

- INTRODUCTION TO THE IHCA DESIGN GUIDE -

This Design Guide provides practical design guidance for use in the IHCA and associated conservation areas, based on the policy and design guidance contained in the IHCA Management Proposals SPD.

The Design Guide will be used to interpret and apply LDF, Local Plan and national planning policy on design matters, with the aim of securing good new development, which is comprehensively designed to protect and enhance the sense of place, local distinctiveness and particular characteristics that have been identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

INTRODUCTION TO THE IHCA DESIGN GUIDE

Why produce a design guide for the IHCA?

National planning policy on design and planning:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
Paragraph 36

“Planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access... based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics”

PPS1

Key principle (iv), paragraph 13

“Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings, in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted”

PPS1

paragraph 33

“Good design ensures attractive, useable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning”

PPS12 Local Development Frameworks

“LDDs relating to specific areas could usefully inform the implementation of strategic design policies by including design policies that relate to local conditions and objectives”.

Objective 1: Aims of the IHCA Conservation Area Review

The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area review will ensure that the conservation area, including the canal corridor, is developed and conserved in a way that reflects its heritage value and preserves or enhances its character and appearance. It aims to:

1. feed into strategic decision making, in terms of the emerging LDF, by ensuring that the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area is understood and taken account of when developing a strategic vision and sites allocations for the District;
2. provide practical policy guidance and design advice, to ensure a targeted approach to Development Control decisions, by informing the application and interpretation national planning policy and broader Development Plan policies within the conservation area and on sites affecting its setting;
3. promote and inspire design excellence and the preservation of the buildings and structures which make this area distinctive, to ensure that a high quality built environment plays a key role in the regeneration of the industrial Stroud valleys.

Objective 2: Core objective of the IHCA Management Proposals SPD and the supporting Design Guide

To encourage creative, innovative and attractive design solutions, which

1. address the issues and pressures that have been identified as affecting the historic character and visual qualities of the conservation area;
2. produce vibrant and viable new development and contribute to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area.

PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN GUIDE

- 1.1 Stroud District Council expects that all development proposals within the Conservation Area shall show that the development will function well, in addition to being attractive and responding to the existing character of the area. To that end, the **IHCA Conservation Area Management Proposals Supplementary Planning Document** (SPD) sets out two objectives (see previous page) for the Conservation Area review and the policy and design guidance that emerges from it.
- 1.2 The aim of the IHCA Design Guide is to ensure that nationally recognised principles of good urban design – the making of successful places – can be applied in a way that is particular to this conservation area. The design framework places a particular emphasis on character and appearance and on local distinctiveness (the things that make the IHCA what it is, and different from anywhere else).
- 1.3 The Design Guide will be adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Advice, in support of the IHCA Management Proposals SPD. Supplementary Planning Documents expand upon or add details to policies laid out in development plan documents (or saved policies in the existing Local Plan). SPDs have the flexibility to use illustrations, text and practical examples to expand on how the authority's core policies can be taken forward. In other words, an SPD should demonstrate how the local authority expects that its policies will be fulfilled, and how they should be interpreted. The policy guidance contained in an SPD has considerable weight, and will be referred to when making planning decisions. This also makes it a material consideration in planning appeals.
- 1.4 The IHCA Design Guide supports the Policy and Design Guidance points (**IHCA PDG1 – PDG42**) contained in the SPD, acting principally as amplification of saved Local Plan policies **BE5, BE6, BE7, BE10, BE11** and **BE12**. These policies relate to new development and changes of use in conservation areas or affecting the setting of a conservation area or listed building, and to alterations and extensions to listed buildings or unlisted buildings in conservation areas (see Chapter 3, paragraph 3.11 of the SPD).
- 1.5 In addition, the IHCA Management Proposals SPD and the IHCA Design Guide may prove helpful when applying other saved Local Plan policies that make a direct link to heritage conservation or to character and appearance – namely, **BE14, BE16, BE17, NE6, NE8, NE10, NE12** and **HN8**.
- 1.6 As the District's Local Development Framework progresses, these saved Local Plan policies will be superseded by policies contained in Development Plan Documents (DPDs), to which the SPD and its supporting Design Guide will then become supplementary.
- 1.7 Stroud District Council is committed to the high standards of urban design and building design that are established in national Planning policy – in particular, **PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development** and its companion guide, **By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice** – as well as policies SD3, SD4, ENV1 and ENV5¹ of the Draft (Proposed Changes) **RSS for the South West**, which deal with quality of design, planning in an historic environment, and the protection and promotion of local distinctiveness, character and appearance.
- 1.8 As **Objective 1** explains (see preceding page), two of the overarching aims of the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Review, and the resulting Conservation Area Statement are:-
- “To provide practical policy guidance and design advice, to ensure a targeted approach to Development Control decisions, by informing the application and interpretation of broader Development Plan policies within the conservation area and on sites affecting its setting”;
 - “To promote and inspire design excellence and the preservation of the buildings and structures which make this area distinctive, to ensure that a high quality built environment plays a key role in the regeneration of the industrial Stroud valleys”.

¹ Refer to APPENDIX 4 of the IHCA Management Proposals SPD

- 1.9 The purpose of this Design Guide is to ensure that, where the principle may be acceptable, development is executed in such a way that the special interest, character and local distinctiveness of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced. Many issues already identified through character appraisal and the examination of issues and pressures as part of the conservation area review, revolve around design. Poor build quality, inappropriately sited or badly scaled development can be as harmful to the character and special interest of the conservation area as wholesale demolition of historic structures can be:
- 1.10 The conservation of historic buildings and structures is only part of what conservation area status is designed to achieve: the sense of place, local distinctiveness and particular characteristics of a conservation area can also be protected and, potentially, enhanced by good new development.
- 1.11 The Industrial Heritage Conservation Area covers a large swathe of the District, including some areas of land that are amongst the most highly pressurised in the District. Many sites in the conservation area are likely to come forward with proposals for redevelopment in the future. The Conservation Area Appraisal has identified that there are sites where development or significant alteration would not be acceptable, because such work would cause harm to the intrinsic character or special interest of that part of the conservation area.
- 1.12 However, there will be sites where development could bring about preservation/and or enhancement of the area's character or appearance, as well as boosting the physical, social and economic regeneration of the locality.
- 1.13 A key function of the Design Guide must be the reconciliation of different (sometimes conflicting) pressures and interests in the Conservation Area, and particularly the Cotswold Canals corridor, which is under heightened development pressure. The Design Guide is a meeting point of 'conservation' and 'change'; it aims to bridge the gap that is often perceived to exist between the presumption in favour of development (set out in planning legislation and policy) and the presumption in favour of preservation (which is a core principle of conservation planning). Conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives and should not generally be seen as in opposition to one another².
- 1.14 Due to particular development pressures in the canals corridor, a significant emphasis is naturally placed in the Design Guide on tackling design issues facing the canal corridor. However, it is not a guide aimed exclusively at the Cotswold Canals project, or even any associated development and regeneration. This guidance applies to the whole IHCA and the seven other conservation areas covered by the review.
- 1.15 The Design Guide has partly grown out of a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) requirement for the Cotswold Canals corridor: HLF funding for the canals' restoration was originally conditional upon Stroud District Council producing a set of design guidelines relating to development within the canals corridor, against which future development proposals could be assessed. Although this is no longer a formal condition of the funding, Stroud District Council recognises that there is a need for robust planning policy guidance, which can specifically address the issues and pressures facing the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area and the other conservation areas included in the IHCA review.
- 1.16 The concept of design guidance for the Cotswold Canals corridor has been expanded and developed into this Design Guide for the wider IHCA, focussing on ways to approach local distinctiveness in new design, and acting as a practical supplement to the policy and design guidance contained in the IHCA Conservation Area Management Proposals SPD.

² PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment, paragraph 1.4

The Design Guide's approach to design guidance: a core objective

- 1.17 Design is not just about aesthetics, style and the outward detailing of a building. As CABE (The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) explains –

“Appearance is part of design, but it is defined by PPS1 as much broader. Design is about how places work, fit together, and the quality of life they support ... Design is about responding to the existing character, movement patterns, appearance and other attributes of the area. It is about how people will be able to use the development when it is built. At a more detailed level, design addresses matters of massing and bulk, external materials and landscaping, inclusive design and how the orientation of proposed buildings and their relationship to public spaces would provide adequate natural surveillance to help make a safe, secure environment.”³

- 1.18 A key principle of PPS1 (iv, paragraph 13) is that Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings, in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.

- 1.19 The Design Guide has been developed with the following ethos very much at its heart:

“Good urban design is rarely brought about by a local authority prescribing physical solutions, or by setting rigid or empirical design standards, but by approaches which emphasise design objectives or principles”⁴

- 1.20 It is not the intention to create a rigid design ‘code’, with a series of specific micro-policies and constraints. Instead, the Design Guide has developed around the core principle that development should function well, in addition to being attractive and responding to the existing character of the area. This principle dovetails with the core objective of the Design Guide and Management Proposals SPD (see **Objective 2** at the beginning of this chapter):

To encourage creative, innovative and attractive design solutions, which

- address the issues and pressures that have been identified as affecting the historic character and visual qualities of the conservation area;
- produce vibrant and viable new development and contribute to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area.

- 1.21 It is from this core principle and this core objective that the assessment of the design for new development will flow.

³ *Design at appeal – Advice on dealing with design issues within planning appeals.* CABE 2006

⁴ *By Design – Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice* DETR/CABE, 2000

SPD guideline: IHCA - G1: Building in context

1. Proposals for development *must*:

- Demonstrate that character appraisal/context analysis has been carried out for the affected site/building. An explanation of how this has fed into the design process and influenced design choices will often be best expressed through an accompanying Design and Access Statement or Listed Building Consent/Conservation Area Consent justification statement.

2. Proposals for development *should*:

- Address the particular character and special interest of the conservation area, where appropriate making reference to relevant text in the Conservation Area Statement and explaining how this supports the case for the design proposal.
- Demonstrate awareness of the IHCA Policy and Design Priorities (which are set out in Chapter 3 [of the SPD], and examined in the supporting Design Guide) and explain how each Priority that is considered relevant to the site has fed into the design process and influenced design choices. This will often be best expressed through an accompanying Design and Access Statement or Listed Building Consent/Conservation Area Consent justification statement.
- Demonstrate awareness of the IHCA Design Objectives, set out in the IHCA Design Guide, and explain how each Objective that is considered relevant to the site has fed into the design process and influenced design choices, particularly in relation to achieving the IHCA's Design Priorities. This will often be best expressed through an accompanying Design and Access Statement or Listed Building Consent/Conservation Area Consent justification statement.

3. Proposals for development *can*:

- Use the Building in Context Checklist as a prompt during the design process, or as an aid/template for a design and access statement, or as part of a design and access statement to support an application, or pre-application discussion. (Please refer to SPD APPENDIX 5 and Chapter 3 of this Design Guide).

SPD management proposal: IHCA-MP 5: Policy and design priorities

Stroud District Council expects that proposals for development within the conservation area, or affecting its setting, will demonstrate awareness of each of the five Policy and Design Priorities set out in Chapter 3 of the IHCA Management Proposals SPD.

These will be relevant criteria in the assessment of any development proposals in the conservation area, with the aim of ensuring that redevelopment and regeneration will deliver a positive and long-lasting legacy, which reflects the conservation area's heritage value and preserves or enhances its character or appearance.

Please see **Guideline IHCA-G 1** 'Building in Context' for further advice.

SPD management proposal IHCA-MP 6: Policy and design guidance

Stroud District Council expects that proposals for development within the conservation area, or affecting its setting, will pay special attention to all relevant points of Policy and Design Guidance contained in the IHCA Management Proposals SPD.

IHCA **PDG1-PDG42** will be relevant criteria when assessing any development proposals in the conservation area against higher level development plan policies and national/regional planning policy, with the aim of ensuring that redevelopment and regeneration will deliver a positive and long-lasting legacy, which reflects the conservation area's heritage value and preserves or enhances its character or appearance.

The **Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Design Guide** provides practical advice on the application of the 42 points of policy and design guidance contained in the SPD.

Reference should be made to **APPENDIX 3** of the SPD.

USING THE DESIGN GUIDE TO SUPPORT THE IHCA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS SPD

- 1.22 Guideline 1 in the IHCA Management Proposals SPD (**IHCA – G1**) makes a direct link with this Design Guide. The ultimate aim of this guideline, and of Management Proposals 5 and 6 (**IHCA – MP5** and **IHCA – MP6**), is to ensure that development in the conservation area or affecting its setting is “built in context”.
- 1.23 The IHCA conservation area review has, through character appraisal, already identified what it is that gives the area its special architectural and historic interest and has identified distinct ‘**Character Parts**’ – areas within the IHCA study area which display differing or similar characteristics. The canal corridor alone ranges in character from sparsely populated, idyllic, rural extremities to functional, unpretentious industrial areas - with an enormous amount of juxtaposition and variety in between. Over all, the canal itself has a distinctly rural character – even when passing adjacent to intensely built-up areas. Due to the diversity and richness of the conservation area’s built environment, a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to design policy and guidance is not appropriate. The Design Guide, like the other volumes of the IHCA Conservation Area Statement, operates on the basis that it is essential to identify and recognise the distinct characteristics of different parts of the IHCA and canal corridor. Approaches to development and particular design solutions can then be tailored to suit the specific context and circumstances.

Policy and design guidance: the IHCA Design Objectives and “building in context”

- 1.24 The **Industrial Heritage Conservation Area Design Guide** provides practical advice on the application of the 42 points of detailed policy and design guidance contained in the SPD (**IHCA PDG1 - PDG42**, contained in Chapter 3 of the SPD). This guide is about showing how the guidance contained in these points can be applied to suit the specific context and circumstances of the proposed development. The policy and design

guidance is quite flexible, allowing tailored approaches depending on the type of building, the type of use, the particular character and qualities of the surroundings or host building, etc. In all cases, though, the intention is to achieve quality and *good design*.

- 1.25 **Chapters 2 and 3** of this document introduce some of the core concepts that relate to good urban design, and in particular design in an historic context. The **Building in Context Checklist**, mentioned in **IHCA – G1**, is set out in Chapter 3.
- 1.26 Chapter 2 introduces some of the basic ‘building blocks’ of urban design; the remaining chapters of the Design Guide are concerned with ensuring that these objectives and phases of the design process are channelled through an understanding of the particular character and qualities that make the conservation area distinctive, so that its special interest can be preserved and enhanced by new development.
- 1.27 **Chapters 4-8**, therefore, use each of the ‘aspects of development form’, identified in Chapter 2, to look a bit more closely at the diversity of the conservation area’s character and appearance, and provide inspiration for incorporating local distinctiveness at every level of the design process. Each chapter looks at a particular aspect of development form (Layout, scale, appearance and public realm), and is concluded with a set of key questions, taken from the Building in Context Checklist.

The IHCA Policy and Design Priorities

- 1.28 The policy and design guidance contained in the IHCA Management Proposals SPD grew out of five Policy and Design Priorities, which are set out in Chapter 3 of that document.
- 1.29 In order for the IHCA Design Guide to be able to achieve the reconciliation and informed ‘balancing’ of conservation and development interests (as set out in 1.13, above), it is important to understand the sorts of pressures to which the area is subject. During the appraisal of the

Industrial Heritage Conservation Area, five key issues have been identified as being of particular concern. These are already placing great pressure on the character and appearance of the canals corridor and the conservation areas through which it passes.

- 1.30 **Chapter 4** reintroduces the SPD's five Policy and Design Priorities, which have grown out of the appraisal of issues and pressures in the conservation area⁵. The five Priorities have been devised to ensure that development is "built in context", with an awareness of the issues and characteristics that are distinctive to the IHCA, rather than simply applying standard formulaic design solutions. Hence, Chapter 4 attempts to illustrate some of the ways that each of the five Priorities might practically be tackled and applied to different circumstances.
- 1.31 The Design Guide is conceived as an inspirational guide, rather than a 'code', and while it does illustrate various ways in which these Policy and Design Priorities might be addressed, it will not lay down prescriptive rules. The intention is to spark innovative and site-specific solutions, by explaining the issues at the route of each priority clearly.
- 1.32 This format allows a tailored approach. Each case, each site, will need to adopt its own strategy, carefully arrived at in order to achieve the best possible design result and the least harmful impact on the character and historic fabric of the conservation area, as well as being a viable development prospect.

⁵ See VOLUME 1, chapter 12; and chapter 3 and APPENDICES 1 and 3 of the SPD