

Policy D1: Placemaking

Development proposals will be supported where they improve poor existing urban and natural environments, enhance York's special qualities and better reveal the significances of the historic environment. Development proposals that fail to take account of York's special qualities, fail to make a positive design contribution to the city, or cause damage to the character and quality of an area will be refused.

Development proposals should adhere to the following detailed design points:

i. Urban Structure and Grain

- enhance, respect and complement the historic arrangement of street blocks, plots and buildings, where possible restoring old patterns of urban grain where these have been damaged or obscured.
- enhance and complement the character and appearance of landscape, city parks, landforms, open space, planting and boundary treatment.

ii. Density and Massing

- demonstrate that the resultant density of a development proposal will be appropriate for its proposed use and neighbouring context.
- demonstrate that the combined effect of development does not dominate other buildings and spaces, paying particular attention to adjacent buildings or parks of architectural or historic significance.

iii. Streets and Spaces

- promote ease of public pedestrian and cyclist movement and establish natural patterns of connectivity with the fabric of the city. Spaces and routes must be attractive, safe, and uncluttered and clearly prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over vehicles.
- promote legibility through development by providing recognisable routes, hierarchy of routes, intersections, incidental spaces and landmarks.
- are designed to improve the quality of the public realm and the wider environment for all.
- provide a pattern of continuity and enclosure, dependant on circumstances, to reflect the need for different types of space for different types of activity including clearly defining private from public space, and mediate between the two.
- designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime and promote public safety throughout the day and night.

iv. Building Heights and Views

- respect York's skyline by ensuring that development does not challenge the visual dominance of the Minster or the city centre roofscape.
- respect and enhance views of landmark buildings and important vistas.

v. Character and Design Standards

- ensure proposals are not a pale imitation of past architectural styles.
- ensure appropriate building materials are used.
- meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion.

- demonstrate the use of best practice in contemporary urban design and place making.
- integrate car parking and servicing within the design of development so as not to dominate the street scene.
- create active frontages to public streets, spaces and waterways.
- create buildings and spaces that are fit for purpose but are also adaptable to respond to change.
- create places that feel true to their intended purpose.
- maximise sustainability potential.

See also Policy CC2

E x p l a n a t i o n

Urban Structure and Grain

- 8.6 Where development is proposed outside of a clearly defined pre existing urban context a less obvious but equally important context still exists: existing landscape features such as topology or field boundaries can provide a framework for the grain and urban structure of new development plots- often a process of intensification of existing patterns of movement and connectivity. The study of adjacent settlements and/or patterns of habitation in the area should be undertaken. This is particularly important as the scale of new development increases and completely new ‘places’ are created. For these, national best practice for contemporary placemaking for new settlements or urban extensions must be considered.

Density and Massing

- 8.7 It is important to communicate the suitability of density proposals in a way that is most easily understood. This can often be difficult for large developments where flexibility is sought at a masterplanning stage. Applications will be encouraged that communicate this through graphical representation (in addition to standard accepted numerical methodologies) through potential plots studies and precedent images. Overall, density should not be applied in an overly uniform way- it should comprise a variety of spatial types. The intensity of development should generally follow the existing pattern of density, but within it should be open amenity spaces. (In particular, conversions into flats or houses should provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers). Conversely higher density spots to aid wayfinding and the readability of spaces might be desirable. This should be interpreted together with Building Height and Views section below. Whilst zoning is a useful illustrative concept, density should not be overly use-zoned and should demonstrate a suitable mix of uses, albeit that there is likely to be a predominant use for each different area.

Streets and Spaces

- 8.8 Development proposals that provide opportunities to promote the enhancement of, or creation of, public space will be supported. Reference should be made to the council’s policies on public streets and spaces particularly ensuring that development proposals support the principles set out in the City of York Streetscape Strategy and Guidance (2014). The use and enjoyment of streets and spaces are affected by how empowered people feel to engage in these spaces, through cultural, every leisure and economic activity. Private spaces should feel completely private places they can relax in. Public spaces should feel like genuine public spaces that are welcoming and belong to everyone. Semi private space, especially in housing developments,

needs extreme care in design so immediate neighbours can have a sense of their collective ownership and even stewardship. Consideration should be given to Secured by Design principles whilst balancing the need of urban design principles such as attractive connected streets and spaces.

Building Height and Views

- 8.9 Development should demonstrate a detailed evidence based understanding of landscape setting including key views so that development proposals respond positively to local building height and massing character and landscape context. Designs should also integrate roof-top plant into the overall building design avoiding visually detracting roof top plant. Reference should be made to the city's key views as defined in the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2011) key views analysis. Opportunities for creating or revealing new public views should also be considered. For new landmarks and buildings that stand higher than the surrounding townscape to be considered acceptable they will normally be expected to have a particular high cultural significance or common value. In addition, the taller and more prominent a building, the higher will be the council's expectations over its quality.

Character

- 8.10 A proposal should demonstrate an understanding of rhythm and/or balance of compositional design. Suitable building materials should be carefully chosen for their texture, colour, pattern, source and durability, and durable construction techniques and elements of detailing should be chosen. For larger scale developments, where development is at a high level masterplan stage, there should be a clear vision of the type of place it aspires to become in sufficient detail to guide the direction of future plot build out proposals use of a design code setting out parameters may be required whilst providing enough flexibility for uncertain future conditions. The way a building will be used should be considered so as to locate commercial servicing in less sensitive places within a development and to prevent parked cars from dominating the street scene. This needs to be balanced to prevent unrealistic expectations leading to abuse, and the development should physically prevent unplanned undesirable use through subtle good design measures. Buildings should also be adaptable so as to facilitate retention. Large scale developments should not inherently prevent their adaptability - the creation of development blocks and open streets are proven durable formats and will be supported.

Design Standards

- 8.11 As part of its commitment to good place-making, the Council is committed to and expects design excellence. There are many UK guides to best practice. The publication of these guides will be ongoing over the course of the Local Plan period. However, they are often still relevant several years after publication and only superseded where directly stated by future publications. Design proposals should be based on best practice and where this can be demonstrated it will support the desirability of the proposal. Current examples are Lifetime Neighbourhoods (DCLG); Building for Life Principles (Design Council); Urban Design Compendium (English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation); By Design (DETR & CABE); Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (English Heritage) to name a few. On culture and the arts, the Town and Country Planning Association's 'Practical Guide 6

'I'd love to live there?' Planning for culture and the arts', aimed at new communities but broadly applicable, may be useful.

Delivery

- Key Delivery Partners: City of York Council; developers and English Heritage.
- Implementation: Planning applications; and adopted/ publishes council guidance such as Conservation Area Appraisals

Policy D2: Landscape and Setting

Development proposals will be encouraged and supported where they:

- i. demonstrate understanding through desk and field based evidence of the local and wider landscape character and landscape quality relative to the locality, and the value of its contribution to the setting and context of the city and surrounding villages, including natural and historic features and influences such as topography, vegetation, drainage patterns and historic land use;
- ii. conserve and enhance landscape quality and character, and the public's experience of it and make a positive contribution to York's special qualities;
- iii. demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship between good landscape design, bio-diversity enhancement and water sensitive design;
- iv. create opportunities to enhance the public use and enjoyment of existing and proposed streets and open spaces;
- v. recognise the significance of landscape features such as mature trees, hedges, and historic boundaries and York's other important character elements, and retain them in a respectful context where they can be suitably managed and sustained;
- vi. take full account of issues and recommendations in the most up to date York Landscape Character Appraisal;
- vii. include sustainable, practical, and high quality soft and hard landscape details and planting proposals that are clearly evidence based and make a positive contribution to the character of streets, spaces and other landscapes;
- viii. create a comfortable association between the built and natural environment and attain an appropriate relationship of scale between building and adjacent open space, garden or street. In this respect consideration will be also be given to function and other factors such as the size of mature trees; and
- ix. avoid an adverse impact on intrinsically dark skies and landscapes, townscapes and/or habitats that are sensitive to light pollution, keeping the visual appearance of light fixtures and finishes to a minimum, and avoiding light spill.

See also Policy GI1, GI2 and GI3

Explanation

- 8.12 Landscape and setting is a principal characteristic of York which includes the strays and lngs that penetrate the urban fabric and the village greens and burgage plots that inform a village structure.
- 8.13 Where environmental impact assessments are required, the City of York Council will expect evidence based landscape assessments to follow the latest edition of the Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.