3.12 Place Hierarchy

3.12.1 Place Hierarchy

Proposals should provide a hierarchy of buildings and spaces to emphasise key locations within the layout and contribute to the character and legibility of the townscape.

3.12.2 Historically, settlements comprised spaces and buildings in an order of visual and functional hierarchy. Places of importance looked important. Town squares, market places, village greens or a crossing of roads provided a social and economic focus for the community. They are often accompanied by buildings of some status, whose architecture and presence help reinforce the significance of the place.

3.12.3 In some cases the original purpose of the place may have changed. However, focal spaces continue to perform an important townscape role and developments should include a hierarchy of both major and minor spaces, that are appropriate to the scale of the scheme.

3.12.4 Ordinary, everyday buildings make up much of the remaining urban fabric (although this need not mean they are uninteresting in themselves) and they provide the backdrop to the wider built environment.
A place and street hierarchy for a scheme, supported by buildings that respond to the scale, significance or role of each street or place.

1. **Entrance or Gateway:** Buildings grouped to ‘announce’ the entrance to the scheme, either by a group enclosing a small green, or by buildings massed to give emphasis to the corner, depending on the existing context, or the character of the scheme.

2. **Main Street:** In the case shown, a formal tree-lined avenue of larger detached villas, set back behind front gardens. In other cases larger terraces may line the street. Due to its spinal route function, the street is likely to have the widest carriageway.

3. **Main Focal Point:** The illustration shows a square serving as a focus for the main routes. Larger buildings terminate long vistas on the approach to the square. The square could be designed as a shared space, with a central tree or public art installation. In larger schemes, some mixed uses and a bus stop may be appropriate.

4. **Secondary Street:** These are the distributors of the scheme and each may have a somewhat different character. On-street parking could be incorporated into the street design. Typically two and ‘two and a half storey’ houses, mainly in short terraces would be located here. All would have relatively modest front gardens. Frequent junctions and changes in direction would contribute to speed reduction.

5. **Minor Street:** These could serve lower density groups at the lower end of the hierarchy. Occasional tree planting dividing the carriageway can reduce speeding and incorporate parking, as appropriate.

6. **Mews Street:** Typically characterised by shared surfaces and aligned at right angles to secondary streets. They would be relatively short, with terraces incorporating garages and slightly set back from the designated roadway.

7. **Green Edge Access Way:** ‘Single loaded’ informal roadway serving houses fronting greenspace and possibly incorporating play space. Typically, the pavement would be on one side. In smaller schemes the roadway could be a shared space private (unadopted) drive.

8. **Courtyard Parking:** Small shared surface areas overlooked by flats over garages. These spaces would usually be located behind main frontages.

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**3.12 Place Hierarchy**
3.12.5 This distinction between important and everyday spaces and buildings establishes an order of place hierarchy and is an important ingredient of any townscape. However, this must be ‘tuned’ to reflect the nature of the settlement so that spaces and buildings are appropriate to the scale, role and character of the place. Focal spaces and buildings of status will differ between a village and an urban setting.

3.12.6 Residential developments often fail to capture this aspect of the townscape and standard house types are often unable to create the status and presence required to identify an important location. It is therefore necessary to find ways of introducing a built hierarchy into residential developments capable of fulfilling this townscape role.

3.12.7 Important buildings punctuate the townscape, provide useful reference points and give emphasis to key uses, locations or notable corners. Often landmarks in their own right, they are important in helping people find their way around and making places understandable.

3.12.8 Where buildings of status already exist (either within or outside the site) they should be integrated as part of the scheme, by either deferring to them, providing an appropriate setting or creating views.

3.12.9 Designs should emphasise important locations within the development, by expressing its scale, architectural quality and materials. Even modest developments may require buildings that provide a focus.

3.12.10 Where new spaces are provided they should be enclosed by buildings and designed to create a sense of place with active uses introduced within or around the space, wherever possible (mixed use developments).

**Successful places:**
- Contain a hierarchy of focal spaces and buildings that form part of network of public spaces.
- Locate focal spaces along main thoroughfares or where two important routes cross and are well overlooked.
- Design focal spaces that are proportionate in scale and character to their location and context.
- Ensure spaces are adequately enclosed by buildings, are accessible and create a focal point such as with a tree, building, public art or monument.
- Position buildings of status to reinforce the importance of focal spaces, emphasise key corners or to terminate views.
- Signal a building of status through its scale, positioning and special architectural treatment (quality, materials, detail and finishes).
- Recognise existing buildings of status within or visible from a site, by deferring to their setting or maintaining or creating views to such buildings.

Above: Houses deliberately designed and sited in order to close views along these streets and provide minor visual focal points that both support character and assist legibility.
3.12 Place Hierarchy

3.12.11 Building placement and architectural responses should be informed by both their context and their role within the place hierarchy. Buildings of greater stature, scale, richness and quality should be used to express the significance of important places, views and nodes to create 'impact' within the townscape and help differentiate one place from another.

**KEY GROUPS**

**Focal Point Group**
Informal massing at intersection of streets & pedestrian routes. Creation of a sense of place by sunny, sheltered space, active frontages/mixed uses, & attractive public realm.

**Gateway Group**
Formal suburban example. Creating a spacious entrance 'funnelling' to a pinch-point. Bold gables relate to the scale of the 'green'.

**Buildings Which Terminate Vistas**
The design of the building should recognise that:
- the elevation will be seen from a distance,
- the massing, scale and roofline should respond to this focal role in the streetscape.

*Left: A building deliberately designed to respond to its role within the townscape by providing a minor focal point, closing the view along the street and assisting legibility.*
3.13 Design for Corners

3.13.1 Corners

**Proposals should recognise the importance of corners and their role in the townscape designing corner buildings to respond appropriately to their unique location, while maintaining the occupants amenity.**

3.13.2 Corners play a special role in the townscape, occupying visually prominent locations and having two frontages addressing different streets. They can highlight key locations and serve as local landmarks, although if poorly conceived and implemented they can weaken the townscape.

3.13.3 Corners pose particular design challenges in terms of achieving continuity to street frontages, articulation of junctions, providing practical garden spaces with adequate light penetration and privacy to gardens and windows. If these issues can be reconciled they have the ability to contribute significantly to the character and quality of the place.

3.13.4 Corner houses should articulate the corner and address both frontages. Many standard house types are unable to achieve this satisfactorily. As such more bespoke approaches to corner house types are likely to be necessary.

3.13.5 Highlighting corners is best achieved by expressing height, the inclusion of prominent entrances and/or windows or using the buildings form, architecture and quality materials to provide emphasis. In mixed use schemes active ground floor uses can also be effective. Often two or more of these elements can be combined successfully.

3.13.6 Within larger developments variation between corners is also necessary to avoid each one appearing the same and undermining their contribution to the legibility of the place.

Successful places:

- Use building placement to define the space on the corner and maintain a good level of continuity to frontages.
- Articulate corners at prominent nodal points or junctions to emphasise important locations and assist legibility.
- Maximise opportunities for surveillance onto both frontages, while minimising the extent of blank frontages or walls.
- Provide a direct relationship between habitable rooms and gardens.
- Maintain privacy between the habitable rooms of homes within the corner.

A notable corner expressed through scale, height and roof form of the house

A contemporary corner design gives emphasis to a building of traditional scale and form
3.13 Design for Corners

**Houses Which Turn Corners**
- Major corners are pivotal points in a townscape—between one space & another.
- A corner building is seen in 3 dimensions.
- It must be a minor focal point which addresses both streets with active frontages & the corner itself.

**Square Corner**
Alternative layout for more compact contexts
- Ensures:
  - privacy
  - minimal overshadowing
  - adjacent parking
  - positive corner

**Concave Corner**
(could also be curving plan)
- Allows for:
  - large, sunny, private gardens
  - extensions
  - rear gardens on plot
  - spacious green frontage

**Convex Corner**
Likely issues:
- overlooking
- overhearing
- overshadowing
- smaller gardens

A house type designed to handle a corner and address both frontages (Davidsons Group Ltd)
A house uses a gable with distinctive windows and local stone express the corner (Image Courtesy of Walker Troup Architects)
Corners emphasised by height and architecture identify an important node and aid legibility.
3.14 Frontages

3.14.1 Public Fronts

Building frontages and entrances should be orientated to positively address the street

3.14.2 Front and back spaces perform different roles and this should be reflected in their design. Orientating main facades to face towards the street gives a public face to the building and creates a positive relationship between public and private realm. Active frontages with doors facing towards the street and overlooking windows provide passive surveillance and make it feel safer.

3.14.3 The main entrance to the building should be located on the front elevation and be clearly visible from the street. This generates movement adding vitality to the street, whereas side entrances are less visible and potentially more vulnerable.

3.14.4 Where possible, internal house layouts should be arranged with some rooms requiring less privacy positioned at the front. This enables occupants to relate to the street and overlook and interact with the outside.

Successful places:

- Arrange buildings to face towards the street with clearly visible entrances.
- Create active frontages with windows and frequent entrances providing direct access to the street.
- Arrange living spaces requiring less privacy to face towards public frontages.
- Design windows to maximise overlooking, putting 'eyes on the street' without compromising privacy.
- Avoid or minimise blank elevations or limit their extent against public frontages.

Successful Places:

A living room located at the front enables a relationship with the street and provides security through overlooking.

Largely blank ground floor elevations deaden the street scene and limit surveillance of public areas.

A clear entrance that relates well to the street.

Contemporary town houses relate to the street with clear entrances and multiple windows providing surveillance of the street.
all buildings have two faces: a **front** onto public space, for entrances and the most public activities, and a **back** where most private activities can go.

Responsive Environments, Bentley et al (2005)

### 3.14.5 Private Backs

Private space should be clearly defined and enclosed to provide privacy and security.

### 3.14.6 Private spaces require both privacy and security. They should be clearly defined, usually by enclosure to distinguish between the public and private sides of the building.

### 3.14.7 Rear gardens which back onto other gardens are generally more secure than those with separate rear access or those backing onto parking courts. Where shared gardens or other communal spaces are provided (such as for flats), the buildings should help define the edges of the space. The privacy of ground floor flats should be maintained by private yards or gardens with clearly defined boundaries, where possible.

### 3.14.8 Rooms requiring privacy such as bedrooms or bathrooms are normally best located at the rear of dwellings as they generally provide limited overlooking of the street.

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**Successful places:**

- Provide a clear distinction between public, semi-public and private spaces with clearly defined boundaries.
- Arrange living areas requiring privacy to face private spaces.
- Arrange rear gardens to face onto rear gardens.
- Generally avoid or limit rear access paths to gardens. Where necessary, any paths should be short, direct, serve a small number of properties, and can be accessed via a single point of entry which is overlooked.
- Provide shared private spaces for flats at the back and preserve the amenity of adjacent ground floor dwellings.
3.14.9 Continuity

The continuity of the street should be informed by its context, character and role within the development.

3.14.10 The way frontages are arranged plays an important role in defining the character of the townscape and distinguishing between public and private areas. Frontages that provide continuous building lines create a cohesive edge to the street.

3.14.11 Where buildings cannot be joined directly, semi-continuous frontages can be achieved by linking houses, outbuildings and garages using connecting walls. Building lines can potentially also be set-back or projected forward to create emphasis or visual interest, if required, while maintaining its continuity.

3.14.12 It may not always be appropriate to provide continuous frontages and strong building lines. Some village settings, settlement edges or low density locations may require a softer, loose knit pattern of development where the built form is a less dominant element of the street scene. An assessment of the context will help inform the appropriate approach.

3.14.13 The continuity of the street should be informed by its context, character and function within the street/place hierarchy.

Successful places:
- Reinforce and define the street by relating buildings to a common building line.
- Vary the degree of continuity according to context and character.
- Utilise set-backs to soften the building line and projections to create visual interest or emphasis to a building or location.

A continuous building line clearly defines the frontage

A semi-continuous frontage creates enclosure by sitting houses towards the front of the plot (Courtesy of Davidsons Group Ltd)

A village infill site with an informal character and loose knit pattern of development. Here a strong building line and continuous frontage would be inappropriate.

A loose knit semi-continuous frontage
3.14 Frontages

**Successful Places: Place Making Principles**

**Right:** The layout of frontages can have a major influence on the degree of enclosure and the character of the street.

- **A continuous street frontage creates a clearly defined edge to the space**
- **Informal organic frontages in a village setting**

**Frontage Layout Options**

- Regular/flush/continuous
- Regular/shallow projections
- Indented
- Discontinuous
- Informal/organic semi continuous
3.15 Enclosure

3.15.1 Street Enclosure

Streets and spaces should be enclosed by appropriately scaled buildings.

3.15.2 Streets and spaces are defined by the buildings at their edges. Their level of enclosure is determined by the width of the space and the relative height of the adjoining buildings.

3.15.3 Enclosure influences the character of a place and contributes to its sense of place. Good enclosure is achieved by ensuring that the height of the adjoining buildings is proportionate to the size and significance of the street or space.

3.15.4 Tightly enclosed spaces will have an intimate character. Larger and more important spaces generally require larger buildings to adequately enclose them. Whereas large spaces enclosed by small buildings appear weakly defined, often lack containment and a sense of place.

3.15.5 The scale of buildings and the width of the street contribute to legibility by reinforcing the relative importance of key places and routes within the overall place hierarchy.

3.15.6 The level of enclosure also needs to be considered in relation to what is appropriate in the context as well as amenity e.g. loss of privacy, light and over-dominance.

Our interest is in ‘urban architecture’ – that is buildings and open space considered as a totality.

Urban Design Compendium 1 (2007)
3.15.7 Boundaries

**Boundaries should be appropriate to their location, strengthen distinctiveness and reflect the characteristics of the local context**

3.15.8 Where buildings are set back from the street the plot boundary should be clearly defined. A clear vertical boundary provides a good distinction between public and private space and supports privacy by creating a defensible area between the dwelling and the street.

3.15.9 Boundary treatments can also have a significant influence on local distinctiveness and character. Local materials, details and traditions can make a big difference to the look and feel of the place, whereas inappropriate boundary treatments can undermine its character.

3.15.10 The nature and materials of front boundary treatments should reflect the context and character of the setting. Urban locations will have urban types of boundary treatment, like railings. Rural areas will have boundaries like stone walls and/or hedges.

3.15.11 Timber fences to frontages, or in visible gaps between buildings or on exposed flanks form less robust boundaries, are generally uncharacteristic in most settings and should normally be avoided.

**Successful places:**
- Provide robust boundary treatments to create defensible spaces that distinguish between public and private realm.
- Vary boundary treatments according to the context and its characteristic edges.
- Draw on local traditions, materials and detailing to strengthen local distinctiveness.
- Avoid lower quality or inappropriate functional boundary treatments in prominent positions like visible front or side boundaries.

![Railings can be appropriate in both urban and rural settings and softened by combining with hedging](image1)

![Modest brick walls and railings reflect their context and provide defensible space to small front gardens](image2)

![A beech hedge provides an informal boundary treatment with an appropriate character given the setting of the house against a village green](image3)

![A visible side wall on a corner plot is finished in local stone to a high standard](image4)

![A hurdle fence in a rural setting provides a rustic boundary between plots where this is visible from the street](image5)
3.15.12 Set-backs

Set-backs from the building line should be determined by the location, context and character of the setting.

3.15.13 Set-backs provide a semi-private space between a dwelling and the street, strongly influencing its character and level of enclosure. They can also have a role in meeting a dwellings’ storage and servicing requirements. To integrate with its context new development should normally reflect the established building line.

3.15.14 Town or village centres may have direct access to the street with little or no set back. Inner urban areas often include modest front gardens (1.5 – 4m) providing a defensible space while maintaining good surveillance of the street as well as opportunities for personalisation. In suburban settings or adjacent to busier roads more generous set-backs (4 - 6m) are generally acceptable, providing greater separation and scope for off-street parking. In more rural or low-density settings these may be increased further if this is appropriate to the context.

3.15.15 Development close to an existing busy and noisy route may need greater separation to assist in mitigating against noise and disturbance from traffic.

Good Practice
Indicative set back distances by location:
- Central (town / village centre): minor or no set back
- Inner Urban: 1.5 – 4m
- Suburban: 4 - 6m
- Rural / very low density: 6m+ acceptable

Successful places:
- Use set-backs to help positively define the character of the street, where appropriate to the character of the place.
- Discretely accommodate storage and servicing requirements.
- Use set backs to provide defensible space.
- Have regard to privacy in the design and layout of ground floor rooms.
- Give careful attention to the design of entrances and thresholds.

A continuous building line set back from an existing busy road to mitigate against noise and disturbance.
3.15 Enclosure

Successful Places: Place Making Principles

An urban street with no set-back from the footway

A central village development with a minimal set-back and robust boundary walls

A suburban setting with deep set backs, frontage parking and open plan frontages with no enclosure

A new village style street with minimal set-backs and distinctive character

Mature trees heighten the sense of enclosure where buildings are set back from the street
3.16 Building Design

3.16.1 Respect the Context

Building forms and details should be appropriate to the local context, their position and role within the place hierarchy and make a positive contribution to the character of the place.

3.16.2 Buildings should be designed with sensitivity to their setting within the local context. They will form part of an existing place and must respect the local characteristics and neighbouring buildings, enriching the quality of the place.

Successful Places: Place Making Principles

- Respect the continuity of the building line.
- Use simple designs similar to local buildings in respect of their forms, heights, widths, scale and proportions.
- Are built from or in harmony with local building materials.
- Reinterpret local building types in a way that contributes to the distinctiveness of the place.
3.16.3 Building Forms

Building and roof forms should be appropriate to their setting and function and support the creation of streets with character.

3.16.4 The plan form of the building influences how it can be arranged within the street and block.

3.16.5 Wide-fronted, shallow-plan buildings can be arranged with flexibility and are capable of providing both continuous frontages with varied street layouts. These forms are often associated with vernacular styles in rural/village locations and can create streets with a more informal, organic layout.

3.16.6 Narrow fronted, deep-plan buildings are efficient in terms of land use and preventing heat loss. They are often associated with urban settings and are suited to creating terraces, straight streets and formality, but are less suited to creating varied layouts.

Sustainable?

Efficient forms: Flats and terrace building forms are more thermally efficient, having less external surface area from which to lose heat.

Semi-detached and detached house types are least efficient in terms of heat loss.

Where units are joined, designing out noise transmission is crucial in order to minimise disturbance and maintain residential amenity and quality of life.

Successful places:
- Utilise building forms that create clear definition and enclosure of the street.
- Use building and roof forms to create character and reflect their context or if appropriate wider setting.
- Utilise forms that support the townscape role of the building.
- Normally, avoid shallow roof pitches (less than 35 degrees) or over dominant roof forms and dormer windows.
3.16 Building Design

Successful Places: Place Making Principles

Good Practice

Depending on the scale and context of the development the range of house types needed to reflect different locations within the street and place hierarchy is likely to include the following:

Linked dwellings that can be joined to form coherent streets and enclosed frontages.

Scale, height & form used for houses intended to enclose spaces or terminate views.

Corner houses that address key corners with active frontages on both streets.

Key groups that can be arranged to give emphasis to important locations.

Mews homes or flats over garages, for use in rear parking courts, narrow or awkward locations or to provide cross streets within larger blocks.

Single aspect dwellings where circumstances restrict residential outlook (limited use only).

Apartments for higher density locations.

3.16.7 Building types and role

Buildings that perform important townscape roles should be designed and detailed to a standard that reflects their status.

3.16.8 The composition of a building’s elevation and its components will determine the appearance, richness and interest of individual façades. This should reflect both the context (see above) and the role the building plays within the place hierarchy, such as visual stops, landmarks and buildings enclosing focal point spaces.

3.16.9 Greater attention to detail, higher quality architectural design, richness and materials will be appropriate for key buildings and focal points to signify their visual and townscape importance. This is not to say that other buildings should be of poor quality.

3.16.10 Standard house types are often not suited to fulfilling different townscape roles and are often used with little regard to their contribution to place making and character, resulting in ‘anywhere’ developments.

3.16.11 It is therefore essential that if standard house types are proposed that these can be responsive to the place, its context and character. This means designing house types that are capable of adaptation to respond to different positions within the street/place hierarchy and reflect the townscape character of the local context. Standard designs from elsewhere will rarely be acceptable without appropriate adaptations.

3.16.12 Over-reliance on a limited number of standard house types should normally be avoided. A range of variant house types will normally be required that are capable of fulfilling different townscape roles and contributing to the distinctiveness and interest of the place.

Successful places:

- Use architecture and form to express the status of key buildings and spaces.
- Carefully site buildings to support the legibility and hierarchy of the townscape.
- Use height, scale and form that is proportionate to the role and townscape status of the building.
- Use of high quality materials, design and detailing.
- Use house types that are capable of adaptation and respond to and reflect the character of the local context.

A key group of buildings work collectively to define the space and create a place within the development.

A simple gable in a prominent townscape position is elevated by the addition of a strong chimney and well proportioned gable windows.
3.16.13 Appearance

**Buildings should provide a visually harmonious composition, informed by their context and should display architectural integrity**

3.16.14 Good architecture brings together proportions, materials, colours and details to create a harmonious appearance. It is not about personal taste but the successful coordination of materials and architectural elements. The focus should be on design quality regardless of style.

3.16.15 Proposals will normally be expected to harmonise with their surroundings, particularly where a distinctive or prevalent character exists. Designs that depart from the prevailing pattern of development will only be acceptable where these can be explained and justified by complementing or enhancing their setting.

3.16.16 Proposals intended to reflect historic styles or details should retain the scale, proportion and integrity of the original and avoid incoherent and unconvincing copies. Mixing architectural styles results in disjointed and inappropriate designs and should normally be avoided.

3.16.17 More contemporary approaches should draw on locally distinctive materials and elements and reinterpret them in a way that provides a connection to the place and avoid ‘anywhere’ developments.

**Successful places:**
- Are informed by and complement their context.
- Are visually harmonious whether contemporary or traditional in design.
- Avoid the arbitrary mixing of architectural styles.
- Possess architectural integrity and avoid using inappropriate or superficial devices.
- Draw on locally distinctive materials and qualities to ground them in their context.

Above: New homes with both contemporary and traditional appearance, respect the scale, traditional building forms and local materials of the existing adjoining townscape.
3.16.18 Detail and richness

*Proposals should provide detail and architectural richness that is appropriate to the role of the building at a scale that reflects its status.*

3.16.19 Details are as important as the large-scale decisions about layout or movement. A lack of attention to appropriate detail can spoil an otherwise well designed scheme and undermine its quality. Details should be considered as an integral part of the building design not as superficial additions.

3.16.20 Where places comprise simple forms with restrained detailing, simple and subtle detailing would be appropriate. This does not mean paring down the details to achieve cost savings, but is about doing those simple details well.

3.16.21 The individual elements of a façade provide visual contrasts and relief (e.g. windows, doors, decorative details). These elements can themselves be enriched (e.g. windows with lintels and cills, brick detailing such as corbelling to eaves and verges, decorative door surrounds etc.) adding further layers of interest to a building as well as reflecting locally distinctive details and building techniques.

3.16.22 Highly visible buildings (e.g. terminating a view) require larger scale elements that can be seen from afar and small scale richness that will be seen close up. The detail should be proportionate to the role and position of the house in the place hierarchy.

3.16.23 The individual elements that make up a building collectively influence the quality of its design. Each component must itself be well designed and arranged as part of a coherent composition. Detailed building elements should be relevant to their context rather than crude stick on additions or standardised ‘one size fits all’ solutions. Drawings of details may be sought as part of a planning application or required by condition.

**Successful places:**

- When using standardised components, make use of the range available rather than repetition of a single element.
- Use contextual clues to develop richness, taking cues from locally distinctive details, traditions and craftsmanship.
- Recycle craftsmanship - where present on site, salvaging and re-using elements of richness from the past, which would otherwise be unaffordable.
- Develop richness at different scales for prominent focal point buildings or those seen at longer distance.
- Ensure windows and doors have sufficient recess to add depth, articulation and avoid flat facades.
- Avoid crude, inauthentic or superficial additions.

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**Useful reference:**

Responsive Environments
Bentley et al. (2005)
3.16 Building Design

3.16.24 Entrances and access

*Entrances should reflect the status and townscape role of the building, draw attention to the way in, be accessible and safe*

3.16.25 Entrances are a major design element of any building. They create the first impression and are experienced by all visitors and users. They identify the way into the building and can also make an important statement about its status and townscape role.

**Successful places:**

- Locate main entrances primarily on front elevations.
- Ensure entrances are appropriate in scale and appearance to the building and reflect its status and townscape role.
- Provide entrances that are visible and accessible with reasonable gradients and an appropriate landing area.
- Ensure front doors are given greater prominence than garage doors.
- Provide safe routes between dwellings and any associated parking.
- Are well lit for comfort and safety.

3.16.26 Aspect

*Buildings should be orientated to ensure that there is sufficient light to habitable rooms and gardens and occupants have a pleasant outlook*

3.16.27 A dwellings aspect and the direction its windows or rooms face affect the internal living conditions, influencing the amount of sunlight and daylight to habitable rooms and gardens as well as the quality of the outlook.

3.16.28 Single aspect and back to back dwellings are unlikely to be acceptable and should normally be avoided. If they face south and west they will be liable to overheat (unless the building is specifically designed to counter this) resulting in an uncomfortable internal environment. If the aspect is north-facing then habitable rooms would never receive direct sunlight.

**Successful places:**

- Avoid or minimise reliance on single aspect dwellings in any scheme and avoid north only facing units.
- Arrange most units to be dual aspect.
- Ensure reasonable levels of daylight to habitable rooms and garden areas.
3.17 Adaptability

3.17.1 Adaptability should be considered as part of the design process. Homes should be capable of meeting the changing needs of their occupants as they age, have children, or use their homes in different ways. This may mean accommodating the needs of a growing family by having somewhere suitable to store a pushchair, providing a space for study or home working, or making adjustments to cope with infirmity or disability.

3.17.2 Choices made early on in the design process and the method of construction have important implications on a building’s adaptability. Future-proofing homes by making them adaptable is inherently sustainable and beneficial for individual householders and communities.

3.17.3 Adaptations usually take the form of either enlargement or internal alteration to suit a particular need. Large floor spaces are generally the most adaptable allowing alternative internal arrangements.

3.17.4Extensions

The potential for a dwelling to be extended should be a consideration at the design stage providing this would be appropriate to the character of the development and its context.

3.17.5Houses with adequate internal space will be less likely to require extension. However, the ability of a building to be extended should be a consideration at the design stage. Terraces and closely spaced semi-detached house types are less able to be extended without compromising neighbour amenity or visual appearance.

Life Times Homes in practice - a cloakroom with pre-installed drainage to allow later conversion to a wet room.

Good Practice: Lifetime Homes Standard

Lifetime Homes is a standard that promotes accessibility and inclusivity in residential design. It comprises 16 criteria that provide a framework for creating both accessible and adaptable homes by enabling occupants to maintain their personal independence.

The Standard anticipates the likely future requirements of occupants and ensures that homes can be adapted over time to meet the range of people’s needs at different stages of life, whether parents with young children or those with mobility difficulties associated with age or disability.

The practical nature of the Standard and the enhanced accessibility provided by Lifetime Homes means that they are helpful in many aspects of everyday life, not just those with more specialist needs. For example, hallways must achieve a minimum width and electrical switches and sockets must be sited in more accessible positions.

Developers are encouraged to build to the Lifetime Homes Standards wherever possible.

Successful places:

- Allow for the potential future extension.
- Adjust the scope for extension according to the character and density of the development and its context.

N/B The Lifetime Homes Standard is only mandatory under the Code for Sustainable Homes when building for Code Level 6 (under Category 7: Health and Well-being). At lower levels of the Code, building to the Lifetime Homes Standard is discretionary.
3.17.6 Roofs

Wherever possible roof spaces should be designed to allow for future conversion into additional accommodation.

3.17.7 Homes with pitched roofs can potentially be converted to provide extra accommodation. This can be facilitated and made more cost effective if the design and construction allows for this possibility from the outset. Measures include an appropriate pitch to provide adequate headroom, non-trussed roof rafters, joist specification that requires minimum reinforcement and the space and layout able to provide an accessible staircase into the roof space. Future conversion would require compliance with the relevant Building Regulations.

Successful places:
- Make sure the construction and geometry allow for easy conversion to a usable space.
- Plan to allow for future fire protected stair access into the roof space.
- Provide adequate height to roof spaces to enable the correct headroom to be achieved.
- Minimise structural constraints such as trussed roof construction methods and include adequate strength to floors for minimal reinforcement.
3.17.8 Potential for mixed uses

In locations where a mixed use function is required or anticipated, a proportion of residential units should be designed to allow for their potential future conversion to non-residential uses.

3.17.9 Where a site is large enough to provide a neighbourhood centre, or in locations where a mixed-use function is expected or desirable in the future, designs should anticipate the potential demand for commercial uses and ensure buildings are capable of conversion to business activities appropriate to a residential area. Single-use blocks will be difficult to adapt in future if this is not considered early on.

3.17.10 The introduction of small-scale, non-residential uses within a larger development can be constrained by the phasing of a scheme. If small-scale commercial uses are unable to be provided early on in the life of a development, designing buildings that are capable of conversion provides a way of incorporating suitable business uses at a later stage.

3.17.11 Likely suitable uses to meet local needs may include convenience shops, small offices, estate agents, pharmacies, hairdressers, hot food outlets, cafes, dentists, surgeries, vets etc. Deliveries, waste storage and removal need to be considered, possibly via a rear service access. Front service access may be acceptable depending on local highway conditions, visual impact and amenity.

3.17.12 Three main factors influence the ability of a building to adapt for change of use:
1. Building depth (affects the provision of natural light, ventilation and any required storage capacity).
2. Access and servicing (affects whether a building can adapt to other uses).
3. Building and ceiling height (floor to ceiling heights particularly at ground floor to allow for suspended ceilings for services).

Successful places:
- Provide increased floor to ceiling heights, particularly at ground floor level, to accommodate the requirements of commercial services.
- Have the potential to provide separate entries from the street to upper floors to enable the vertical mixing of uses within buildings.
- Allow for universal access, including for people with impaired mobility.
- Incorporate good acoustic insulation between units and activities.
- Provide for adequate servicing by vehicles for deliveries, waste storage and collection.
- Configure internal spaces to allow uses and circulation to be easily adapted and use construction methods that enable such changes to be easily implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Typical</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Width of frontage</td>
<td>5.4 – 6m</td>
<td>4.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height (depending on services)</td>
<td>3.0 – 3.8m</td>
<td>2.8 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales : ancillary ratio</td>
<td>50:50</td>
<td>45:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff facilities – likely requirements</td>
<td>1 w.c. &amp; basin (per sex), Changing area, lockers. Rest room &amp; food prep area.</td>
<td>Table 5 Typical small retail / office dimensions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.17 Adaptability

Successful Places: Place Making Principles

Corner Site
Adaptable
Ground Floor
Building Type

The ground floor ‘L’ shape generic plan & envelope allows for residential, office, retail or creche/community use options.
3.18 Materials

3.18.1 Building Materials

Building materials and colours should be chosen for their high quality, to complement site context and to strengthen the local distinctiveness of the area.

3.18.2 The use of locally relevant building materials, techniques and detailing can reinforce local distinctiveness and strengthen the special character and identity of a place.

3.18.3 Materials used in boundaries, elevations and roofs should harmonise with the predominant local character, colour tones and texture where these make a positive contribution to the area. For sites with a weak or indifferent context, materials can be used to help introduce a stronger sense of identity to a place. Contemporary schemes can use traditional materials to create distinctive and innovative designs that also connect with and have relevance to the place.

3.18.4 The number of materials and colours should normally be limited to a small palette range, both within a façade and within the wider street. The arbitrary use of a variety of materials and colours in an attempt to achieve ‘individuality’ should be avoided.

3.18.5 Selection of materials and colours and their distribution across a development should be based upon an understanding of the context and a reasoned approach to the appearance of the scheme as a whole.

Successful places:

- Ensure the choice of materials and colours complements those of the existing setting.
- Use the choice of materials to strengthen character and distinctiveness (typical of the settlement and area of landscape character).
- Avoid the arbitrary use of a wide variety of materials and colours.
- Normally avoid harsh contrasts and garish colours.
- Utilise locally produced traditional materials or recycle and re-use building materials such as stone, bricks and tiles, to help integrate a development into its context (provided these are not taken from walls and structures that are themselves important elements of the areas character).
3.18.6 Integrity and robustness

Materials should be durable, robust and maintainable and chosen with regard to their visual qualities and contribution to the character of the area.

3.18.7 The choice of materials needs to take account of their durability as well as aesthetic considerations and character.

3.18.8 It can be tempting to select materials based on their low cost and ease of maintenance, such as the use of moulded glass reinforced plastic (GRP) features. This can be particularly inviting where houses are to be managed by an external organisation such as a housing association. However, low cost, low maintenance materials and inauthentic ‘stick-on’ additions lack integrity and undermine the quality of place.

3.18.9 New buildings should possess integrity and normally avoid the use of inauthentic materials or imitation features.

3.18.10 Where materials are located on a building is also a factor to be considered e.g. siting painted timber boarding high up on a flatted development makes it inaccessible and difficult to maintain once it begins to deteriorate and likely to lead to its future replacement.

Sustainable materials?

Can the environmental life cycle cost of materials and components be identified?

This should cover:
- the costs of extracting raw materials.
- the renewable nature of raw materials.
- energy costs in the manufacture of materials.
- the environmental costs of transportation to site.
- the ease of re-use and/or recycling.

Further guidance on sustainable construction is available in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Green Guide.

Successful places:

- Use robust, locally relevant materials that will stand the test of time.
- Use and locate materials so they can be easily maintained when they begin to deteriorate.
- Balance considerations of cost and maintenance with the need to achieve visual harmony, quality and integrity.
3.19 Servicing

3.19.1 Practical servicing requirements are a necessary design consideration, but they can impact on the quality of place. Servicing needs are likely to include access for service vehicles, adequate space to store bins and recycling containers, the placement of utility meters and provision of storage for dirty items such as bikes and pushchairs.

3.19.2 Bin storage provision

*Each dwelling should have an adequate storage area for refuse and recycling containers, designed and sited so as not to detract from the appearance of the development and to allow bins to be safely and conveniently taken to the collection point.*

3.19.3 Each local authority has its own refuse collection and recycling system. Table 6 summarises each council’s requirements for the number and type of bins or recycling containers.

3.19.4 Each plot must include sufficient space for the storage of the type and number of containers operated by the waste collection authority. Where bin storage areas are provided for individual dwellings, an area measuring 1.4sqm per bin should allow sufficient space for storage, access and handling of the bin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chesterfield Borough Council</th>
<th>No. of bins</th>
<th>Bin size/ volume (litres)</th>
<th>Communal bin (flats)/ litres</th>
<th>Recommended Carry Distance (BS5906 2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 bin system</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1100 (option to opt for 140l bins for 1 bed units)</td>
<td>Two-wheel containers -15m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black bin residual waste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four-wheeled containers – 10m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green bin green waste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MFS – suggests 30m is also reasonable but recognises the BS Standard guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Bin dry recyclables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bolsover District Council &amp; North East Derbyshire District Council</th>
<th>3 bin system</th>
<th>240</th>
<th>1100 (equivalent to storage for 5 units)</th>
<th>Two-wheel containers -15m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black bin residual waste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four-wheeled containers – 10m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green bin garden waste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burgundy bin dry recyclables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bassetlaw District Council</th>
<th>2 bin system</th>
<th>240</th>
<th>1100 bins for residual and recycling; or Others may have a 240 bin for each flat.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue bin dry recyclables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two-wheel containers -15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green bin residual waste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four-wheeled containers – 10m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contact:** Environmental Services, Waste Management Unit (tel. 01246 345345)

**Contact:** 01246 242424 Street Services (Bolsover District Council)

**Contact:** 01246 231111 Streetscene Services (North East Derbyshire District Council)

**Contact:** Environment Services Department (tel. 01909 534501)
3.19.5 Siting and design
Bin storage areas should be conveniently located to enable bins to be easily moved to the collection point, without the need for bins to be taken through a building (excluding garages, carports or similar external covered spaces). Bin storage within garages is acceptable, provided the garage design is big enough to comfortably accommodate both a vehicle and the required waste storage (see 3.8 Parking).

3.19.6 Waste storage areas located on property frontages are convenient for the purposes of collection but can be visually intrusive and detract from the appearance of the street. Proposals must therefore balance the need for bin stores to be not only convenient and robust, but also visually sympathetic. They should be positioned to avoid or minimise any adverse visual intrusion into the street scene or other publicly visible locations.

3.19.7 Security
Careful consideration should also be given to their positioning and design for reasons of safety and security.

3.19.8 In communal buildings, waste storage chambers provide bin storage for communal waste containers, as either integral or attached annexes or separate buildings. Ideally, they should be accessed externally to prevent access being gained to the building through the waste storage chamber. Where possible, access should also be limited to prevent bin fires.

3.19.9 Communal bin storage areas or compartments should also be well lit, both for both convenience and safety.

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To summarize, the design of bin storage areas should prioritize convenience and safety. When siting and designing bin storage, considerations should include

- Proper location away from street view to avoid visual intrusion.
- Adequate space to accommodate vehicles and waste storage.
- External access to prevent access to the building.
- Good lighting for both convenience and safety.

---

(Refuse storage space) This can be over-designed, and there are many examples of ugly dustbins concealed inside even more ugly bin enclosures - little temples which make an inappropriate celebration out of storing refuse...

Metric Handbook (3rd Ed. 2008)
3.19 Servicing

Successful Places: Place Making Principles

3.19.10 Rear-access paths
In the layout of terraced housing rear-access paths enable the movement of refuse bins, garden equipment etc. without the need to pass through the house. However, they are wasteful of valuable space and often long, narrow, poorly lit and unwelcoming spaces. This discourages their use and can cause bins to be left on frontages, detracting from the street scene. For reasons of safety and security, convenience, character and maximising garden sizes, rear-access paths should normally be avoided.

3.19.11 Where an access path is required this should normally be provided between units below an oversailing storey or ‘ginnel’. These reinforce their privacy and security and are an established feature of the area. They can also be grouped with entrances to form interesting elements and attractive arrangements on a facade.

3.19.12 If rear access paths for multiple dwellings are unavoidable, these should be minimised and their adverse effects mitigated by keeping them short, direct, and serving as few properties as possible. Any boundaries should incorporate open/trellis panels to allow overlooking of the path.

Right: New houses with rear garden access via a shared ginnel avoiding the need for rear access lanes

Far right: Entrances and a ginnel arranged and detailed to form an interesting grouping
3.19 Servicing

Successful Places: Place Making Principles

3.19.13 Bin Carry Distances
Residents should not normally be required to carry waste more than 30m (excluding vertical distance) to a bin storage point.

3.19.14 Where bins are unable to be taken to the edge of the street, for collection (such as flats with large communal bins), waste operatives should not normally be expected to move 4-wheeled containers more than 10m or 2-wheeled containers 15m to the waste collection vehicle (as recommended by BS 5906:2005), although Manual for Streets (2007) indicates that up to 30m can be a reasonable carry distance. If proposals intend to site bin stores that require bins to be carried further than 10m or 15m respectively, the advice of the waste collection authority should be sought to determine if this is acceptable.

3.19.15 Designs should also ensure that waste containers can be left out for collection without unduly blocking the footway or causing an unnecessary obstruction to pedestrians. In some circumstances a specific bin collection area may be necessary to ensure this is managed appropriately.

3.19.16 Developers and their designers are encouraged to liaise with the local planning authority and the waste collection authority to reach a mutually acceptable agreement on waste storage capacity, siting, access and design considerations.

Useful References

BS 5906:2005 Waste Management in Buildings Code of Practice, BSI

Manual for Streets, 2007, DCLG, DoT, WAG


(see Section H6 Solid Waste Storage, ODPM)

Successful places:
- Provide sufficient space to store the type and number of bins and recycling containers provided by the waste collection authority.
- Locate and design storage areas so they are convenient but not visually intrusive.
- Avoid locating bin storage where it will obstruct parking or access.
- Ensure suitable access between bin collection points and service vehicle access.
- Design bin storage areas to be discrete, functional and robust.
- Use ginnel passages between terraced houses (in preference to rear lanes) to provide direct and secure access to gardens and bins.
- Any gates securing an access path should be visible from or close to the street facing that elevation of the property.
- Avoid rear paths as a means of providing rear access to terraced houses but, if unavoidable, minimise the number and extent and mitigate their shortcomings.
### 3.19 Servicing

**Successful Places**: Place Making Principles

#### 3.19.17 Access for service vehicles

_Layouts should facilitate access by service vehicles and be designed so that any turning areas do not dictate the form of layout, but are incorporated within it._

#### 3.19.18 Waste storage and collection regimes affect quality of place by influencing the size and type of vehicles that will require access.

#### 3.19.19 Waste collection requirements should be an integral part of street design and layouts should make provision for public service vehicles (i.e. refuse collection) and general deliveries to gain effective access. However, this should not be at the expense of the quality of place.

#### 3.19.20 The inclusion of turning areas should normally be avoided by designing layouts as through routes. This obviates the need for heavy vehicles to reverse, as reversing is a serious hazard to pedestrians and other road users. If a turning area is required this must not dictate the form of layout (as with a standard turning head) but be incorporated within a space that forms part of the public realm, within which a service vehicle can turn.

#### 3.19.21 Sufficient space for a three-point turn within the turning space is normally desirable; although where turning is likely to be infrequent or where pedestrian and traffic flows are low more complex turning manoeuvres may be acceptable.

#### 3.19.22 Cars parked inconsiderately in turning areas can obstruct service vehicles and cause difficulty with bin collections. The provision of adequate residential parking is therefore an important factor in the design and layout to ensure adequate service access.

#### 3.19.23 Vehicle tracking/swept path analysis should be used to assess the accessibility of layouts and spaces to show that they are capable of accommodating a service vehicle (see Table 7 for refuse vehicle dimensions).

**Successful places:**

- Provide access and turning for service vehicles without being designed with only these needs in mind e.g. within spaces designed as part of the public realm.
- Demonstrate the ability of a space to accommodate a turning service vehicle using swept path analysis.
- Provide reasonable access between waste storage areas and collection vehicles.
- Are robust, fit for purpose and capable of withstanding the demands of heavy vehicles.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Waste collection vehicles should be able to get within 25m of the waste storage point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gradients should not exceed 1:12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There should be no more than three steps to negotiate for waste containers up to 250 litres (ideally there should be none) and no steps where larger waste containers are in use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The maximum reversing distance for service vehicles is 12m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle Type/Model</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
<th>Gross Weight (fully laden)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chesterfield Borough Council</strong></td>
<td>Dennis OLYMPUS - 8x4 MS Chassis</td>
<td>11.430</td>
<td>2.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bolsover District Council</strong></td>
<td>Mercedes Econic 6x2 Mid-steer</td>
<td>10.581</td>
<td>2.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEDDC</strong></td>
<td>Mercedes Econic 6x2 Mid-steer</td>
<td>10.581</td>
<td>2.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bassetlaw District Council</strong></td>
<td>Mercedes Econic 8x4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>2.530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7** Service Vehicle Dimensions by waste collection authority (largest vehicle used is shown)
Cars parked within a turning head cause an obstruction to service vehicles needing to turn.

Streets and turning areas must be tested to ensure they are capable of accommodating large service vehicles.

Vehicle tracking used to demonstrate that a refuse collection vehicle is able to turn within a focal space rather than a standard turning head arrangement. (Drawing courtesy of Pinfold Securities and David Black, Architect)
3.19.24 Storage of dirty items

Dwellings should be provided with an area suitable for storing dirty items, appropriate to the size and type of accommodation.

3.19.25 The inclusion of adequate storage space is essential for the convenience and running of any home. This should include space for storage of outside items such as bicycles, pushchairs, shopping trolleys, garden tools and so on.

3.19.26 The location and amount of this type of storage will vary depending on the nature and size of the dwelling. Often this is most appropriately located in outbuildings, although the dimensions of garages should be able to accommodate both a car and storage.

3.19.27 Where there is no convenient access to secure external storage, outside items may potentially be stored internally. This should be in addition to normal domestic storage space. For example a utility room could also serve as an area of dirty storage, if it is of sufficient size to act as both a store and still remain functional.

3.19.28 For flats, bicycle and pushchair storage in communal stores should be weather protected, easily accessible, safe and personalised wherever possible. It should not be located in habitable rooms or on balconies.

Successful places:
- Provide adequate dirty storage to meet the likely needs of the household.
- Ensure external dirty storage is weather protected, accessible, safe and secure.
- Provide some additional space for internal dirty storage areas where it cannot be accommodated outside.
3.19.29 Utility meters

3.19.30 Utility meters are a necessary but often unsightly feature of modern residential developments. Meter boxes should normally be positioned discretely on an outside wall so they are accessible without the need to enter the dwelling.

3.19.31 For reasons of safety and security the siting of utility meters should be on the public side of any side/rear fences or gates. Where meters can only be positioned on visible elevations they must be sited to minimise their prominence and factory finished in a colour that complements rather than stands out from the background materials.

3.19.32 In the case of multi-occupancy developments, where possible utility meters should be located on the ground floor between access controlled doors (air lock system) so that access can be restricted to the meters.

3.19.33 Utility meters must be positioned discretely and coloured so they do not appear dominant or detract from the appearance of the building or development.

**Successful places:**
- Position meter boxes with consideration to minimising their visual prominence and impact.
- Finish meter boxes in a colour that blends in with chosen background material and colour.
- Locate utility meters having regard to safety and security considerations.