



Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton

Design Part 3: Design of buildings and structures

September 2004

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1. Introduction

This guidance note provides advice on the design of individual buildings and structures, including extensions to and conversions of existing buildings. It sets out the detailed requirements of draft Unitary Development Plan policy DQ1 (Part 3) and draft Policy CS 3 (Part iii) and must be read with Part 1, 2 and 4 of this guidance note along with the relevant settlement character plan.

This guidance note gives advice on how to achieve high quality and attractive and sustainable architectural solutions that are appropriate for your individual site.

2. Context^o

a) The design of your new, converted or extended building must make a positive contribution to its context. You should need to consider how your building will add to the character of the local area and also the effect your building has on existing views or street scenes. The design of it could help to create a new landmark, or emphasise an important junction or space.

b) You can get more advice on designing buildings that are in context in Part 1 of this supplementary planning guidance note 'Key design principles and designing in context'.

3. Basic elements of architectural design

a) The basic elements of design can be summarised as follows.

Form^o: the layout, scale^o and appearance of the development, its individual parts and their relationship with neighbouring buildings, adjacent open areas and the local context.

Function: what the building will be used for and how well it satisfies that use.

Structure: how the building is built, and how this affects its form^o and detailed appearance.

Materials: the materials used, their detailing and how this affects the building's appearance.

Sustainability^o: There are several elements to this:

- Making sure that the building uses fewer natural resources in its construction and when it is in use.

- Making sure that the building meets the financial and economic needs of those who want to use it.

- Making sure that the building meets the needs of everyone who has to use it.

- Making sure that the building improves its surroundings.

b) Personal safety and security should also be taken into account in your design.

c) Your planning application must show you have addressed all these basic elements.

4. Tackling the elements of design

Form^o:

a) A successful design will be in scale with its surroundings, and the parts of the building will be in proportion to each other.

b) There should be a clear and understandable relationship between the various parts of the building. The depth, width and height of its parts should respond to and respect neighbouring buildings and spaces.

c) The form of the building should make a positive contribution to neighbouring spaces. This is particularly important in the case of large buildings or groups of buildings within a single site.

Function:

d) There should be a clear relationship between the arrangement of the spaces and uses inside your building and its appearance from the outside (that is between its form and its function).

e) The design of your building should be indicative of the purpose of the building.

f) Visitors should be able to find the entrance easily and then find their way around inside the building.

g) All parts of the building should be designed to be accessible to all potential users. This will help to make sure



the building can be adapted for new uses in the future.

Structure:

h) The method of construction – for example, whether you use loadbearing masonry or a steel frame should be an integral part of your building’s design, as it will influence the appearance and form of the building. The structure can emphasise the width or height of the external walls and give order to the arrangement of elements such as windows, doors, bays, balconies and rooflines. You must carefully consider the effect the proportion of different parts of the buildings will have on the external appearance of the building.

Use of materials:

i) Your choice of materials - their quality, colour, texture and pattern – is crucial to the appearance of your building. You should choose materials that are long lasting and hard wearing. Take great care with detailing on the outside of the building, using the form, structure and materials to create layers of interest. In general, designs which use a few high-quality materials are more successful than those using lots of different materials.

j) The choice of materials in your design can have an impact on the environment as well as the design of the building. Re-use of brick, stone, slate and timber reduces the amount of waste and cost of new materials. The re-use of materials on site is best.

k) You may be able to use recycled products. For example, recycled plastic can be used for products such as outdoor furniture/fencing and recycled tyres can be used for surfacing.

l) More guidance is given in the Design Guidance Notes (Landscape) and in Part 4: Sustainability and EcoHomes.

m) Lighting should be incorporated into your design to bring buildings to life at night and make them safe and secure. More information is given in Part 4: Sustainability and EcoHomes.

n) The local surroundings may influence the design of new buildings, but avoid copying exactly every traditional detail of existing buildings unless you thoroughly understand the principles of the architecture involved.

o) It is important that the quality of materials used is

reflected in the workmanship and construction methods of the building. Poor-quality workmanship can ruin a scheme, however well it is designed.

Sustainability:

p) You should take sustainability into account at the start of the design process. The design should minimise the negative effect the building has on the environment by using fewer resources and should have a positive effect by improving the surroundings

q) The building should also meet the needs of everyone who has to use it, and be easy to adapt for different uses or ways of using space inside in the future. As part of this, your design should tackle access for all, safety, security, and fear of crime.

r) Your design should be able to meet changing demands and activities without major alterations. The form and structure should be easy to alter in future.

s) When designing a scheme, take account of the cost of running and maintaining the building over the long term to keep costs as low as possible.

t) Your designs should minimise the use of resources and energy. Use your building’s form and the way it faces to exploit the opportunity to use heat from the sun and natural lighting and ventilation. Habitable rooms (such as living rooms, kitchens, office working areas, playrooms) are the most important and should have larger windows on the south side of the building to collect light and heat from the sun. Stairs, lifts, storage, corridors, halls, utility/power rooms and bathrooms/washrooms could be located on the north side. These will generally need fewer or smaller windows, which reduces heat loss.

u) You should consider reducing and recycling surface water run-off by collecting rainwater from roofs and storing for re-use. You should also consider recycling ‘grey’ water from bathroom or kitchen sinks (even in a workplace). This recycled water could be used for watering planted area, washing down some outdoor hard-surfaces, flushing toilets or cooling things like heating elements (but not for drinking or washing). This water recycling is likely to need a specialist system, but in some cases a water butt or storage container may be sufficient

v) We would encourage you to use long-lasting, energy-efficient materials from sustainable sources, and to design your building so it uses as little energy as possible to run.



You should consider using renewable energy (for example, solar water heating, solar panels). Developments of 1000 square metres or more (other than housing schemes) must make sure that 10% of their energy comes from renewable sources. You should see draft Policy DQ1A and the Renewable Energy Information Note for more details.

w) We will encourage innovative designs which make full use of sustainable building techniques.

x) There are other things we would encourage you to do to make your development use fewer resources, even if they do not make a difference to whether or not you get planning permission. They include installing 'low-flush' or 'dual-flush' toilets, choosing energy-efficient electrical goods (even in workplaces), and extra insulation for your building by using certain types of bricks, thicker walls and other more specialist materials, using thicker loft or roof insulation and insulating hot-water pipes or cylinders.

y) If your converted or extended building has wildlife which is protected by law, you should not harm the wildlife or where it lives. If you are replacing an existing building which has protected wildlife, you must provide or replace the same sort of place for it to live. Where possible you should make sure that protected wildlife can use new buildings – or at least some of the buildings in a large scheme - for example by use of 'bat bricks'.

z) For more details on sustainability see Part 4 of this SPG, the 'Sustainability and EcoHomes'.

Safety and Security

aa) The government's good practice guide 'Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention' Home Office/ODPM 2004 may provide helpful information for you.

Glossary

Character: See Local Character.

Context: The wider setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

Form: The layout (urban grain), scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and detail) and landscape of the development, its individual parts and their relationship with neighbouring buildings, adjacent open areas and the local context.

Hard and soft materials: This includes both 'hard' building materials such as bricks, tiles, slates and fencing and 'soft' landscaping such as trees, shrubs and grass.

Layout: How a development or area is set out, as seen from above. There are many different ways development can be laid out (just as there are many ways of laying a table!). So 'road layout' is the way roads look, as seen from above, 'building layout' is the way buildings are set out within a site or along roads, and 'site layout' is where things like buildings, parking area and paths are within a site, for example.

Loadbearing capacity: The amount (weight) of development that a particular piece of land or ground, masonry or structure can support.

Local Character: The overall atmosphere and 'feel' of a place or area, the things which give it an identity, make it different from (or similar to) anywhere else and make it what it is.

Scale: The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, including its height and massing, or the size of parts of a building or its details. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is simply used instead of size.

Sustainability: See Sustainable development.

Sustainable development: Development that helps to ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. A sustainable development:

- means everyone has the opportunity to use it
- is easy and safe to use
- looks nice/attractive
- encourages investment in the area (means jobs are gained not lost)
- reduces the need to use up natural resources (including petrol, stone and energy)
- protects trees, other plants, animals & where they live
- improves the environment



- generally makes things better!

Urban grain: The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent

Further advice and guidance

National design guidance:

'Better Places to Live - A Companion Guide to PPG3', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'Building In Context', available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'Design Review', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'PPG1: General Policy and Principles', available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

'The Urban Design Compendium', available from English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation.

'The Value of Urban Design', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention', available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or the Home Office.

Other relevant supplementary planning guidance we have produced:

- Archaeology
- Providing a choice of travel
- House extensions
- Landscape character
- New housing development

- Sustainable drainage systems
- Trees and development

Sefton MBC information notes:

- Renewable Energy information note
- Landscape design guidance sheets

Useful contacts

Planning & Economic Regeneration Department

(For Bootle, Waterloo, Crosby, Hightown, Maghull and Melling)

Planning Department,
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(For Southport, Formby, and Ince Blundell)

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Community Safety Section

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ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd

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E-mail: acpocpi@acpo.pnn.police.uk
Website: www.securedbydesign.com

Building Research Establishment

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Website: www.bre.co.uk

Commission for Architecture and The Built Environment (CABE)

Tower Building
11 York Road
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Phone: 020 7960 2400
Website: www.cabe.org.uk

English Heritage (North West)

Suites 3.3 and 3.4
Canada House
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Phone: 0161 242 1400
Fax: 0161 242 1401
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Partnerships (North West)

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Phone: 01925 651144
Fax: 01925 411493
Website: www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

Housing Corporation

Maple House
149 Tottenham Court Road
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Email: enquiries@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk
Website: www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

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Website: www.odpm.gov.uk



APPENDIX 1

Statement of public consultation

a) The Planning Committee approved a draft 'Design' planning guidance note for feedback and to help it make decisions about planning applications on 5 June 2002. It was placed on our website later that year.

b) The guidance was discussed at the meeting of the Sefton Agents' Forum which was held in April 2003. Few comments or questions were raised during the meeting.

c) We consulted interested organisations in July 2003. In total, we sent over 600 letters to local agents, developers, housebuilders and other interested groups (such as parish councils). We then consulted with the general public in September and October 2003. We placed adverts in the local press and the guidance was available in the two planning offices and at four main public libraries (the main library at Bootle was closed for repair in 2003).

d) Our consultation procedure is in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 'Development Plans' (PPG12) which stresses the importance of consulting widely if we and the Secretary of State are to rely on Supplementary planning guidance notes to help make decisions about planning applications.

e) We received a number of comments about the guidance from Formby Civic Society, Merseyside Civic Society, Government Office North West, Hitchcock and Wright and United Utilities. The table over the page summarises the comments we received, and our responses.

f) We consulted Plain English Campaign on the guidance to help make its wording clearer.

g) We revised the guidance to take account of the comments received during the consultation process, changes proposed to the draft plan, to correct mistakes in the guidance and to make the wording clearer in line with Plain English Campaign's suggestions.

h) We reported the results of the consultation process to the Planning Committee on 17 December 2003. The 'Design' guidance note, including a new Sustainability checklist in Part 4, was adopted on 17 December 2003.

i) On 25 August 2004 the Planning Committee approved draft revisions to Part 3 of the 'Design' planning guidance note, 'Design of buildings and structures', for feedback and to help it make decisions about planning applications. The draft revisions were mostly about safety and security issues and sustainable development issues.

j) We consulted the general public and interested organisations in August and September 2004. In total, we sent 600 letters to local agents, housebuilders and registered social landlords and other interested groups (such as parish councils). We placed adverts in the local press and the guidance was available in the two planning offices and on our website.

k) We received comments of support about the guidance from Mr Cowell and from Government Office North West. The table over the page summarises the comments we received, and our responses.

l) We made some changes to the guidance.

m) We reported the results of the consultation process to the Planning Committee on 22 September 2004. The revised Part 3 of the 'Design' guidance note was adopted on 22 September 2004.



Table – summarising comments received and our responses

Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
General comments about all Supplementary planning guidance notes		
Garden History Society	No comments	Response is noted
Formby Civic Society	Write to support all of the Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes.	We made a note of this support.
Design Supplementary planning guidance note		
Formby Civic Society	The section that identified Freshfield Road and Ryeground Lane as characteristic areas is excellent.	We made a note of this support.
Merseyside Civic Society	Supportive of comprehensive assessment of character.	We made a note of this support.
Government Office North West	Expand introduction to document to include overall vision for Sefton’s urban environment.	We added wording to do this.
Government Office North West	Document could make useful links to Community Strategy and the major plans for neighbourhood renewal in the Borough.	We decided that it is more appropriate for the guidance note to refer to other Supplementary planning guidance notes.
Government Office North West	Suggest highlighting design relating to public realm and inclusion of public art/ street furniture as Borough has some good examples to promote as good practice e.g. improvements at Southport.	Southport Seafront Supplementary planning guidance note includes appropriate references. The Design Supplementary planning guidance note is aimed at developers and we considered that it is not the appropriate place to refer to street furniture. There is no policy in the draft Plan on public art and so it would not be appropriate to make reference to this in the guidance note.
Government Office North West	<p>Specific points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -useful to mention need for buildings to face streets, squares or parks and avoid inward-facing development -welcome emphasis placed on sustainable drainage systems -section on access could be expanded to take into account public transport considerations -Settlement Character Plans – useful to have the conservation areas marked on the plans as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have included this first point - We have noted this second point. - We have dealt with access issues in the ‘Providing a Choice of Travel’ guidance note but cross reference will be added. - We added conservation areas to Settlement Character Plans.



Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
Hitchcock and Wright	Revision of urban edge to include proposed Switch Island/ Thornton Bypass.	We think that this is premature until, firstly, the road scheme is approved and, secondly, any consequent change to the Green Belt boundary is made.
United Utilities	Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of underground /overhead electricity cables, water mains, public sewers and overflow systems.	We amended the guidance note to say that utilities need to be consulted before planting in the vicinity of their apparatus.
Part 3 of the Design Supplementary planning guidance note: Design of buildings and structures		
Mr Cowell	This is a very good SPG.	We made a note of this support.
Government Office North West	Welcome the changes to cover more crime and sustainability aspects.	We made a note of this support.



