

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
Sustainable Urban Design Standards: Urban Design

SPG 1a Design Guidance and Design Statements

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In assessing the urban design elements of schemes for new development, alterations and extensions, the Council will have particular regard to the following: adopted Haringey UDP (1998) Policies DES 1.1 –1.11 (inclusive), DES 4.1 –4.2 (inclusive), DES 5.1 – 8 (inclusive) Haringey UDP First Deposit Consultation Policies UD1, UD3 and UD4, SPG 1 c and this supplementary guidance.
- 1.2. Supplementary guidance is provided below regarding the following:
- Urban design guidance
 - Specific guidance on design statements

2. URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

- 2.1. Guidance, in this section, is provide below on the following aspects of urban design, many of which are inter-related:
- A. Context
 - B. Urban grain and enclosure
 - C. Building lines
 - D. Form, rhythm and massing
 - E. Layout
 - F. Height and scale
 - G. Landform, landscaping, trees and biodiversity
 - H. Fenestration
 - I. Architectural style detailing and materials
 - J. Historic heritage
 - K. Living frontages
 - L. Public realm
 - i. Design of Public Open Space
 - ii. Public Open Spaces
 - iii. Corners
 - iv. Pedestrians and Cycle Routes
 - v. Public Art

- vi. Mixed Uses
- vii. Safety and Security
- viii. Street Furniture
- ix. Street Trees
- M. Strategic views and identified local views
- N. Access to the site
- O. Privacy and amenity of occupants of neighbouring buildings
- P. Other Design Guidance
- Q. Additional Sources of Design Information

A. Context

- A.1. Any scheme needs to have regard to the physical and social dynamic character and setting of the local area within which it is situated.
- A.2. New development should aim to respect the form, structure and urban grain of the locality, taking into account local distinctiveness (including materials and features), and create a new and interesting public face.
- A.3. Context, according to the "Urban Design Compendium" ¹ prepared by Llewelyn Davies for English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation, is an area's "natural as well as human history; the forms of the settlements, buildings and spaces; its ecology and archaeology; its location, and the routes that pass through it. Context also includes people, the individuals living or near an area and how communities are organised so that citizens become real participants in the projected development".
- A.4. It also involves being aware of a schemes potential inter-relationship with the public realm so that, for example, the scheme provides for adequate refuse storage and collection facilities at the design stage so as to avoid rubbish being stacked or spilling onto pavements. (See also the "Public Realm" section below and also SPG 8b: Waste and Recycling).

B. Urban Grain and Enclosure

- B.1. New development should take into account the relevant urban grain i.e. the pattern of arrangement and size of buildings and their plots and the size of street blocks and junctions.
- B.2. In general new development and infill buildings should create, preserve or enhance enclosure to the street scene and create enclosed overlooked urban spaces. Developments should aim to create or follow either an

¹ "Urban Design Compendium", prepared by Llewelyn Davies for English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation (available from English Partnerships at 110 Buckingham Palace Road SW1W 9SB Tel: 020 7730 9399)

urban form of enclosure in which buildings dominate, or a rural form of enclosure dominated by trees and planting.

- B.3. Where a wooded or rural form of enclosure to the street (and also to off road spaces such as the Parkland Walk) survives, this will almost always be of great value and should be carefully protected, in particular by limiting any increase in the dominance of built form over trees and planting.

C. **Building Lines**

- C.1 New buildings should generally follow the front and rear building lines of adjacent properties. Where a number of properties share common front building lines, undue projection is likely to undermine the uniformity regularity and coherence of the street scene.

D. **Form, Rhythm and Massing**

- D.1. The form, rhythm and massing of the buildings should reflect important features in the surrounding buildings. Strong elements such as gable roofs or bay windows may be very important to the townscape of an area and may offer a basis for a good design solution which fits in to the neighbourhood.
- D.2. Developing sites piecemeal with little regard for the form of surrounding development has, in many cases, led to a loss of defined character and a fragmented urban form.
- D.3. Large areas of parking or servicing uninterrupted by landscaping should be avoided. A dull poorly designed rectangular box would not be considered a positive contribution in an area of ornate late Victorian villas. Large areas of parking or servicing uninterrupted by landscaping should be avoided.

E. **Layout**

- E.1. Developments should not prejudice the satisfactory development or redevelopment of adjoining land, or which fail to make optimum use of the land available, leaving as a result, small or isolated pieces of land. Proposals should not prevent the satisfactory development of adjoining land by restricting suitable access, building too close to the boundary, or prejudice the complete development of the site.

F. **Height and Scale**

- F.1. Development should be in scale with the adjoining buildings, and in proportion to the average street width as defined by building frontages.

Where uniform building height is part of the character of a street it will not normally be appropriate to permit abrupt variations in the general roof line or eaves line, while in other areas irregular building height might be acceptable

- F.2. Development should also be designed to reflect the scale and bulk of neighbouring development. In general, frontage length should not be excessively long and should generally be in proportion to building height. Extensions or alterations to buildings should be subordinate in scale to the original building and should respect its architectural character. Thus the alteration or extension should either fit in to the character of the house, or if in contrasting design, should by its independence and smallness of scale not undermine the architectural effect of the whole. The development should not undermine existing uniformity of the building or row, and should not over balance or dominate existing features important to the building. For example, to ensure subordination, full width rear extensions are not normally considered acceptable and they should not extend more than two thirds the width of the rear of the house and should remain at least one storey below eaves level. In terms of depth of rear extension, they should not normally extend beyond 3 metres (10 ft.) for terraced houses and 4 metres (13 ft.) for semi-detached or detached houses from the rear wall of the house.
- F.3. In terms of dormers, a dormer should not undermine the sweep of a roof. Dormer windows or roof extensions projecting above ridge height and 'wrap around' roof extensions will normally not be acceptable.

G. Landform, Landscaping, Trees and Biodiversity

- G.1. The relative land levels and other landform features need to be taken into account in the design of the development. Landscaping to a large extent can have a significant impact on the visual success or failure of a building, and its subsequent enjoyment by its occupants, owes much to the setting provided by soft and hard landscaping. The greening effect can also have a health impact in that trees absorb CO₂ during the day.
- G.2. Landscaping schemes should provide a suitable and pleasant setting for the proposed development, and contribute to the street scene. Schemes should normally include details of:
- Tree planting and protection of existing trees (including street trees).
 - Ground and shrub cover, hard surface and paving, grass verges.
 - Adequate lighting (without causing light pollution) and continuity of fencing or walling.
 - Boundary treatments comprised of materials or finishes which reduce the likelihood of graffiti.

- Adherence to the principles of designing out crime.
- Landscaping of parking areas.
- Opportunities for nature conservation and habitat creation
- Provision of amenity space.
- Pedestrian linkages with surrounding landscape features of natural or ecological interest.
- Maintenance details
(See also SPG 8d: Biodiversity, Landscaping and Trees).

H. Fenestration

- H.1. Fenestration pattern (including window size, proportion, shape, positioning, glazing bar detailing and cill depth) can be a critical element in the appearance of a building.
- H.2. In terms of alterations to existing buildings, new windows (particularly as part of roof extensions), should normally be subordinate in size to the main windows, whilst following vertical window positioning. They should be constructed of materials to match those existing (e.g. timber sashes) and thus normally those constructed of UPVC, aluminium or other non-traditional materials or of a design out of character with the building in question will not be acceptable. Additional or enlarged windows may be appropriate providing that they do not harm the architectural integrity of the building, that they follow the original pattern and materials and they do not create problems of overlooking. See section in this document on Privacy.
- H.3. Double glazed sash windows require the use of thicker glazing bars which detract from the appearance of traditional buildings and are thus unlikely to be acceptable. (Similar, and often more economical, solutions to heat loss can be achieved through installing secondary glazing).
- H.4. Dormer windows should have regard to the building's fenestration pattern and detailing below. They should be subordinate to the roof, being small enough to preserve the dominance of the main pitch and its silhouette and be in keeping with the character size and scale of the building as a whole. They should be set well within the slope of the roof away from the eaves and ridge, the flanks should be set well in from any gables or party walls and the dormer should not straddle any hip line. They should not generally be located on the front elevation except where front dormer windows are a contemporary feature on neighbouring properties.

I. Architectural Style, Detailing and Materials

- I.1 Design detail is especially important where it enables the building to conform to the distinctive character of the local area, or to the success of the building within its setting. Details may include small projections, the degree of

ornamentation, brickwork, the linking of special features with those of adjoining buildings, or the continuation of brick walls and fences.

- I.2 In areas where certain materials predominate, such as a certain colour of brick or slated roofs, it would normally be expected that new development would use similar materials. In less defined areas with more diverse materials a strong building can use sensitive materials to integrate an area giving new definition and strength.
- I.3 Materials ideally should be from sustainable sources and be environmentally friendly in other respects. (For further details see SPG 8b: Materials).

J. **Historic Heritage**

- J.1. All developments which involve a listed building or its setting or locally listed buildings or properties within a conservation area or an area of archaeological interest will need to take special account of this heritage factor. (For details see Chapter 11, Conservation, of the First Deposit Consultation UDP and SPG 2: Conservation and Archaeology).

K. **Living Frontages**

- K.1. All development should create a public face at ground floor, street frontage level. This is helped by having perimeter blocks i.e. dwellings which face outwards towards the edge of the block and the public realm. Doors and windows enhance human scale and provide surveillance and safety. Doors also create a physical human sized link between the development and the street. (See also the “Public Realm” section below).
- K.2. Dead frontages, such as uninterrupted brick flank elevations, can also become targets for graffiti.
- K.3. Privacy also needs to be taken into account so that, for example, residential developments should incorporate overlooked private front gardens (generally at least 3 metres deep) as 'defensible space'.
- K.4. Secluded niches in ground floor street elevations should be avoided as they provide opportunities for crime.

L. **Public Realm**

- i. ***Design of Public Space*** - Where development affects the character of public spaces (including principal facades, potential alterations to street furniture, or other publicly visible development) should preserve and enhance the character of the public space and form of enclosure of the street-scene. New development should aim to respect the form, structure and grain of the

locality, and create a new and interesting public face. The following matters should be taken into account:

- ii. **Public spaces** - Public spaces should be retained, enhanced and create overlooked pedestrian public spaces, such as squares and pocket parks. In proposals for extensive development, opportunities should be taken to create such new public spaces. New development to existing squares should enhance the sense of enclosure filling any gaps and maintain established rhythms in the perimeter such as height, fenestration pattern, roof line and style, materials and colour.
- iii. **Corners** - Corner sites, in particular, can often provide an opportunity for defining streetscape and area character. Edges of built areas offer opportunities for visual landmarks, external corners can be turned by rounded towers and horizontal elements such as brick bands or cornices can 'close' internal corners.
- iv. **Public Art** -in new or existing schemes adds diversity to the Borough and to individual developments, whether on site or in the immediate vicinity. Careful integration of art within a development and linking it to the public realm has advantages for the developer, users of the facility and for passers by. Public art can enhance a building and its environs by promoting local character and identity, by making a development more user -friendly and thereby increasing its prestige, by being part of an urban design strategy and helping promote further improvements to environmental quality and by assisting long term urban regeneration.
- vi. **Mixed Uses** - The Council will encourage variety and appropriate mixed land use, where this contributes to the vitality of areas and is not contrary to other policies protecting area character and amenity.
- vii. **Safety and Security** – this can be enhanced by providing 'defensible space'. Good practice will increase overlooking of public areas, prevent creation of dark or secluded areas, provide and maintain adequate lighting, avoid creating enclaves which do not contribute to the security of the area as a whole, make houses and flats secure and increase the vitality and use of public areas by encouraging mixed land use. (See also SPG 5: Safety By Design).
- viii. **Street Furniture** - The design and placing of street lighting, traffic signs and other items of street furniture should be good design and appropriate to the character of the area. Public lighting needs to address the issue of light pollution and where possible take into account opportunities for renewable energy. Continuing maintenance of the street furniture will be expected to be safeguarded and subject to a maintenance management plan. Clutter should be minimised. New street furniture and alterations to existing street furniture

should be placed to allow clear and safe passage for people with sensory and mobility difficulties. In Conservation Areas original street furniture should usually be retained and refurbished. New street furniture should be sensitively sited and of a traditional design compatible with the character of the area. To ensure that the surfaces of roads and pavements are appropriate to the character and period of townscape, the Council will aim to preserve historic street furniture, street materials such as flagstones and cobbles where they survive and other structures if they contribute to local character. The Council will have regard to the advice and policy guidance of English Heritage and others and in particular to the guidelines "Street Improvement in Historic Areas".

- ix. **Street Trees** - The Council will protect street trees and trees in public places. For example, trees that are on the street will be expected not to be adversely affected by any crossover schemes.

M. **Strategic Views and Identified Local Views**

- M.1. Development which falls within the designated zones where the strategic view and its setting is protected will need to ensure that the view is not adversely affected. (See SPG 1 c: Strategic Views). This is also the case for any identified local views.
- M.2. The Council would wish to see photographic evidence to show the impact in the form of photographs and or drawings showing the precise impact using a view taken from a specified height and location. Such views are verifiable (as opposed to photo montages which tend to be much more indicative and less accurate).

N. **Access to and Around the Site and Mobility Needs**

- N.1. Buildings and their surrounds should take into account the need to ensure that people are not be excluded access because of physical restrictions. Detailed guidance on this matter is provided in SPG 4: Access for All – Mobility Standards.

O. **Privacy and Amenity of Occupants of Neighbouring buildings**

- O.1. Detailed guidance on privacy, overshadowing, aspect is provided in SPG 3b. Guidance on light, noise, fume and air pollution is provided within SPG 6c and SPG 9.

P. Other Design Guidance

- P.1. From time to time there may be planning briefs, area strategies, neighbourhood plans or other guidance for individual sites or areas which cover design matters.

Q. Additional Sources of Design Information

- Q.1. Further information on context and other aspects of design can be found in a number of publications including "Urban Design Compendium" prepared by Llewelyn Davies for English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation (mentioned above) and "Better Places to Live: By Design" prepared by Llewelyn-Davis in association with Alan Baxter and Associates.²

3. SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ON DESIGN STATEMENTS

- 3.1. Under Policy UD1, the Council requires a design statement to be submitted with any application for planning or listed building consent, which involves external alterations. This is expected to relate to the scale and nature of the development scheme.

- 3.2. Guidance is provided below on the following matters:

- What is a design statement?
- Components of a design statement
- Researching the feasibility of a scheme before producing the design statement
- Steps for producing a design statement
 - Step 1: Site Analysis – Constraints and Opportunities
 - Step 2: Identify the Design Principles
 - Step 3: Create Design Solutions

3.3 What is a Design Statement?

- 3.4. A design statement is the justification of why a development looks the way it does. It should include a site analysis, set out the design principles, produce design solutions and show how they respond to the context of the site.

- 3.5. Most applicants or their agents already go through the steps set out below before making a planning and or listed building application, but they may not have done so in a formal way. Presenting a design statement with the application can be done in a simple way and may save time and money by avoiding the need for later amendments. It can also be used as a negotiating tool with the Council,

² "Better Places to Live: By Design" prepared by Llewelyn-Davis in association with Alan Baxter and Associates (available from The Customer Services Department, Thomas Telford Ltd, Units I/K, Paddock Wood Distribution Centre, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6UU Telephone No 0207665 2464 ISBN 0 7277 3037 1

during the design process and help to minimise any potential delays in processing the application.

3.6 Components of a Design Statement

3.7. The design statement will include a written statement, the length and complexity of which will reflect the size and nature of the site and the type and scale of development proposed. For example, it may be just a paragraph for a single storey rear extension to a property outside a conservation area).

3.8. In addition to the written statement it may be illustrated by: -

- Explanatory plans and elevations (if relevant, extending some way beyond the site)
- Boundaries in order to show the relationship of the proposal to its surroundings.
- Photographs of the site and its surroundings.
- Perspective drawings and annotated sketches.
- If the site is particularly complex then it may be helpful to produce three-dimensional drawings or an architectural model.

3.9 Researching the Feasibility of a Scheme before Producing the Design Statement

3.10. A good starting point is for applicants or their agents to:

- Find out if the site has any planning history in terms of previous planning applications or appeal decisions.
- Study the existing UDP and First Deposit UDP Review policies which will give an indication of the type of development, that may be acceptable on the site. It will also indicate if the site is within a special area, such as a conservation area.
- Study the design statement components above, in this SPG.
- Study the sustainability checklist items in SPG 9.
- If once all the available information is assessed, the applicant wants to proceed with the scheme then the three steps below, for producing a design statement should be carried out.

3.11 Steps for Producing a Design Statement

3.12. The following three essential steps to the production of a design statement are suggested: -

Step 1: Site Analysis – Constraints and Opportunities

3.13. This should be a factual record of the site and the surrounding area and may include annotated maps, drawings and/or photographs. The analysis should include: -

- A brief history of the site, what it has been used for, and any possibility of contamination should be noted.
- The size, shape, orientation and topography of the site, including cross sections where there are any significant changes in level.
- The location, condition and importance of any existing buildings and structures on the site.
- Existing landscape features, such as trees, hedges, ponds, streams, and boundary treatments.
- The presence of protected species and wildlife habitats.
- The character of the surrounding area. This should include landscape character, land use, form, urban grain, materials used and height of buildings.
- Any features which make the area distinctive (including any historical or architectural buildings or structures)
- Important views, both of the site and from within it.
- Access to the site including road and footpath layout adjacent to it.
- North point and prevailing wind direction.
- Any habitable room windows facing the site.

Step 2: Identify the Design Principles

3.14. The design principles will stem from a mixture of sources. The applicant's development objectives and market forces will need to be considered against the policy context and site analysis. This section should be seen as a way of structuring and informing the design process and may include some or all of the following: -

- The national, strategic and local policy background including any constraints or designation in the UDP and any SPG guidance
- Development objectives, e.g. accommodation requirements, number of units.
- The constraints and opportunities of the site, which will have been identified in the site analysis.
- Impact on neighbours e.g. loss of light, overlooking, noise etc.
- Public and private space.
- Access, vehicular, cyclist, pedestrian and for the less mobile.
- Impact on travel patterns.
- Potential for any other sustainable development components, e.g. for biodiversity, renewable energy etc (see Sustainability Checklist)

Step 3: Create Design Solutions

3.15. There will often be several design options but whichever one is chosen it must incorporate and respond to the design principles from Step 2. An explanation of how this is achieved will be an important part of this section. Thus a design statement is not simply a justification for a pre-determined design solution. It may be helpful to discuss the preferred design solution, at a pre-application meeting with a planning officer before submitting any formal application.

This SPG is being consulted on as part of the Haringey UDP First Deposit Consultation. As such, it is a material consideration in determining planning applications.