Understanding the National Design Guide

Design Network

June 2020

Design Network.

d:m design:midlands

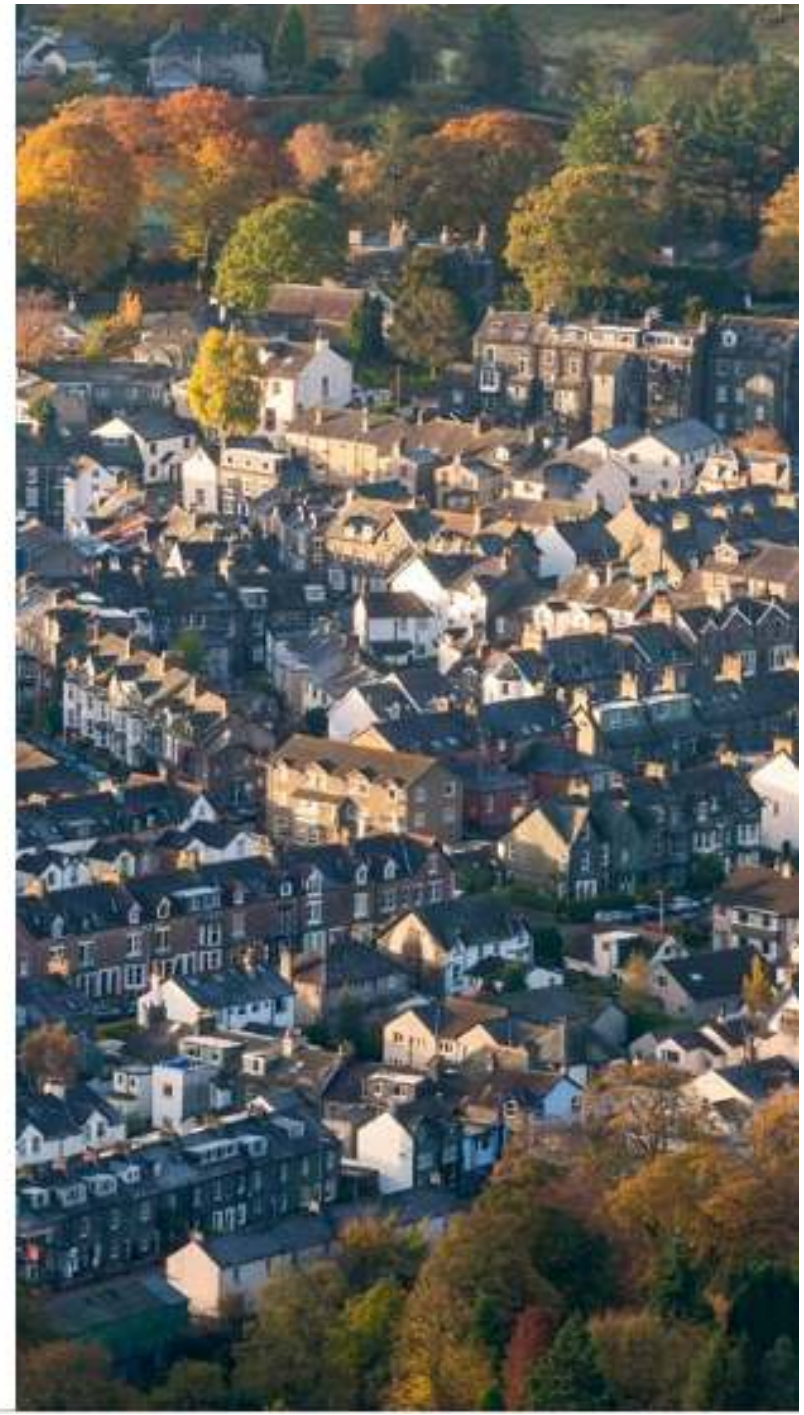
design:southwest

creating excellence

Objectives

- how the National Design Guide

- relates to national planning policy;
- to local planning policy and practice;
- provides 10 characteristics, and their interconnections
- its practical use to evaluate design quality
- relates to tools and processes you can use to secure good design



Paragraph 130 NPPF

"Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions….

…taking into account any local design standards or styles guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.

but…

…where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision maker as a valid reason to object to development."

LOCAL PLAN
(including design policy and guidance)
consistent
with
NATIONAL POLICY
(NPPF and PPG inc. National Design Guide)

National Design Guide

Explains the design sections of the NPPF and PPG

Informs local design guidance

Provides design guidance when local guidance is absent

Checklist

Common language

Structure for documents

- **Context** – enhances the surroundings.
- **Identity** – attractive and distinctive.
- **Built form** – a coherent pattern of development.
- **Movement** – accessible and easy to move around.
- **Nature** – enhanced and optimised.
- **Public spaces** – safe, social and inclusive.
- **Uses** – mixed and integrated.
- **Homes and buildings** – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- **Resources** – efficient and resilient.
- **Lifespan** – made to last.

The ten characteristics of well-designed places

Introductory overview

Colour coded characteristics

Cross references to NPPF chapters

Cross references to other characteristics

Illustrations to highlight good practice

Key attributes under each characteristic

Good practice examples with captions

Definitions for technical terms

Looking forward – issues to consider

Context

Enhances the surroundings

Well-designed places are:

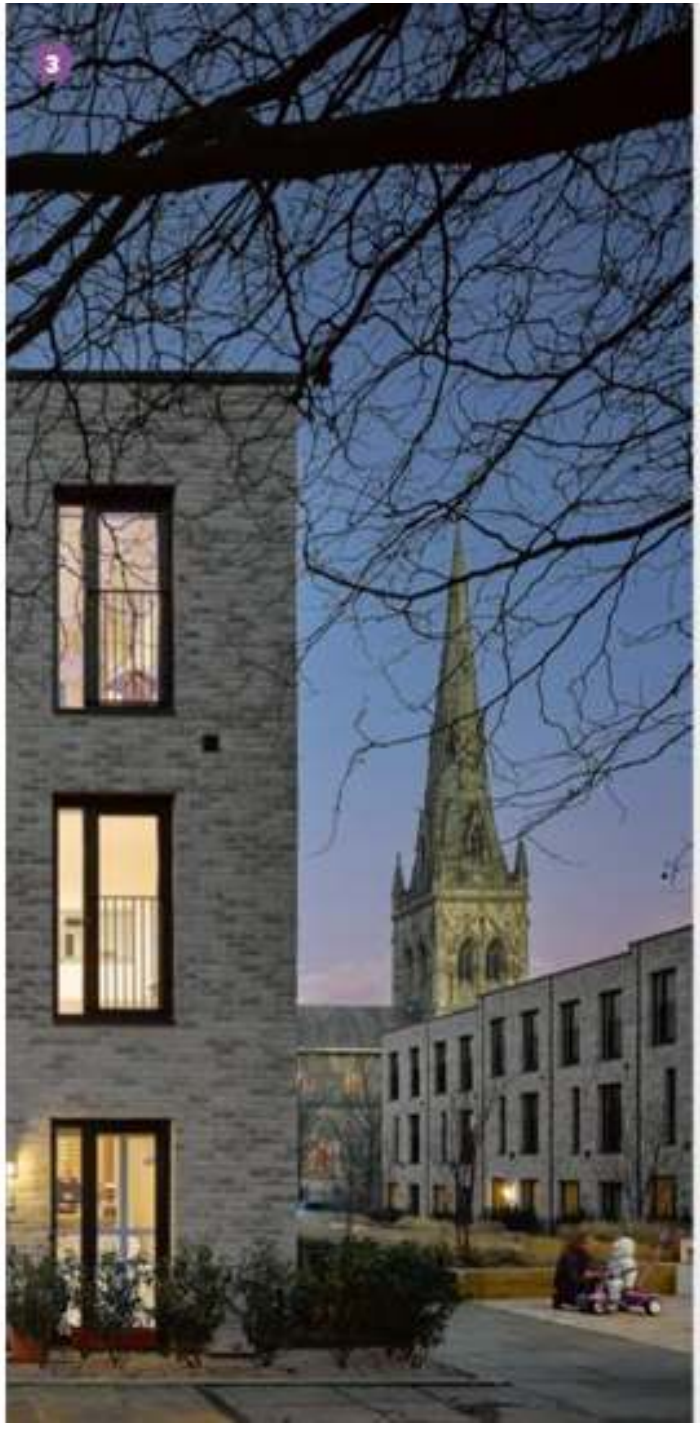
- based on a sound **understanding** of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
- **integrated** into their surroundings so they relate well to them
- **influenced** by and influence their context positively
- **responsive** to local history, culture and heritage.

Context

Identifying the existing features of the site and the wider area highlights opportunities for the design of new developments to link well into their context and enhance these features for the benefit of new and existing residents.

Context

C2 Value heritage, local history and culture



Design is a process

- Analyse **context** at a range of scales
- **Interrogate** brief
- **Identify** opportunities
- **Identify** site constraints
- **Clarify** design principles
- **Test** options
- **Develop** site response
- **Develop** design response
- **Review** and respond to feedback
- **Demonstrate** quality
- **Communicate** impact

1. Survey
2. Analysis
3. Plan

Identity

I2 Well-designed, high quality and attractive

- adopting **typical building forms, features, materials** and details of an area;
- drawing upon the **architectural precedents** that are prevalent in the local area, including the proportions of buildings and their openings;
- using **local building, landscape or topographical features**, materials or planting types;
- introducing built form and appearance that adds **new character and difference** to places;
- creating **a positive and coherent identity** that residents and local communities can identify with.

Identity

I3 Create character and identity

Built form

B2 Appropriate building types and forms

Recognisable streets

Movement

M1 An integrated network of routes for all modes of transport

Movement

M2 A clear structure and hierarchy of connected streets

Nature

Enhanced and optimised

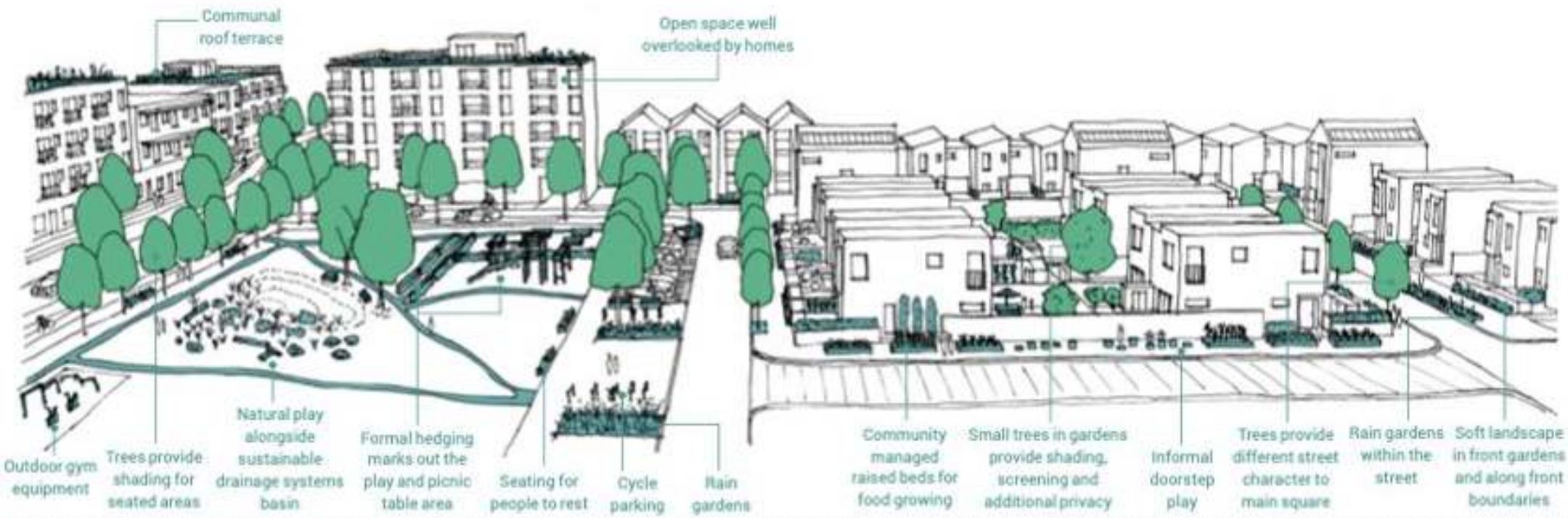
Well-designed places:

- **integrate existing, and incorporate new natural features** into a multifunctional network that supports quality of place, biodiversity and water management, and addresses climate change mitigation and resilience;
- prioritise nature so that **diverse ecosystems can flourish** to ensure a healthy natural environment that supports and enhances biodiversity;
- provide **attractive open spaces** in locations that are easy to access, with activities for all to enjoy, such as play, food production, recreation and sport, so as to encourage physical activity and promote health, well-being and social inclusion.

Nature

N1 Provide high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities, including play

Nature


Communal roof terrace
Open space well overlooked by homes
Outdoor gym equipment
Trees provide shading for seated areas
Natural play alongside sustainable drainage systems basin
Formal hedging marks out the play and picnic table area
Seating for people to rest
Cycle parking
Rain gardens
Community managed raised beds for food growing
Small trees in gardens provide shading, screening and additional privacy
Informal doorstep play
Trees provide different street character to main square
Rain gardens within the street
Soft landscape in front gardens and along front boundaries

Public spaces

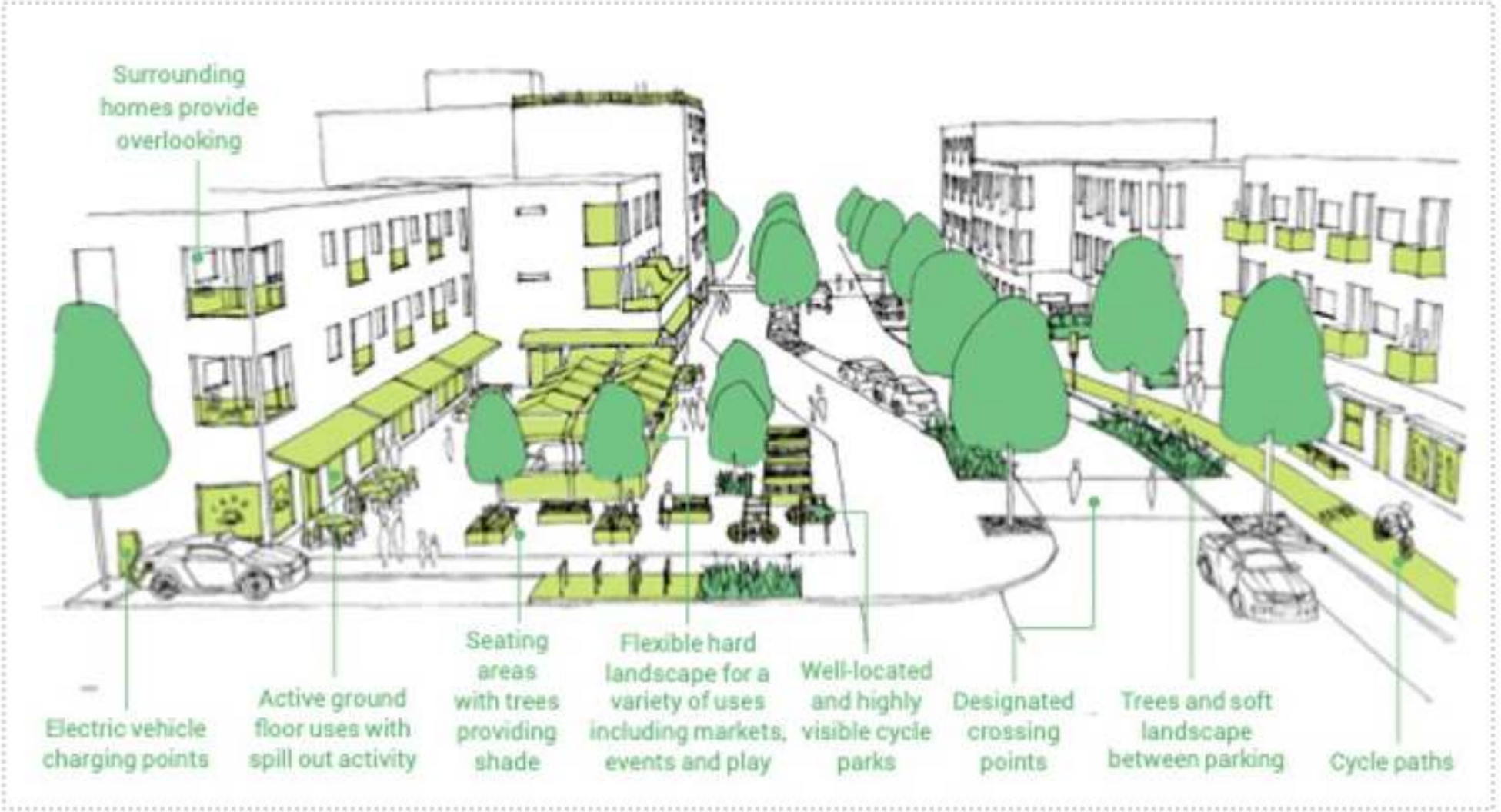
Safe, social and inclusive

Well-designed places:

- include well-located public spaces that **support a wide variety of activities** and encourage social interaction, to promote health, well-being, social and civic inclusion;
- have a **hierarchy of spaces** that range from large and strategic to small and local spaces, including parks, squares, greens and pocket parks;
- have public spaces that **feel safe, secure and attractive** for all to use; and
- have **trees and other planting** within public spaces for people to enjoy, whilst also providing shading, and air quality and climate change mitigation.

Public spaces

P1 Create well-located, high quality and attractive public spaces



Public spaces

P2 Provide well-designed spaces that are safe

Uses

U1 A mix of uses

Uses

U2 A mix of home tenures, types and sizes

Uses

U3 Socially inclusive

Homes & buildings

Functional, healthy and sustainable

Well-designed homes and buildings:

- provide good quality **internal and external environments** for their users, promoting health and well-being;
- relate positively to the **private, shared and public spaces** around them, contributing to social interaction and inclusion; and
- resolve the details of **operation and servicing** so that they are unobtrusive and well-integrated into their neighbourhoods.

Homes & buildings

H1 Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment

Homes & buildings

H1 Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment

Homes & buildings

H2 Well-related to external amenity and public spaces

Homes & buildings

H3 Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

Resources

Efficient and resilient

Well-designed places:

- have a layout, form and mix of uses that **reduces their resource requirement**, including for land, energy and water;
- are fit for purpose and **adaptable over time**, reducing the need for redevelopment and unnecessary waste;
- use materials and adopt technologies to **minimise their environmental impact**

Resources

R3 Maximise resilience

Lifespan

Made to last

Well-designed places, buildings and spaces are:

- designed and planned for **long-term stewardship** by landowners, communities and local authorities from the earliest stages;
- **robust, easy to use and look after**, and enable their users to establish a sense of ownership and belonging, ensuring places and buildings age gracefully;
- **adaptable** to their users' changing needs and evolving technologies; and
- **well-managed and maintained** by their users, owners, landlords and public agencies.

Lifespan

L1 Well-managed and maintained

Lifespan

L2 Adaptable to changing needs and evolving technologies

Lifespan

L3 A sense of ownership

components of the built environment

Layout

Scale

Landscape

Form

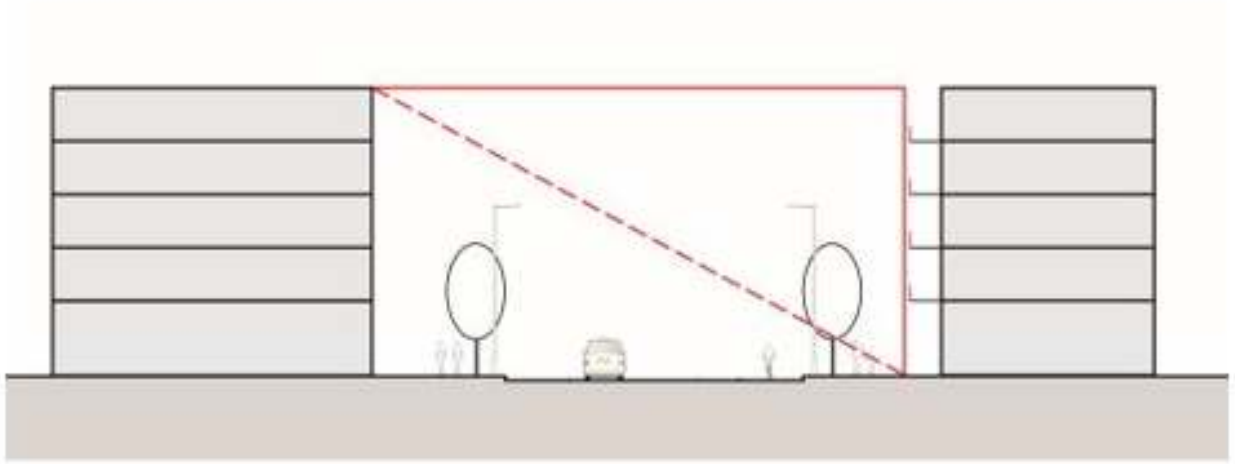
Appearance

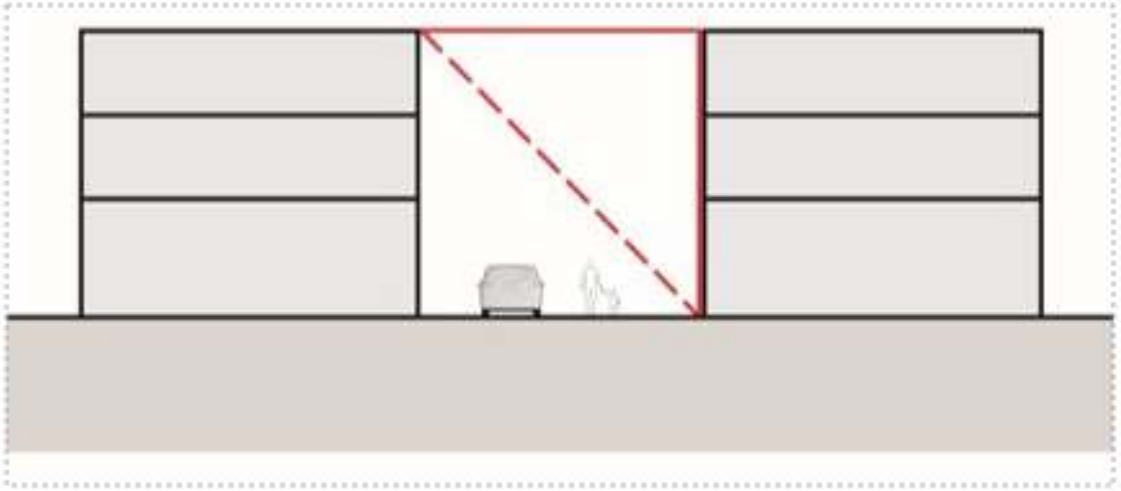
Materials

Detailing

Scale

'The size or level of something'





Appearance

‘the way a thing looks to other people ’

Landscape

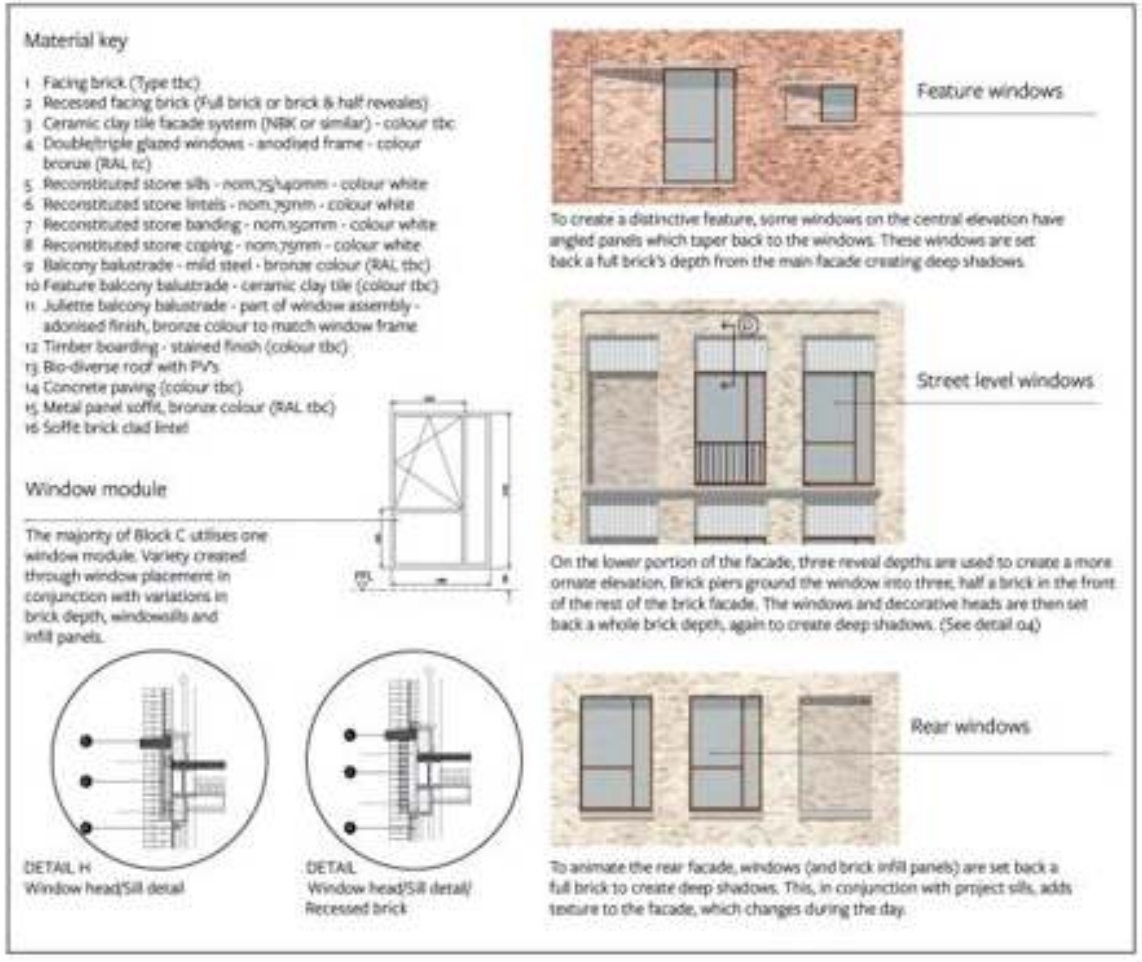
‘all the visible features of an area of land’

Materials

‘a physical thing (e.g. wood, stone) with qualities that allow it to be used to make other things ’

Detailing

‘the small features of something that you only notice when you look carefully’



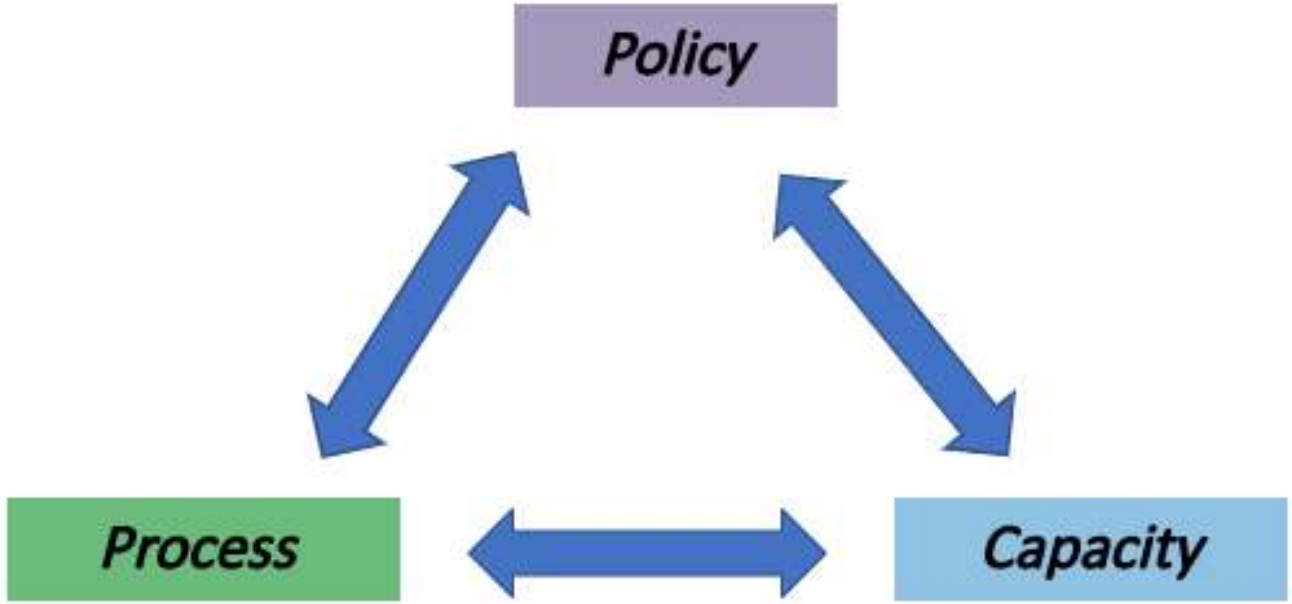
achieving well designed places

"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…This 'story' will inform and address all ten characteristics. It is set out in a Design and Access Statement that accompanies a planning application."

Suffolk Design

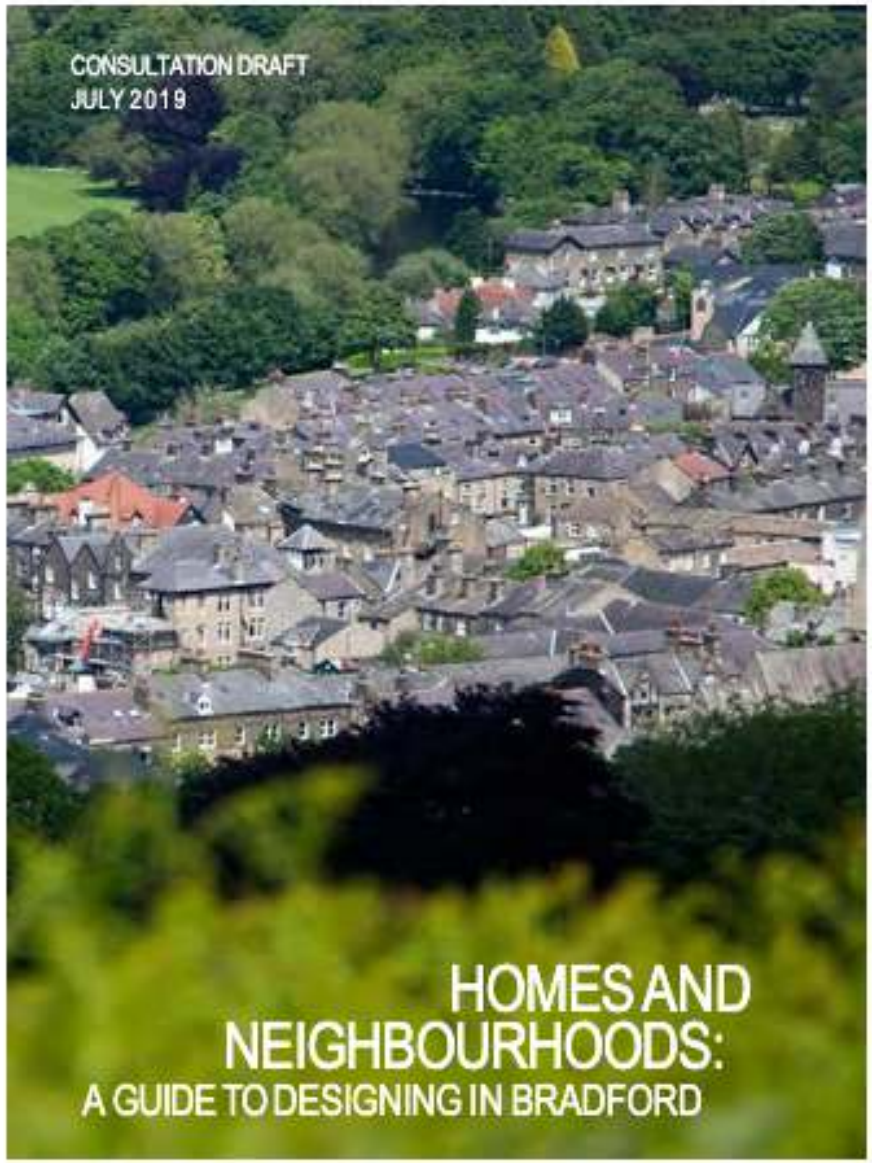
Suffolk Design Management Process (SDMP) for Large Sites [DRAFT v2]

Section	First steps (Local Plan Allocation process may take place between 2 & 3)		Pre-App Process (Iterative, non-linear process Timeframes set according to PPA)				Decision-Making			Post-Decision	
Stage	1 Inception	2 First Formal contact	3 Setting / Agreeing PPA	4 Site Analysis and Design Principles	5 Design Evolution	6 Informal Opinion	7 Submission and statutory process	8 Decision, Conditions, Obligations	9 Pre-construction design audit	10 Construction	11 Completion / Post Completion
Outcomes	• Clarity around ultimate desired outcome • Understanding of key constraints and needs • Everyone feels well-informed • Common ground established		• Trusted process of engagement between public, LPA and applicant • Iterative process outlined by PPA • Confidence in successful outcome for the scheme evidenced by DAC and SoCG • Certainty in process and ultimate outcome				• Transparency • Recognition of acceptability of development • Formal acceptance • Understanding rationale for decision • Reflection of previous stages			• Learning and reflection • Evaluation of input • Recognition and celebration • Learning and reflection	
Applicant-LPA Dialogue /Actions	❑Dialogue opened ❑Online information signposting ❑Partners / consultees / departments informed ❑Landowners forum (if required) ❑Developer shares pre-engagement work	❑Suffolk Design Approach and SDMP explained to applicant ❑Site history shared ❑SoCG Policy approach set ❑Collective SWOT analysis to jointly understand threats and risks ❑Test of soundness (suitable, available, achievable)	❑Sit-down session with key stakeholders ❑Agreement on project milestones and timeframe using template SD PPA ❑SoCG: topic areas identified ❑Establishing baseline Design Audit Checklist (DAC) contents ❑Establishing likely planning obligations	❑Workshops with key stakeholders and consultees ❑Expansion of DAC ❑Establishing validation requirements ❑Updating likely requirements: conditions, s106 etc. ❑Updating DAC contents	❑Workshops with key stakeholders and consultees ❑Evolution of DAC ❑SoCG evolved including statement(S) of changes ❑Updating likely conditions, s106 etc.	❑Assessment against DAC ❑Design Review ❑Final SoCG agreed	❑Assessment against DAC ❑Statement on changes ❑All formal standard statutory requirements ❑Statutory consultees formal input	❑Decision made ❑Conditions, s106 etc. agreed, drawing on what was previously identified	❑Consultee and stakeholder forum to assess progress on reserved matters and conditions and assess these against DAC ❑Statement on changes	❑Statement on changes ❑Site visits from officers to assess construction process against DAC	❑Consideration of level of quality – likely to be eligible for Suffolk Design Awards!! ❑Developer Survey
Internal LPA Actions	❑Team resources assessed and dedicated officer set	❑Internal LPA Project Leader officer / team set ❑Portfolio holder briefing ❑SoCG handover	❑Conversations with all departments involved in community engagement in/near site	❑Involvement at workshops ❑Briefings if unable to attend		❑Officers brief parish and ward Cllrs to understand what everyone expects	❑Member briefing				❑Findings from assessments shared with Cllrs via Member briefing ❑Member visits to selection of completed schemes
Community Involvement	❑Publicly-accessible information kept updated ❑Consideration of site's relationship with made/ emerging Neighbourhood Plans	❑Online information signposting	❑Community engagement milestones set out in PPA ❑Joining up LPA and developer communications team	❑Named officer as point of contact ❑Early public 'co-creation' event ❑Non-technical summary of key documents published ❑Community representatives attendance at key meetings	❑Consultation events ❑Community representatives attendance at key meetings ❑Community representatives attendance at key meetings	❑Community attendance and representation at Design Review where possible / appropriate	❑Formal statutory public consultation	❑Non-technical summary of decision and reasons why published.	❑Updates on progress and timeframe published on website	❑Named officer available for contact ❑Community Liaison Groups for strategic sites	❑ New resident satisfaction surveys ❑ Community able to vote for Suffolk Design Awards ❑ Links between development and benefits publicised


Policy
Process
Capacity

Policy

- **Planning for well-designed places**
  - Plan vision
  - Strategic and non-strategic policies
  - Local design guides
  - Masterplans
  - Design codes
  - Supplementary planning documents



Process: discussions and decisions

- **Making decisions about design**
  - Pre-application discussions
  - Outline planning applications
  - Parameter plans
  - Design and Access Statements including a narrative for design approach and rationale
  - Use of conditions, including important design details to be set out at application stage
  - Ensuring quality is not diminished between permission and completion, including a strategy for maintaining original design intent

Process: assessment and engagement

- **Tools for assessing and improving design quality**
  - National Design Guide
  - Local design guides and codes
  - Effective Design Review
  - Assessment frameworks, including Building for Life 12

- **Effective community engagement on design**
  - How local communities can be effectively engaged early in the design process
  - Effective community engagement tools

Capacity

- **Skills**
  - Specialist officers
  - CPD for generalist officers
  - Engaging planning committees with training and support
- **Resources**
  - External resources – design support and placements
  - Design Workshops
  - Design Review
  - Networks
- **Culture**
  - Collaborative approach
  - In-house projects/procurement
  - Design Charter
  - Design awards

Training

Workshops

Design Review

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