

- DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND THE DESIGN PROCESS -



Chapter 2 introduces some of the core 'building blocks' of good urban design

Nine DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Character and local distinctiveness
- Diversity
- Continuity and enclosure
- Ease of movement
- Legibility
- Adaptability
- Quality of the public realm

- Quality
- Sustainability

The design process and key ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT FORM

- Layout
- Scale
- Appearance
- Public realm

DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND THE DESIGN PROCESS

What is urban design?

- 2.1 Urban design is the art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities – and the establishment of frameworks and processes which facilitate successful development. As *By Design* says:
- “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” *
- 2.2 In urban design terms, successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities tend to have characteristics in common. These factors have been analysed to produce principles of good urban design – they help to remind us what should be sought to create a successful place. There is considerable overlap between the objectives, and they are mutually reinforcing.
- 2.3 This chapter introduces some of the core ‘building blocks’ of urban design; the following chapters of the Design Framework 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.

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

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- 2.4 **By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice** is the Government’s companion guide to its planning policy PPGs and PPSs. Published in 2000 and produced in conjunction with CABE, *By Design* sets out a series of seven principles or objectives of good urban design.
- 2.5 Stroud District Council expects that proposals for development within the IHCA will address each of these objectives. An awareness of these core urban design objectives is worthwhile, even when preparing or considering proposals for minor development, right down to householder alterations such as extensions. The Design Guide illustrates how these can and should impact on every stage of the design and decision-making process, and how each has a role to play in ensuring 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.

1 Character and local distinctiveness

A place with its own identity

To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

- Distinctive landscapes
- Natural features
- Locally distinctive buildings
- Streets and street patterns
- Special spaces
- Skylines and roofscapes
- Building materials
- Local culture and traditions
- Avoiding standard solutions

2 Diversity

A place with variety and choice

To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

- A mix of compatible uses and tenures
- Variety of layout and building form
- Variety of architectural styles
- Biodiversity
- Mixed communities

3 Continuity and enclosure

A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.

- Streets, footpaths and open spaces overlooked by buildings
- Clear distinction between public and private space
- Avoiding uncharacteristic gaps in the line of buildings along a frontage
- Enclosing streets and other spaces by building and trees of a scale that feels comfortable and appropriate to the character of the space
- No leftover spaces unused and uncared for

4 Ease of movement

A place that is easy to get to and move through

To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

- Density highest where access to public transport is best
- Roads, footpaths and public spaces connected into well-used routes
- Easy accessibility
- Direct routes that lead to where people want to go
- A choice of safe, high quality routes

5 Legibility

A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand

To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.

- Landmarks and focal points
- Views
- Clear and easily navigable routes
- Gateways to particular areas
- Lighting
- Works of art and craft
- Signage and waymarkers

6 Adaptability

A place that can change easily

To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

- Flexible uses
- Possibilities for gradual change
- Buildings and areas adaptable to a variety of present and future uses
- Reuse of important historic buildings

7 Quality of the public realm

A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas

To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

- A feeling of safety and security
- Uncluttered and easily maintained
- Public art which is carefully detailed and integrated
- Suited to the needs of everyone, including disabled and elderly people
- Well-designed lighting and street furniture
- Attractive and robust planting

2.6 In addition to these seven core urban design objectives, Stroud District Council expects that new development will demonstrate a commitment to the following two over-arching objectives. These will be key criteria in the assessment of any development proposals in the conservation area, with the aim of ensuring that redevelopment and regeneration – in particular the Cotswold Canals project – will deliver a positive and long-lasting legacy.

8 Quality

- 2.7 The Cotswold Canals corridor is already valued by many for a variety of reasons – it is a precious local resource. The high quality of the local environment (the wider conservation area, not just the canalsides) must be boosted, not degraded by any development that happens. If the quality of design is high and this is matched by quality of execution and construction, it can stand the test of time and help to enrich the area and improve its liveability.
- 2.8 At the heart of this is the question “do the buildings and spaces show excellence in design, and contribute to local character and distinctiveness, with the prospect of becoming a valuable part of our architectural heritage?”

9 Sustainability

- 2.9 Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 2.10 Development which, for whatever reason, fails to function well and suit its context, produces a burden for the future – someone, sometime will have to re-think, re-develop and dispose of the physical and social consequences of poor development. At a very basic level, poor development is unsustainable.

- 2.11 Buildings that are attractive, robust and adaptable will last long, thus avoiding the need for wasteful demolition and new building; while re-using old buildings is a simple way of achieving sustainability: it saves waste and reduces the need for new building materials.
- 2.12 Growing emphasis on sustainability in building, both at Government and local levels, will present challenges in design terms, which may not be met by traditional brick and block construction. The goal of achieving zero carbon status by 2016, for example, looks likely to involve significant changes to Part L of the building regulations; while the government has published the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’ and a supplement to national Planning Policy Statements (PPS1) ‘Planning and Climate Change’ (December 2007), which sets out how planning should help shape places with lower carbon emissions, and which will be resilient to future climate change (visit www.communities.gov.uk for further information and to view these publications).
- 2.13 The preservation or enhancement of a conservation area’s character or appearance need not be at odds with the pursuit of sustainable development. Part of the role of this Design Guide is to look at ways of balancing the two.

DESIGN PROCESS: ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT FORM

- 2.14 *By Design* identifies a series of design process ‘landmarks’, through which almost any good development proposal passes as it is worked up. This is related to various aspects of development form – from the broad, strategic overview (the basic shape, size and skeleton of the development) to matters of detailing and the choice of materials. Unless these aspects are working together, the core Design Objectives are unlikely to be successful, particularly in the long term. The result is poor, unsustainable, unworkable and unattractive development.
- 2.15 Stroud District Council expects that all proposals in the conservation area, and particularly within the canal corridor, will show that the development will function well, in addition to being attractive and responding to the existing character of the area.
- 2.16 The Design Guide will use these aspects of development form as a basis for providing and discussing possible design solutions, to show how it is possible to build ‘in context’. In the following chapter, Chapter 3, a ‘checklist’ provides some practical prompts to thinking about aspects of development form and the design process.

1 Layout

- Urban structure
- Urban grain
- Landscape and townscape context
- Density and mix

2 Scale

- Density and mix
- Height and massing

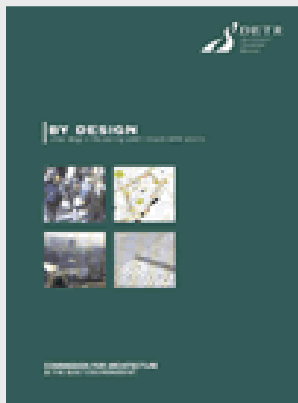
3 Appearance

- Height and massing
- Building form, facade and interface
- Materials
- Details

4 Public realm

- Building form, facade and interface
- Streetscape and landscaping

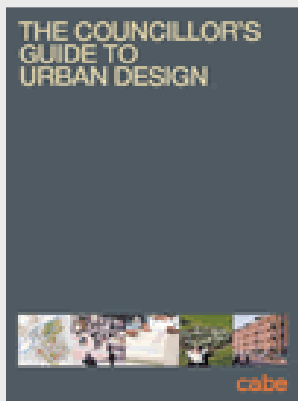
Further information:



By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice [DETR/CABE 2000]

The Government’s companion guide to its planning policy PPGs and PPSs.

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/bydesignurban



The Councillor’s Guide to Urban Design [CABE 2003]

www.cabe.org.uk

2.17 Stroud District Council expects that proposals for development within the conservation area, or affecting its setting, will demonstrate awareness of each of the nine Design Objectives set out in Chapter 2. 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 and appearance in a sustainable manner.

The IHCA Management Proposals SPD says in guideline IHCA-G1 that:

Proposals for development should:

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.

[See the full guideline on Page 13] [Refer to paragraph 4.14, Chapter 4 of the IHCA Management Proposals SPD]