

3.8 Design Principles

Reasoned Justification

- 3.52 Good design is a key aspect of **sustainable development** to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives, and indivisible from good planning. All development should contribute positively to making places better for people¹.
- 3.53 The Council is committed to working positively with developers to achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development, including small and larger individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development. The Council will seek to ensure that new development will: function well; create attractive places and support community cohesion; optimise the potential of the site; respond to local character, history and distinctiveness; and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and landscaping. In accordance with the **National Planning Policy Framework**, development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should be refused.
- 3.54 Reflecting the **Joint Core Strategy**, the Council places great importance on the need to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness, and the Council is committed to producing guidance, policies and information to help raise understanding and evaluation of these defining characteristics. This includes the South Norfolk Place Making-Guide SPD, a Residential Alterations, Conversions and Extensions SPD and other supplementary planning guidance and Conservation Area appraisals.
- 3.55 Good quality housing should provide for internal and external accommodation that is fit for purpose and suitable for its intended occupants. Homes must be designed to meet the demands of everyday life and offer the flexibility and potential to be occupied by householders with different needs over time.
- 3.56 Buildings that perform better than the minimum environmental standards are more sustainable in the long term, particularly in respect of sound insulation and energy efficiency. Well-proportioned rooms with good levels of natural light provide a better quality of life for occupiers, and will also be adaptable to meet changing circumstances over time.
- 3.57 The outdoor space around new homes may be provided as private gardens or as a communal amenity space. It should however be integral to the overall residential design of the site. Detailed guidance on the design and quality of outdoor space and arrangements of housing is set out in the **South Norfolk Place-Making Guide**. Provision of parking, refuse storage and utility space should not be

detrimental to the provision of suitable external amenity space; detailed guidance is referred to in the Notes below.

- 3.58 To ensure innovation and originality is not stifled and best practice is shared, the Council will also have regard to promote the sharing of best practice and will maintain a regular programme of local design review.
- 3.59 Reflecting Joint Core Strategy Policy 2, major development (500 dwellings or more) OR that of particular complexity, should be **masterplanned** using an inclusive recognised process demonstrating how the whole scheme will be delivered and related to adjacent areas. A lower threshold may be appropriate for new development in smaller settlements, and this should address the programming of timely infrastructure and so forth. Specific requirements are addressed in individual site allocation policies.
- 3.60 The importance of contributing to local distinctiveness, the **historic environment** and setting in the wider landscape applies at the smaller scale and to domestic scale development too - see Residential Alterations, Conversions and Extensions SPD, Development in the Historic Environment SPD, and Landscape Character Study.

Policy DM 3.8 Design Principles applying to all development

- (1) **The Council will work with applicants to achieve high quality design and positive improvement from all development, protect and enhance the environment and existing locally distinctive character and encourage innovation; the Council will refuse development that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way the area functions.**
- (2) **Major development should be masterplanned using an inclusive recognised process demonstrating how the whole scheme will be delivered and related to adjacent areas, including the programming of infrastructure requirements. A masterplan will also be required for sites of less than 500 dwellings in the case of large developments incorporated into a smaller settlement or on sites of particular complexity.**
- (3) **Dwellings should be designed so that internal spaces are suitable, adaptable and will be able to accommodate a range of residents over time.**
- (4) **Planning permission will be granted for development that has been designed to, where relevant to the proposed development: respect adjoining structures, spaces, routes and local landscape; provide an attractive, accessible and safe environment; and conform to the following criteria:**

- (a) The scale, height, massing, form and appearance of development is designed with a satisfactory relationship of structures, spaces and routes within the site and a successful integration into the surroundings;**
- (b) The development is created with high standards of design, building materials, finishes and landscaping reflecting the use of distinctive local building traditions, materials and heritage assets where relevant; or innovative contemporary design solutions reflecting local context and reinforcing or creating local distinctiveness;**
- (c) Access is provided by routes and public spaces that meet different requirements of accessibility (including pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility or sensory difficulties) without an unsatisfactory domination of traffic;**
- (d) A clear distinction is made between public and private spaces within the site; all public and private spaces to be suitable for their purpose, attractive, landscaped, safe; and with adequate lighting where provided that is carefully controlled to minimise overspill;**
- (e) Visually attractive frontages and hard & soft boundary treatments are created to adjoining streets and public areas, public spaces and the open countryside; all appropriate frontages to contain windows and doors that assist informal surveillance of the public realm by occupants of the site;**
- (f) Buildings and spaces are orientated to: gain benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy and wherever possible designed around a Sustainable Drainage system;**
- (g) The entire development is designed to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for anti-social activity on the site and in the surrounding area;**
- (h) Landscaping of the development is designed to retain important existing natural features, reflect the surrounding landscape characteristics of the area and contribute to relevant objectives of the local Biodiversity Action Plan; and**
- (i) Convenient, safe and visually attractive areas are created for servicing buildings and parking of vehicles and cycles without dominating the development or surroundings.**

Notes

- Sections 7, 10, 11 & 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework promote design and environmental quality, including the protection and mitigation of impacts. Para 15 requires local plans to set out how the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' will be applied locally; para 58 refers to the need to "understand and evaluate" the "defining characteristics" and to respond and reflect these, while not preventing appropriate innovation. Para 61 addresses the "connections between people and places" and the contribution to sustainable communities, para 121 points to the "desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness".
- **Joint Core Strategy** Policy 2 promotes good quality design that creates a strong sense of place and reflects local distinctiveness. The need to reflect local distinctiveness in development is addressed in the Place Making Guide SPD (Section 2) and Section 4.2 of the guide includes detailed guidance on appraising a site and its context. This should form part of the **Design and Access Statement**.
- Reflecting Joint Core Strategy Policy 2, all development of 10 units or more should be evaluated for the Building for Life Criteria and its successors.
- Development Management Policies expand on the necessary assessments of **environmental assets** and requirements.
- Further advice and guidance prepared by South Norfolk Council to help designers identifying important local characteristics and appropriate design response include:
 - **South Norfolk Landscape Characterisation Study** – published
 - **South Norfolk Place-Making Guide** – Adopted Supplementary Planning Document
 - **South Norfolk Design in the Historic Environment Guide** - (to be prepared)
 - **South Norfolk Residential Alterations, Conversions and Extensions Guide** - (to be prepared)
- Presentation of these documents on the Council's web site pages will include examples of updates, best practice and the results of design review.

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- ¹Section 7 of the **National Planning Policy Framework** clearly states the importance of good design to sustainable development and that permission should be refused for development that fails to take the opportunities available for improving character and quality of an area and the way it functions.