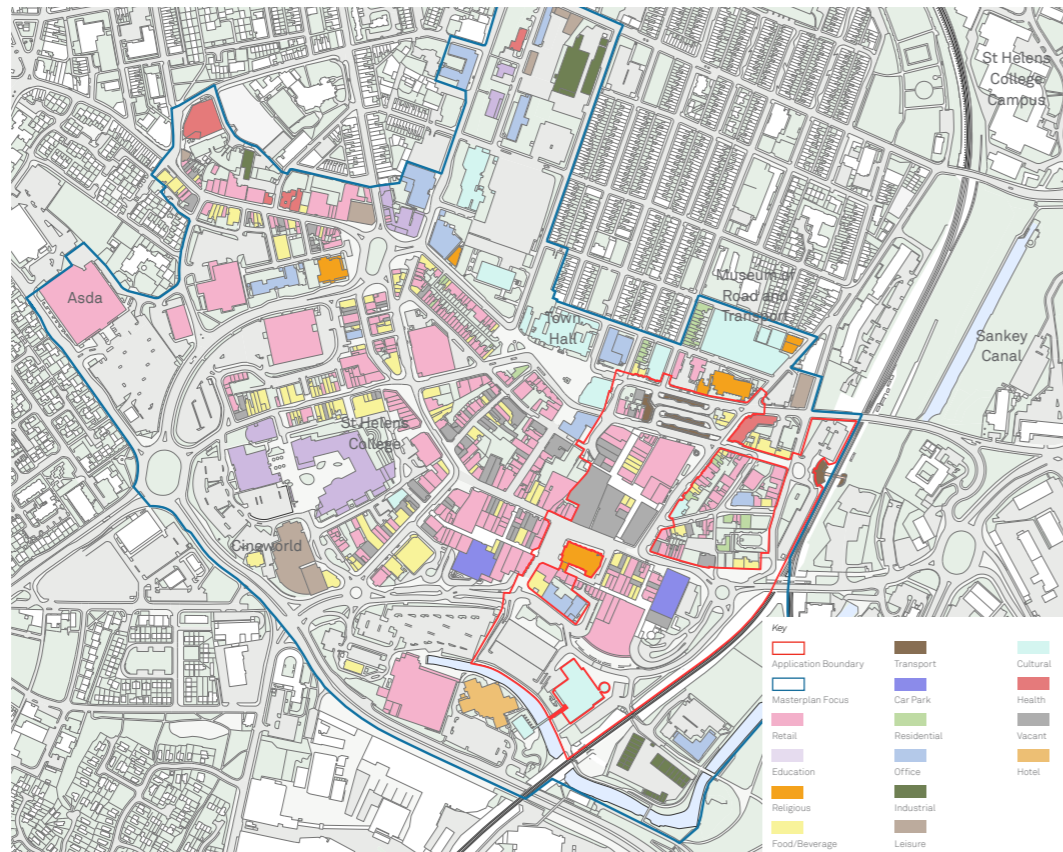


Figure 9



Figure 10

- 9. A site plan showing building uses in St Helens town centre.
- 10. Town centre locations will have a greater mix of uses than suburban or rural locations.

- a. Identify the **mix of uses** in the area, and whether there is an established dominance of use. Indicate on a colour coded site plan. Land uses might include:
 - Town Centre
 - Urban Neighbourhood
 - Inner Suburb
 - Industrial Area
 - Business Park
 - Local Centres and High Streets
 - Outer Suburb
 - Urban Green Space
 - Rural
 - Village
 - Locally Designated.
- b. Understand the distances between the site to **local facilities** and **public transport**. Illustrate locations on a site plan. These will include:
 - Education
 - Health
 - Workplaces
 - Industrial
 - Retail
 - Entertainment
 - Leisure
 - Community.
- c. If the site is in-use, consider the impact of development on the **existing site activities**.
- d. Be mindful of existing **air quality** and sources of **noise pollution**.
- e. Look for indicators of whether an area is **thriving or disadvantaged** e.g. a survey of businesses & empty shops on a high street.

2.1.3 People

- a. Understand **who lives in the community** currently, whether there is a dominant group characterized by age, ethnic background, occupation, etc. and how the development will benefit existing residents.
- b. Identify types of **community facilities** used by different socio-economic groups, and where there is need for additional services.
- c. Where **under-represented groups** are identified, consider how it would benefit the community to provide for these groups.
- d. **Consultation.** Establish aspirations and concerns of local communities. Undertake interviews and observation to understand how local people perceive the locality and use the site.



Healthy St Helens

There are wide health inequalities and differences in life expectancy across the different wards of the Borough.

Design and Consultation plays an important role in negotiating the different needs and aspirations of people who use places.



Definitions

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society.

Links

Planning Practice Guidance : Air Quality DLHC 2019

Planning Practice Guidance : Noise DHLC 2014

Place-based approaches for reducing health inequalities 2021



Figure 11

11. A section of the Sankey Canal known as the "Hotties". Pilkington's, used the water for cooling glass furnaces raising the temperature to perfect swimming temperature.
12. Demolished in the 1980's, Helena House (right) is fondly remembered by many.
13. St Peters Church, Parr. Built in a mixture of red and yellow sandstone and industrial waste in the form of copper slag.



Figure 12



Figure 13

2.2.1 Context

"Context is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings. An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments."

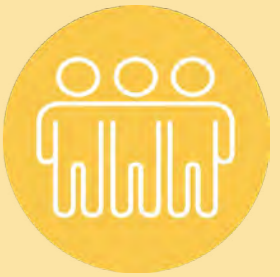
National Design Guide

The following techniques and issues for consideration may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of the site's contextual relationship with its setting and locality.

- a. Prepare **figure-ground plans** to establish whether the site is well-integrated with adjoining townscape.
- b. Consider the **topography** and the **landscape character**. Establish whether the site is prominently located or secluded. In rural locations, avoid prominent and exposed locations. Establish whether a **Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment** is required.
- c. Document and research **existing structures** and **positive features** on the site and in the immediate vicinity. These can include listed buildings, conservation areas, architectural style / detailing and protected trees.

- d. Research the **history and folklore** of the site. Analyse **historic maps** to understand how the site and surrounding context has developed and what features contribute to local & regional distinctiveness. Where there are lost and lamented buildings consider opportunities to reinstate or reference them in the development.
- e. Note any **barriers** such as railway lines and features that constrain development opportunities. Highlight areas where there is potential to improve the aesthetic and functional character of the area.
- f. Illustrate the form and condition of **site boundaries** and their potential relationship to development.
- g. Undertake a study of **townscape, neighbouring buildings & structures** to establish the prevailing architectural styles, development forms, building heights & densities.

Identity can be understood at a regional, national or international level, as well as a local level. Where the character is poorly defined or the site lacks a sense of identity, cast the net wider in search of characterful architecture and townscape to reference. A historic or exemplar building will be a more fruitful reference point than a suburban housing estate.



Definitions

Townscape refers to the character of a town including the range and quality of buildings in an area, the relationships between those buildings and the different types of space around them.

A **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** is a study produced to assess the character of a defined area of landscape and the effects of a proposed development on that character.

Links

National Design Guide : Identity
Part 2, Page 14.
DLHC 2019



Figure 14

14. The Victorian grain around the town hall demonstrates a clear hierarchy of streets and public spaces.
15. Blocks can be developed in response to the size of neighbouring buildings and the arrangements of plots.

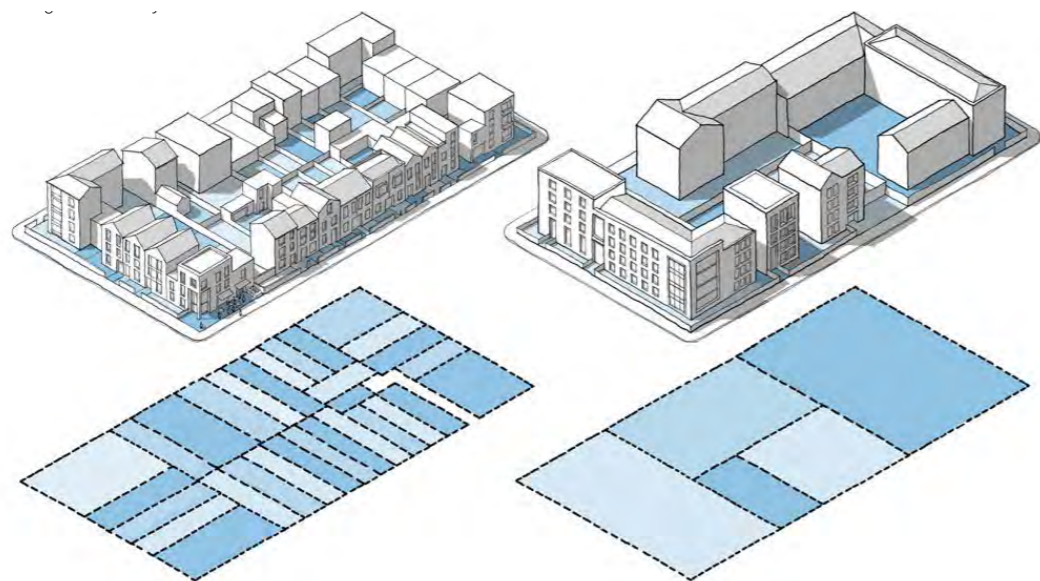


Figure 15

31

- h. Consider materials, colour and texture. Identify a **local palette** on which the scheme can draw on or contrast with.

Traditional materials in St Helens reflect those of Lancashire as a whole. Before 1800, buildings were either half-timbered with thatched roofs, or built of stone. New red sandstone was quarried at Rainhill. Post-1800, most buildings were built of local brick known as 'Accrington bloods' with a deep red appearance. Victorian roofs were often of Welsh slate, but around the turn of the 19th Century these began to be replaced by smooth red or pink clay tiles.

- i. Highlight **key views** into, across and out of the site, and mark on key receptor points. Illustrate each view with site photography.

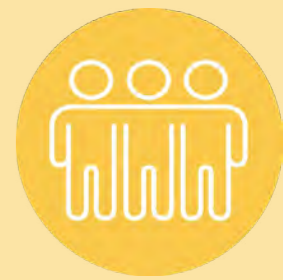
2.2.2 Character

"The character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses."

National Design Guide

The following techniques and issues for consideration may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding as to the character of the site and its locality.

- a. Analyse the **grain** of surrounding development. Take account of:
- The **pattern** of surrounding streets;
 - The **size** of buildings in relation to plot;
 - The relationship / **alignment** of buildings to streets;
 - Building **heights**;
 - **Density**.
- b. Identify **character zones** within the built context of the site. Understand the relationship between different character zones.
- c. Confirm whether the site is located within or near to a Conservation Area and how the character should influence the approach to design of the proposed development.



Definitions

Character zones are areas in which the land use, grain and buildings form a distinct identity.

Conservation Area

An area of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The Council has adopted a number of conservation area appraisals and management plans which can be viewed online.

Morphology

A study of the physical structure of places, the processes that created them over time and the resultant form they take.



Figure 16



Figure 17

16. A constraints and opportunities diagram demonstrating how key views of The Dream will inform the layout of the site.

17. A long view of Dream from Sutton.

d. Analyse specific **urban morphology** and **building typologies** where present. This could be the grouping of buildings around a market square in an urban location, or a farmstead in the countryside. Illustrate with photographs, sketches and diagrams.

2.2.3 Legibility

“Well-designed places have a hierarchy of well-connected routes, such as boulevards, streets, roads, avenues, mews and courts. New developments help to reinforce or extend the movement network.”

National Design Guide

A legible place is memorable, easy for people to understand and to find their way around.

The following techniques and issues for consideration may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of the movement networks that serve the development site.

- Identify **key landmarks** and important meeting points within the site and in the vicinity.
- Where there is an established **hierarchy of streets and public spaces**, categorise the different types e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary, residential, high street etc. Use sketches and photographs to describe and analyse their character.
- Indicate the principal pedestrian and vehicular **arrival points** into the development site, and any existing **nodal points** within, or on the edge of, the site. Consider how these points can enhance legibility for the site and integrate with adjoining locations.



Definitions

Legibility refers to the way in which elements of the urban landscape combine to form a ‘mental map’ of an area. See Appendix A4.

Nodal points are urban spaces formed at the junction of key routes.

Links

National Design Guide : Built Form
Part 2, Page 18.
DLHC 2019

Building for a Healthy Life : Distinctive Places
P45. Homes
England.



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

- 18. A wildflower meadow in Bold Forest Park.
- 19. A retained tree forms a focal point at the centre of this development in Moss Bank.
- 20. A historic map of Earlestown & Newton le Willows town centres.

2.3.1 Policy

- a. The **NPPF** requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity, maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; restoring and improving priority habitats and species, ecological networks and providing net gains.
- b. **Local Plan Policy LPC08: Ecological Network** seeks to enhance the Borough’s natural assets by encouraging the restoration or enlargement of natural habitats and other landscape features, along with the creation of new habitats where appropriate.
- c. **Policy LPA08: Green Infrastructure** requires developers to provide long-term management arrangements for new and existing green infrastructure within development sites.
- d. **Policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management** aims to ensure that development is directed to locations with the lowest risk of flooding and to locations with the least impact on water quality in accordance with the NPPF and the St Helens Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

2.3.2 Landscape

“Landscape is the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the site, the area in which it is situated and the natural environment. Landscape includes landform and drainage, hard landscape such as surfacing, boundary treatments, street furniture and play equipment. It also includes soft landscape – trees, shrubs and other planting”

National Design Guide

The following techniques and issues for consideration may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of the landscape character of the development site and locality.

- a. Describe and illustrate the **structure** of the landscape on site and in the surrounding area.
- b. Highlight **natural features, wildlife habitats** and where **human factors** have influenced the evolution of the site. These might include:
 - (Ancient) woodland;
 - Important trees;
 - Ponds, lakes & streams;
 - Hedgerows;
 - Canals;
 - Earthworks.
- c. Use **historic maps** to analyse the **evolution** of the landscape. Consider **heritage / archaeological features** and constraints.



Definitions

Biodiversity Net Gain is a concept introduced by the Environment Act and will become a statutory obligation from 2024 onwards. National and local policy expects the biodiversity net gain to be achieved on site through the use of the current DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain Metric.

Links

The St Helens **Landscape Character Assessment** is a comprehensive assessment of the urban, urban fringe and rural landscapes within the Borough, prepared to inform future planning and development.

National Library of Scotland’s **Historic Maps** browser.

St Helens **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment**

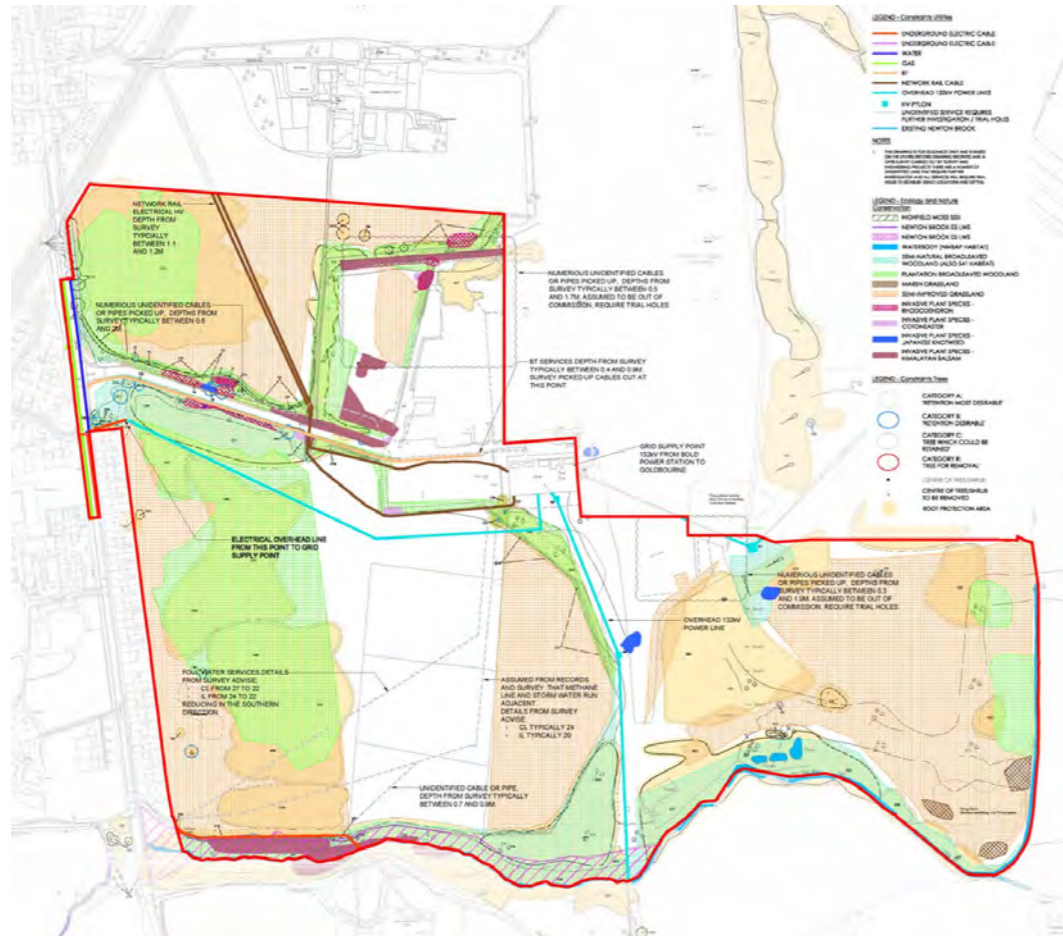


Figure 21

21. A site plan categorising the existing landscape character on site and potential constraints to development.
22. An existing green way incorporated into the layout of a new housing estate provides a positive outlook and backdrop for the new housing, as well as a wildlife habitat and active travel connection.



Figure 22

- d. Take account of the **topography, soil type and geological characteristics** of the site. Highlight areas of **contamination / instability**. Consider how these factors have informed the architectural context. For example, how neighbouring buildings sit on a hillside, or, construction in locally sourced sandstone.
- e. Categorise the different types of **public open space** in the vicinity of the site and how accessible they are. Analyse how each type functions as a leisure, exercise and health resource. Types of public open space might include:
 - Parks & gardens;
 - Natural & semi-natural open space;
 - Amenity greenspace;
 - Provision for children and young people;
 - Allotments;
 - Outdoor sport.
- f. Highlight the **landscape and public realm features** that contribute to the character of the public open space. Landscape and public realm features might include:
 - play areas;
 - water features;
 - flower beds.
- g. Identify **green corridors** that provide habitat connections and movement routes through the urban environment.

2.3.3 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life - animals, plants, fungi - that are found in an area. These species form ecosystems that maintain balance and support life.

- a. Document **wildlife habitats** on and around the site.
- b. Highlight potential **ecological constraints** such as protected species or habitats, and invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed.
- c. Highlight **secondary risks** that may arise off site from development e.g. impacts on adjacent wildlife sites by increased public use, changes to drainage and pollution.

2.3.4 Water

“In well-designed places, water features form part of an integrated system of landscape, biodiversity and drainage. This includes new water features that manage drainage and also existing watercourses.”

National Design Guide

- a. Understand the **ground conditions** and **water table**.
- b. Document how **drainage** and **flood risk** effect the site.
- c. Document any existing **watercourses** or **culverts** on site.



Definitions

Green corridors are areas of landscaping, woodlands, wetlands, heathland and grassland that encourage healthy living and link fragmented sites of biodiversity.

Links

Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan

The Mersey Forest Plan. Policy 4: Planting and Design
Policy SH1: Urban areas, settlements and employment sites.

St Helens Open Space SPD
For further information on the design of open space.

Natural England action plan 2022 to 2023

SHBC Lead Local Flood Authority Documents



Figure 23



Figure 24

23. A plan diagram showing existing transport routes in St Helens town centre.

24. Earlestown Viaduct with an active travel path through the nature reserve.

Patterns of movement, including walking and cycling, access to facilities, employment and servicing, parking and the convenience of public transport, are integral to well-designed places. Their success is measured by how they contribute to the quality and character of the place, not only how well they function

The following techniques and issues for consideration may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of the patterns of movement on and around the development site.

2.4.1 Policy

a. Development principles as set out in Local Plan **Policy LPA02**, require new development to minimise the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport, guiding development to sustainable and accessible locations. It further requires, along with Local Plan **Policy LPA06: Transport and Travel**, that new development encourages a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, by promoting public transport, walking and cycling between homes and employment and supporting the provision and retention of shared space, community facilities and other local services. Improving access and opportunities promotes healthy communities.

b. These policies are supported in the **NPPF paragraphs 104, 105, 106, 110 and 112.**

2.4.2 Connectivity & Permeability

a. Establish whether there is suitable vehicular and active travel **access to / from the site.**

b. Highlight barriers and opportunities to improve internal **permeability** and external **connectivity.**

c. Document existing **public rights of way.** Determine initial internal site **desire lines** and how these relate to wider connectivity opportunities and existing rights of way.

d. Where there is an established **street hierarchy**, consider how this can be related to the development site and how the site will link into and be complementary to it. Where no obvious or applicable hierarchy exists then a new development site should still seek creation of one internally and this should be defined at this stage

e. Understand the **public transport network** that serves the site. Highlight the proximity of bus stops and train stations, the destinations served by different public transport systems and the frequency of service. Refer to the Accessibility Standard Assessment in the St Helens Transport and Travel SPD.



Definitions

Permeability describes the extent to which urban forms permit (or restrict) movement of people or vehicles.

Street Hierarchy refers to a system of classifying all the roads and streets in a given area, according to their function.

Active Travel refers to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Links

St Helens Transport and Travel SPD

Active Travel England is the government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.



Figure 25

- 25. The Steve Prescott active travel bridge.
- 26. Well-designed places have a hierarchy of well-connected routes, such as boulevards, streets, roads, avenues, mews and courts. New developments help to reinforce or extend the movement network.




Figure 26

2.4.3 Active Travel

- a. Mark **existing footpaths and cycle routes** onto a site plan. Determine the existing provision of active travel infrastructure in terms of its suitability at present and in the future, related to LTN1/20 requirements.
- b. For residential developments schools, shops and community facilities should be easily accessible by other means than the car. Refer to the Accessibility Standard Assessment in the St Helens Transport and Travel SPD.

2.4.4 Highways

- a. Establish whether there is sufficient capacity in the transport network to accommodate new development. For larger sites it will be necessary to prepare a **Transport Assessment** to demonstrate the highway and traffic impact of any development. The sufficiency of vehicular capacity should ideally be based on a 'decide and provide' approach rather than more traditional trend based or 'predict & provide' approaches.
- b. Understand existing **parking demands** and availability in the area, and what bearing the development proposals might have on external on-street parking.



Healthy St Helens

Increasing physical activity and minimising the time spent sitting down helps to maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and depression.

The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, each week.

Source: health.org.uk



Links

St Helens Borough Active Lives Strategy 2022-27

St Helens Borough Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

The Council's long-term plan, aimed at dramatically improving the safety, comfort and attractiveness of walking and cycling in the borough.

Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)

Guidance for local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure

Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements

Advice on when Transport Assessments and Transport Statements are required, and what they should contain.

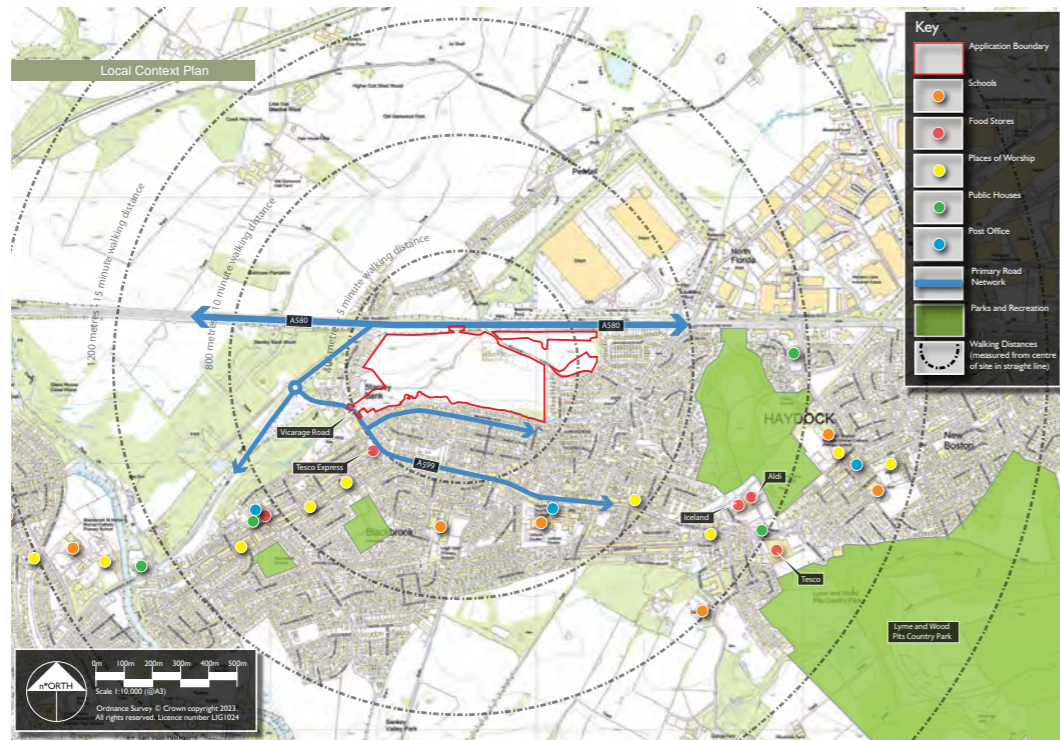


Figure 27



Figure 28

27. A local context plan demonstrating the proximity of key services and facilities to the site.

28. Derelict terraces in Liverpool were refurbished to create characterful homes, rather than demolished.

“Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change by being energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions to meet net zero by 2050.”
National Design Guide

The following techniques and issues for consideration may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding as to the importance of resourceful design in the context of new development.

2.5.1 Policy

The Council declared a **climate emergency** in 2019 in recognition of the existential threat posed by rising temperatures across the world. The Council is committed to achieve net zero by 2040.

Two key Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan are to ensure that development acknowledges the **value of resources** within the Borough by safeguarding or promoting their use in a sustainable manner, and to **mitigate** development impacts by ensuring that local and strategic infrastructure needs are fully met. This will assist in helping lowering St Helens Borough’s **carbon footprint**. **Chapter 7** of the Local Plan sets out specific policy requirements in regard to the environment and resources.

2.5.2 Design

The **location** of new developments in relation to **key services and facilities** will contribute to the scheme’s overall sustainability. Developments that are well serviced by **public transport networks** will benefit from increased sustainability by reducing the number of car journeys.

- Consider how existing buildings, structures and materials can be **repurposed or recycled** on-site.
- Where existing buildings are retained they should be retrofitted to a high standard in order to reduce their energy demand.
- Consider the **aspect, orientation and microclimate** of the site. Illustrate the **sun path**, prevailing **wind** and **overshadowing**.

2.5.3 Services

- Highlight where **public utilities** and **easements** cross the site and establish the need for **buffer zones**.
- Explore opportunities to establish or connect into **district heat networks**.



Definitions

Net zero carbon refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

Retrofit refers to the installation of new systems to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the energy demand of existing buildings

Links

Pathway to Net Zero by 2040 St Helens Climate Response Plan

National Design Guide : Resources Part 2, Page 42. DLHC 2019

2.6

Site & Context : Checklist

The checklist summarises the **design variables** in the preceding chapter. The applicant should determine which variables apply to a proposed application, undertake the required **analysis** and prepare an appropriate **design response**. Variables suitable for design coding will be determined on a case by case basis, agreed with the local planning authority. More detail is set out in the SPD as to the potential for specific design issues to be the subject of coding.

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site Design Coding	Analysis	Response
2.1	Community			
2.1.1.a / b	Local Plan Vision			
2.1.1.c - f	Local Plan Policy			
2.1.2.a	Site Plan : Uses			
2.1.2.b	Site Plan : Local Facilities			
2.1.2.b	Site Plan : Public Transport			
2.1.2.c	Existing Site Use Analysis			
2.1.2.d	Air Pollution Analysis			
2.1.2.d	Noise Pollution Analysis			
2.1.2.e	Social / Economic Prosperity Analysis			
2.1.3.a	Community Profile			
2.1.3.b	Community Facilities			
2.1.3.c	Under-represented groups			
2.1.3.d	Consultation			
2.2	Identity			
2.2.1.a	Site Plan : Figure-ground			
2.2.1.b	Topographical Survey			
2.2.1.b	Landscape Character Assessment			
2.2.1.b	Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment			
2.2.1.c	Existing Structures / Positive Features			
2.2.1.d	Site History / Historical Maps			
2.2.1.e	Opportunities & Constraints Diagram			
2.2.1.f	Boundary Conditions Appraisal			
2.2.1.g	Built Context Analysis			
2.2.1.h	Local Material Palette			
2.2.1.i	Key Views Diagram			
2.2.2.a	Urban Grain / Building Heights Analysis			
2.2.2.b	Character Zones			
2.2.2.c	Conservation Area			
2.2.2.d	Urban Morphology / typology Diagrams			
2.2.3.a	Landmarks			
2.2.3.b	Street Hierarchy			
2.2.3.d	Arrival Points & Nodes			

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site Design Coding	Analysis	Response
2.3	Nature			
2.3.1.a	NPPF			
2.3.1.b - d	Local Plan Policy			
2.3.2.a - b	Landscape Structure			
2.3.2.c	Historic Evolution			
2.3.2.c	Heritage / Archaeological Features			
2.3.2.d	Topography & Levels			
2.3.2.d	Soil / Geological Analysis			
2.3.2.e	Public Open Space Analysis			
2.3.2.f	Landscape & Public Realm Features			
2.3.2.g	Green Corridors			
2.3.3.a	Wildlife Habitats			
2.3.3.b	Ecological Constraints			
2.3.3.c	Off-site secondary risks			
2.2.4.a	Water table / Ground conditions			
2.2.4.b	Drainage			
2.2.4.b	Flood Risk			
2.2.4.c	Watercourses / Culverts			
2.4	Movement			
2.4.1.a	Local Plan Policy			
2.4.1.b	NPPF			
2.4.2.a	Site Access Layouts - Existing & New			
2.4.2.b	Internal permeability & external connectivity			
2.4.2.c	Public Rights of Way			
2.4.2.c	Desire Lines			
2.4.2.d	Existing Street Hierachy			
2.4.2.e	Public Transport Network			
2.4.3.a	Footpaths / Cycle Routes			
2.4.3.b	Accessibility Standard Assessment			
2.4.4.a	Transport Assessment			
2.4.4.b	Parking Demands			
2.5	Resources			
2.5.1	Local Plan Policy			
2.5.2.a	On-site re-use / recycling			
2.5.2.b	Retrofit			
2.5.2.c	Aspect / Orientation e.g. sun path diagram			
2.5.2.c	Microclimate			
2.5.2.c	Prevailing winds			
2.5.2.c	Overshadowing			
2.5.3.a	Easements / buffer zones			
2.5.3.b	District heat networks			

Strategic Design Tier

The Strategic Design Tier generally refers to design considerations for large, complex sites. The aim of Strategic Design is to resolve key design principles in response to the Site & Context Analysis.

This Design Tier will result in the production of a Parameter Plan and / or an Illustrative Masterplan.

Key issues relative to the development of allocated strategic sites have been established in the Local Plan, which should be incorporated into any masterplanning process.

The starting point of any Parameter Plan or Masterplan preparation will be agreed between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority at the start of the design process.

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Figure 29
Diagram illustrating examples of how the design themes and variables apply to the Strategic Design Tier of a large, complex site.

- Key**
- 1 Development parcels
 - 2 Compatibility with context
 - 3 Magnet buildings
 - 4 Mitigation Strategies
 - 5 Benefitting existing communities
 - 1 Integrated with adjoining townscape
 - 2 Visual connections
 - 3 Perimeter blocks / active frontage
 - 4 Fronting onto open landscape
 - 1 Enhance natural features
 - 2 Sustainable urban drainage systems
 - 3 Public open space
 - 4 Retained features e.g. hedgerows
 - 5 Green corridors
 - 1 Street hierarchy
 - 2 Nodal points
 - 3 Active travel connections
 - 4 Public rights of way
 - 1 Existing buildings repurposed
 - 2 No build zones integrated

“Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play. Well-designed neighbourhoods... are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities.”

National Design Guide

The following prompts may be appropriate to strengthening or creating community through development at the Strategic Design Tier.

3.1.1 Place

- a. Demonstrate that the proposed use is **suitably located** within the Borough, the neighbourhood and the street.
- b. Ensure that the proposed use is **compatible with neighbouring site activities**. Adjacency bubble diagrams are a useful way to illustrate these relationships.
- c. Where the existing site conditions are not compatible with the proposed use, propose **mitigation strategies**. This may also be necessary in situations where the proposed use will have an adverse effect on neighbours e.g. restricting the hours during which deliveries can take place.
- d. Consider how the development will help to create **a thriving neighbourhood**.

- e. For **mixed-use developments**, explore the most appropriate locations for different uses and consider the relationship between uses on-site.
- f. Buildings that act as **‘magnets’** such as shops, schools and offices should be located within easy walking/cycling distance of urban centres or in locations well served by public transport. This will minimise reliance on the private car and the space required for parking.
- g. On large sites, indicate **development parcels** and propose a **phasing strategy**.
- h. The Council will require housing to use land efficiently. See **Policy LPA04: Meeting St Helens Borough’s Housing Needs** for minimum densities.

3.1.2 People

- Access for all, regardless of mobility or age should be at the heart of the design process.
- a. Demonstrate how the proposed development will benefit existing communities and address existing needs.
 - b. Consider the impact of construction on existing communities.



Definitions

Mixed Use development combines residential, commercial, cultural, and recreational uses in one area. Such development can create vibrant, walkable, and diverse neighbourhoods that offer a variety of amenities and services to residents, employees and visitors.

Links

National Design Guide : Uses
Part 2, Page 34.
DLHC. October 2019.

St Helens Borough Local Plan Policy LPA04: Meeting St Helens Borough’s Housing Needs - Page 52

Planning Practice Guidance : Healthy and safe communities
DHLC 2014

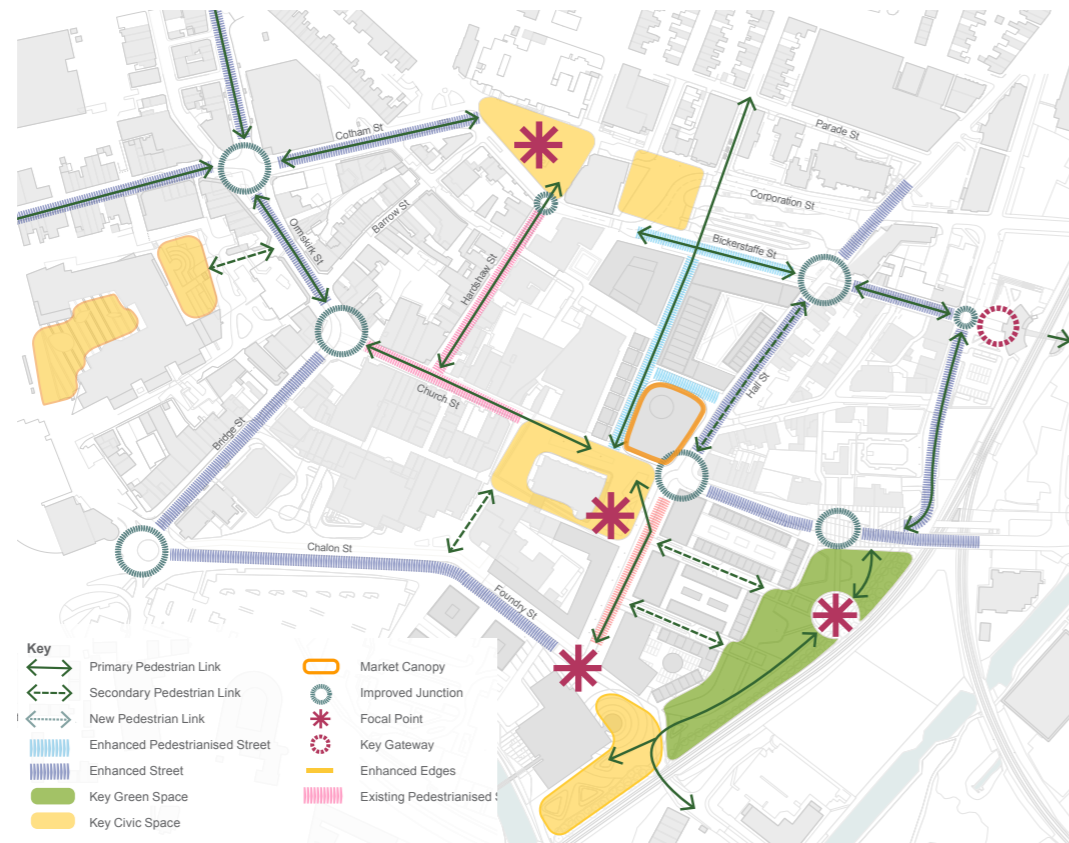


Figure 30

30. St Helens town centre regeneration public realm strategy demonstrates how the proposed development integrates with the adjoining townscape.

31. The historic water tower and Keeper's Cottage are successfully integrated into a new housing development.



Figure 31

3.2.1 Context

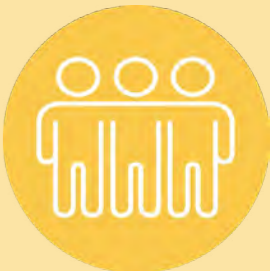
“(Contextual developments) are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion”

National Design Guide

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of context at the Strategic Design Tier.

- a. Prepare **characterisation studies** explaining how the development will respond to the **existing character** and **local vernacular**. New development does not need to replicate the surrounding architecture but can instead respond to the scale, materials or aspects of the site. Landscaping can also contribute to a sense of place.
- b. Establish the **capacity** of the site; the appropriate height, footprint and massing in relation to neighbouring buildings.
- c. New development should relate to the general pattern of **building heights** in the area, though this need not preclude a degree of variety. Single storey development is rarely appropriate in urban centres, where the council will encourage higher density, mixed-use development.

- d. Demonstrate how the development is integrated with adjoining **townscape** in respect of form, relative scale, proportion and elevation.
- e. Using the **topography** positively can add interest and contribute to the sense of place.
- f. Development in elevated locations is likely to be exposed and could intrude on the skyline. Consider the creation or preservation of distinctive **skylines**.
- g. Development within a rural or edge of settlement location, will be visually exposed and must be carefully sited. Assess and seek to mitigate the visual impact of proposed development.
- h. Development should front onto the open landscape, open space and highways to **avoid prominent backs** of buildings.
- i. Where **existing structures & features** are to be retained on site, consider how the development forms their setting. This might involve describing how a retained façade is integrated into the proposed street scene, or the creation of landscape buffer to enhance an existing waterway.
- j. Explain how **significant barriers** and features that constrain development opportunities will be addressed in the proposed design.



Definitions

Characterisation

The study of the layout of places including those elements of use, form and space that combine to create a distinctive character. Characterisation can apply to assessing the character and distinctiveness of rural landscapes assessing topography, built form, natural and imposed features and their pattern in combination.

Links

Urban Characterisation
Historic England

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment
Natural England. 2014

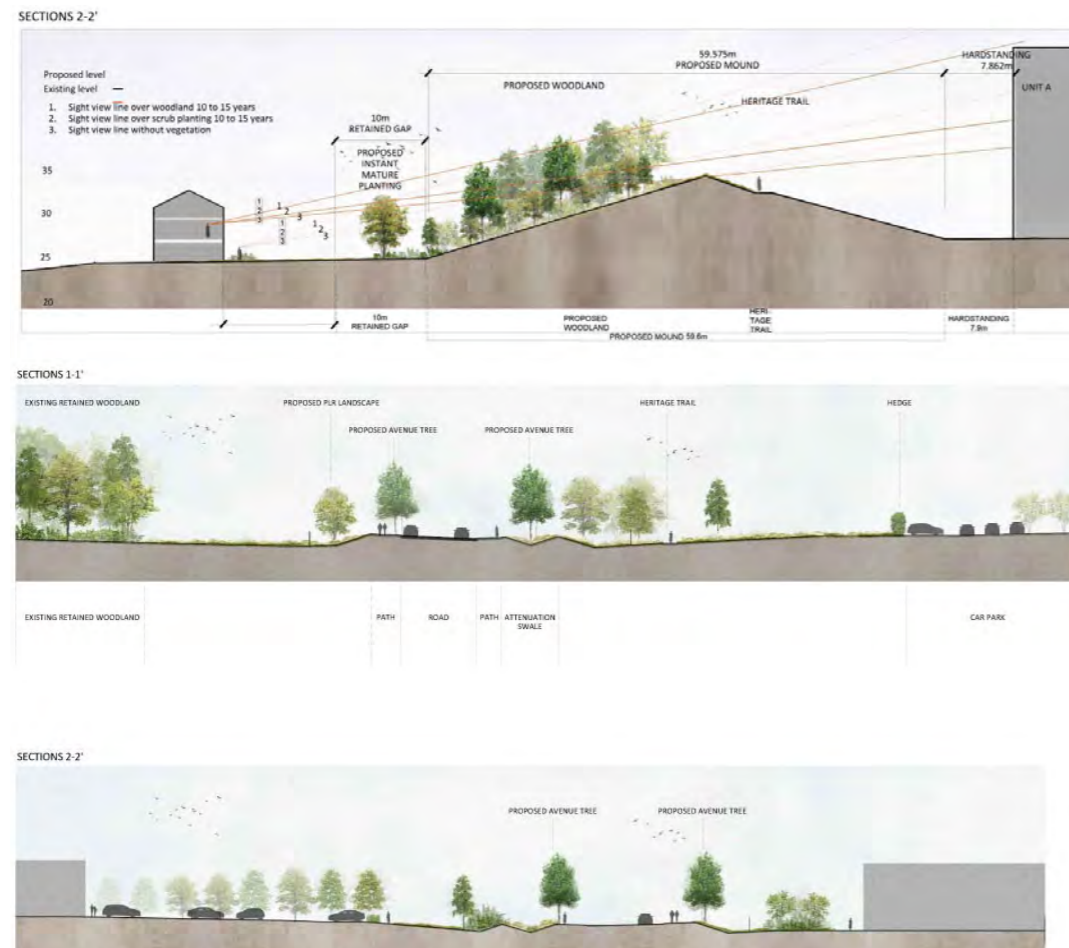


Figure 32



Figure 33

32. Sectional drawings illustrating the proposed boundary conditions.

33. A landmark building terminating a street.

k. Sectional drawings and sketches are a useful way to describe the development’s proposed relationship to the site’s **boundaries**.

l. Illustrate emerging **building form, massing and architectural style**, drawing on information collected as part of the Baseline Study.

m. Develop a high-level **material strategy**; complementary palettes that relate to the emerging character zones within the development and the context.

n. Explore **visual connections** and relationships into and across the site. On larger sites, consider **visual links** between different character areas.

o. Prepare illustrative visualisations of the development from **significant viewpoints** and important ‘**gateway**’ locations. If the development is less visible in some areas of the site than others, demonstrate how this will inform the layout. Public open space should be prominently located.

p. A building should only stand out from the background of buildings if it contributes positively to views and vistas as a **landmark**.

q. Describe how the new development will relate visually to the existing settlement.

3.2.2 Character

“Local character makes places distinctive and memorable and helps people to find their way around. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.”

National Design Guide

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of character at the Strategic Design Tier.

a. New development, regardless of its scale, must have a **strong and memorable character**. This is more than just building places that are pleasing to the eye but about making places that work and where people want to live. This is achieved by ensuring that the design is based on an analysis of the site and its surroundings including links to existing facilities and movement networks.



Definitions

Visual Connections

The way in which urban spaces are related and connected to one another and the means of orientating and experiencing these connections.

Street Pattern

The way in which streets, as defined by their individual characteristics of use, form, enclosure and space relate to one another and are linked together.

Plot Development

The level to which a defined plot relates to the buildings or other uses that occupy it – or are proposed to develop it.

Links

St Helens Open Space SPD

For further information on the design of open space.



Figure 34

34. A strategic site plan showing how views, vistas and green links have informed the layout.

35. Types of Active Frontage.



Figure 35

- b. The illustrative site layout should connect into the **pattern of surrounding development**. To achieve the appropriate density and an attractive place-based layout it may be appropriate to introduce a variety of **layout types, plot sizes and relationships between building and plot**. Ensure adequate space for servicing, gardens and car parking. Where the surrounding grain is not clearly defined, the development should establish a legible street pattern.
- c. For larger sites, identify **strategic character zones** within the development, that relate to the built & natural context.
- d. Describe the relationship between different character zones.
- e. **Landscaping** should be an integral element in design proposals. Development should generally sit within a **landscape setting**, requiring incorporation of **open space** and **tree planting**. Large areas of parking should be well **subdivided** by landscaping and service areas well **screened** and where possible sited away from street frontages. See also 'Nature' & 'Movement' themes.

- f. **Active frontages** should predominate. Front doors and living room windows create activity and sense of security in the street. In urban developments, small commercial units or duplex apartments can be 'wrapped' around larger retail units or car parking. In the case of industrial or employment uses, the office elements should be placed close to public spaces and highways.
- g. Use sketches and photographs to describe how the proposed development form responds to specific **urban morphology** and **building typologies**.



Healthy St Helens

Well-designed, safe and attractive streets are critical if people are going to use cars less and walk, cycle and use public transport more.

Streets that are noisy, polluted and difficult to navigate prevent people from going out.

Streets should be places that provide seating, shelter and play as well as accommodating movement functions.



Definitions

Strategic Character Zones

Zones relating to proposed use, activities and character of buildings and landscape.

Active frontage is a street frontage with an engagement between the life on the street and the uses on the ground floor of the buildings.

Legibility refers to the way in which elements of the urban landscape combine to form a 'mental map' of an area.

Vista
A short or long view contained or framed by built or natural features.

Links

Appendix 2 contains further information on the residential street hierarchy.

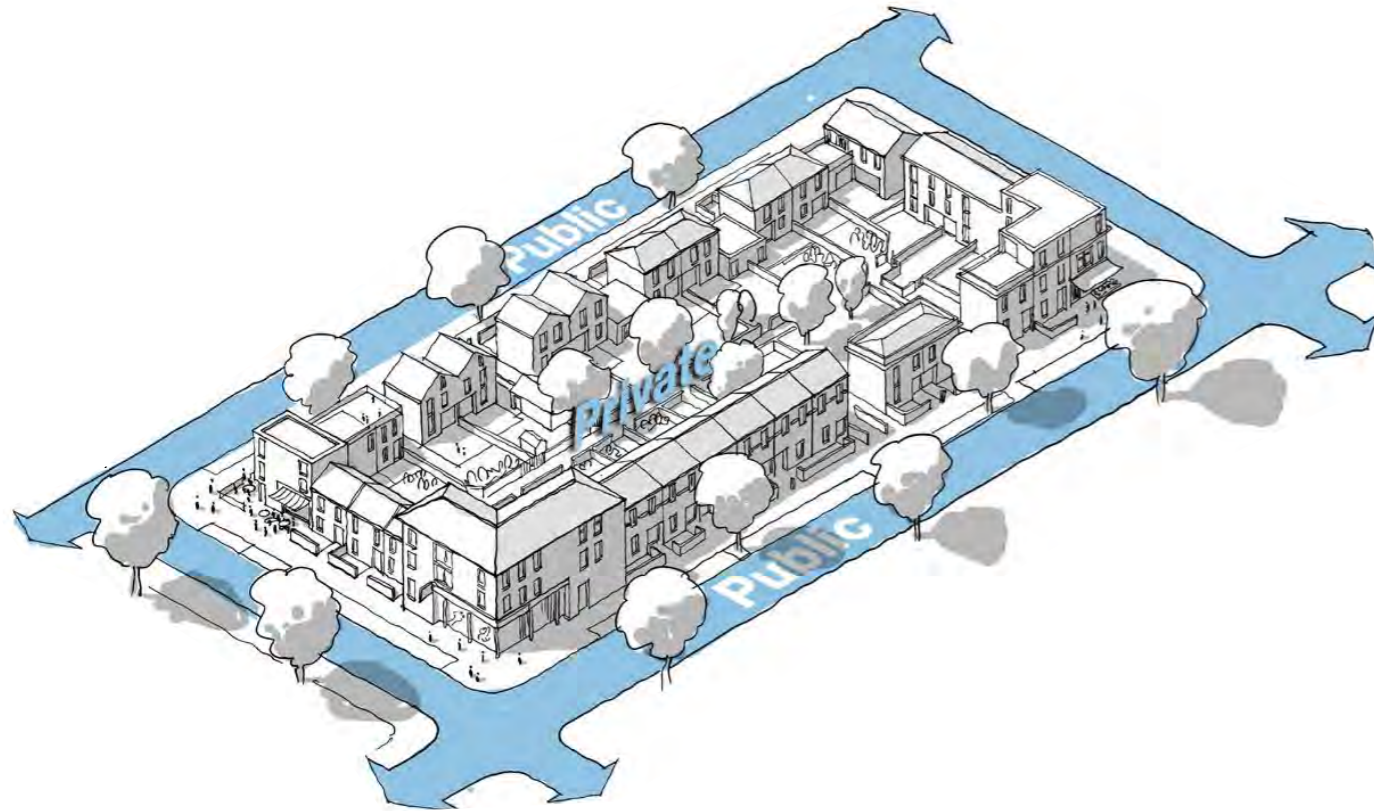


Figure 36

36. Perimeter blocks create a clear distinction between the public fronts of buildings and the private backs.

37. Perimeter block development with rear parking courts allows for a positive street scene with good levels of enclosure.



Figure 37

3.2.3 Legibility

Successful neighbourhoods should be easy to understand for residents and visitors. There should be a clear hierarchy of streets, landmarks and focal points, which should help orientation and navigation. Successful layouts should be characterised by interconnected well-defined routes. Successful neighbourhoods are easy to navigate, feel safe and encourage walking or cycling.

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of legibility at the Strategic Design Tier.

- Views and vistas** can be used to assist with legibility. They should focus on important routes, key landmarks and landscape features.
- The layout should demonstrate a coherent and legible structure or **hierarchy of streets and public spaces**. Street types should be differentiated by:
 - carriageway widths;
 - footpath widths ;
 - active travel provision;
 - street tree frequency & species;
 - landscaping;
 - building scale;
 - building alignment;
 - enclosure;
 - frontage spacing;
 - materials palette;
 - hard surfacing materials.

- The layout and built form should be designed to **minimise the visual impact of highway** design; the place should not be dominated by roads. A road hierarchy which defines places where cars are dominant and places where they are guests in the pedestrian environment will help to achieve this.
- Prepare illustrative design strategies for each of the principal **pedestrian and vehicular arrival points** into the development site, and any existing **nodal points** within, or on the edge of, the site. In these locations, buildings should be suitably scaled and carefully orientated to create a coherent entrance to the site. The design of the public realm must also help to emphasise their character
- Establish the principles of how **physical links** with adjoining areas will work.
- The **perimeter block** provides a sound basis for layout. It can accommodate a wide variety of density levels and a range of uses. The Local Planning Authority would prefer that this approach is used unless the character of the area suggests otherwise.
- Public and private spaces** should be clearly delineated with appropriate boundaries, buffers defensible space.



Definitions

Perimeter Blocks

An arrangement of buildings fronting onto the street along the public edges of an urban block, with a central private or semi-private space at the centre.

Perimeter blocks can vary in shape from a rectangular grid or with a curved alignment, depending on the layout type.

Public and Private Spaces

The distinction between spaces that are wholly publicly accessible (e.g. the street) and those deemed as being private (e.g. back gardens). Semi-public space is often privately owned but publicly visible and important as part of street character e.g. front garden areas

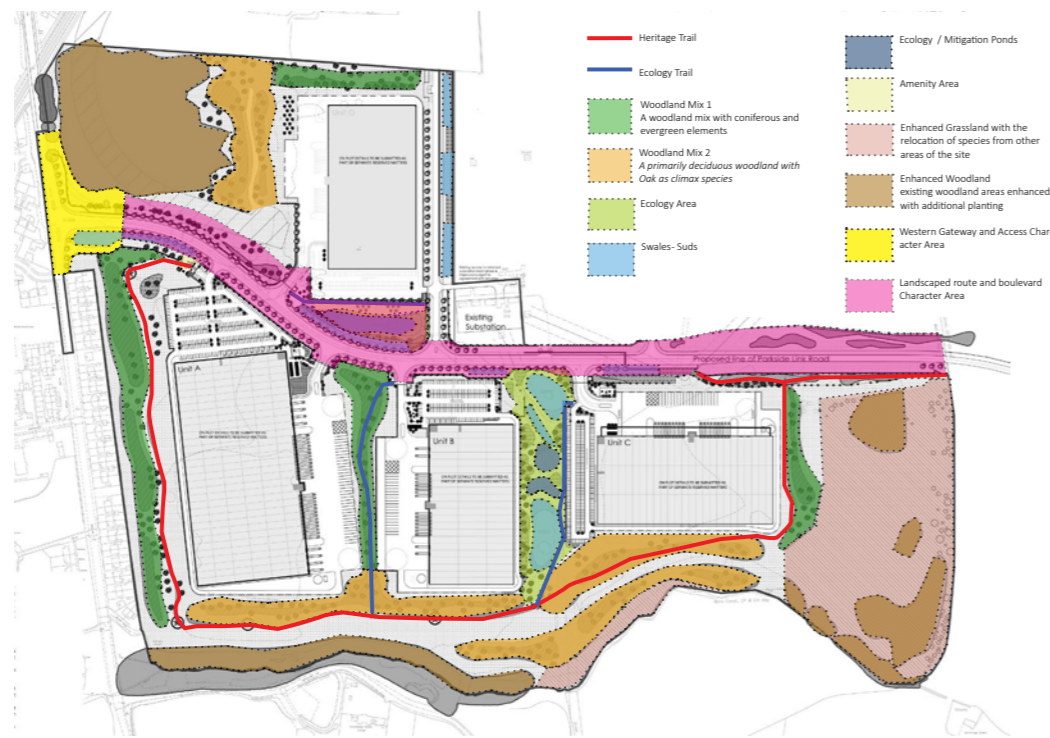


Figure 38

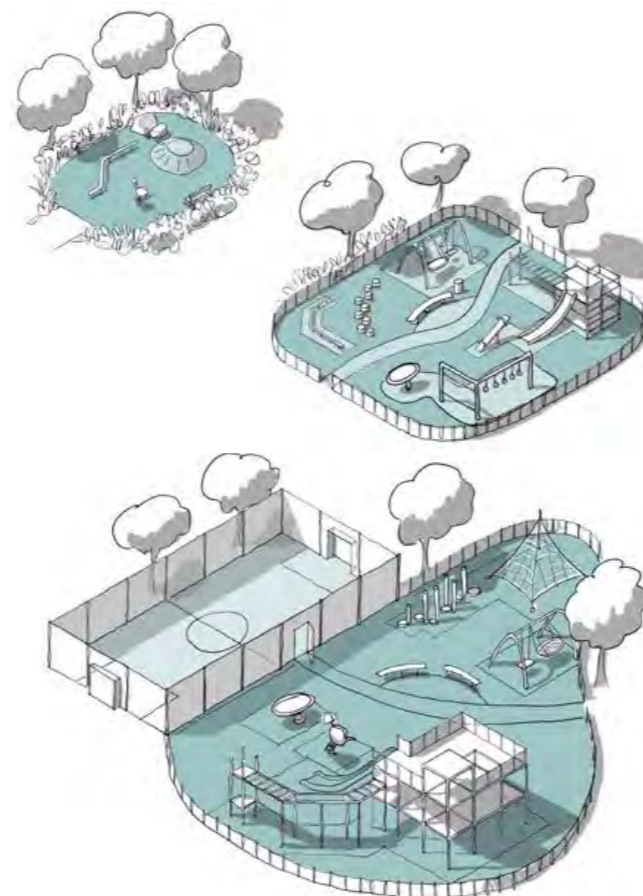


Figure 39

- 38. A landscape strategy for a logistics site.
- 39. From top to bottom; a Local Area for Play (LAP), a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) & a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP).

Nature contributes to the character of a place and to people's quality of life. It is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features should be integrated into well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of nature and landscape at the Strategic Design Tier.

3.3.1 Landscape

A **landscape & public realm strategy** must form an integral part of the strategic design concept.

- a. Illustrate the **structure** of the public realm and landscape design, describing how it integrates with the surrounding area. As people move through an area, they should experience a sequence of spaces of different size, shape, and character.
- b. Landscape proposals should **enhance natural features & wildlife habitats**. Consider whether features outside of the site could also be enhanced as part of the development.
- c. Demonstrate how the landscape design will connect to and enhance existing **green corridors**.

- d. **Trees** of amenity and ecological value (especially those covered by TPO, or of ancient or veteran character) and other vegetation, such as that forming wildlife corridors, should be retained and enhanced.
- e. **Heritage / archaeological features and constraints** should be incorporated into the concept design in a coherent manner. Where there are 'no build zones' these should form legible open spaces that are well overlooked and connected to a wider hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- f. The **topography** of the site should be used creatively to provide variety whilst also meeting accessibility requirements. Visually more prominent land requires careful consideration/respect.

- g. Categorise the different types of **public open space** to be provided on site and the audience / area they serve. Establish how each type functions as a leisure, exercise and health resource. Categories of public open space might include;
 - Parks & gardens;
 - Natural & semi-natural open space;
 - Amenity greenspace;
 - Provision for children and young people;
 - Allotments;
 - Outdoor sport.



Definitions

The **public realm** refers to the wide range of public places and spaces that provide the canvas for public life. The public realm can positively influence wellbeing and quality of life. At the same time, it can be a source of stress when security and community safety are in question.

Open Space Types

The adopted Local Plan requires the provision of open space in the context of certain types of development and of a variety of forms e.g. play space, recreational provision natural green space.

Links

St Helens Open Space SPD
For further information on the design of open space.



Figure 40



Figure 41

40. The lake at the heart of the New Bold Estate provides a focal point and a wildlife habitat.


41. Biodiversity & landscape led site layout.

3.3.2 Biodiversity

- a. Development sites should have suitable **buffers** to sites that are important for wildlife, such as Local Nature Reserves and River Corridors. Further information with regard to Biodiversity can be found in the Nature Conservation SPD.
- b. Protect and enhance **wildlife habitats** on and around the site. Where this is not possible demonstrate how and where habitats will be re-provided.
- c. Demonstrate how the proposal will respond to **ecological constraints** and mitigate **secondary risks** that may arise off site from development.

3.3.3 Water

- a. **Waterways** and the environs should be viewed as an integral part of the public realm; new waterside development should be considered holistically with the opportunities for water-based development, usage and enhancement.
- b. Demonstrate how the proposal will mitigate **flood risk** on and off the site.
- c. **Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)** will ensure that surface water run-off from developments does not exceed pre-development rates.



Healthy St Helens

Living in a greener environment promotes and protects good health, aids in recovery from illness and helps with managing poor health.

Access to greenspace is associated with better mental health and wellbeing outcomes including reduced levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue, and enhanced quality of life for both children and adults.

Source: Improving access to greenspace. Public Health England



Definitions

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) immitate natural drainage patterns by providing an alternative for surface water runoff, diverting away from pipes and sewers. SuDS aim to reduce flooding, improve water quality and enhance amenity and biodiversity value.

Links

Trees, Planning and Development: A Guide for Delivery
Trees and Design Action Group. 2023.

Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play
Fields in Trust. 2020.

St Helens SuDS Guidance
For further information on the design of SuDS.



Figure 42

42. A street that prioritises active travel.

43. The council will encourage connected networks of streets (right), rather than cul-de-sacs (left).



Figure 43

A well-designed development should be easy to get to and move through, making the most of existing or proposed facilities in the area. The overarching aim is the creation of safe and walkable neighbourhoods that prioritises pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

The streetscape, urban form and function should be designed in an integrated way to ensure that environments prioritise people ahead of car use. Highway design needs to respond by integrating cars into the public realm without affecting its quality.

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of movement at the Strategic Design Tier.

3.4.1 Connectivity & Permeability

- Demonstrate in detail how the **vehicular and active travel access** to/from the site will work. **Junction layout drawings** will be required at this stage to demonstrate how active travel will be incorporated and tie into existing provisions, as well as to assess the existing impact on highways.
- Ensure that existing active travel **connections** and nodal points are maintained and reinforced through the emerging layout.

- Demonstrate how the built form and landscape structure will reinforce **public rights of way** and emerging **desire lines**.
- Buildings, public space and streets should be designed together to prevent layouts which only consider traffic issues.
- Illustrate the proposed **street hierarchy** and how it connects into neighbouring streets and spaces.
- Define key intersections as **nodal points**, and suggest treatments for prioritising and aiding the efficiency of walking & cycling.
- Neighbourhoods should be more permeable for pedestrians and less permeable for cars.
- Demonstrate how the **public transport network** connects into the site. If a bus route will be diverted through or created to serve the site indicate the position/s on a site plan. Indicate potential bus stop locations within the site to maximise internal accessibility. Refer to the Transport and Travel SPD to ensure that the proposed changes are appropriate.



Links

Manual for Streets 2

Guidance to assist those in the planning, construction and improvement of our streets to deliver more contextually sensitive designs

Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)

Guidance for local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure

St Helens Transport and Travel SPD

For further information on access to public transport.

Appendix 2

contains further information on the residential street hierarchy.

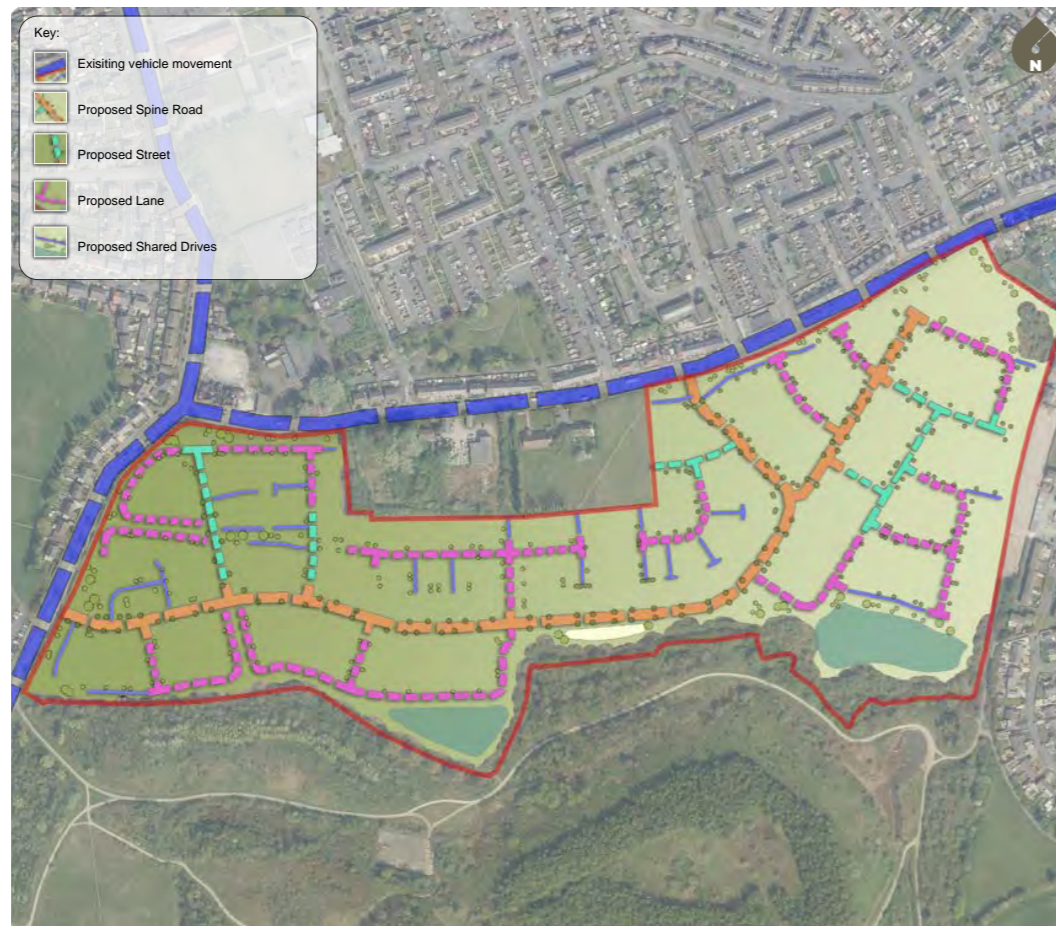


Figure 44



Figure 45

44. Vehicular moment framework demonstrating the strategic street hierarchy. *Image:*

45. Play integrated into a pedestrian street.

3.4.2 Active Travel

Sustainable travel such as **walking, cycling and public transport** should be prioritised to reduce the need to travel by private cars. Routes need to be coherent; direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. They should also be free from barriers and in full accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

- a. Roads and street layout should be designed to aid trips by mode other than car, particularly when one mile or less.
- b. Mark **proposed footpaths and cycle routes** onto a site plan and demonstrate how they connect to existing well-used routes. Routes should relate to the street hierarchy and initial street design.
- c. Indicate whether streets will be provided with full segregated/protected cycle lanes, light segregation, advisory / shared use provisions or 'quiet street' design.
- d. Schools, shops and community facilities should be easily accessible by other means than the car. Refer to the Accessibility Standard Assessment of the Transport and Travel SPD, to understand the commitments needed from the site to improve wider accessibility, e.g. new bus services, greenway or external cycleway infrastructure etc.

3.4.3 Highways

Streets should be designed to fit into the townscape and ensure a high quality environment for all users, rather than the buildings designed to fit in and around the roads.

Streets should be designed as public spaces, taking into account engineering considerations, but being based on their function rather than purely the level of traffic.

- a. Developments should be designed to ensure that buildings **overlook** all public spaces, roads and footpaths to increase **passive surveillance**.
- b. Consider the long-term operation of the development and how user friendly it will be. The need to safely accommodate manoeuvring and turning requirements of larger vehicles, including refuse collection, deliveries and emergency vehicles, should be taken into account at an early stage.
- c. Design of highways should relate to the proposed **Street Hierarchy**. Consider:
 - widths and alignments;
 - surfacing types/materials;
 - traffic calming measures;
 - aesthetic measures;
 - parking needs/requirements;
 - direct frontage access needs.



Definitions

Passive surveillance
An environment where people can see and be seen through casual observation.

Links

Equality Act 2010
Government Equalities Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission

Active Design
Creating Active Environments Through Planning and Design. Sport England.



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48

46. Parking courts reduce the visual impact of parked cars on the character of the street.
47. A well-overlooked parking court with integral parking at the ground floor of residential buildings.
48. The visual impact of frontage parking is softened by areas of lawn, hedges and street trees.

- d. Establish the extent of the highway that is intended to be adopted by the Local Highway Authority. Ensure these streets are designed to **adoptable standards**.
- e. Illustrate how **parking** for cars, bikes and other relevant transport will be provided on site. The convenience of parking should not be at the detriment of active travel and public transport. Car parking should be integrated, safe and secure, with visual impact minimised.
- f. The level of **parking** (including cycle parking) required will depend on the following: The type of development (Houses, Flats, Sheltered Accommodation) and the location of the development (Town Centre or elsewhere).
- g. In residential schemes, parking should be predominantly at the side of dwellings or in secure and well-overlooked parking courts. Driveways should not form the whole of a building's frontage.



Links

St Helens Street Design Guide – Highways for Adoption.

Advice on adoptable standards and servicing requirements.

Advice on the size and design of parking spaces and areas can be found in the **Supplementary Planning Document Transport and Travel.**



Figure 49

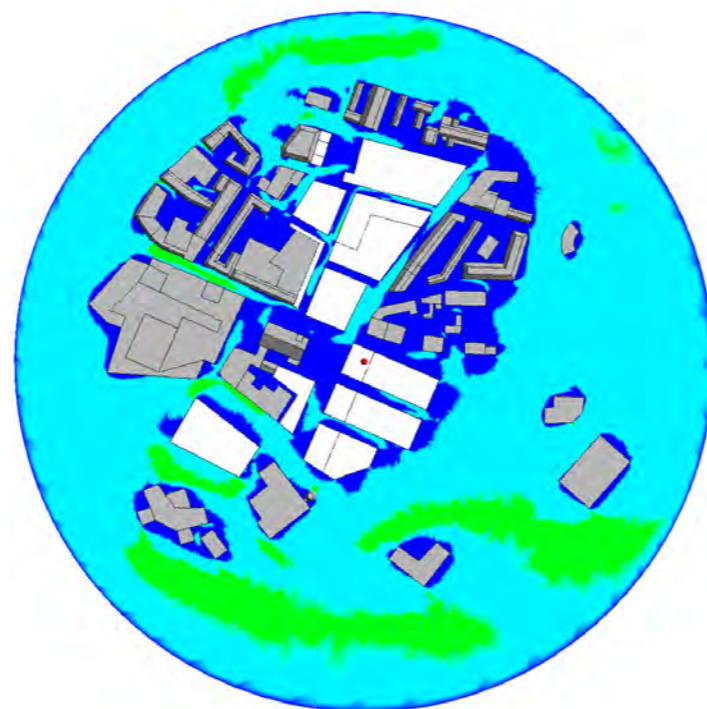


Figure 50

49. Modular homes in Sutton that incorporate solar panels, electric charging points and 'gas-free' central heating.

50. A wind microclimate assessment of the town centre regeneration massing was undertaken to understand the impact on pedestrian comfort.

“The layout and orientation of new buildings contributes to reducing their energy needs by avoiding overshadowing, maximising passive solar gain, internal daylight levels and ventilation.”

National Model Design Code

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of resources at the Strategic Design Tier.

3.5.1 Design

- a. Prepare strategies for how existing buildings, structures and materials will be **repurposed** or **recycled** on-site.
- b. Demonstrate how the **aspect**, **orientation** and **microclimate** of the site have influenced the site layout. Demonstrate how the development maximises **solar gains**, provides **shelter** from prevailing **wind** and minimises **overshadowing**. Proposed dwellings should, as far as reasonably practical, have front or back walls facing south and within (max) 45 degrees of an east-west axis.
- c. Long uninterrupted road passages should be avoided. Shelter from cold and prevailing winds can be provided by vegetation. Buildings can also be arranged in an irregular pattern to avoid channelling the wind.

- d. Consider the building’s form factor. A compact building form minimises the heat loss envelope in relation to the building’s volume.
- e. Explore opportunities for modern construction methods, improves built quality and reduces construction waste.
- f. The council will encourage the use of materials with low embodied carbon.

3.5.2 Services

- a. Highlight proposed locations for **substations & pumping stations** and strategies for integrating enclosures into the wider design.
- b. Demonstrate how **no-build zones** associated with public utilities and easements / buffer zones are integrated into the site layout in a coherent way.
- c. The Council encourages the use of **renewable energy** installations, such as solar water heating, wind turbines, photovoltaic and biomass heating, in the design of new residential housing. Permission will be granted for the development of renewable energy installations where there is no unacceptable impact on the character of the area, which would not outweigh their community/environmental benefits.



Definitions

Aspect

The main outlook or view from a site.

Orientation

The relationship of a building and its facades relative to the direction it faces.

Microclimate

a local set of atmospheric conditions that differ from those in the surrounding areas, often slightly but sometimes substantially. Microclimates can be created by and through the design of buildings and spaces and can be influenced by solar gain, shelter and wind turbulence.

3.6

Strategic Checklist

The checklist summarises the **design variables** in the preceding chapter. The applicant should determine which variables apply to a proposed application, undertake the required **analysis** and prepare an appropriate **design response**. Variables suitable for design coding will be determined on a case by case basis, agreed with the local planning authority. More detail is set out in the SPD as to the potential for specific design issues to be the subject of coding.

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site	Design Coding	Analysis	Response
3.1	Community				
3.1.1.a	Site plan : Uses				
3.1.1.b / e	Use mix adjacency diagrams				
3.1.1.c	Mitigation strategies				
3.1.1.d	A thriving neighbourhood				
3.1.1.f	Magnet buildings				
3.1.1.g	Development parcels & phasing strategy				
3.1.1.h	Density levels				
3.1.2.a / b	Community benefits				
3.2	Identity				
3.2.1.a	Characterisation Study				
3.2.1.b	Site Capacity Study				
3.2.1.c	Site Plan : Building Heights				
3.2.1.d	Townscape Study				
3.2.1.e	Topography / Site Sections				
3.2.1.f	Skylines				
3.2.1.g	Careful siting of rural development				
3.2.1.h	Site Layout : avoiding prominent backs				
3.2.1.i	Integration of existing structures / features				
3.2.1.j	Opportunities and barriers design response				
3.2.1.k	Proposed boundary conditions				
3.2.1.l	Form, Massing & Style studies				
3.2.1.m	Material Strategy				
3.2.1.n	Visual connections & links				
3.2.1.o	Significant viewpoints				
3.2.1.p	Landmarks				
3.2.1.q	Visual relationship with existing settlement				
3.2.2.a	Strong and memorable character				
3.2.2.b	Site layout : Connections with surroundings				
3.2.2.c / d	Character zones				
3.2.2.e	Landscape setting				
3.2.2.f	Active frontages				
3.2.2.g	Urban morphology and building typologies				

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site	Design Coding	Analysis	Response
3.2	Identity (continued)				
3.2.3.a	Views & Vistas				
3.2.3.b	Street Hierarchy				
3.2.3.c	Minimise visual impact of highway				
3.2.3.d	Arrival Points & Nodes				
3.2.3.e	Physical links with adjoining areas				
3.2.3.f	Perimeter blocks diagram				
3.2.3.g	Public / Private spaces diagram				
3.2.3.d	Active frontages				
3.3	Nature				
3.3.1	Landscape & public realm strategy				
3.3.1.a	Landscape structure				
3.3.1.b	Enhance natural features				
3.3.1.c	Connect to existing green corridors				
3.3.1.d	Trees to be retained & enhanced				
3.3.1.e	Heritage / archaeological features incorporated				
3.3.1.f	Creative use of topography				
3.3.1.g	Public Open Space proposals				
3.3.2.a	Landscape buffers				
3.3.2.b	Enhance wildlife habitats				
3.3.2.c	Ecological constraints - design response				
3.3.2.c	Off-site secondary risks - design response				
3.3.3.a	Waterways incorporated into public realm				
3.3.3.b	Flood Risk mitigation				
3.3.3.c	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)				
3.4	Movement				
3.4.1.a	Site access layouts				
3.4.1.a	Junction layout drawings				
3.4.1.b	Active travel connections				
3.4.1.c	Public Rights of Way / Desire Lines				
3.4.1.d	Avoid layouts which only consider traffic issues				
3.4.1.e	Street hierarchy : connectivity				
3.4.1.f	Nodal points				
3.4.1.g	Pedestrian permeability				
3.4.1.h	Public transport network				
3.4.2.a	Street layouts : Active travel				
3.4.2.b	Footpaths / Cycle Routes				
3.4.2.c	Segregated / protected cycle lanes				
3.4.2.d	Accessibility Standard Assessment				
3.4.3.a	Overlooking / passive surveillance				
3.4.3.b	Refuse collection / deliveries / emergency vehicles				
3.4.3.c	Street hierarchy : highway design				

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site	Design Coding	Analysis	Response
3.4	Movement (continued)				
3.4.3.d	Highway Adoption Strategy				
3.4.3.e - g	Parking Strategy				
3.5	Resources				
3.5.1.a	On-site re-use / recycling				
3.5.1.b / c	Aspect, orientation & microclimate				
3.5.1.b	Prevailing winds diagram				
3.5.1.b	Overshadowing study				
3.5.1.d	Form factor				
3.5.1.e	Modern construction methods				
3.5.1.f	Low carbon materials				
3.5.2.a	Substations / Pumping stations				
3.5.2.b	Easements / buffer zones				
3.5.2.c	Renewables				

4.0

Neighbourhood Design Tier

The Neighbourhood Design Tier refers to either;

- a stand-alone site of around 50 dwellings,
- a commercial or mixed-use development or,
- on a large site, an area within the masterplan that requires design development beyond the general layout principles associated with the Strategic Design Level.

Stand-alone sites that come under the Neighbourhood Design Tier may still have major significance, an example being the development of a key site within a town, suburb or village centre,

On large sites, the Neighbourhood Design Tier should help to develop character zones, street types & groups of buildings around nodal points.

This Tier is likely to be relevant to a full application or a reserved matters application to an outline scheme (or part thereof),



Figure 51
Diagram illustrating examples of how the design themes and variables apply to the Neighbourhood Design Tier of a residential development.

- Key**
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 Distinctive character areas | 1 Continuous / spaced frontage | 1 Well-overlooked play area |
| 2 Mixed-use development | 2 Active frontage / surveillance | 2 Soft landscaped boundaries |
| 3 Public open spaces | 3 Defensible space / boundaries | 3 Street trees |
| 4 A mix of housing | 4 Key buildings | 4 SuDS as visual amenity / wildlife habitat |
| 5 Uses that 'spill-out' | 5 Separation distances | |
-
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Street hierarchy | 1 Renewable energy |
| 2 Considered parking strategy | 2 Form factor |
| 3 Cycle parking | 3 Integrated bin storage |
| 4 Traffic calming measures | |
| 5 Active travel | |

The form and layout of a development has a relationship with the uses and activities it accommodates.

The following prompts may be appropriate to strengthening or creating community through development at the Neighbourhood Design Tier.

4.1.1 Place

- For large sites that have been subdivided into smaller **development zones** or **character areas**, illustrate how the design principles of each relate to the overall design theme and its principles as defined at the Strategic Design Tier.
- For development with a **single use**, demonstrate how the activities and spaces within the development are located across the site.
- For **mixed use development**, illustrate how the proposed uses are located within the development. Consider how they relate in three dimensions and how they are distinguished through the architectural design.
- New and existing **public open spaces** should help to shape the layout of the site and form an integral part of it. Development should relate well to open space in terms of frontage, scale and outlook.
- Develop the design of proposed **mitigation strategies**. These should not have a negative impact on future residents/users' amenity and outlook.
- Direct **links** between development and a range of services/facilities promote walking and, hence, safe and secure streets where people encounter each other.
- Development around significant public spaces & routes should include uses that can **'spill out'** into the public realm to create activity (cafes/shops/community centres).



Links

The design principles that the Council wishes to see demonstrated in developments for the prevention of crime are contained in the **Design and Crime Supplementary Planning Document**.



Figure 52

52. Warburton Hey, Rainhill provides a mix of housing carefully laid out to create a distinctive neighbourhood.

53. The public spaces at Marmalade Lane Co-Housing, Cambridge are designed to accommodate a wide variety of uses and people.




Figure 53

4.1.2 People

The development should provide a variety of spaces / places to cater for **different peoples needs** and preferences.

- a. **Public spaces and community facilities** can provide identity and local distinctiveness, if they are designed to respond to the particular needs of the local population.
- b. Demonstrate how buildings and spaces meet relevant **accessibility standards**.
- c. Demonstrate how **public safety** and security have been considered in the design of new developments. The development should create continuous activity and surveillance to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour.



Healthy St Helens

The St Helens Borough Suicide Prevention Strategy aims to eliminate suicides in the Borough. The planning system can play a vital role in prevention by considering the risks of suicide associated with buildings and public spaces.

Consult the practice resource [Preventing suicides in public places](#) when considering new developments.

4.1.3 Housing Mix

The provision of a mix of housing creates balanced and successful residential environments by:

- Creating a better balance of demand for local services;
 - Allowing people to upsize and downsize without leaving the community;
 - Creating visual diversity of building forms and scales;
 - Improve natural surveillance (a variety of tenures increases the likelihood of some residents being at home during the daytime).
- a. Affordable dwellings should be evenly distributed throughout the site rather than being concentrated in a particular part of the site. This does not preclude limited grouping of dwellings for functional or management purposes.
 - b. Affordable housing should integrate fully with the market housing on a site in terms of style and quality and should be in keeping with the character of the area. This should therefore include a consistency of style, detailing and building materials. The Council will not accept affordable housing, which, either by its design or siting, is clearly distinct from the market housing.



Links

New residential developments are required to provide variety in the mix of property sizes, types, tenures and affordability, in accordance with the needs of the area. These needs are outlined in the **Housing Strategy (2022-27)** and the **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (updated 2019)**. Details on the requirement for affordable housing are contained in the **Affordable Housing SPD**.



Figure 54



Figure 55

54. Elevations showing standard dwelling arranged to create a coherent street scene.

55. A visual connection between a public and shared courtyard. The pergola structure marks the threshold between the two.

56. Varied orientation, alignment and enclosure give this street a village character.



Figure 56

The following prompts may be appropriate for strengthening or creating identity through development at the Neighbourhood Design Tier.

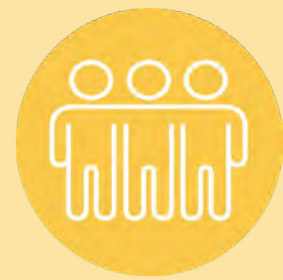
4.2.1 Context

- Demonstrate how the placing of buildings celebrates **retained existing features** such as buildings, trees, hedges, watercourses.
- Develop a high-level **material strategy**; complementary palettes that relate to the emerging character zones within the development and the context. Use precedent images of buildings and places to communicate the design intent.
- Demonstrate how specific buildings and locations within the public realm exploit and relate to **visual connections** and relationships into and across the site.
- Prepare plans and elevations or use a 3D model to show the proposed **building footprint** and **heights** in context. Demonstrate how the development relates to neighbouring buildings.
- Prepare long sections through the site that demonstrate how the development is designed to respond to the **topography** of the site.

- Prepare sketches and elevations demonstrating how the development will respond to the **existing character** and **local vernacular** in the area.

4.2.2 Character

- Buildings must be of the appropriate **size, proportion, shape** and **layout**, creating well-defined streets and spaces, which are attractive, user-friendly, and improve residents' quality of life.
- The degree to which buildings address the street not only affects sense of **enclosure**, but also impacts on **natural surveillance** and community safety. Inward looking layouts create weakly defined spaces and present blank walls to the outside world, alienating passers-by.
- Frontages** can be continuous, or spaced (either regular or irregular). The degree of spacing has an effect on the sense of enclosure.
- Regular **gaps between buildings** can help to define local character, help to 'green' streets and give views across the site.
- On sites within an existing **building line**, development should respect this and continue the appropriate frontage type (e.g. continuous or spaced, regular or irregular).



Definitions

Enclosure

The sense of containment within a space and its proportions are affected by the height and spacing of surrounding buildings and the width of the space itself. The perception of enclosure can be affected by additional features within the space e.g. built or landscape features. Enclosure is often represented as a ratio of building height to space.

Closure

The termination of a view. This can be sequential in the case of building alignment or abrupt e.g. where a building is located at the end of a street as a focal point.

Links

National Model Design Code

Part 2. Para. 112. DLHC. October 2021



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59

57. Victorian urban frontage on Prescott Road.

58. The scale of this elevation creates a good sense of enclosure. The gables, recesses and bays prevent it from being imposing.

59. Informal alignment of dwellings gives this development in Rainhill a rural feel.

- f. The extent to which buildings are set back from the pavement helps to define the sense of enclosure and establishes the character of a street.
- A **consistent building line** will create a more urban character. This is appropriate for urban centres and primary streets.
 - A **less continuous, irregular building line** will be expected in lower density suburbs and rural sites, with a less formal character.
- g. Buildings should give **definition** to spaces rather than sit in them as islands.
- h. Streets and spaces with a good sense of enclosure have a positive impact on wellbeing. Poorly enclosed feel exposed and are less well used. **Enclosure** is created by trees, slopes, walls and hedges, not just buildings.
- i. Consider the **transition** between different levels of enclosure as people move through the development.
- j. Buildings which **terminate views** can help to enclose spaces and reduce traffic speed.

Major residential development must provide a **mix of dwellings** in form and size. The distribution of dwellings should form character areas which relate to street hierarchy and respond to local context.

4.2.3 Legibility

- a. Identify **key buildings** and **landmarks** that will assist with legibility. These would traditionally be churches and commercial buildings. A creative approach will need to be taken to achieve variety in the streetscape and create buildings of interest. e.g. community facilities, changes in height, or architectural features such as bay windows.
- b. The **hierarchy of streets** should be differentiated by the buildings as well as the highway design. Differentiate between building scale, height, frontage, elevations and materials. Refer to Appendix 2: Residential Street Hierarchy for further details.
- c. Prepare design proposals for the design of **physical links** with adjoining areas to include; Dimensions, access, materials, landscape, boundaries, lighting, street furniture.
- d. Good design can help to reduce **crime** and **anti-social behaviour**. Security and community safety should be a priority. Natural surveillance is important, particularly for footpaths or areas that may be less busy. A clear division is needed between public and private space. The transitional area between the two should be carefully considered.



Definitions

Key Buildings

Significant buildings which stand out from their surroundings. Historically of greater public importance e.g. churches, pubs, libraries, etc.

Links

Secured by Design

The official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit.

Appendix 2

contains further information on the residential street hierarchy.



Figure 60



Figure 61



Figure 62

60. 'The Miner or The Anderton Mining Monument' on The Linkway is an iconic piece of public art that celebrates St Helens' industrial heritage.

61. Generous front gardens support biodiversity and green the street.

62. A spacious and well-designed courtyard garden provides a place to congregate in this extra care scheme in Newton-le-Willows.

- e. Prepare design proposals for **defensible spaces** and **boundaries** to include, dimensions, materials, landscape, boundaries.
- f. **Public art** should be an integral part of creating sense of place and adding value to large or prominent gateway developments. Artists should be involved as early as possible to help shape and inform the character of the public realm and the wider development. Public Art should be developed closely with the local community. Art should be integrated into the architecture of the development, as well as within the public realm.

The Council will seek to make use of planning conditions and Section 106 Agreements (S106) for the inclusion of public art in large or prominent gateway developments.

4.2.4 Outdoor Space for Dwellings

- a. Dwellings must have some form of **outdoor private or shared space**. In lower density development, gardens can be accommodated. In higher density areas shared courtyards and balconies will be more suitable.
- b. Gardens should receive **direct sunlight** all year round, for at least part of the day, and be accessed conveniently and directly from the home.
- c. The **minimum rear garden depth** for houses will generally be 10m unless the character of the development / setting can be proved to warrant a reduction in this requirement. This is to ensure a good level of amenity space as well as sufficient separation for light, privacy and flexible living. The minimum rear garden depth should be increased in the case of developments, which have habitable room windows located above first floor level and will be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- d. **Gardens for apartment buildings** should provide at least 20m² for each flat. Less provision may be appropriate in higher density central and town centre locations and in locations with good access to open space. Bin stores and clothes-drying areas should not be included in this space. Strips of land required for streetscene and amenity reasons will not be counted as part of the garden area.
- e. Well-designed **roof gardens** can provide suitable communal outdoor amenity space.
- f. Avoid north-facing **balconies**. In-set balconies tend to be better used than protruding balconies.

Annotate drawings with dimensions and areas to demonstrate that the development provides appropriate outdoor amenity space.



Links

The **St Helens Borough Arts Strategy** sets out the councils priorities for Public Art commissioning.



Figure 63

63. A shared courtyard with private terraces can be a better use of space than private gardens.

64. Angled cantilevered bay windows give oblique views along the street whilst maintaining the privacy of houses on the opposite side of the road.

65. An inset balcony provides shelter from the elements in this extra care scheme in Newton-le-Willows.



Figure 64

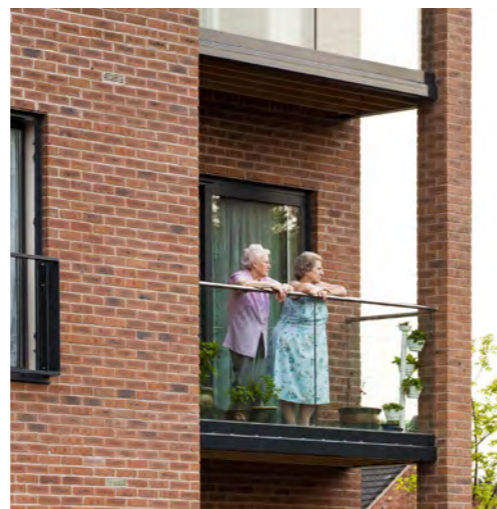


Figure 65

4.2.5 Recommended Separation Distances

The following guidelines set out the **minimum distances** that should be left between buildings. They are intended to prevent an unacceptable amount of **overlooking, overshadowing, disturbance** and loss of **outlook** and to provide minimum levels of **residential amenity**. Residential amenity includes issues such as privacy, garden space, outlook, light, and disturbance.

The guidelines should generally be followed, but it is important to consider the design of the development, and its relationship to the character of the surrounding area.

From	To	Minimum Distance
First floor habitable room window	A blank wall or a non-habitable room window	12.5m
First floor habitable room window	Another habitable room window	23m – Private Garden Side 18m – Public Street Side

These distances relate to dormer bungalows and standard two storey buildings on a level site.

If the ground levels vary, or the proposal will have more than two storeys, the recommended separation distances will increase as follows.

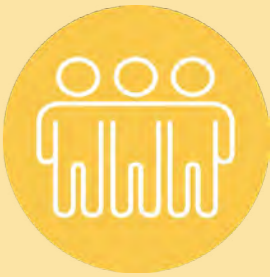
The distance from a habitable room window located above first floor level to another habitable room window facing should be increased by 5m;

- For each extra storey with overlooking main windows or,
- For every 3m change in ground levels.

Achieving typical separation distances can be limiting and the Council will encourage and support **creative solutions** to ensure that visual and acoustic privacy, light, and outlook can be achieved. These can include;

- Positioning dwellings obliquely to one another;
- High level windows, rooflights or bay windows that angle views away from neighbouring dwellings;
- Screens and planting;
- Changes in level between neighbours and / or between the dwelling and the public realm.

If the proposed development does not exactly meet the recommended distances, the rationale should be justified in the Design and Access Statement.



Definitions

A **habitable room window** is a main window to a room that people are in for long periods such as living rooms and bedrooms.

A **non-habitable room window** is a window to a landing, hallway, bathroom or other room that people do not normally occupy for long periods and where obscure glass may be used.

Figure 66
Sustainable Drainage
Systems.

Key

1. Green roofs and walls
2. Permeable surfacing
3. Swales
4. Rain capture:
5. Soakaways
6. Retention tanks
7. Street tree planting
8. Rain gardens:
9. Basins and ponds
10. Reedbeds and wetlands.

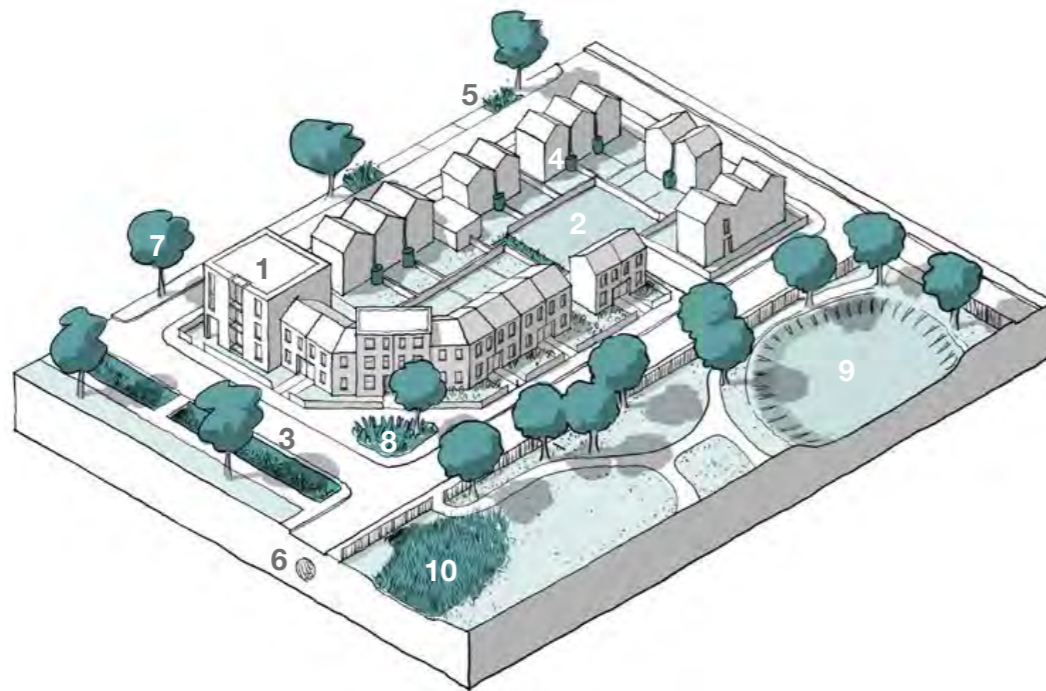


Figure 67

67. Canalside residential development incorporating historic mill building and bridge.

68. One of the lakes that contribute to a distinctive landscape at the New Bold Estate.



Figure 68

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of nature and landscape at the Neighbourhood Design Tier.

4.3.1 Landscape

a. The public realm and landscape design should contribute to the creation of a **distinctive sense of place**. Consideration should be given to:

- creating **structure**;
- framing **views**;
- reinforcing **boundaries**;
- softening **visual impact**;
- enhancing **vistas**;
- potential for uses to ‘**spill out**’ into the public realm and enhance sense of place;
- creating ‘**external rooms**’ with specific functions;
- providing **play space** for the full age range;
- creation of **shelter**;
- provision of **wildlife habitats**;
- differentiation of spaces.

b. For public open space prepare designs of the different types to be provided on the site to include:

- access;
- activities;
- materials;
- soft and hard landscaping;
- trees and planting;
- types of play equipment and street furniture;
- wildlife habitats.

4.3.2 Biodiversity

a. Specify types of **street tree** and demonstrate that they have the **room to mature** without impacting neighbouring buildings or utilities. If it is necessary to remove existing trees then replacements should be planted within public areas of the development at a ratio of **two new trees for every tree lost**. Trees should be discussed with the Council’s Tree Officers at an early stage in the planning process.

b. The creation of **meadowland** within parks and larger open spaces helps enhance biodiversity whilst also reducing maintenance.

4.3.3 Water

a. Siting, configuration and orientation of buildings, should **maximise views of water**, create natural surveillance over it and encourage access to, from and alongside the water.

b. Consider the impact of the development on the visual amenity of users of waterways and towpaths.

c. Prepare designs for SuDS that function as visual amenity and support wildlife habitats. Examples include green roofs and walls, wetland swaths, soft landscaping, trees and ponds.



Links

National Design Guide : Nature
Part 2, Paras. 95-98. DLHC. October 2019.

National Model Design Code
Part 2. Paras. 57-58. DLHC. October 2021

Trees, Planning and Development: A Guide for Delivery
Trees and Design Action Group. 2023.

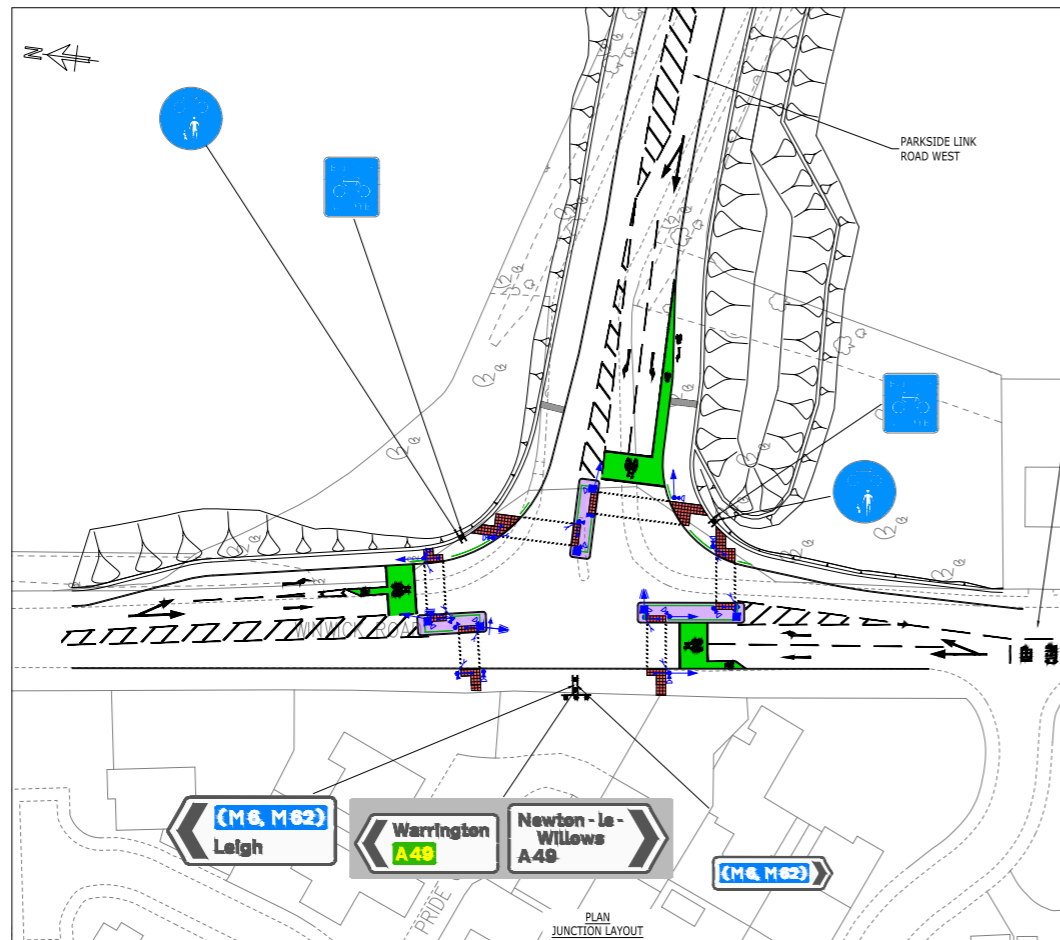


Figure 69



Figure 70

69. Site access layout to a logistics site.

70. Well overlooked cycle parking.

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of movement at the Neighbourhood Design Tier.

4.4.1 Connectivity & Permeability

- For **site access & junctions**, prepare designs to include highways, soft and hard landscaping, trees and planting, lighting, boundary treatments, public art, signage and wayfinding.
- For **nodal points**, prepare designs of the public realm to include access, activities, materials, soft and hard landscaping, highways, trees and planting, types of play equipment and street furniture.
- For **public rights of way** prepare designs to include materials, soft and hard landscaping, trees and planting, lighting, public art, wayfinding.
- For each street type within the **street hierarchy** prepare designs to include carriageway widths, active travel provision, verges, soft and hard landscaping, tree-lining, street lighting & furniture, signage and wayfinding.

- Prepare designs for **bus stops** to include location, materials, signage, seating. Shelters should provide a bench for people whilst they wait. Designs should comply with MerseyTravel specifications.

4.4.2 Active Travel

- Pedestrians and cyclists need routes that are **coherent; direct, safe, comfortable and attractive**. They should be free from barriers and in full accordance with LTN1/20 and the Equality Act 2010s.
- Secure, well-designed **cycle storage** should be provided within the public realm at key areas of activity to help promote cycle use.
- New homes should provide secure cycle storage within the curtilage, either integrated into the design or (in the case of dwellings with gardens) providing suitable space for a freestanding shed.
- If cycles are to be stored in a garage, they will need be designed to a sufficient width (4.5m for a single garage) to access and park cycles & cars.
- Cycle parking in apartment buildings should be indoors or in a secure, covered enclosure and easily accessed from the building entrance.



Links

National Design Guide : Movement
Part 2, Paras. 75-89. DLHC. October 2019.

National Model Design Code
Part 2. Paras. 32-56. DLHC. October 2021

Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)
Guidance for local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure

St Helens Transport and Travel SPD
For further information on access to public transport.

Appendix 2
contains further information on the residential street hierarchy.



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73

71. Traffic calming, rain gardens and street trees in a residential street in Cardiff.

72. Previously a car-dominated back street, Van Gogh Walk is now a valued public space providing access to nature and play.

73. Modal filters allow pedestrians and cyclists access whilst limiting car movement.

4.4.3 Highways

- Design of **highways** must relate to the proposed Street Hierarchy. Street types will be distinguished by:
 - place function;
 - widths and alignments;
 - surfacing types/materials;
 - traffic calming measures;
 - aesthetic measures;
 - parking needs/requirements;
 - direct frontage access needs;
 - pedestrian/cycle crossing types;
 - visibilities;
 - spacing of internal junctions;
 - road safety audits;
 - form/control of internal junctions;
 - street furniture;
 - swept path analysis.
- Streets with **low speed limits** are safer and can be achieved through the careful treatment of surfaces, junctions and crossings.
- In a low-speed and low-traffic environment the use of **shared surface environments** for all road users can be considered. The delivery and design of **quiet streets** and low traffic streets can negate the need for any segregated and protected cycle infrastructure.
- Vehicle speed can be controlled through the layout of streets.
- For more heavily trafficked routes such as avenues, boulevards and through routes, pinch points (created by buildings, not just road widths), bends with terminating views and junctions provide natural slowing mechanisms.
- For minor streets, short lengths with terminating views, and tighter corners can be appropriate.
- Traffic calming measures** should be designed with an aesthetic consideration as well as a functional speed consideration.

Refer to the St Helens Street Design Guide - Highways for Adoption SPD for detailed guidance on the design of traffic calming measures.



Links

Manual for Streets 2
Guidance to assist those in the planning, construction and improvement of our streets to deliver more contextually sensitive designs.

Appendix 2
contains further information on the residential street hierarchy.



Figure 74



Figure 75

74. Parking is located discretely to the side of dwellings.

75. The visual impact of frontage parking is softened by street trees, soft landscaping and a high-quality material palette.

76. A car port between dwellings leaves the street scene free from parking.



Figure 76

4.4.4 Car Parking

Car parking needs to be usable, safe and secure.

- a. Car parking provision must be designed to **minimise its visual impact** in the street scene, through appropriate siting and screening.
- b. Avoid the provision of large areas of surface car parking. It wastes space and feels too 'open'. Where a substantial amount of car parking is required **undercroft parking** should be considered.
- c. Car parking should be **integrated** into the overall layout and design of new development making sure that the **building frontage is not dominated by cars**, and that there is a good relationship between buildings and the street.
- d. **Surface car parks** should be well overlooked, broken up by appropriate landscaping, contain useable walk routes and a clear circulation plan.
- e. In larger car parks, allow for compartmentalisation of car clusters. The provision of one or two sided 'lots' providing of 15 car spaces either side of an access road with landscaped areas at either end (minimum width of 5 metres) and as a linear subdivision for the length of the parking lot.
- f. Use a variety of surface materials to provide visual interest, between access roads, circulation aisles, pedestrian paths and parking spaces.
- g. Semi-private rear **parking courts** are acceptable if they are limited in size, with only one entry point, well over-looked and designed to discourage public access. Undercroft or gated access deters strangers.
- h. Where **on-street parking** is to be provided, it should be designed so as not to impact highway safety whilst also integrating positively into the street scene.
- i. **On-plot parking** should be generally accessed from the front with garaging and parking spaces located to the side or rear of a dwelling. This maintains good surveillance from properties. In those cases where frontage parking is proposed this should not dominate the street frontage.
- j. The side of property parking should be protected from extensions that would force additional on-street parking to occur in replacement.
- k. Residential **driveway parking** that is parallel to the footway will not be permitted.



Links

National Design Guide : Parking & Servicing
Part 2, Paras. 84-89. DLHC. October 2019.

Residential Parking Guidance Note
Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation

Re-Think! Parking on the High Street
Guidance on Parking Provision in Town and City Centres. British Parking Association.

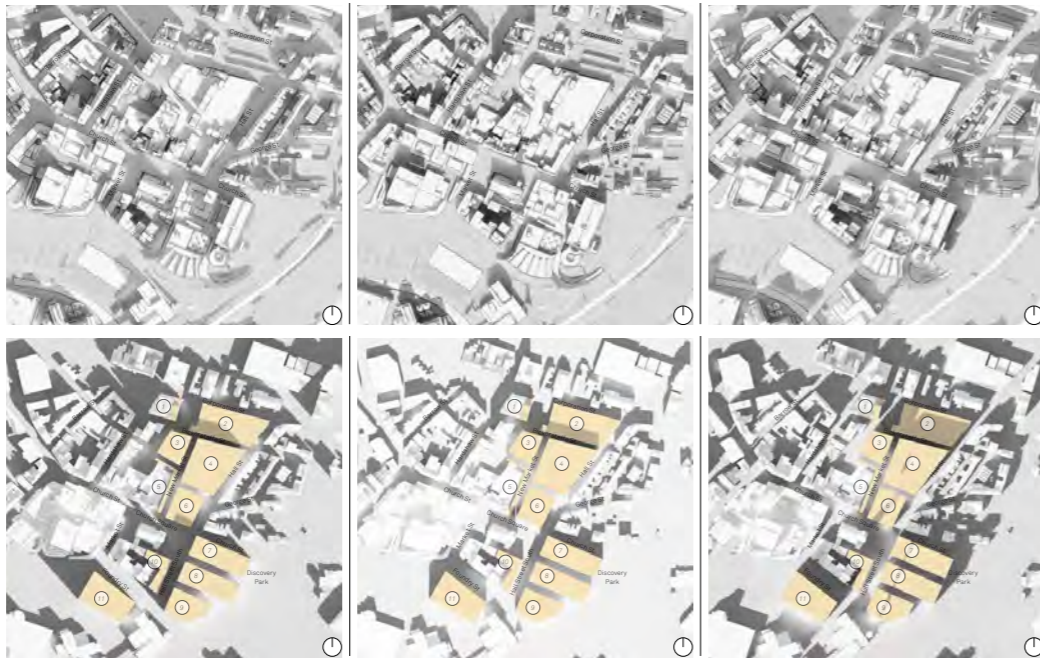


Figure 77

77. Shadow study analysis of the existing and proposed town centre.

78. Refuse collection options.

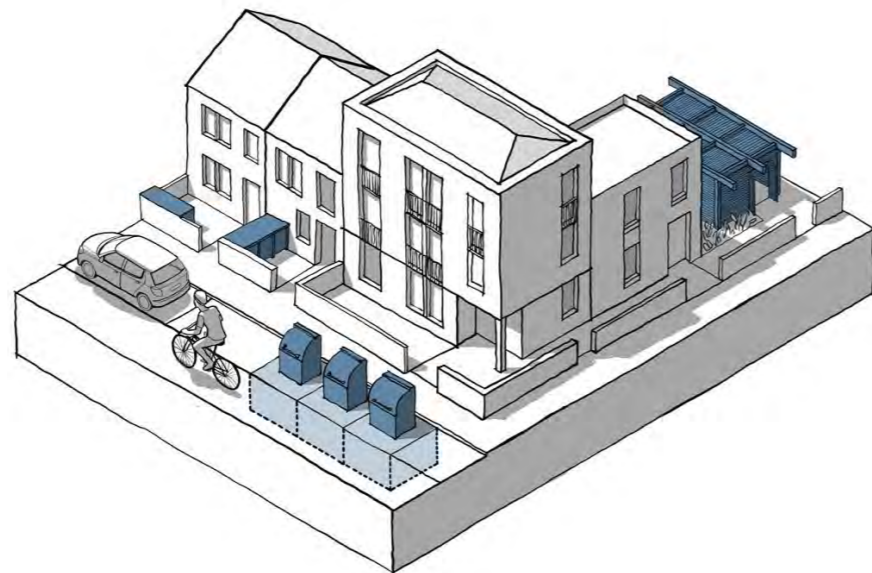


Figure 78

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of resources at the Neighbourhood Design Tier.

4.5.1 Design

- Demonstrate how the **aspect, orientation** and **microclimate** of the site have influenced the position and design of proposed buildings on the site.
- Consider the building's **form factor**. A compact building form minimises the heat loss envelope in relation to the building's volume.
- Explore opportunities for **modern construction methods** that improve built quality and reduce construction waste.
- The council will encourage the use of materials with low embodied carbon.

4.5.2 Services

- Demonstrate how **substation & pumping station enclosures** and other services are integrated into the layout of the site. Prepare designs that show; materials, access, landscape.
- Incorporate **renewable energy systems** and alternatives to gas boilers. Investigate opportunities to establish or connect into **district heating networks**.

4.5.3 Storage & Collection of Waste

- Provision should be made for **external storage of waste**. Storage areas should be **naturally ventilated, secure** and easily **accessible** by residents and for waste collection vehicles. Waste collection vehicles are required to get within 25m of any storage point.
- For houses, **storage on the frontage** will often be required, either within the footprint of the dwelling or in the front garden. Bin storage to the front of dwellings needs to be designed to ensure that it is not to the detriment of residential amenity or the quality of the public realm.
- For flats, **communal bin storage** located within the envelope of the building should be provided. Internal access should be provided for residents and external access for refuse collectors. **Freestanding bin stores** will not normally be acceptable because of their detrimental impact upon the public realm.
- For **non-residential development**, bin storage should be discretely located either within an integral bin store or an external structure built of high quality materials, in-keeping with the wider character of the site.



Links

St Helens Household Waste and Recycling Policies and Procedures
Section 7: New Developments

National Design Guide : Waste
Part 2, Para. 134.
DLHC. October 2019.

National Model Design Code
Part 2. Para. 56.
DLHC. October 2021

Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document H6
Solid Waste Storage

4.6

Neighbourhood Checklist

The checklist summarises the **design variables** in the preceding chapter. The applicant should determine which variables apply to a proposed application, undertake the required **analysis** and prepare an appropriate **design response**. Variables suitable for design coding will be determined on a case by case basis, agreed with the local planning authority. More detail is set out in the SPD as to the potential for specific design issues to be the subject of coding.

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site Design Coding	Analysis	Response
4.1	Community			
4.1.1.a	Development zone / character areas design themes			
4.1.1.b / c	Site layout : activities & spaces			
4.1.1.d	Public open spaces			
4.1.1.e	Mitigation strategies			
4.1.1.f	Links between development & services/facilities			
4.1.1.g	'Spill out' uses			
4.1.2.a	Community facilities			
4.1.2.b	Accessibility standards			
4.1.2.c	Public safety & security			
4.1.3	Housing Mix			
4.1.3.a	Site Plan : affordable dwellings			
4.1.3.b	Affordable housing design			
4.2	Identity			
4.2.1.a	Site layout: Retained existing features			
4.2.1.b	Material strategy			
4.2.1.c	Visual connections			
4.2.1.d	Building footprint / height in context			
4.2.1.e	Topography / Site Sections			
4.2.1.f	Existing character / vernacular : design response			
4.2.2.a	Size, proportion, shape & layout			
4.2.2.b / h	Enclosure			
4.2.2.b	Natural surveillance			
4.2.2.c	Frontage spacing			
4.2.2.d	Gaps between buildings			
4.2.2.e / f	Building line			
4.2.2.g	Buildings defining spaces			
4.2.2.i	Transition between different levels of enclosure			
4.2.2.j	Buildings terminating views			
4.2.3.a	Key buildings / landmarks			
4.2.3.b	Street hierarchy : built character			
4.2.3.c	Physical links : design proposals			
4.2.3.d	Crime & anti-social behaviour			

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site Design Coding	Analysis	Response
4.2	Identity (continued)			
4.2.3.e	Defensible spaces & boundaries			
4.2.3.f	Public art			
4.2.4.a	Outdoor amenity space			
4.2.4.b	Direct sunlight			
4.2.4.c	Minimum rear garden depth			
4.2.4.d	Gardens for apartment buildings			
4.2.4.e / f	Roof gardens / Balconies			
4.2.5	Recommended separation distances			
4.3	Nature			
4.3.1	Landscape & public realm strategy			
4.3.1.a	Landscape structure			
4.3.1.b	Public open space design			
4.3.2.a	Tree specifications			
4.3.2.b	Meadowlands			
4.3.3.a	Views of water			
4.3.3.b	Waterways			
4.3.3.c	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)			
4.4	Movement			
4.4.1.a	Site access layouts			
4.4.1.b	Nodal points			
4.4.1.c	Public rights of way			
4.4.1.d	Street hierarchy			
4.4.1.e	Bus stops			
4.4.2.a	Design of active travel routes			
4.4.2.b - e	Cycle storage			
4.4.3.a	Highway design			
4.4.3.b	Low speed limits			
4.4.3.c	Shared surface			
4.4.3.d - f	Speed control through street layout			
4.4.3.g	Traffic calming measures			
4.4.4.a	Car parking : minimise visual impact			
4.4.4.b	Avoid large areas of surface car parking			
4.4.4.c	Building frontage not dominated by car parking			
4.4.4.d	Surface car park design			
4.4.4.e	Compartmentalisation			
4.4.4.f	Surface materials			
4.4.4.g	Parking courts			
4.4.4.h	On-street parking			
4.4.4.i	On-plot parking			
4.4.4.j	Side-of-property protection from extensions			
4.4.4.k	Residential driveway parking			

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site	Design Coding	Analysis	Response
4.5	Resources				
4.5.1.a	Aspect, orientation & microclimate				
4.5.1.a	Prevailing winds diagram				
4.5.1.a	Overshadowing study				
4.5.1.b	Form factor				
4.5.1.c	Modern construction methods				
4.5.1.d	Low carbon materials				
4.5.2.a	Substations / Pumping stations				
4.5.2.b	Renewables				
4.5.3.a	External storage of waste				
4.5.3.b	Bin storage on frontage				
4.5.3.c	Communal bin storage				
4.5.3.d	Non-residential bin storage				

5.0

Streets & Buildings Design Tier

The Streets & Buildings Design Tier deals with the design of the street or the plots within it. This includes building relationships, the design of public and semi-public space and building design specifications including form, facades and elevation, energy efficiency and adaptability.

For large or complex sites, this will follow on from conceptual proposals at the Strategic and/or Neighbourhood Design Tiers. It can also be used in isolation to prepare an appropriate, responsive design for the development of a street or infill development.

Whilst the Streets & Buildings Design Tier is the 'lowest level' does not diminish its importance. A particular site may be strategically located, emphasising its public prominence and importance. This Tier is particularly significant as it considers the detailed design proposals that strongly influence the quality of the end result.

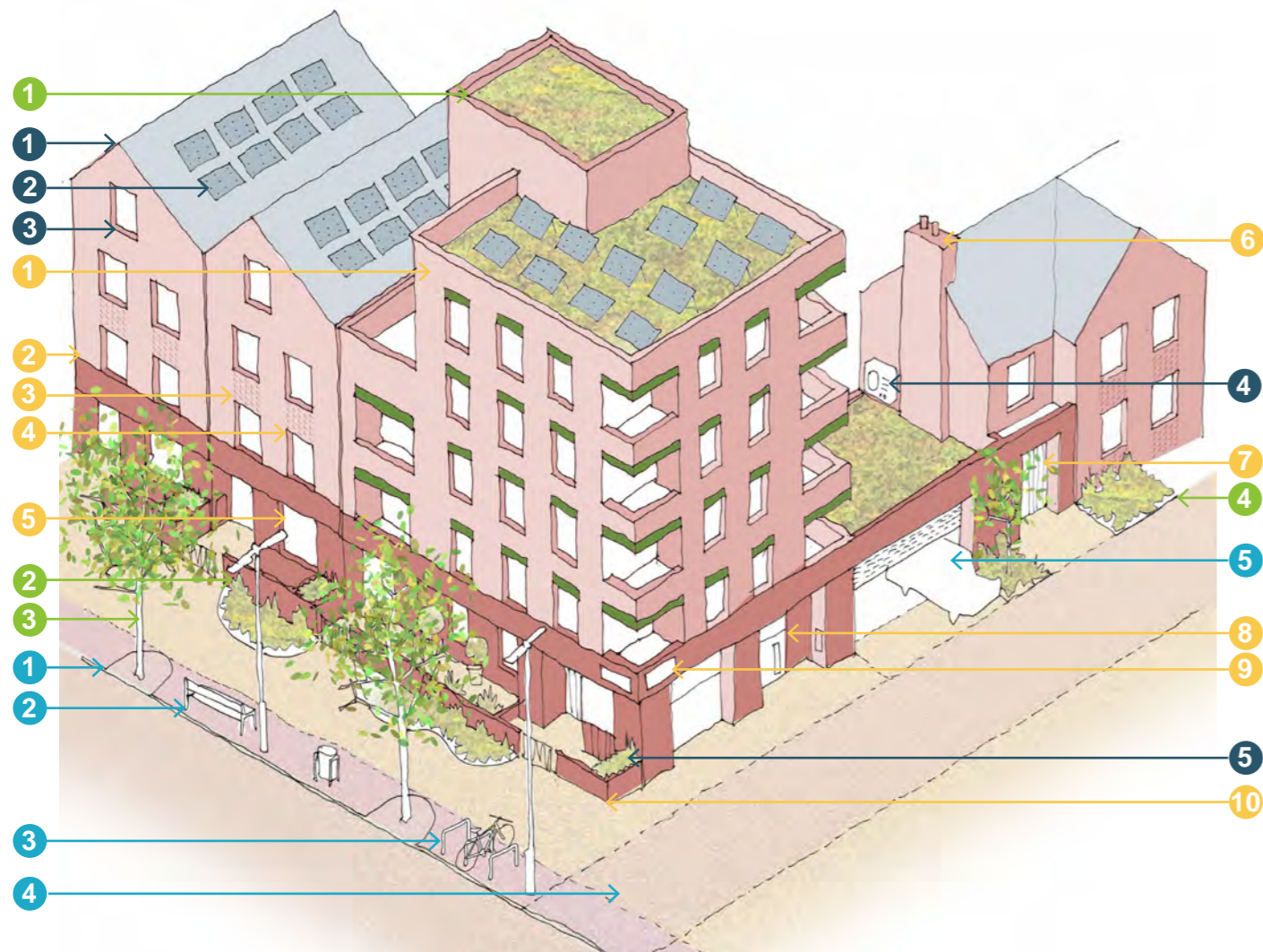


Figure 79
Diagram illustrating examples of how the design themes and variables apply to the Streets & Buildings Design Tier of a residential development.

Key

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Landmark building at street corners | 1 High-quality surfaces | 1 Fabric-first design |
| 2 Changes of material | 2 Distinctive street furniture | 2 Glazing ratios |
| 3 Carefully composed elevations | 3 Cycle parking | 3 Renewables |
| 4 Recessed Windows | 4 Minimising visual impact of highway | 4 Air-Source Heat Pump |
| 5 Avoiding full-height windows at street level | 5 Minimising visual impact of parking | 5 Integrated bin stores. |
| 6 Chimney feature | 1 Green roofs | |
| 7 Front doors to street | 2 Rain gardens | |
| 8 Prominent entrances | 3 Street trees | |
| 9 Signage kept to a minimum | 4 Soft-landscaped defensible zone | |
| 10 High-quality boundaries | | |



Links

Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard

Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M

5.1.1 Housing Standards

The **Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)** provide guidance on gross internal floor areas for dwellings.

The Council will use the NDSS to assess the internal space of proposed new homes.

Applicants must provide a **schedule** setting out internal floor areas for each dwelling type.

For **accessible and adaptable dwellings**, refer to the Building Regulations Approved Document M ‘Access to and use of buildings’.

Local Plan Policy LPC01: Housing Mix requires all proposals for new housing on greenfield sites, delivering 25 or more homes to provide at least 20% of those new dwellings to be design to the “accessible and adaptable” standard as set out in Part M4(2), and at least 5% of those new dwellings to be designed to the “wheelchair user adaptable” standards as set out in Part M4(3)(2) (a) .

a. The **size of living areas** must relate to the number of bedspaces within a home. For example, the kitchen and dining table in a three-bed dwelling should be larger than in a two-bed dwelling.

b. Internal layouts indicating **furniture positions** must be provided as part of a planning application. These plans should demonstrate that there is adequate space for residents to socialise.

c. Dwellings with three or more bedrooms should have **two separate living rooms** (such as a living room and a kitchen/dining room) to make the home easier to live in and able to accommodate a greater number of residents.

d. Applicants should provide a minimum of 2.5m between the finished floor level and the **finished ceiling level**.

e. Minimum requirements for **internal storage** are set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards. These requirements should be met. External storage for gardening equipment, cycles, and waste and recycling bins, should also be provided.

f. New developments should avoid **single-aspect homes** that are north-facing, exposed to sources of noise, or contain three or more bedrooms. If single-aspect units are proposed, the applicant will need to show how good levels of ventilation, natural light and privacy will be provided in each habitable room.

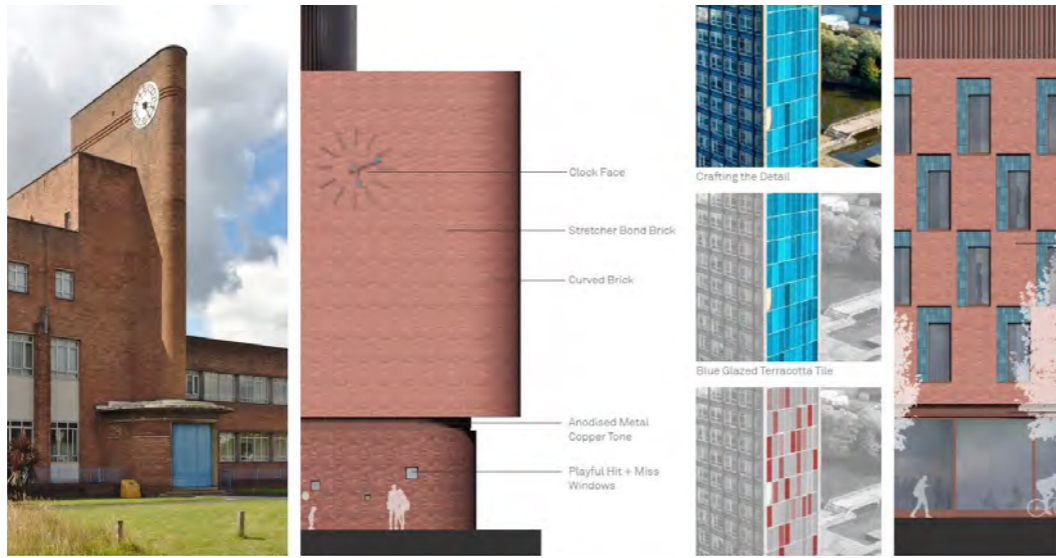


Figure 80

80. Elevation studies demonstrating how local landmarks have inspired distinctive architectural character in the town centre regeneration.

81. A disused church in Newton-le-Willows that was converted into an apartment building. The extension is clad in a sandstone that references the historic building.



Figure 81

82. An apartment building in the Rainhill Conservation Area. The projecting bays break up an otherwise imposing mass.



Figure 82

The Streets & Buildings Design Tier involves the resolution of **detailed design matters** for a **street within a new development** or **development within an existing street**.

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of identity at the Streets & Buildings Design Tier.

5.2.1 Context

a. As with the Strategic and Neighbourhood Design Tiers, the **townscape character** should be identified. A design theme should be developed to describe what makes the proposed design **distinctive**. **Characterisation** of a proposed or existing street should include an analysis of:

- typography;
- plot configuration;
- street pattern;
- historic development;
- enclosure;
- building line;
- form and height;
- articulation and modulation;
- proportion;
- views and vistas;
- roof profiles;
- landscape;
- materials.

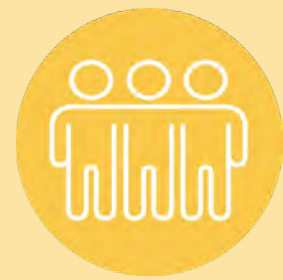
b. In countryside around St Helens, **vernacular buildings** can be referenced to produce sympathetic and contextual development. Important design elements include plot subdivision, boundaries, landscape character, form, scale, height, proportion and materials.

c. Within **Conservation Areas** or adjacent to **Listed Buildings** the design of buildings will need to be particularly sensitive to the site. Analyse the distinctive character and propose an appropriate form of development that responds to it. Consider:

- In a street with a consistent character, establish whether the new development will replicate, or contrast with, neighbouring buildings;
- Where a contrasting approach is considered appropriate, what is the appropriate increment of variety and which design elements are relevant?

d. **Extensions to historic buildings** should be subservient in order that the significance of the main building is not compromised.

e. **Reuse of historic buildings** should aim to retain as much of the internal character and structure as possible. Historic Buildings include those which are nationally listed and also those that are considered to be of local significance.



Defintiions

Increments of Variety

An approach based on replication, reinterpretation or contrasting of design elements. How the character of a locality will influence the design of a particular site and what factors of the context should influence the design approach.

Links

St. Helens has adopted a number of **Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans**, which identify the key characteristics of the place.

They include advisory policies and guidelines as regards the form of development that would be appropriate to an area and its setting.

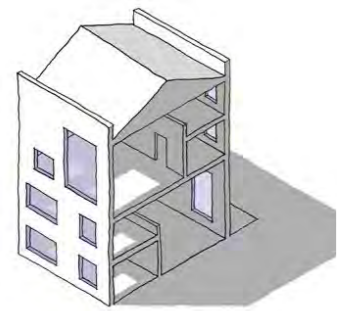


Figure 83

83. Facades can be formal or informal compositions.

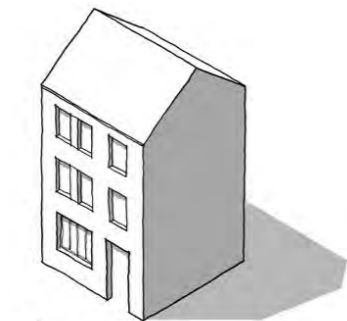


Figure 84

84. Aim for a wall to window ratio of 15-35%. Avoid overheating.

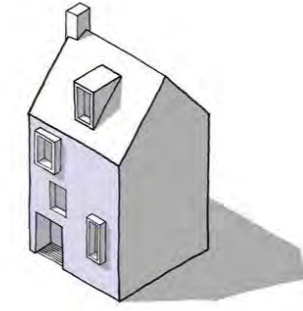
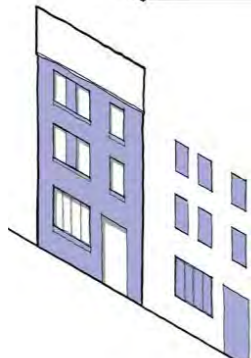


Figure 85

85. Façades benefit from depth and articulation.



86. Materials and detail: a degree of complexity will ensure that buildings are attractive from a distance and close-up.

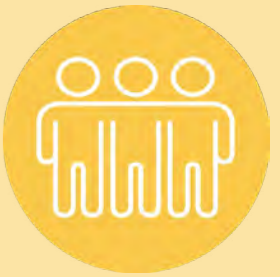
87. The bay window creates a dual-fronted corner building. Planting softens the boundary wall.



Figure 87

5.2.2 Character

- a. **Large bulky buildings** should be avoided, and their forms broken down into constituent parts.
- b. At **street corners** there is a need for special design consideration. Standard off-the-shelf layouts are insufficient. Corner sites are visually prominent; they have dual frontages, where both will need to be addressed with equal importance. Their landmark potential should be recognised and exploited for the benefit of the local area.
- c. **Building materials** must be selected for their;
 - appropriateness to local character,
 - environmental qualities,
 - aesthetic value.
- d. **Changes of material** can help to articulate a building's form and elevation, and respond to its context. Changes of materials in elevations should relate to the building's form and the various functions of the building. A balance should be sought between variety in colour and texture and simplicity in terms of the number of different materials used in a single scheme.
- e. The use of **large panels** at street level should be avoided.
- f. Identify **landmark buildings** within the development, or principle elevations of a single building, for which materials and architectural detail will be embellished. On elevations only visible from private vantage points, the architectural detail can be pared back, but the materials must still be of high quality.
- g. Every element of the **street scene** contributes to the identity of a place, including lighting, railings, paving and street furniture. They should be approached in a comprehensive manner from the start of the design process.
- h. **Elevations** must be carefully composed and well proportioned.
- i. **Storey heights and bay widths** should have a legible relationship with their immediate context and incorporate the appropriate visual emphasis and proportion.
- j. **Elevational hierarchy.** Building Facades should be designed to respond to their position, outlook and the activities taking place within the building. The size and detail of windows should respond to their aspect e.g. larger south facing windows with projecting louvres / external blinds to prevent overheating, and context.



Definitions

Elevational Hierarchy

The way in which a building façade is ordered, traditionally with diminishing floor heights from ground floor level. In contemporary design this term usually relates to the visual organisation of its elevations to express its internal plan.

Links

Refer to **Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Character Areas** to inform design within key areas of the Borough.



Figure 88



Figure 89



Figure 90

88. A long elevation is articulated as a row of well-composed bays, referencing nearby terraced houses.

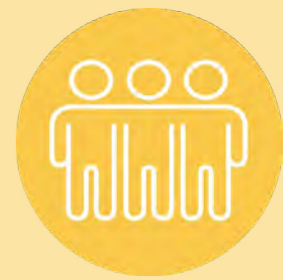
89. Varied brick bonds help to structure and enliven an elevation.

90. The entrance to Foundry Wharf is legible and welcoming.

- k. **Windows** should generally be **recessed** to provide depth and interest and to minimise thermal bridging.
- l. For dwellings, **full-height windows at ground level** should be avoided on street facing elevations as they do not provide adequate privacy.
- m. All habitable rooms should have a **pleasant outlook**, with views to nature where possible.
- n. In the countryside around St Helens, **decoration and fenestration** should be simple in character; avoiding domestic / suburban detailing.
- o. **Chimneys** are no longer an integral feature in residential architecture but can help to create varied roofscapes and provide a visual connection with the traditional character of an area. Chimneys can be used to conceal flues, vents and other extraction equipment. They should be integrated into the gable rather than pre-fabricated and positioned in the middle of the ridge line.
- p. Architectural elements associated with **building services** (meter boxes, lighting, flues, ventilation ducts, gutters and pipes) should be constructed from high-quality materials that are in-keeping with the character of the development. They should be indicated on elevations.

5.2.3 Legibility

- a. **Entrances** must be prominently located, visible from the street, and designed with high-quality materials. They should be set back within the elevation, or have a porch or canopy, to provide shelter from the elements and a transition from pavement to building interior. Front doors should have a vision panel.
- b. **Street-facing ground floor apartments** should have **front doors** with direct access from the street and a **landscaped buffer** between windows and the footway, to provide some privacy. **Duplex apartments**, with living spaces at ground level and bedrooms at first floor should be provided, where possible.
- c. Apartment buildings should be designed to **minimise internal circulation**. The number of apartments accessed by a **shared core** should not exceed **eight dwellings per floor per core**, to provide a sense of ownership, privacy and security.
- d. **Circulation space** should be well lit, with natural light where possible.
- e. **Street signage** should be kept to a minimum. Wayfinding signage should be coordinated across the development to contribute to a sense of place.



Definitions

Articulation and Modulation

The way in which the building, usually its elevations and roof is steeped, recessed or projected.

Fenestration

The openings in a building's facade. The arrangement of windows, doors and openings in a building including its constituent parts e.g. framing.



Figure 91



Figure 92

91. Well-composed elevations with variety in the window types and architectural detail.

92. Hedges soften the boundaries and help to green the street.

93. Brick boundaries contain bin storage and air source heat pumps.



Figure 93

5.2.4 Boundaries

- a. **Boundary treatments** must respect and respond to the character of the surrounding area in terms of their height, type and materials used.
- b. Where the boundary of a dwelling is **adjacent to a highway or public space**, hard boundary treatments should not normally exceed 1m in height and should be of high quality.
- c. **Avoid large areas of high blank walls**. Where they face onto the public realm, they reduce surveillance both into sites (e.g. industrial areas) and onto the street (e.g. in neighbourhoods). In cases where this is unavoidable (for example where the house and side elevations face onto the street) the wall should be attractively detailed, and recessed from the plot edge to accommodate a landscape strip that will soften the appearance of the wall.
- d. **Visibility** between the front of a building and the street should be achieved. Tall walls which obscure this relationship are generally not acceptable. The use of **railings** for front gardens and non-residential sites improves surveillance and community safety. This is especially useful where high boundaries are needed to prevent access.
- e. **High close boarded fences** should not be used in locations that project into or enclose the street scene. Spaces that require enclosure and meet the street scene should be demarcated by masonry walling, as appropriate.
- f. **Hedges as boundaries** should be prioritised, where security is not an issue. Hedges add softness to the public realm and support wildlife.
- g. In the countryside around St Helens, boundaries should use **natural or traditional materials** and **follow the contours** of the land. Avoid approaches used in suburban areas.



Links

National Design Guide : Homes & Buildings Part 2, Paras.120 - 134. DLHC 2019

National Model Design Code Part 2. Paras. 160 - 169. DLHC. October 2021

Building for a Healthy Life : Well defined Streets & Spaces P50. Homes England.



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96

94. Mature trees bed the development into its setting.

95. Colourful and varied planting creates a joyful moment at a bus stop.

96. A habitat wall constructed from reclaimed materials.

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of Nature at the Streets & Buildings Design Tier.

5.3.1 Landscape

a. The design of all outdoor spaces must take into account the following:

- **Orientation** to achieve maximum sunlight;
- **Planting location and type** for durability, ease of maintenance, and aesthetic quality;
- **Amenity** of nearby dwellings, e.g. privacy, noise;
- **Biodiversity**;
- Measures to control **access** where appropriate;
- **Safety**, e.g. natural surveillance, lighting and any hazardous features;
- Potential for **SuDS**.

b. **Hard and soft landscape design** should contribute to the creation of a distinctive sense of place. It should be:

- **integral** to the whole scheme design;
- **appropriate to its context**, the site and use of space;
- **appropriate to the scale** of the development and the specific location;
- **practical**, long lasting, resilient to wear and vandalism and cost-effective to maintain;
- vegetation should **enhance wildlife value**.

c. Include appropriate species of landscape planting e.g. trees, hedgerow and shrubbery that is appropriate to the scale of the street, the specific purpose of the feature(s):

- to **subdivide** space;
- for the purposes of **screening**;
- **softening** the built environment;
- acting as a **focal point**;
- adding **colour** or **texture**;
- for **maintenance** and durability;
- appropriate **scale** and **root spread**.

d. The public realm should be designed to **evolve over time**. Materials will be subject to wear and tear through their everyday use, plants establish and grow, and wildlife will colonise the site. The design should be **robust** to minimise future management and proposals will be required to demonstrate how the different elements will be maintained and allowed to develop.

e. **Hard landscaping materials** should complement proposed buildings and context, be limited in range, and appropriate in scale. Variations can be used to define differences in public and private areas. Surfaces should be porous as part of the design for sustainable drainage systems.



Links

Further information with regard to landscaping, boundary treatments and trees can be found in the **Nature Conservation SPD**, Trees and Development SPD and the **Design and Crime SPD**

Trees, Planning and Development: A Guide for Delivery
Trees and Design Action Group. 2023



Figure 97



Figure 98

- 97. Rain gardens in Sheffield's Grey-to-Green project.
- 98. Blue and green infrastructure should be designed as visual amenity for residents.
- 99. SuDS are designed to create green links between public open space.




Figure 99

- f. **Landscape Character Assessments and Residential Character Areas** should be used to determine the **species and type of landscaping** most appropriate for the site, to remain in keeping with the surrounding landscape character of the area. Native species of local provenance should be used in the design where feasible. These can also have a positive impact on local biodiversity of the site.
- g. **Site furniture** (lighting, signs, litter bins, railings) should reinforce the character of the site with a **co-ordinated aesthetic**. **Public art** will be encouraged, especially where it is designed in participation with communities, or performs functions such as providing seating/focal point for activity.
- h. SuDS should be treated as a design opportunity, integrated into the wider landscape design.
- i. A detailed **management plan and maintenance programme** for the communal areas / public realm should be submitted as part of all detailed planning applications and detail management responsibilities will be secured by either a S106 agreement or condition.

5.3.2 Biodiversity

- a. Specifying **native species** maximises the biodiversity value of any landscaping provided, though generally the principle of **'right tree right place'** should be adhered to.
- b. New buildings & landscape design should integrate:
 - bat boxes;
 - bat bricks;
 - bat houses;
 - hybernaculars;
 - bird boxes;
 - swift boxes / bricks.
- c. Leaving **gaps under and within fences** is important to allow movement of wildlife between sites.



Healthy St Helens

In moderating the climate and environment of urban areas, street trees are associated with a number of health benefits including:

- reducing air pollution;
- providing an environment conducive to physical activities;
- reducing stress and improving mental health;
- reducing noise levels;
- cooling air in summer by giving shade.

Source: forestresearch.gov.uk



Definitions

Hybernaculars are places in which animals seek refuge during the winter months.

Links

National Design Guide : Nature Part 2, Paras. 90 - 107. DLHC 2019

National Model Design Code : Nature Part 2. Paras. 57 - 89. DLHC 2021



Figure 100



Figure 101

100. Well-overlooked play area in a village green setting.

101. Play integrated into a publicly accessible courtyard.

102. Adventure playground in a retained woodland setting.



Figure 102


5.3.3 Lighting

Lighting is of particular importance in promoting community safety, and ensuring the use of streets and the public realm after dark. It should be designed as an integral part of a scheme. Issues to consider are:

- **focus lighting on pedestrian areas** rather than on highways – the height of columns in such areas should be human in scale;
- specify lighting that **minimises light pollution**;
- **avoid directing lighting into private gardens** or onto windows;
- the design of lighting fixtures should be **appropriate to the local context**. Different solutions will be appropriate for residential areas than in town centres;
- Lighting should be appropriate to the scale and character of the street;
- **low energy** lighting solutions should be used;
- where safety may be an issue, low level lighting may not provide sufficient visibility;
- ensure that **key movement axis and desire lines** across public spaces are well-lit;
- the sensitive **lighting of key buildings, artworks and spaces** helps create a strong sense of place within new development and enhance the public realm.

5.3.4 Play

- a. Careful consideration should be given to the location of **play areas for younger children**. They should:
 - be **away from roads, close enough to housing**, and located where the activities of teenagers can be observed through **passive surveillance**;
 - have more than one **access** point;
 - be **well-lit**;
 - include **landscaping and facilities for both children and adults**.
- b. Play areas can be accommodated in shared surface streets as part of a 'home zone' concept.



Healthy St Helens

Play and physical activity plays a vital role supporting children's well-being and development. Evidence has linked play and physical activity to:

- improved mental health and wellbeing;
- capacity to deal with stress and form healthy attachments;
- better physical health;
- cognitive development;
- Social development.

Source:
childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



Links

Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play
Fields in Trust. 2020.

St Helens Open Space SPD
For further information on the design of open space.



Figure 103



Figure 104

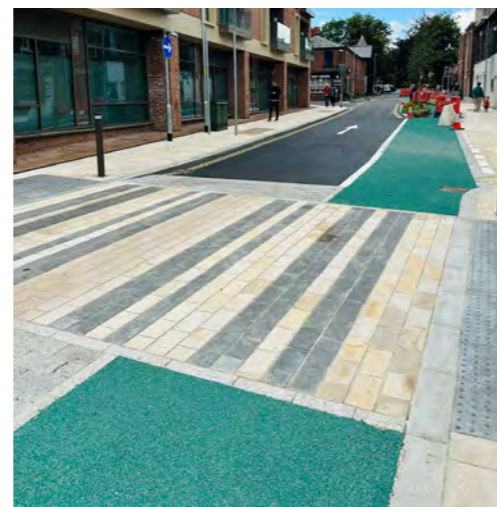


Figure 105

103. The visual impact of the highway is significantly reduced through the omission of pavements and high quality surfacing.

104. Children playing out in a residential street designed with a high place function.

105. Town centre street design prioritises pedestrians and cyclists.

5.4.1 Connectivity & Permeability

The principles of **well-connected streets** to and within a development are fundamental and referenced throughout the Design Tiers.

Detailed design requirements will be set out in the revised St Helens Street Design Guide.

5.4.2 Active Travel

The success of **active travel principles** and implementation will be achieved through successful detailed street design. These factors will be considered in detail at this Tier.

Detailed design requirements will be set out in the revised St Helens Street Design Guide.

5.4.3 Highways

Design of the street must adhere to the agreed **street hierarchy**, with consideration now given to detailed design of the following (not exhaustive) points:

- horizontal and vertical alignments
- gradients
- refuges
- central reservations
- signing and lining
- kerb types
- surfacing types/materials
- traffic calming measures

- visibilities
- street furniture
- maintenance considerations
- road safety audits
- swept path analysis
- integration with landscape within public and private spaces.

Detailed design requirements will be set out in the revised St Helens Street Design Guide.

5.4.4 Car Parking

Car parking principles may have been established at earlier stages in the design process.

a. **Frontage, side or courtyard parking** will be assessed in relation to the **existing or emerging character of the street**.

b. The installation of **electric car charging points** should be provided in individual dwellings and within shared parking areas. At the least, adequate provision must be made to enable the installation of electric car charge points in shared parking areas if and when required.

Detailed design requirements will be set out in the forthcoming, revised St Helens Street Design Guide.



Links

Manual for Streets 2

Guidance to assist those in the planning, construction and improvement of our streets to deliver more contextually sensitive designs.

Appendix 2

contains further information on the residential street hierarchy.

The Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021

St Helens Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy (2023 – 2027)



Figure 106

106.A development in Manchester of 22 gas-free homes for social rent built to the Passive House standard.

107.The design of the windows on this passive house development balance environmental performance with elevational proportion and hierarchy.



Figure 107

The following prompts may be appropriate to demonstrate a full understanding of resources at the Streets & Buildings Design Tier.

5.5.1 Design

- a. Building **materials** must be selected for their **environmental performance**, employing a **fabric-first** approach to new buildings and refurbishments. The design team should consider the **embodied carbon emissions** associated with the materials specified.
- b. **Habitable rooms** should benefit from **natural light**. **Living areas** should benefit from **direct sunlight** at some point during the day.
- c. **Windows** should be carefully positioned and sized to enhance **natural light**, but to limit and manage **solar heat gain**. Where there are concerns relating to the level of natural light applicants will be required to submit a **daylight and sunlight assessment** to justify their proposal.
- d. All residential developments should provide environmentally sustainable housing, The Council will particularly encourage the following:
 - targeting specific **energy efficiency standards**, (e.g. passive house, enerphit);
 - **grouping** buildings to minimise heat loss;
 - designing for future **adaptability**, (e.g. future use of roofspace);
 - achieving energy efficiency through **orientation, insulation** and use of **energy-efficient lighting** (including external) and **heating**;
 - considering the **generation of electricity** in homes or locally;
 - considering the **minimisation of waste** and its re-use and recycling;
 - considering **water saving** devices such as low volume taps, dual flush toilets and water/energy-efficient appliances;
 - consider use of **SuDS** such as grey water systems, green roofs and porous hard landscaping/access ways;
 - consider making best use of good **soil** on gardens and open spaces;
 - the use of **recycled** and **local materials** and those with **low 'embodied energy'**;
 - provision of **public transport** facilities and **cycle storage**.



Definitions

A **fabric-first** approach to building design involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems.

Embodied Carbon means all the CO₂ emitted in producing materials.

Links

What is a Passive House? The Passive House Institute

5.6

Streets & Buildings Checklist

The checklist summarises the **design variables** in the preceding chapter. The applicant should determine which variables apply to a proposed application, undertake the required **analysis** and prepare an appropriate **design response**. Variables suitable for design coding will be determined on a case by case basis, agreed with the local planning authority. More detail is set out in the SPD as to the potential for specific design issues to be the subject of coding.

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site Design Coding	Analysis	Response
5.1	Community			
5.1.1	Nationally Described Space Standards			
5.1.1	Area Schedule			
5.1.1	Accessible / adaptable dwellings			
5.1.1.a	Living room : areas			
5.1.1.b	Furniture positions plan			
5.1.1.c	Separate living rooms			
5.1.1.d	Finished ceiling levels			
5.1.1.e	Internal storage standards			
5.1.1.f	Single-aspect dwellings			
5.2	Identity			
5.2.1.a	Townscape characterisation			
5.2.1.b	Vernacular building study			
5.2.1.c	Conservation areas			
5.2.1.d	Extension to historic building			
5.2.1.e	Reuse of historic building			
5.2.2.a	Large, bulky buildings			
5.2.2.b	Street corners			
5.2.2.c	Building materials			
5.2.2.d	Changes of material			
5.2.2.e	Large panels at street level			
5.2.2.f	Landmark buildings / Principal elevations			
5.2.2.g	Street scene			
5.2.2.h	Elevational composition & proportion			
5.2.2.i	Storey heights & bay widths			
5.2.2.j	Elevational hierarchy			
5.2.2.k	Recessed windows			
5.2.2.l	Full-height windows at ground level			
5.2.2.m	Outlook			
5.2.2.n	Decoration & fenestration			
5.2.2.o	Chimneys			
5.2.2.p	Building services			
5.2.3.a	Entrances			

Paragraph Ref.	Design Variable	Relevant to site Design Coding	Analysis	Response
5.2	Identity (continued)			
5.2.3.b	Street-facing ground floor apartments : front doors			
5.2.3.c	Apartment buildings : Internal circulation			
5.2.3.d	Circulation			
5.2.3.e	Street signage			
5.2.4.a	Boundary treatments : general			
5.2.4.b	Boundaries adjacent to a highway / public space			
5.2.4.c	Avoid large areas of high blank walls			
5.2.4.d	Visibility / railings			
5.2.4.e	High close boarded fences			
5.2.4.f	Hedges as boundaries			
5.2.4.g	Boundaries : countryside around St Helens			
5.3	Nature			
5.3.1	Landscape & Public Ream Strategy			
5.3.1.a	Design of outdoor spaces			
5.3.1.b	Hard & soft landscape design			
5.3.1.c / f	Landscape planting : species			
5.3.1.d	Robustness / evolution over time			
5.3.1.e	Hard landscaping materials			
5.3.1.g	Site furniture			
5.3.1.h	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)			
5.3.1.i	Management plan / maintenance programme			
5.3.2.a	'Right tree, right place'			
5.3.2.b	Wildlife Habitats			
5.3.2.c	Gaps under fences			
5.3.3	Lighting			
5.3.4.a / b	Play			
5.4	Movement			
5.4.1	Connectivity & permeability			
5.4.2	Active travel			
5.4.3	Street hierarchy			
5.4.4.a	Parking			
5.4.4.b	Electric car charging points			
5.5	Resources			
5.5.1.a	Building materials			
5.5.1.b	Natural light			
5.5.1.c	Window sizes			
5.5.1.d	Sustainable housing			

Appendices



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Figure 108

108. Infill development that closely follows the design of the other houses on the street.



Figure 109

109. Backland development that successfully resolves issues of access and overlooking.

110. Infill development in a heritage context, where the decision has been taken to contrast with adjoining historic buildings.



Figure 110

A1.1 Infill

Infill Development usually occurs where there is development on sites located between existing property frontages.

- a. The Council will only grant planning permission for infill developments where there is no adverse impact upon the street scene, the character of the surrounding area and the amenity for existing neighbouring properties.
- b. The detailed design, materials and proportions of the neighbouring properties must be carefully considered when the elevational details of the new buildings are considered.
- c. Plot sizes and frontages should be sympathetic to the character of the area as well as being satisfactorily related to each other and the street scene.
- d. Building alignment, design and massing of the proposed buildings should be determined by the existing neighbouring properties.
- e. The height and scale of the neighbouring properties must be respected, and any transition in levels must be achieved within the development site itself. Only in wider sites will buildings that are substantially higher than neighbouring buildings be considered.
- f. The eaves height will be a critical measure when judging a proposed new development in relation to its neighbours. This should be illustrated by street scene elevations, which should accompany any planning application.
- g. Boundary treatments along the frontage must closely match that prevailing in the street scene, particularly where there are continuous hedges. Open frontages will not be permitted in streets where enclosed front boundaries prevail and vice versa.
- h. Developments shall conform to the Council's current standards for lighting and privacy contained in this document.
- i. Developments shall conform to the Council's current standards for parking provision contained in Supplementary Planning Document - Transport and Travel.

A1.2 Backland

Backland Development concerns sites that are located to the rear of an existing property, usually land that has previously been used as garden.

These sites tend to be land locked and not visible from public vantage points. Not all backland sites are enclosed and occasionally will have a highway frontage.

- a. The proposed development must have regard to the character of the surrounding area in terms of layout, scale and form of housing.
- b. Regard should also be given to the loss of any landscaping and habitats, which make a positive contribution to the character and ecology of the area.
- c. Design should be informed by the immediately surrounding buildings and the scale and massing of new dwellings should reflect and respond to those around them. Consideration should be given to the height of a building as well as its massing.
- d. New buildings should reflect and enhance the local style and identity of the local area. Materials used for roofing and walls should match or respond to adjacent dwellings, as should materials and colours for doors and window frames.

- e. Sufficient garden depth and area should be retained by existing dwellings commensurate with their size.
- f. Developments shall conform to the Councils current standards for lighting and privacy contained in section 4.2.5 of this document.
- g. Consideration must be given to screening the boundaries of a new development for privacy reasons and to reduce noise and disturbance. Brick walls have better noise attenuation qualities than fences or hedges.
- h. Each backland plot should have its own access for motor vehicles. The size of the proposed development will determine the access arrangements, which will have to be provided. In some circumstances this may be in the form of a private drive, which will depend upon the number of new properties. Where appropriate, turning heads to enable the manoeuvring of vehicles on the site will be necessary.
- i. Whilst an access may be acceptable on the grounds of flow, safety and other traffic criteria it may be refused on grounds of adverse impact on the neighbouring property, e.g. too close, too noisy through serving a number of houses.

A1.3 Tandem

Tandem Development refers to sites directly behind an existing building and again is usually land that has been previously been used as gardens, or is partially enclosed by gardens.

Tandem development results in one or more dwellings being served by a single driveway.

Such proposals frequently cause problems such as overlooking, overshadowing of neighbouring gardens, noise (including from car movements), loss of amenity and adverse impact on local character.

This type of development will essentially result in a dwelling within the rear garden of an existing dwelling and a site which is cramped and overdeveloped. The development will also result in a poor outlook for the occupants of the new dwelling.

The Council will normally resist such proposals except in exceptional circumstances, where all issues relating to backland development are considered and satisfactorily addressed.

- j. Developments should ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian access to the site, which should make adequate provision for normal servicing requirements, such as refuse collections, deliveries, etc.

To prevent disturbance to properties at the front of backland sites, we recommend the following minimum distances between access roads and the existing properties.

Access road next to	Site with 5 homes or less	Site with 6 or more homes
A habitable room window (eg bedroom)	4 metres	6 metres
A non-habitable room window (eg bathroom)	3 metres	4 metres



Figure 111

A1.4 Conversion of existing buildings into apartments

Conversion of existing buildings into apartments can contribute to the improvement and maintenance of larger dwellings in the older housing stock. They can also raise privacy issues, parking problems, character of an area and can have an adverse effect on residential amenity and character of an area.

- a. Developments should not have a detrimental impact upon the character of an area; any conversions involving external alterations should respect the form, scale and materials of the original dwelling and the visual character of the area in which it is located.

- b. In the case of statutory and locally listed buildings, extra care must be taken to ensure any addition or alterations are in keeping with the its special character. Some listed and locally important buildings may be suitable for conversion, however in some cases internal alteration will adversely affect its special historic and architectural interest, in these cases conversions will not be permitted.
- c. Development for the conversion of properties within designated Conversation Areas should preserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset.

- d. Where appropriate the provision of adequate noise attenuation measures to reduce the transmission of sound between floors, ceilings and adjoining rooms and dwellings should be included in the design of conversion schemes.
- e. Developments will be expected to provide amenity space for occupants. The Council will require applicants to illustrate landscaping proposals, including future management regimes, which should reflect and enhance the general landscape character of the property and locality.
- f. Any proposals to convert existing buildings should be accompanied by a management plan which details how the property will be maintained (which should include amenity spaces, landscaping, external appearance of the building, etc.) to ensure that the conversion does not result in any detrimental impact upon the character of the area.
- g. Developments shall conform to the Council's current standards for parking provision contained in Supplementary Planning Document, Transport and Travel. However, any conversion should ensure that parking does not dominate, and no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the front curtilage should be allocated for on site parking.
- h. Landscaping must respect the character of the area and residential amenity for neighbouring residents whilst providing amenity space consistent with requirements for new-build flat developments. Developers are advised to refer to Supplementary Planning Document – Trees and Development 2008, which provides information about the standards and level of information required by the Council in relation to tree protection and landscaping new developments.
- i. The conversion of existing buildings into apartments may have implications for legally protected species such as bats. The Council will exercise their duty to protect such species and where appropriate may require an ecological appraisal to be submitted as part of any planning application. If mitigation measures are required, appropriate conditions will be attached to planning permissions. Failure to provide adequate supporting information or surveys may result in the refusal of a planning application.

111. Reflection Court, the former Pilkington's headquarters, which is Grade II listed and has been converted into apartments.

- Identity**
- 1 Feature Window
- 2 Gables
- 3 Boundaries
- Nature**
- 1 Retained Trees
- 2 Street Trees
- 3 Front Gardens
- Movement**
- 1 Carriageway
- 2 Street Parking
- 3 Parking



Figure 112

A2.0 Introduction

Residential development across the Borough will take a variety of forms ranging from the release of large greenfield sites to infill developments in an existing street.

The principles of achieving high quality design in the development of residential schemes, and a structured process for achieving this, is set out within the design Tiers and Themes of the SPD.

The layout of sites for residential development, as advocated in advisory publications including Manual for Streets and Building / Streets for a Healthy Life, should establish or reinforce a **street hierarchy**.

This principle applies to the development or adaptation of existing streets as well as new development.

A sustainable high-quality **street network** is a fundamental objective of the urban design agenda, aiming to provide **well-connected, visually attractive, socially successful** neighbourhoods that encourage **active travel**.

New development should create **liveable streets** with a sense of place, maximising **social interaction** for all sections of the community, as apposed to highways dedicated solely to the movement of vehicles.

The **character** of streets and their success as places are derived from their physical **layout** and visual character, which combine to create specific **identity** and **distinctiveness**.

In addition to providing **access, parking** and providing space for **utilities**, the street environment will be created through consideration of built **enclosure, orientation, form, space, frontages, building alignment, elevational proportion, materials, ecology, landscaping** and **trees**.

The principles of street hierarchy relate to the balance between **movement** and **place**. The greater the vehicular activity the higher the movement function and the least expected vehicular activity the higher the place function.

This Appendix identifies four **street types** with distinct physical characteristics; the width and alignment of the carriageway, the enclosure of the street, parking and access arrangements, the scale and arrangement of the dwelling frontage and landscaping.

Whilst the street types are based around the principles of a hierarchy, this should not imply that Types 1 & 2 should be highway dominated. All streets should seek to achieve specific **social objectives; slow movement of vehicles, active travel** and the creation of a **characterful distinctive street environment**.

The illustrations and examples that follow, set out some principles that apply to the four identified types. These focus on the relationship between **built form (identity)**, the **street (movement)** and **landscaping (nature)**.

The Council is preparing a revised **Street Design Guide** which will be complimentary to the Design SPD. In the meantime, an **interim street hierarchy** is in use which specifies some key design performance specifications including geometric criteria for carriageways and junction arrangements. The Council also specifies **adoption standards** in its current guidance.

The revised Street Design Guide will encompass broader issues of street design, including the integration of **active travel** objectives and the creation of physically and socially **distinctive places**, relating highway requirements to built form.

Designing visually attractive and distinctive places will require a thorough understanding of the **local context**. A **Baseline Study** should inform a **design response** that promotes high quality distinctive street design.

This Appendix highlights a number of **townscape principles** as prompts for thinking, relating to the four Tiers.

Links

Manual for Streets 2

Guidance to assist those in the planning, construction and improvement of our streets to deliver more contextually sensitive designs

Building for a Healthy Life : Well defined Streets & Spaces P50.

Homes England.

Streets for a Healthy Life

Homes England.

Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)

Guidance for local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure

St Helens Transport and Travel SPD

For further information on access to public transport.

112. An analysis of how Identity, Nature and Movement features combine to create a distinctive street environment in Warburton Hey, Rainhill.

A2.1 Main Streets

Main streets have a significant element of movement as an essential aspect of their function, reflected in their width and the space dedicated to movement activity.

This necessary function should not be to the exclusion of seeking to maximise the 'place function' by encouraging active travel and creating an environment which offers social and community value.

Urban Main Streets will be in existing urban areas, including the redevelopment of larger sites or the reconfiguration of existing streets. 'Active frontage' at ground floor level can support the place function and also relate to the use of upper floor residential or mixed uses, maximising to an appropriate level, urban density levels.

The Suburban / Rural Main Street will be most associated with the development of large green field – or brown field – sites, which are comprehensively developed.

The Type 1 Street should be considered to have a connector function linking distributor roads with the lower tiers of residential street hierarchy.

A2.2 Secondary Streets

Secondary streets should be visually different from Main Streets. This difference in character is achieved by the geometric criteria that is applied to their design. This will include, for example, a narrower carriageway and tighter junction radii. Segregated footways can be provided, which in turn, will usually contain intervening landscape space and trees to form 'avenues'.

In the case of an urban site, the sense of enclosure will be increased with taller, closely spaced buildings whereas in a suburban / rural context, two or three storey buildings with a setback will produce a more spacious character. This will depend on the defined character proposed including the specified house types. On-street parking can be provided in embayments and side parking, to limit the visual intrusion of parked vehicles and in turn increase frontage (in curtilage) landscaping.

Street Type 2 will normally connect to Type 1 Streets although, in some cases, this street type may connect directly to distributor roads.

The place function should be maximised, whilst accepting the movement function is important. The use of crossing points, landscaping, and high-quality materials are an important aspect of creating a sense of place.

A2.3 Tertiary Streets

Tertiary streets should prioritise the 'place' function over movement of vehicles. They provide access for up to 50 dwellings with a two way access (at either end) or 25 in the case of a short cul-de-sac.

The low number of predicted vehicular movement provides the opportunity to introduce a shared surface or footway provision on one side of the carriageway.

The objective is to create an active street environment that promotes pedestrian safety and prominence.

The potential informality of the street alignment offers the opportunity to create interesting frontage and building relationships.

The street system, as regards 'movement', is similar in concept between an urban design character or suburban design character with the differences relating to the nature of the site and surroundings and the type of development proposed including density.

A2.4 Courtyards & Lanes

Courtyards & Lanes are the 'lowest level' of the street hierarchy that would be adopted by the local authority. Private Drives with 5 or less dwellings are not included within the adoptable street hierarchy.

Courtyards & Lanes typically serve between 6 and 25 dwellings and, with a design speed of 10 mph with an almost exclusive 'place' function.

Typically, the carriageway will have a maximum width of 4.8 metres overall, with no footways, to include a service strip of 0.5 to 0.6 metres.

The type can include relatively short streets in urban locations or courtyards or mews' in urban, suburban or rural locations.

A2.1a Main Streets in an Urban Context

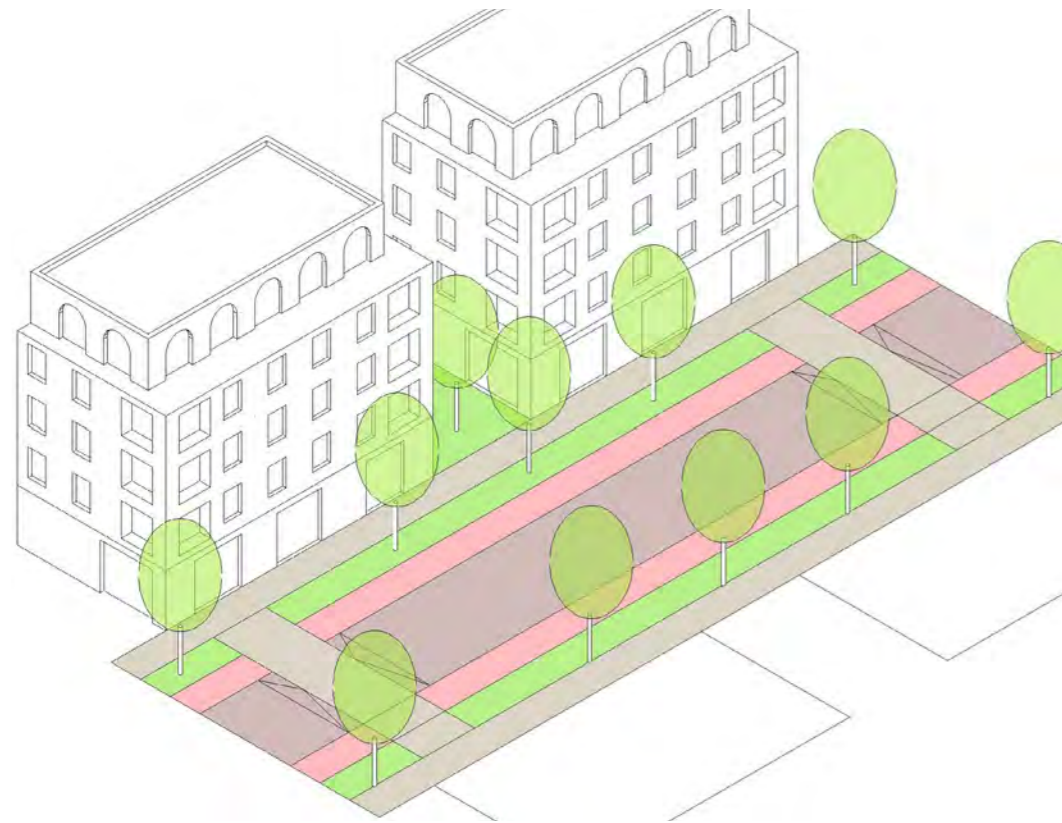
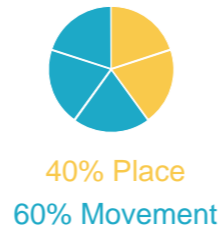


Figure 113
Key
 ● Footway
 ● Landscape Median
 ● Cycleway
 ● Carriageway



Identity

- Urban character expressed through level of enclosure; taller buildings, closely spaced, set close to the street edge.
- Perimeter block system.
- Active frontage.
- High-quality, distinctive frontage.
- Tree planting arranged as an avenue or within groups along with other landscaping.
- Destinations (nodes) and the connections (streets) carefully considered to provide a legible built environment.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- A multi-modal street environment – walk/cycle/wheel (active travel) with a wider carriageway between 6.1m to 7.3m with a 20mph maximum target speed.
- Active travel provision to establish connections with external linkages.
- The potential for the inclusion of public transport.
- A clear distinction between vehicular, cycle, wheel space and the pedestrian environment.
- Crossing points appropriately spaced to enhance pedestrian movement.
- Some on street parking possible but with rear courtyards preferred.

Nature

- Wide landscaped medians on both sides of the street to include closely spaced trees of a scale appropriate to the subdivision of the street and also include SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment e.g. modulated mounding where appropriate.
- The potential for biodiverse/ecological spaces as part of the broader landscape structure for the site, providing nature corridors.

Examples



Figure 114 South Gardens, Southwark

This street includes a relatively wide carriageway with a significant movement function. The street enclosure is an essential element creating an urban character - three storey height and consistent building frontage – with a narrow semi public/private threshold between the frontage and the street space. This combination creates a well-designed edge to the street and the bay windows at ground floor level modulate the long linear character of the street.

The well-proportioned trees provide the street with a ‘secondary’ visual subdivision creating the particular street character and its level of enclosure. The verges provide for an attractive segregated footway and landscaped intervening space. Some on-street parking is provided but overall, it is subsidiary to the broad character of the street.



Figure 115 Abode, Cambridge

This street scene presents a carefully considered urban environment with a high level of enclosure and place character.

The inclusion of well-designed landscaping features soften the robust and contemporary architectural language of the buildings. These include street trees, landscaped verges and a segregated cycle way from the main carriageway.

The street also includes a central verge, also with trees, which further subdivides the space and contributes to the place function.

Car parking is accessed from rear courtyards.

Materials



Carriageway



Kerbs & Edging



Footway



Driveway

A2.1b Main Streets in a Suburban / Rural Context

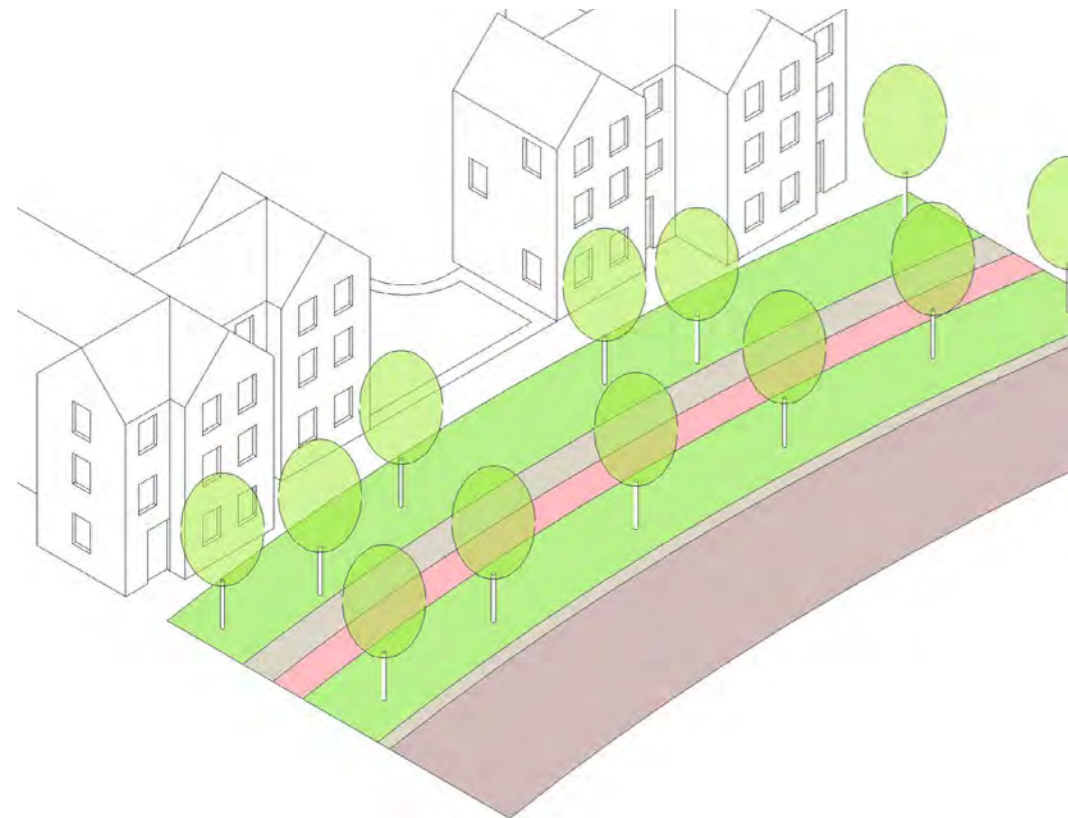
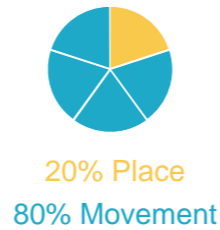


Figure 116
Key
 ● Footway
 ● Landscape Median
 ● Cycleway
 ● Carriageway



Identity

- Less intense urban character expressed through level of enclosure; 2-3 storey buildings with intervening spaces, set back from the street edge.
- Perimeter block system with curved alignment.
- High-quality, distinctive frontage. Buildings arranged into attractive groupings
- Tree planting arranged as an avenue or within groups along with other landscaping.
- Destinations (nodes) and the connections (streets) carefully considered to provide a legible built environment.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- A multi-modal street environment – walk/cycle/wheel (active travel) with a wider carriageway between 6.1m to 7.3m with a 20mph maximum target speed.
- Active travel provision to establish connections with external linkages.
- The potential for the inclusion of public transport.
- A clear distinction between vehicular, cycle, wheel space and the pedestrian environment.
- Crossing points appropriately spaced to enhance pedestrian movement.
- Some on street parking possible but with rear courtyards preferred.

Nature

- Wide landscaped medians on both sides of the street to include closely spaced trees of a scale appropriate to the subdivision of the street and, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment e.g. modulated mounding where appropriate.
- The potential for biodiverse/ecological spaces as part of the broader landscape structure for the site, providing nature corridors.

Examples



Figure 117 Poundbury, Dorset

This scheme is an urban extension based upon a residential street hierarchy.

This image illustrates how the building frontage relates to a local distributor road with the carriageway segregated from the footway and passing through a wide landscaped space. This combined effect presents the development within a landscape setting.

The Main Street turns at 90 degrees from the distributor, thereby slowing traffic speeds and creating the perception of entering a residential environment.

The landscape and building edge creates a combined distinctive character for the development, with forward facing development incorporating dually designed front elevations to both frontages.



Figure 118 Lawley, Telford

This Main Street incorporates a curving alignment, wider carriageway and segregated footway with verges in between. The street is designed to accommodate a bus route. Cycle provision is accommodated within the carriageway space. Taller sections of the frontage overlook the park on the right hand side of the street. The trees will mature to further subdivide the space. Car parking is generally located to the side of the dwellings (on plot parking), which also reduces the visual impact of vehicles.

The urban design/architectural character is clearly defined based around the creation of a coherent character of unity through choice of materials and building modelling/ articulation and boundary treatments.

Spatial definition between public and private space is well defined and the street is overlooked, thereby enhancing the perception of personal security.

Materials



Carriageway



Kerbs & Edging



Footway



Driveway

A2.2a Secondary Streets in an Urban Context

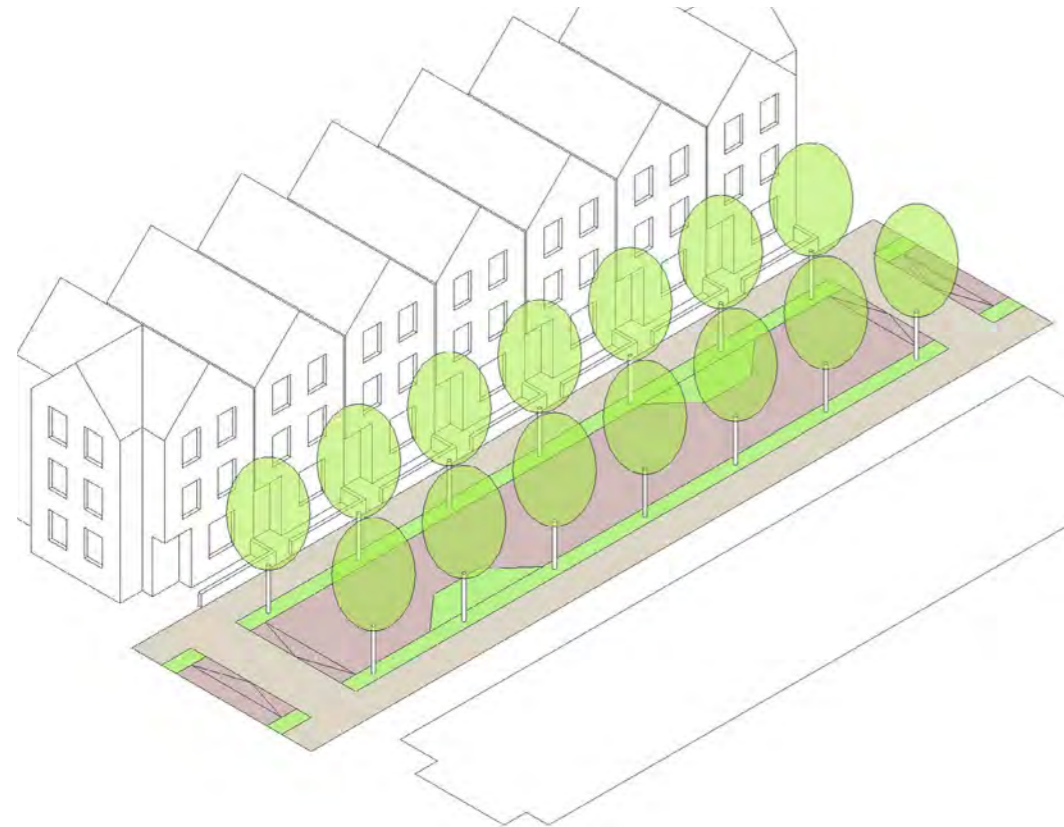
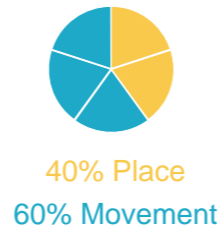


Figure 119
Key
● Footway
● Landscape Median
● Carriageway



Identity

- Urban character expressed through level of enclosure; taller buildings, closely spaced, set close to the street edge.
- Corners should be dual fronted with exposed rear gardens omitted.
- Buildings grouped into coherent lengths with feature buildings included.
- 2 metre minimum private/defensible zone – demarcated with a low wall or hedge.
- Create visual interest to the street character by way of building alignment, nodal spaces and views/vistas.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- Carriageway will have reduced dimensions including street width relative to Main Streets.
- Footways on both sides of the street.
- Active Travel principles integral to street design.
- Parking in courtyards or podiums. Some on-street parking can be used to accommodate visitor parking.
- Material palette to enhance character & 'place' function.
- Embayments may be appropriate.

Nature

- Landscaped medians on both sides of the street, to include closely spaced trees of an appropriate scale and also include, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment e.g. modulated mounding where appropriate.
- Build-outs may define car parking embayments.
- The potential for biodiverse/ecological spaces as part of the broader landscape structure for the site, providing nature corridors.
- Frontage space can contain planting including hedgerow to subdivide space and 'soften' the built frontage.

Examples



Figure 120 Castleward, Derby

The nature of this street frontage, three storey buildings with narrow spaces between, present a dominant sense of enclosure.

Notwithstanding this character, the pedestrian spaces are an important element with wide footways and crossing points laid in contrasting materials with a fine grain, presenting a balance between movement and place function.

The street trees subdivide the space of the street and soften the urban frontage. The threshold in front of the buildings integrates the private and public realm, providing defensible space.

The ground floor windows provide for high level of natural surveillance, which are closely spaced.



Figure 121 Poundbury, Dorset

This example contrasts with the example from Derby and is part of a purpose built urban extension.

Nonetheless it has a traditional urban character as might be expected in a traditional village, whereby the built frontage was maximised.

The character is derived by the fine grain for the frontage plots, vertical proportion and varied roofline. The ratio of street width to building height provides the level of enclosure modified by the flowing building alignment of the frontage and terminating focal point building.

The dominance of the carriageway is reduced significantly through the use of wide footways and variety of materials. Embayments are included are to accommodate casual parking with parking courts included as part of the design concept.

Street trees modify the space and act as points of reference and landscape interest, demarcating the parking bays.

Materials



Carriageway



Kerbs & Edging



Footway

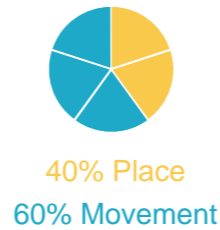


Driveway

A2.2b Secondary Streets in a Suburban / Rural Context



Figure 122
Key
● Footway
● Landscape Median
● Carriageway



Identity

- Lower level of enclosure, greater spacing between buildings, set back to allow for landscaped frontage.
- Corners should be dual fronted with exposed rear gardens omitted.
- Buildings grouped into coherent lengths with feature buildings included.
- 2 metre minimum private/defensible zone – demarcated with a low wall or hedge.
- Create visual interest to the street character by way of building alignment, nodal spaces and views/vistas.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- Carriageway will have reduced dimensions including street width relative to Main Streets.
- Footways on both sides of the street.
- Active Travel principles integral to street design.
- Parking to be accommodated in small overlooked courtyards or in curtilage side parking. Some on-street provision can be used to accommodate visitor parking.
- Material palette to enhance character & 'place' function.
- Embayments may be appropriate.

Nature

- Landscaped medians on both sides of the street, to include closely spaced trees of an appropriate scale and also include, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment e.g. modulated mounding where appropriate.
- Build-outs may define car parking embayments.
- The potential for biodiverse/ecological spaces as part of the broader landscape structure for the site, providing nature corridors.
- Frontage space can contain planting including hedgerow to subdivide space and 'soften' the built frontage.

Examples



Figure 123 Poundbury, Dorset

Whilst considered 'Suburban' the distinction between this type and the Type 2 'Urban' is not always obvious and will depend on the scheme objectives and its location.

In this case, there is a variety of built form to suggest a more organic form of development – although built as one development. However, there is a coherent character to the development with the dwellings set to a modestly aligned frontage with buildings exhibiting a consistent proportional system, roof line and materials. This could be referred to as a more traditional approach, grounded in the local vernacular.

The trees soften the development with landscape included to the immediate building frontage creating a threshold. The footway materials increase the prominence of pedestrian space and in doing so, reduce the dominance of the carriageway.

The image illustrates the unity and coherence of the development.



Figure 124 Trumpington Meadows

This development presents a suburban form of development with two storey buildings set to a prescribed building line frontage.

The scheme includes short frontage gardens with palisade walls providing a defined edge between private and public space.

The long alignment of the street is modified by the inclusion of gables, set perpendicular to the principal roofline, thereby demarcating and defining building groupings.

The trees soften the street scene and modify the street space with low planting and hedgerows included.

The footway is segregated with the overall visual effect of narrowing the carriageway.

An element of embayed parking is included with courtyard parking to the rear of the dwellings, but accessed from the street frontage.

Materials



Carriageway



Kerbs & Edging



Footway



Driveway

A2.3a Tertiary Streets in an Urban Context

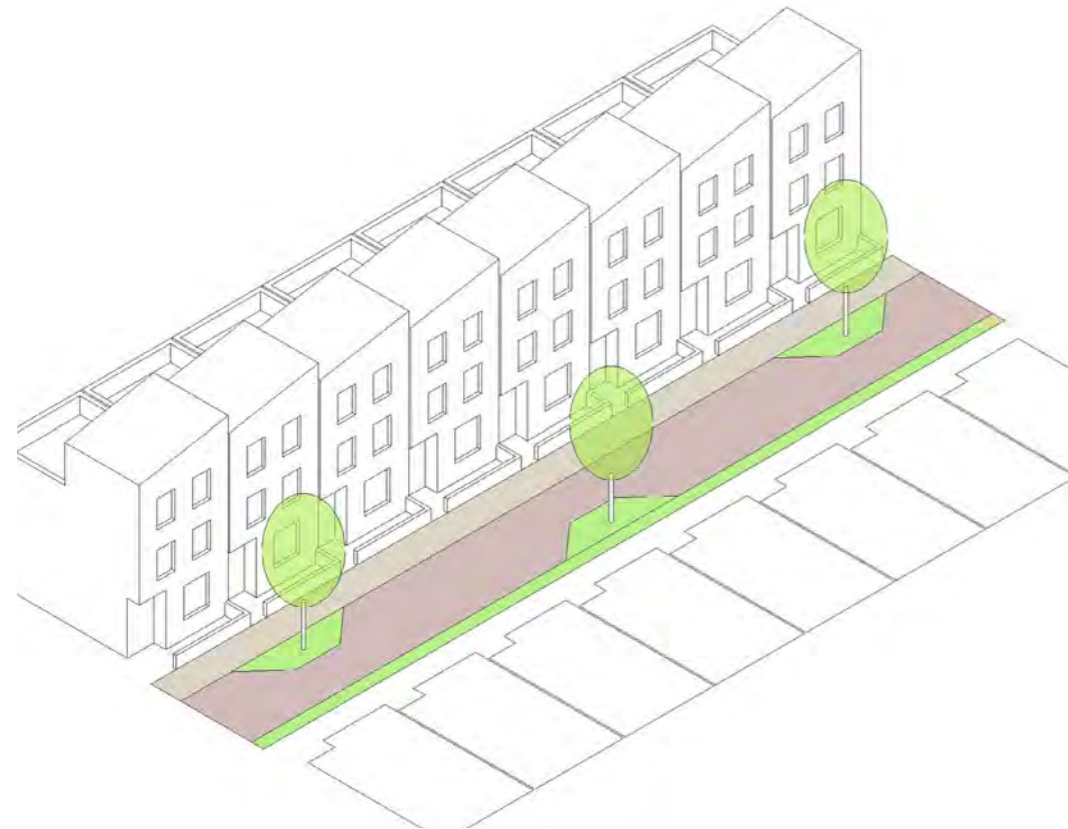
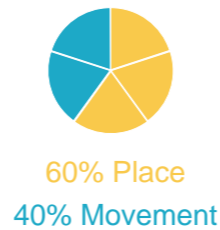


Figure 125
Key
 ● Footway
 ● Landscape Median
 ● Carriageway



Identity

- Urban character expressed through level of enclosure; 2-3 storey buildings, closely spaced, set close to the street edge.
- Corners should be dual fronted with exposed rear gardens omitted.
- Buildings grouped into coherent lengths with feature buildings included.
- 2 metre minimum private/defensible zone – demarcated with a low wall or hedge.
- Create visual interest to the street character by way of building alignment, nodal spaces and views/vistas.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- Carriageway will have reduced dimensions including street width relative to Secondary Streets.
- Footways not normally required. In some cases, a footway may be required on one side only.
- Active Travel principles integral to street design.
- Parking in courtyards or to the frontage ‘in-curtilage’ and subdivided with landscaping. Some on-street parking can be used to accommodate visitor parking.
- Material palette to enhance character & ‘place’ function.
- Embayments may be appropriate.

Nature

- Landscaped medians on one side of the street, to include closely spaced trees of an appropriate scale and also include, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment.
- Depending on the character of the street it may be appropriate to include specimen trees as focal points rather than as an avenue.
- Build-outs may define car parking embayments.
- Frontage space can contain planting including hedgerow to subdivide space and ‘soften’ the built frontage.

Examples



Figure 126 Vallette Square, Salford.

This is a tertiary street in a clearly urban context with detached and semi-detached blocks set to a common building line frontage and parking to the side of the blocks, thereby significantly reducing the visual effects of parked cars.

The proportions applied to the facades are consistent offering a coherent, distinctive character.

The ground floor windows increase surveillance and opportunity for social interaction within the street space.

The image illustrates the relatively small proportion of the external environment allocated to carriageway with paved areas to define nodal points, contrasting with the carriageway in respect of grain, colour and texture.

Car parking to the right hand side is surrounded by low level planting and street trees are included.



Figure 127 Chocolate Works, York.

A similar scheme to that at Salford with three storey development (with elements of four storeys).

There is an interesting variation to the frontage with recessed sections and ground floor forward projections.

The enclosure of the street tends towards an ‘urban’ character with an element of frontage parking increasing the space between the frontages.

The factory building located at the end of the vista has influenced the design of the development – being locally distinctive.

The surfacing is considered to be a pedestrian material (paving) with level footway area.

Frontage parking is included within embayments perpendicular to the building frontage with landscaping incorporated, to soften the frontage with trees included as specimen features.

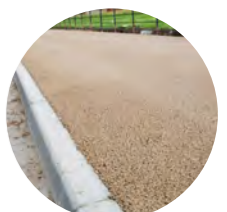
Materials



Carriageway



Kerbs & Edging



Footway



Driveway

A2.3b Tertiary Streets in a Suburban / Rural Context



Identity

- Lower level of enclosure, greater spacing between buildings, set back to allow for landscaped frontage.
- Corners should be dual fronted with exposed rear gardens omitted.
- Buildings grouped into coherent lengths with feature buildings included.
- 2 metre minimum private/defensible zone – demarcated with a low wall or hedge.
- Create visual interest to the street character by way of building alignment, nodal spaces and views/vistas.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- Carriageway will have reduced dimensions including street width relative to Secondary Streets.
- Footways not normally required. In some cases, a footway may be required on one side only.
- Active Travel principles integral to street design.
- Parking in courtyards or to the frontage ‘in-curtilage’ and subdivided with landscaping. Some on-street parking can be used to accommodate visitor parking.
- Material palette to enhance character & ‘place’ function.
- Embayments may be appropriate.

Nature

- Landscaped medians on one side of the street, to include closely spaced trees of an appropriate scale and also include, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment.
- Depending on the character of the street it may be appropriate to include specimen trees as focal points rather than as an avenue.
- Build-outs may define car parking embayments.
- Frontage space can contain planting including hedgerow to subdivide space and ‘soften’ the built frontage.

Examples



Figure 129 Abode, Cambridge

This is a contemporary development based around a reinterpretation of local distinctive styles.

Whilst the buildings are relatively close together, they are set perpendicular to the street. The spaces between the frontages is correspondingly increased, providing the dwellings with a greater three dimensional character and open setting suggesting, in combination, a suburban format.

The road carriageway uses a small element paving material with islands of landscaping kerb edged and splayed to provide access points.

The footways have a straight alignment whereas the carriageway follows a flowing alignment thereby increasing the perception of pedestrian space and hence priority.

The landscaped beds with trees provide focal points within the street scene adding to the overall character.



Figure 130 Poundbury, Dorset

A sector of the urban extension could also assume a more urban format although, in some total the development has a density associated with a suburban density.

The buildings, presenting a traditional elevation, are closely related to the street frontage and contain, in this case a footway located on one side.

The three storey development is designed overall in a coherent way with architectural consistency to promote particular distinctiveness, with a unity of façade materials, distinctive roofs and plinths.

The frontage defensible space is demarcated with a decorative railing and complimentary landscaping.

The street is one-sided overlooking mature trees set within soft-landscaping.

Materials



Carriageway



Kerbs & Edging



Footway

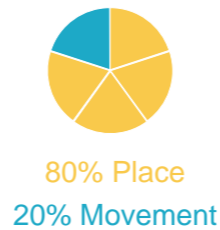


Driveway

A2.4a Courtyards & Lanes in an Urban Context



Figure 131
Key
 ● Footway
 ● Landscape Median
 ● Carriageway



Identity

- Urban character expressed through level of enclosure; 2 storey buildings, closely spaced, set close to the street edge.
- Corners should be dual fronted with exposed rear gardens omitted.
- Could accommodate individual dwellings or, other formats e.g. apartments
- Frontages located close to the street edge with windows and doors to increase surveillance and activity.
- Private space located behind the building frontage.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- Carriageway will have reduced dimensions including street width relative to Tertiary Streets.
- Footways not required.
- Active Travel principles integral to street design.
- Parking in courtyards or to the frontage 'in-curtilage' and subdivided with landscaping. Some on-street parking can be used to accommodate visitor parking. Integral garaging may be appropriate.
- Material palette to enhance character & 'place' function.
- Embayments may be appropriate.

Nature

- Incidental landscaped spaces to include closely spaced trees of an appropriate scale and also include, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment.
- Depending on the character of the street it may be appropriate to include specimen trees as focal points rather than as an avenue.
- Build-outs may define car parking embayments.
- Frontage space can contain planting including hedgerow to subdivide space and 'soften' the built frontage.

Examples



Figure 132 Abode, Cambridge

Designed as part of a larger development, this is a high density urban form of housing.

Designed in a contemporary language, including attractive brick detailing. Flat-roofed dwellings are located to a building frontage, close to the street frontage with link-detached units to the left side and a terrace to the right.

The street has a high degree of enclosure with a tight radii – width to height ratio and terminated by a splayed building closing the vista.

The street is well overlooked from ground and upper floor levels with the properties on the right containing recessed balconies.

The surface is level with a small element paving material purposefully used. The landscaping - shrub beds and trees - demarcate curtilages on the left side and a continuous frontage to the right – apart from garage access, which combine to soften the built frontage.



Figure 133 The Gables, Crosby

A different arrangement to Abode illustrating the use of a 'Courtyard' street.

An arrangement of dwellings is integral with variety (but unity) as regards alignment and frontage emphasis – two storey linear frontage and three storey gable ended dwellings. Projecting frontage bays articulate the built elevation.

The end gable to the end property contains an active frontage with large windows contained at two levels.

The development has a coherent unity since it relates to a small grouping of dwellings with complementary dwarf walls used to demarcate frontages and subdivide parking bays.

Incidental areas of soft landscaping is included with specimen trees.

Small element paving enhances the 'place' function.

Materials



Hard Surfacing



Hard Surfacing



Hard Surfacing

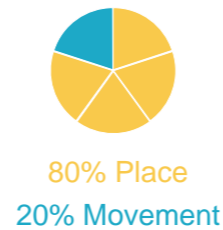


Kerbs & Edging

A2.4b Courtyards & Lanes in a Suburban / Rural Context



Figure 134
Key
● Footway
● Landscape Median
● Carriageway



Identity

- Lower level of enclosure, varied built character with buildings defining the street space.
- Corners should be dual fronted with exposed rear gardens omitted.
- Could accommodate individual dwellings or, other formats e.g. apartments
- Frontages located close to the street edge with windows and doors to increase surveillance and activity.
- Private space located behind the building frontage.
- Bin storage etc. located away from the street frontage.

Movement

- Carriageway will have reduced dimensions including street width relative to Tertiary Streets.
- Footways not required.
- Active Travel principles integral to street design.
- Parking in courtyards or to the frontage 'in-curtilage' and subdivided with landscaping. Some on-street parking can be used to accommodate visitor parking. Integral garaging may be appropriate.
- Material palette to enhance character & 'place' function.
- Embayments may be appropriate.

Nature

- Incidental landscaped spaces to include closely spaced trees of an appropriate scale and also include, if appropriate, SuDS (rain gardens etc.) hedging, lawns and variation in vertical alignment.
- Depending on the character of the street it may be appropriate to include specimen trees as focal points rather than as an avenue.
- Build-outs may define car parking embayments.
- Frontage space can contain planting including hedgerow to subdivide space and 'soften' the built frontage.

Examples



Figure 135 Abode, Cambridge

This street demonstrates the effects of utilising a narrow carriageway, shared surface and a small element paving material.

The development has a greater sense of space since it includes frontage curtilage parking to one side. The parking to the left side is based around perpendicular bays, but these areas are subdivided by hedgerow and shrub planting.

The trees emphasise the building groupings.

The development is characterised by a coherent use of distinctive materials with added variety through the use of brickwork detailing to emphasis some openings.

The acute gables along the street frontage arrest the linearity of the street. The terminating building contains contrasting materials and form, deflecting the view as the street alignment changes. This demarcates a nodal point adding an enhanced visual structure to the broader development.



Figure 136 Cane Hill, South London

This street is suburban in character with the development being one sided and fronting an open space.

The street is shared surface with no defined footway.

The dwellings follow a curved alignment that is a response to the site with the curtilages demarcated by dwarf fences and barred gates, to enhance an Arcadian character.

The dwellings include a variation of facing brick with the angled roofs being an important element of the overall composition. The dormer windows add to the creation of a distinctive roofline and the ground floor bay and canopy projection modulate the frontage.

Materials



Hard Surfacing



Hard Surfacing



Hard Surfacing



Kerbs & Edging

The Emerging Urban Design Agenda

The term 'Urban Design' reputedly emerged from a conference held at Harford in the United States in 1956. Since that time the discipline has become well defined. The context in which urban design operates and the practices that now form the various approaches to it have emerged over time. They are the result of a long process of factors that have influenced how places appear and work. For example, inter war residential development was an amalgam of by-law spacing standards created over the preceding years, along with elements of the garden city principles promoted by Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes, Raymond Unwin and the recommendations of the 1918 Tudor Walters Report.

These influencing factors resulted in particular densities of residential development and suburban typologies. Later philosophies and architectural movements, gave us post war development based around modernist principles and buildings in landscaped settings. Redeveloped townscapes became commonplace in displaying minimalist architectural detailing with little deference to the genius loci. Many developers of the era seized on this form and style of development to produce efficient albeit mediocre urban design responses, much of which later became unpopular.

In turn, there were subsequent responses to some of these acknowledged failings, including The Essex Design Guide, Design Bulletin 32 and the Greater London's publication 'Introduction to Housing Layout'. Influencing the design agenda at this time was the emergence of the 'conservation movement' resulting in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. The rediscovery of the writings of Camillo Sitte and the publications of Thomas Sharp, Roy Worskett, Edmund Bacon, Leon Krier and Gordon Cullen, identified the virtues of 'historic townscape'.

These visual approaches to design were complimented by broader urban design studies and analysis considering the broader qualities of place, including the writings of Jane Jacobs, Christopher Alexander and Kevin Lynch, which have also influenced urban design theory, policy and practice.

Despite ambivalent attitudes to design quality - in the late 1970's and 80's - being achieved through the planning system itself, the urban design agenda had gained momentum, particularly in professional circles. This resulted in the formation of the Urban Design Group in 1978, which seeks to bring about the removal of professional boundaries and promote collaborative approaches to design in the built environment, through close working relationships between the design professions.

The objective design led approach led to seminal publications such as Ian Bentley's 'Responsive Environments' and the work of Alice Coleman, Oscar Newman, Bill Hillier and Francis Tibbalds, which were further influences on design theory, to be applied to practical, contemporary urban settings. The publication of the 'Vision of Britain' by the then Prince of Wales and the formation of the Urban Villages forum in 1989 raised the profile of the urban village concept in professional circles, but also an increased interest and awareness in the eyes of the general public regarding general design issues.

The release of the publication 'Quality in Town and Country' in 1994, by the then Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer, is regarded as pivotal in drawing out the importance of design quality in its broadest sense. The subsequent directional change to promote sustainable, high quality contextual design in social, environmental and economic settings, has been at the forefront of successive government policy and guidance. This has culminated in the NPPF, PPG and other specific 'good practice' documents.

'Historical' approaches to urban design have resulted, in many cases, to standardised approaches to design, particularly in the use of prescribed spacing standards in the development of residential layouts. This can lead to stereotypical forms of development.

More recent policy and guidance now suggests an approach based on 'design specifications'. At the outset, design objectives are set, describing how the development will work and what its character should be. A creative design process is then used to fulfil the design brief.

A problem at present is the plethora of policy, practice, precedents, guidance and theory that could reasonably be said to be relevant to the development of a particular development site. Where might the starting point be? The NPPF, the legal dimension regarding the interpretation of policy, The National Design Guide, Building For a Healthy Life, other guidance e.g. that supplied by Historic England and other bodies, guidance on community engagement and the impact of the views of professional opinions and academics, trends and philosophies.

Various publications have been produced to promote the sustainable urban design discussion: By Design (now withdrawn but still relevant); The Urban Design Compendium; Shaping Neighbourhoods; Towards an Urban Renaissance; The London Design Guide; The Toolkit for Garden Towns; Places Streets and Movement; Putting Health into Practice; Quality Reviewer; The Ten Primary Characteristics of Places and People, Place Value and the Ladder of Place Quality, Design in Context (MUD – Lab) – and many more.

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