Design for Living
Residential Design
Supplementary Planning Document
Adopted 2010
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1 Introduction

‘Overall, Havering will continue to be an attractive, liveable, safe and fully accessible borough where developments are required to be high quality and design-led, contributing positively to the character of the borough, respecting the local heritage and creating an environment in which people want to live, stay and prosper.’ (Havering Core Strategy Vision)

Why do we need a residential design guide?

1.1 Good design is not simply a matter of preference or taste. It creates successful places which provide people with a good quality of life. Importantly, good design is fundamental to achieving many of the Council’s planning objectives including housing mix and density, sustainable design, heritage, biodiversity, access, delivering safer communities and encouraging sustainable transport modes.

1.2 Havering is an attractive, green borough which is largely suburban in character and contains many good examples of residential development from the past which can be seen in areas such as Romford, Upminster and Gidea Park. However, the quality and scale of some recent residential development in the borough has raised concerns about the types of housing provided and the design solutions used, which do not reflect the needs and aspirations of the local residents, and do not respect or improve on local character.

1.3 New residential development provides the opportunity to deliver the types of homes people want, alongside meeting housing targets and housing mix and density policies through best practice in residential design. Achieving higher densities does not necessarily require high rise development, and the Council is keen to encourage developers to think creatively about design and layout solutions which respect the generally low rise suburban character of the borough and provide for variety in terms of housing choice, such as more family accommodation.

1.4 This residential design guide strives for the best in residential design and layout solutions and seeks to ensure new residential development in Havering is built to the highest quality, which evokes a sense of local pride. The fundamental aim is to create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible places which add economic, social and environmental value to the borough and contribute positively to the existing character.
Introduction

Purpose of this document

1.5 Havering’s 20 Year Vision, ‘Living Ambition’, seeks to provide the highest quality of life in London. The places where people live impact directly on their quality of life. If the urban environment is well planned, designed and managed, it is likely to contribute to a better quality of life for residents and visitors.

1.6 Therefore this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) aims to improve the quality of new residential schemes by providing clear design guidance to developers, applicants, the public and other parties bringing forward residential development proposals within Havering.

1.7 It provides guidance on the implementation of those Core Strategy and Development Control Policies relating to new residential development and is focused on the following key areas:

- Principles of good design
- Existing diversity of housing in Havering
- Providing the appropriate mix of housing
- Housing density and building form
- Movement and accessibility
- Structure and layout
- Enhancing local character
- Safeguarding residential amenity
- Outdoor spaces
- Car Parking, cycle storage and waste and recycling storage

1.8 At the end of each section, this guidance sets out a number of principles for achieving good standards in residential design and signposts relevant local, regional and national policies and guidance, along with Building for Life criteria. This document also sets out planning submission requirements for Design and Access Statements and Building for Life appraisals.

Status

1.9 This SPD forms part of Havering’s Local Development Framework (LDF) and it supplements the policies contained within the LDF and the London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2004) which together form the Development Plan. This guidance is therefore a material consideration for decisions on planning applications. It has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations and guidance on Supplementary Planning Documents.

How this SPD fits within the Havering Local Development Framework

1.10 This SPD is one of a suite of documents which provide further guidance on the implementation of those Development Plan Document (DPD) policies contained within Havering’s Local Development Framework which collectively will ensure new residential development is built to a high standard. It provides further detail on the implementation of Core Policy CP17 (Design) and Development Control Policy DC61 (Urban Design) and the range of matters
covered in these policies, including guidance for residential amenity space. In addition, it will provide further detail on the implementation of Development Control Policies DC2 (Housing Mix and Density) and DC3 (Housing Design and Layout).

1.11 It should be used alongside other adopted and future SPDs:
- Sustainable Design and Construction, April 2009
- Emerson Park Policy Area, February 2009
- Hall Lane Policy Area, February 2009
- Protecting and Enhancing the Borough’s Biodiversity, May 2009
- Protection of Trees during Development, April 2009
- Designing Safer Places, February 2010
- Heritage (future)
- Residential Extensions and Alterations (future)
- Gidea Park Conservation Area (future)
- Landscaping (future)

Policy context

1.12 This SPD takes account of current national and regional planning policy and guidance on design and housing. Further policy, guidance and relevant material used in the production of this document can be found in the reference section of this document.

National Policy


Regional Policy

1.14 The London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004) sets out design principles for new development which seek to promote high-quality and inclusive design.

1.15 The Mayor of London’s draft replacement London Plan, Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (October 2009) is scheduled for adoption in late 2011. The document is more focused and concise than the current London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004) and contains fewer policies, at a more strategic level. The draft revised London Plan reinforces the Mayor’s commitment to design quality for new development, with a new focus on quality of life. It has a 20-25 year focus and applies to the timeframe up to 2031.

1.16 The London Development Agency (LDA) published the draft London Housing Design Guide (July 2009) for consultation which includes internal space standards for new residential development. The design guide is aimed at delivering high quality homes and is anticipated to be adopted in April 2010. It is intended that the guide will become applicable to all housing development funded by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) from April 2011 onwards, however the consultation opens the debate on applying standards consistently for all housing in London.
2 Principles of good design

By Design: Urban Design in the planning system towards better practice

‘The Planning system provides the means to encourage good design, not just in conservation areas and other attractive places, but everywhere. Securing good design is central to good planning. The appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are relevant to the consideration of a planning application and PPG1 makes it clear that local planning authorities should reject poor design.’ (By Design)

2.1 By Design was published by The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to promote higher standards in urban design and provide sound, practical advice to help implement the Government’s commitment to good design, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles (later replaced by Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development). The Havering Local Development Framework encourages all new development to adhere to the principles of good urban design, and the Council will encourage developers and their architects to achieve the objectives contained within By Design and set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives of urban design</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity and Enclosure</td>
<td>A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguishable. To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the Public Realm</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Movement</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legibility</td>
<td>A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand. To promote legibility through development that provides routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>A place that can change easily. To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 More information on By Design can be obtained from the CABE website.

**Building for Life**

‘Good quality housing design can improve social wellbeing and quality of life by reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and increasing property values. Building for Life promotes design excellence and celebrates best practice in the house building industry.’

2.3 In July 2008 Communities and Local Government (CLG) published a set of revised core output indicators which introduced Building for Life as the indicator for housing quality (Indicator H6). Building for Life is a partnership between several national agencies and is led by CABE and the Home Builders Federation. The quality of new housing is required to be monitored using Building for Life as part of boroughs’ Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR). The 20 criteria, which are set out in Appendix 1, can be used to evaluate the quality of schemes at both the pre-planning and post-construction phase.

2.4 The Council promotes Building for Life and developers will be expected to have regard to the criteria in bringing forward new residential schemes. Details on planning submission requirements in relation to the Building for Life standard are outlined in the Design and Access Statements section of this document. More information on the Building for Life standard and examples of award winning schemes can be found on the Building for Life website: [www.buildingforlife.org](http://www.buildingforlife.org)

Principles of good design

**Lifetime Homes and Mobility Housing**

2.5 In line with Development Control Policy DC7 (Lifetime Homes and Mobility Housing), the Council will seek all new homes to be built to Lifetime Homes standards.

2.6 Ten percent of all new homes on sites of 15 or more dwellings and on residential sites of 0.5 hectares or more irrespective of the number of dwellings must be designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users.

**Sustainable Design and Construction**

2.7 The Council’s commitment to mitigating against and adapting to the anticipated effects of climate change is evidenced in its Sustainable Community Strategy, relevant Local Area Agreements, its ‘Climate Change Strategy’ and ‘Sustainable Energy Strategy’.

2.8 Havering’s Core Strategy and Development Control Policy DPDs contain a number of requirements to ensure that new developments are constructed to a high standard of sustainable design and construction. The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD provides guidance on how to meet these requirements and encourages developers to consider measures beyond this.

**Designing Safer Places**

2.9 The Designing Safer Places SPD outlines the Council’s planning policy approach to designing safer places in Havering and provides further guidance on how Core Policy CP17 (Design), and Development Control Policy DC63 (Delivering Safer Places) are implemented. It explains how crime prevention measures can be incorporated into a scheme from the start of the design process to create positive places where people are safe and feel safe.

**Residential Travel Plans**


2.11 The guidance sets out that Residential Travel Plans must be submitted with any new development that contains more than 80 residential units. However, the guidance is also appropriate for the creation of travel plans for smaller residential developments, and for mixed-use developments that contain a residential element under 80 units but the overall scale of the development is considered to have a significant impact on transport.

2.12 The document can be downloaded from the Transport for London website.
It is recommended that applicants contact the Council at the earliest stage to discuss submission requirements and initiate the design process appropriately. A pre-application meeting may be required on larger schemes. Depending on the level of advice required, there may be an associated fee for the service. A current list of fees is available on the Havering website.

The design process should be analysis-based, context-driven and creative, to produce the highest quality residential design. At the outset, the developer/designer should:

- Explore the policy framework (national/regional/local)
- Explore existing area-based policies and guidance (e.g. Emerson Park and Hall Lane SPDs, Romford Area Action Plan)
- Explore best practice guidance and examples (By Design, Building for Life, CABE, etc.)

Design and Access Statements

Design and Access Statements are an essential requirement of the planning process and aim to allow the applicant to demonstrate that proposals are based on a thorough design process. A key part of the statement is an explanation of how local context has influenced the final design.

The Council will expect developers and their architects to submit a response to Building for Life questions as part of the Design Statement when making a planning application for major schemes (10 or more dwellings). They will also be encouraged to respond to these criteria on smaller applications. A schedule of Building for Life questions is included in Appendix 1.

Further information on the requirements for Design and Access Statements is contained in Appendix 2. Additionally, CABE guidance on how to write, read and use Design and Access Statements can be downloaded from the CABE website.
3 Existing diversity of housing in Havering

‘Sub-regionally Havering plays an important role in offering a diversity of and quality of housing stock and a residential environment which is scarce in other parts of East London’. (Havering Core Strategy)

3.1 The majority of Havering’s almost 98,000 dwellings, both private and public, are suburban in character and were built between 1919 and 1964. Havering has the second highest number of semi detached homes in London as a proportion of total stock (42%) and in recent years a number of flatted schemes have been introduced into town centre locations. It is the only east London borough with more than 10% of its stock being detached. This is particularly true of the pockets of executive housing which exist in Emerson Park, Hall Lane and Gidea Park.

3.2 Havering boasts several areas of special local character which require specific design solutions in order to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness. For example, Emerson Park is one of the most mature and varied residential districts in the borough. Similarly, Hall Lane has a distinctive residential character consisting mostly of large detached and semi-detached dwellings with long and well landscaped rear gardens. Due to the distinctive character of these areas, more detailed information and design guidance for these areas is contained within the adopted Emerson Park Policy Area SPD and Hall Lane Policy Area SPD. Further details applying to these areas (and other special policy areas) are set out in DC69 (Other Areas of Special Townscape or Landscape Character).

3.3 In contrast, Romford’s commercial town centre has its own unique urban character, with the highest density residential development in the borough consisting largely of flatted housing in mixed use developments. New development in this area is subject to the Romford Area Action Plan. Residential development has been strongly encouraged within the town centre in recent years, with schemes at The Brewery, The Axis and The Matrix for example. These higher density developments are in marked contrast to the mostly Victorian terraced housing located outside the commercial part of the town centre.
4 Providing the appropriate mix of housing

'Key characteristics of a mixed community are a variety of housing, particularly in terms of tenure and price, and a mix of different households such as families with children, single person households and older people.' (PPS3)

4.1 Havering aims to widen the variety and choice for residents of different ages and economic status and with different lifestyles and levels of independence, to create a balanced and inclusive community. This approach allows residents to meet their changing housing needs within the borough, whether it be moving to a larger or smaller home, or first homebuyers, rather than having to move out of the area.

4.2 PPS3 highlights the importance of the planning system in delivering a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas. New housing should respond to local housing need and aspirations in terms of type, size and tenure, having regard to studies of housing needs and priorities for London and Havering, and the requirements of LDF policies CP2, DC2 and DC6.

4.3 The design of new housing for affordable and private homes should be ‘tenure blind’ and indistinguishable in terms of design quality, appearance and location.

Principles and Further Guidance

- Ensure housing design for affordable and private homes is indistinguishable in terms of design quality, appearance and location.
- LDF Policies: CP2 Sustainable Communities; DC2 Housing Mix and Density; DC6 Affordable Housing; ROM15 Family Accommodation
- PPS1 (para 4, 16, 36); PPS3 (para 12, 20-22)
- Building for Life: Questions 2-3 (Environment & Community)
5 Housing density and building form

‘If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment.’ (PPS3)

Achieving appropriate density

5.1 Achieving appropriate densities is a major component of sustainable development and accommodating future population growth. Planning policy nationally and within London seeks to ensure that new development, including residential, makes the best use of available land.

5.2 However, density alone will not be used as the primary means of assessing design acceptability. It is essential that proposals take account of the site, its unique characteristics and its context.

5.3 The same density can be provided in a wide variety of forms and some will be more appropriate than others depending on the context. In Havering, low rise development and houses will normally be the most appropriate design solution for achieving higher densities.

Figure 1: High density development (75dph) does not need to be high rise

Source: Designing for a compact city (1999)

5.4 Innovative design and layout solutions for new residential development will be encouraged and welcomed within the appropriate density range, taking into consideration the unique features of the site.

Density standards

5.5 Density standards set out in the London Plan are reflected in Development Control Policy DC2, which sets out the range of densities for Havering. The Havering density matrix can be found in Appendix 3 of this document and developers must have regard to this when determining appropriate densities for new development.
5.6 Density ranges in the matrix reflect the setting of a site in terms of its location, existing building form and massing and the index of public transport accessibility (PTAL)\(^1\). Setting is defined as:

- **Suburban** – areas with predominantly lower density development such as detached and semi-detached houses, predominantly residential, small building footprints and typically buildings of two to three storeys\(^2\).

- **Urban** – areas with predominantly dense development such as terraced houses, mansion blocks, a mix of different uses, medium building footprints and typically buildings of two to four storeys, located within 800 metres walking distance of a District centre or along main arterial routes\(^2\).

- **Central** – areas with very dense development, a mix of different uses, large building footprints and typically buildings of four to six storeys, located within 800 metres walking distance of a International, Metropolitan or Major town centre\(^2\).

5.7 Most of Havering is designated as suburban in setting and therefore suitable for low density, low rise development, in line with the predominant existing building form of detached and semi-detached houses between 30-50 units per hectare.

5.8 In areas where the maximum density identified is up to 80 units per hectare, housing can, where appropriate, be provided in the form of contemporary town housing for family accommodation. In Havering, this applies to the suburban areas of Upminster, Hornchurch, Upminster Bridge, Gidea Park, Harold Wood and Elm Park, and the urban areas of Harold Hill and Collier Row district centres. Design should take account of the local context and the opportunities presented in the historic centres of Upminster, Hornchurch and Gidea Park to enhance the historic setting.

5.9 Within Havering only some parts of Romford Town Centre are classified as central in terms of setting. In general, smaller households can be focused in these areas which have high levels of public transport accessibility.

\(^1\) London Plan (Consolidated with alterations since 2004), 3.22  
\(^2\) London Plan (Consolidated with alterations since 2004), 3.23
5.10 Housing densities for specific regeneration sites in London Riverside and Romford Town Centre are set out in the Site Specific Allocations DPD and Romford Area Action Plan DPD. These sites will be key to delivering high quality new housing within the borough.

**Design at different densities**

5.11 The quality of design is important for all development, but particularly for higher density development, and all proposals should respond positively to reinforcing or improving local character. Failing to do this by simply squeezing standard house types together and reducing amenity space standards will not provide a quality living environment. All schemes should have regard to the following design issues:

- High standard of architectural quality
- Privacy and minimising overlooking
- Sunlight and daylight
- Provision of good quality and usable amenity space
- High quality, durable and sustainable materials
- Size and quality of internal spaces
- Access to the open space network
- Boundary treatment, trees and planting
- Layout and integration with the surrounding area
- Pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access
- Safe, well lit and conveniently located entrances
- Car and cycle parking and waste storage

5.12 These design considerations are applicable to all new residential development, regardless of density.

**Tall buildings**

5.13 As an outer London borough, Havering is characterised by 2-3 storey housing, even within the major district centres. The largest concentration of tall buildings is within Romford Town Centre where there have been a few tall schemes approved in recent years. In Havering, buildings or structures of 6 storeys or greater, or above 18 metres in height above ground level, are considered as tall buildings. These will normally only be granted planning permission in Romford Town Centre in line with DC66 (Tall Buildings and Structures) and ROM19 (Tall Buildings) which identifies a limited number of appropriate locations for tall buildings.

5.14 In the event of tall buildings being appropriate, they should be of exemplary high quality and inclusive design, and must:

- Ensure the proposed density is suited to the site and to the wider context in terms of proportion, composition, relationship to other buildings, streets, public and private open spaces, the waterways or other townscape elements.
- Be attractive as viewed from all angles and contribute to an interesting skyline.
Housing density and building form

- Be set in attractive, welcoming spaces that create a well-defined public realm with a human scale, with continuity of frontage and accessible entrances from street level.
- Be sensitive to their impact on micro-climates in terms of wind, sun, reflection and overshadowing.
- Be sensitively orientated.

5.15 Even in the approved locations, tall buildings are not always necessary to achieve high density development; a tall building will, therefore, only be acceptable where there is a clear reason to have one.

Principles and Further Guidance

- Ensure the design of new residential development relates to its setting, which in Havering is generally low rise development of houses in line with its suburban character.
- Ensure the proposed density is suited to the site and to the wider context.
- Only propose tall buildings where there is a clear reason to have one, and where they are of exemplary high quality and inclusive design, normally restricted to the approved locations in Romford town centre.

- LDF Policies: CP1 Housing Supply; CP2 Sustainable Communities; CP9 Reducing the need to travel; CP17 Design; DC2 Housing Mix and Density; DC3 Housing Design and Layout; DC61 Urban Design; DC66 Tall Buildings and Structures; ROM14 Housing Supply; ROM15 Family Accommodation; ROM19 Tall Buildings; ROM20 Urban Design
- Site Specific Allocations DPD; Romford Area Action Plan DPD
- PPS3 (para 49, 50)
- London Plan (consolidated with alterations since 2004), Mayor of London, 3.22-3.23
- Building for Life: Questions 17-19 (Design & Construction)
6 Movement and accessibility

‘Successful development depends on good access and connections. The connections between a site and its surroundings are important for even the smallest of developments.’ (Urban Design Compendium, p.28)

Access

6.1 Successful residential neighbourhoods which provide a high degree of both external connectivity and internal permeability allow people to go about their daily activities with ease.

6.2 The access to and circulation through a development should integrate with and improve the existing movement patterns of the wider area. A network of well-connected streets should be provided that offers a choice of routes with easy access to local amenities, open space, the public transport network and established routes.

6.3 Infill developments should pay particular attention to the way they link together the areas that surround the site to avoid creating isolated enclaves of development. However, the need for permeability should still maintain safety, security and privacy. Routes into and through a development should minimise areas where the private activities of residents are visible to the public, and all access points should be clearly visible.

6.4 All routes should be safe to use, clearly defined and necessary, leading to places where people want to go.

Movement

6.5 Places with lower speed limits are safer and can provide a more pleasant living environment than streets with fast traffic. Streets that manage traffic speed by their design, for example through careful treatment of surfaces, pedestrian crossings and the arrangement of buildings, are favoured over physical traffic calming measures. Narrower streets can often be safer and help to avoid the appearance of a housing area which is dominated by cars rather than pedestrian movement. In some instances, it may not be necessary to separate pedestrian, vehicular and cycle routes. Homezones use materials, textures, patterns, furniture and good planting to divert and slow traffic.

A change in road surfacing at intersections encourages vehicles to drive slowly and contributes to a more pleasant residential street.
Legibility

6.6 Places should ‘make sense’ to the people who use them. The use of townscape features (e.g. gateways, nodes, landmarks, edges, views and vistas) is encouraged to give the development a clear identity and make the layout easy to understand for residents and visitors. Corner buildings and other easily identifiable visual markers are of particular importance for creating recognisable, understandable places.

Consider all users

6.7 Streets should be designed as public spaces with the needs of all users considered. Well designed streets with safe, direct, convenient and clear pedestrian and cycle routes maximise the transport choices of residents, and can influence people to use more sustainable modes of travel. Residential layouts designed solely to meet the requirements of vehicular traffic are not acceptable. New routes and connections should provide integrated routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic.

6.8 Where segregated routes for pedestrians are provided, they should serve a clearly defined function and meet the criteria set out within the Designing Safer Places SPD. Pedestrian and cycle routes should follow desire lines, insofar as possible, and be free from barriers except where necessary to prevent motorcycle access.

Residential developments should prioritise the needs of pedestrians by providing clear, safe and direct pedestrian routes that encourage people to walk.

Principles and Further Guidance

- Connect new and existing routes to create a network of well-connected streets which improve movement patterns in the wider area.
- Ensure new design and layout is oriented around the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and connectivity to the public transport network.
- Ensure new residential layouts are easy to understand and navigate around.

- LDF Policies: CP17 Design; DC3 Housing Design and Layout; DC32 The Road Network; DC34 Walking; DC35 Cycling; DC61 Urban Design; DC63 Delivering Safer Places; ROM20 Urban Design
- Designing Safer Places SPD
- PPS3 (para 16)
7 Structure and layout

‘Some of the most attractive and enduring residential environments have the simplest of structures.’ (CABE, Better Places to Live by Design)

Layout

7.1 Layout refers to how buildings and public and private spaces are arranged on a site, and how they relate to the buildings and space around the site. The layout informs the character and uniqueness of a place, and provides the basic framework on which all other aspects of the development depend.

7.2 Most of Havering’s streets are grid based, characterised by a framework of interconnected routes that define street blocks, as is typical of outer London suburban locations. In most cases, new developments should respond to the traditional street pattern that exists in the borough. Because the layout of housing within these blocks can range from terraces to detached homes, new developments should take account of the block size and structure of the area surrounding the site.

Active frontages

7.3 Active frontages, characterised by frequent doors and windows, help to avoid blank walls facing the public realm and provide natural surveillance. Primary access to dwellings should be from the street wherever possible, and direct rather than communal entrances are preferred to support active frontages and contribute to the legibility of an area. Where communal entrances are required (for example to stair and lift lobbies) the entrances should be prominent, generous and have secure access for residents.

Active frontages characterised by frequent doors and windows provide a high degree of natural surveillance to the street.

Building fronts and backs

7.4 A common arrangement of buildings in Havering is the perimeter block structure, with the fronts of dwellings lining the street and private spaces such as gardens located at the rear of dwellings. This form of development offers several advantages:
Structure and layout

- Efficient use of land
- Legible and well-connected places
- Clear distinctions between public and private space
- High levels of natural surveillance

7.5 Cul-de-sac forms of developments are generally discouraged, however they may be acceptable in certain cases provided they are shown to be part of a wider, well-connected network.

7.6 Within the general perimeter block structure, developments are encouraged to make use of creative and innovative layouts. However, the built up area within the block should be in character with the surrounding area, and established building lines should be maintained. For example, the character of streets with detached or semi-detached houses is informed by the gaps between buildings, and this rhythm of development should be maintained.

Figure 2. The street network

Consider how the site can be connected with nearby main routes and public transport facilities.

The typical cul-de-sac response creates an introverted layout, which fails to integrate with the surroundings.

A more pedestrian-friendly approach that integrates with the surrounding and links existing and proposed streets.

This street pattern then forms the basis for perimeter blocks, which ensure that buildings contribute positively to the public realm.

Principles and Further Guidance

- Arrange fronts and backs of dwellings appropriately to maximise active frontages onto streets.
- Ensure new block layouts respond to the size and structure of blocks in the surrounding area.

- LDF Policies: CP17 Design; DC3 Housing Design and Layout; DC 34 Walking; DC35 Cycling; DC61 Urban Design; DC63 Delivering Safer Places; ROM20 Urban Design
- Designing Safer Places SPD
- PPS3 (para 16)
- Building for Life: 9-10 (Character), 11 (Streets, Parking and Pedestrianisation)
8 Enhancing local character

'Matters to consider when assessing design quality include the extent to which the proposed development creates, or enhances, a distinctive character that relates well to the surroundings and supports a sense of local pride and civic identity.' (PPS3)

Character

8.1 The physical character of an area can be described as the overall impact of discrete public and private features and how these come together to make a place feel, look and function. Character is also informed by the local community and historical influences, and these factors are important in understanding an area’s unique identity.

8.2 New residential development provides the opportunity to improve the character of an area by reinforcing and adding to the positive aspects of the built environment. The Council is keen to ensure new residential development respects and enhances the positive features of Havering’s character and local distinctiveness.

8.3 Respecting local character does not necessarily mean replicating it, however, great care should be taken when incorporating contemporary design into the existing urban fabric. New and old buildings can coexist without negatively influencing the character of the area.

8.4 It may be argued that specific sites or areas have poor, mediocre or no distinctive character. In these instances, good planning and urban design may justify a development that departs from its context for particularly high quality innovative proposals.

8.5 Large sites or sites isolated from the surrounding urban fabric, such as London Riverside, provide a unique opportunity to bring forward high quality housing and neighbourhoods, with their own distinctive character.
Context appraisal

8.6 A careful analysis of the local character, and where relevant its history, will inform the best response to the context resulting in a more successful and appropriate development. Applicants will need to explain how the development proposal responds to the character of the site and wider area through a design and access statement. General features to consider include building styles, scale, massing, height, materials, layout, access, trees, landscape features, open spaces, landmarks, views and heritage assets at statutory and local level. More detailed guidance on the suggested structure of the design and access statement is provided in Appendix 2 to this document.

A school conversion and 2-3 storey residential development which demonstrates a good relationship to the existing context (above).

A 4-5 storey residential development which demonstrates a poor relationship to the existing commercial context (above).
Enhancing local character

Scale, massing and height

8.7 Scale, massing and height refer to the arrangement, volume, shape and size of a building or a group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces; and their combined visual impact. It is these aspects of the built form which determine views, vistas and skylines.

8.8 Proposals for new residential development should respond to the distinctive local building forms and patterns of development and respect the scale, massing and height of the surrounding physical context.

8.9 New development should reflect the existing building lines and rhythm of the street. Where uniform building heights form a distinctive character, major variations will not normally be appropriate.

Strong building lines form a distinct character in many of Havering’s residential streets. A development which does not respect the scale, massing and height of existing buildings in a residential street.

Materials

8.10 The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials chosen for new development contribute to the quality of its appearance individually, along with the character of its wider setting.

8.11 Use of durable and high quality materials is fundamental to creating robust and sustainable residential development. Materials should be chosen to withstand their environment and likely abuse with minimal maintenance. Poor quality materials that are hard to maintain will wear badly.

8.12 High quality contemporary materials can create an attractive and distinctive character, however, care should be taken to ensure that all materials respond to the site context and design objectives.

8.13 Thought should be given to the sourcing, energy efficiency and life cycle of the materials chosen. Permeable paving should be used where possible for hard surfacing. Refer to Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and forthcoming Landscaping SPD for further guidance.

Trees and planting

8.14 Good quality soft landscaping contributes positively to the streetscape and local character of an area, and can help to create a pleasant, safe and
attractive environment. Trees and planting have a softening affect on the appearance of hard materials of buildings and streets and can provide increased privacy and security to homes. Trees and planting can provide habitats for local wildlife, especially birds, and can also have significant benefits in terms of climate change adaptation.

8.15 Particular consideration should be given to the unique features of the development site, including soil types, drainage, light and the relationship with neighbouring properties. Thought should be given to ongoing maintenance, particularly planting close to buildings.

8.16 Soft landscaping should aim to protect existing trees and integrate them into new layouts and incorporate locally native species in new planting. Landscape design should be integrated with the building design from the earliest stage. Refer to forthcoming Landscaping SPD for further guidance.

When well maintained, street trees and front garden planting can improve the appearance of the streetscape and soften the visual dominance of buildings and cars.

### Principles and Further Guidance

- Complement or improve the character of the area through its appearance, materials used, layout and integration with surrounding land and buildings.
- Respond to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development by respecting scale, massing and height of the surrounding physical context.
- Ensure materials chosen for new development are high quality, durable and simple to maintain and respond to the context and design objectives.
- Provide appropriate landscaping in new development from the earliest stage, retaining existing trees and incorporating locally native species.

- LDF Policies: CP17 Design; CP18 Heritage; DC59 Biodiversity in New Developments; DC60 Trees and Woodlands; DC61 Urban Design; DC67-69 (Heritage); ROM20 Urban Design
- Biodiversity SPD, Emerson Park Policy Area SPD, Hall Lane Policy Area SPD, Protection of Trees SPD, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, Heritage SPD (forthcoming), Landscaping SPD (forthcoming)
- PPS1 (para 35, 38); PPS3 (para 13, 14, 16)
- Building for Life: Questions 6-10 (Character)
9 Safeguarding residential amenity

‘Privacy is an important design objective in ensuring residents feel at ease within their home. It is also an area where general planning standards prescribing minimum separation distances between habitable rooms can frustrate the creation of attractive residential environments by denying the ability to provide privacy through careful design’. (Better places to live by design, CABE/DTLR 2001)

Privacy and outlook

9.1 Privacy is an important design issue, particularly for higher density schemes, and all residents should feel at ease within their home. Design can create privacy in a number of ways, including the careful positioning of buildings in relation to one another; internal layouts (positioning of windows and rooms requiring more privacy) and through screening and landscaping.

9.2 The positioning of properties, including their windows and balconies, must be carefully considered to ensure that adequate privacy is maintained. In particular, habitable rooms and areas of private gardens close to dwellings should not be excessively overlooked by windows or balconies. Screening can reduce overlooking in these instances.

9.3 Privacy can be safeguarded by achieving adequate window to window, or window to balcony distances between buildings (both existing and proposed). In areas characterised by large spacious gardens, distances will be correspondingly greater, whereas in tighter knit urban areas where some window to window overlooking already exists, distances similar to those existing may be appropriate.

9.4 All habitable rooms should contain at least one main window with an adequate outlook where nearby walls or buildings do not appear overbearing or unduly dominant.

Sunlight and daylight

9.5 Providing good daylight to the home not only contributes to a more pleasant living environment, but also has the potential to reduce energy requirements within the home in relation to lighting and heating. Refer to Sustainable Design and Construction SPD for further guidance.

9.6 Careful orientation and design of buildings can ensure daylight and sunlight levels are maximised, without compromising levels of privacy of adjoining properties and reducing their daylight and sunlight levels.

9.7 New development should be sited and designed to maximise daylight and sunlight as far as possible. North facing single aspect units should be avoided.

Protection of existing amenity

9.8 New development should be sited and designed such that there is no detriment to existing residential amenity through the following: overlooking and/or privacy loss; and dominance or overshadowing.
9.9 The potential of adjoining land to be developed should not be compromised through, for example, building very close to boundaries or having intrusive overlooking windows.

**Principles and Further Guidance**

- **Design residential layouts to ensure sufficient privacy and to minimise overlooking between dwellings, and orientate buildings to maximise sunlight and daylight.**

- **Ensure new development does not reduce the amenity value of neighbouring properties or compromise the potential for adjoining land to be developed.**

- LDF Policies: CP17 Design; DC49 Sustainable Design and Construction; DC61 Urban Design; ROM20 Urban Design

- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

- PPS1 (para 35, 38); PPS3 (para 13, 14, 16)

- Building for Life: Questions 5 (Environment & Community); 20 (Design and Construction)
10 Outdoor spaces

‘Matters to consider when assessing design quality include the extent to which the proposed development provides, or enables good access to, community and green open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies.’ (PPS3, 16)

Delivering high quality and usable amenity space

10.1 Amenity space provides many benefits in terms of opportunities for recreation and leisure, and enhancing quality of life through improved health, reduced stress levels, child development through play spaces and interaction with the natural environment.

10.2 Back gardens and other amenity spaces are a cherished part of Havering’s suburban form and contribute positively to its green character and spacious layout. Their importance for biodiversity and climate change adaptation is also being increasingly recognised.

10.3 As such, provision of amenity space is a key consideration for new residential developments and every home should have access to suitable private and/or communal amenity space through one or more of the following: private gardens, communal gardens, courtyards, patios, balconies and roof terraces. Both balconies and communal amenity space will be expected in flatted schemes.

10.4 Unlike previous guidance, this SPD does not prescribe fixed standards for private amenity space. Rigid space standards can restrict creative design and layout of new residential developments, particularly on smaller, awkward development sites. Developers will be encouraged to bring forward schemes involving imaginative and innovative provision of amenity space.

Rear private gardens provide opportunities for relaxation and interaction with the natural environment (above).

A range of outdoor spaces provided by a three-storey town house (left).
10.5 The fundamental design considerations for amenity space should be its **quality** and **usability**. Applicants will be required to demonstrate these design considerations in their proposals.

10.6 In designing high **quality** amenity space, consideration should be given to privacy, outlook, sunlight, trees and planting, materials (including paving), lighting and boundary treatment. All dwellings should have access to amenity space that is not overlooked from the public realm.

10.7 The size, shape and slope of amenity space is key to its **usability**. Awkwardly shaped, narrow and very steeply sloping amenity spaces should be avoided.

10.8 Rear private gardens should provide adequate space for day to day uses such as a table and chairs for outdoor dining, clothes drying, relaxation, gardening and safe children’s play (where family accommodation is proposed).

Balconies should provide adequate space for a table and chairs for outdoor dining. Private outdoor space at two levels, with first floor terrace and courtyard below, in a 4 bedroom house.

10.9 The design and provision of private amenity space is particularly important in flatted schemes. Balconies should be incorporated into all developments and should, as a minimum, be 1.5 metres in depth to allow adequate space for a table and chairs. Ground floor dwellings in flatted schemes can provide direct access to a private garden space leading to a private communal space beyond.

10.10 Communal amenity space will be expected on all flatted schemes and may be appropriate on some large housing schemes. Communal amenity space should be designed to be private, attractive, functional and safe. Its quality and management should encourage a sense of ownership and pride.
10.11 Communal amenity space should:

- Receive adequate sunlight, even in the winter months and sufficient shade in summer months;
- Be screened from parking and public areas to ensure privacy;
- Be easily accessible and legible to all occupants;
- Be overlooked by habitable rooms to ensure safety;
- Include seating, trees and planting, lighting, paving and footpaths (where appropriate);
- Have an effective and affordable landscape management and maintenance regime;
- Take account of the needs of disabled users and all age groups; and
- Have a clearly defined purpose and be designed to reflect this.

A well-maintained communal ornamental garden located above a car park (above).
Robust benches and landscaping in a communal courtyard (left).

10.12 Private roof gardens can provide an alternative form of amenity space, particularly where there is difficulty in providing adequate amenity space at ground level.

10.13 All private and communal amenity space should have a clearly defined purpose. A clear demarcation between public and private areas should be indicated to provide clear responsibility for maintenance.

10.14 Proximity to public open space will be considered when assessing the adequacy of provision of private amenity space only where design and layout is of sufficient high quality and contributions are made through s106 for enhancements to existing open space.

**Front gardens**

10.15 Front gardens or ‘set-backs’, serve a number of important purposes and are normally expected to be provided in residential developments, with careful consideration given to their design.
Outdoor spaces

10.16 When defined by a boundary, such as a hedge or low wall, front gardens provide a buffer between the public and private realm and provide clarity of ownership.

10.17 Front gardens support the streetscape and enhance local character through landscaping, including trees, and can be sufficient to accommodate bin and cycle storage. Furthermore, they provide increased privacy and security to the ground floor front rooms of houses. Front gardens should consist of permeable surfaces with consideration given to trees and planting.

Various forms of front gardens in Havering with boundaries provide a setback from the footpath and increase privacy and security to the home.

Play space

10.18 Children’s play spaces should be provided in all new residential development containing flatted schemes with the potential for 10 or more child bedspaces, as set out in the London Plan’s Supplementary Planning Guidance Providing for Children and Young People’s play and informal recreation. Developers are required to have regard to this guidance which sets a minimum standard of 10 square metres of playspace per child bedspace within the development. Play spaces should be designed to be overlooked for natural surveillance and with safety and security in mind.

Boundary treatment

10.19 Most residential environments comprise a mix of public, private and communal spaces. It is important to clearly define the boundary between these spaces in order to provide clear ownership and responsibility for all open areas around new development and increase privacy and security to the home.

10.20 In most cases, the fronts of houses should remain open to view in order to increase natural surveillance to the street, therefore walls, fences and hedges defining the fronts of properties should be kept low. Side and rear boundaries can increase privacy and security to the property through higher fencing or walls.

10.21 Boundary treatment, particularly front boundaries should reinforce the prevailing character of the streetscape, especially where a continuous uniform treatment forms a distinctive character. Boundary design should also complement the design materials and techniques used in the overall scheme. More information on boundaries is contained in the Designing Safer Places SPD.
Outdoor spaces

Principles and Further Guidance

- Ensure all new dwellings have access to high quality and usable amenity space that is not overlooked from the public realm.
- Clearly define the boundary between public, private and communal spaces to provide clear ownership and responsibility for their maintenance.

- LDF Policies: CP17 Design; DC3 Housing Design and Layout; DC20 Access to Recreation and Leisure Including Open Space; DC61 Urban Design; ROM20 Urban Design
- Designing Safer Places SPD, Emerson Park SPD, Hall Lane SPD, Heritage SPD (forthcoming), Landscaping SPD (forthcoming), Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- PPS3 (para 16, 17)
- Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation SPG, GLA, March 2008
- Building for Life: Questions 1, 5 (Environment & Community); 15 (Streets, Parking & Pedestrianisation), 16 (Design and Construction)
11 Car parking, cycle storage and waste storage

‘Matters to consider when assessing design quality include the extent to which the proposed development takes a design-led approach to the provision of car-parking space that is well integrated with a high quality public realm.’ (PPS3)

Parking

11.1 The location and provision of car parking is a key design issue and great care should be taken to ensure car parking does not dominate or overburden residential areas, particularly the fronts of houses, or inconvenience pedestrians and cyclists.

11.2 There are various ways of incorporating car parking into a scheme, some will be more appropriate than others depending on the context and the density of the area. The use of lighting, trees and planting and street furniture can help to better integrate parking into the overall scheme and wider streetscape.

11.3 In-curtilage parking should be located close to the home to avoid inconvenience and increase natural surveillance. Large, isolated car parks should be avoided. Refer to Designing Safer Places SPD for further guidance.

11.4 Whilst parking will be provided within private areas, it should be recognised that people will wish to park where they consider convenient and this is often on the existing or proposed street. This should be taken into consideration, and parking designed to be convenient for residents so that streets are not dominated by cars.

11.5 Car parking standards are set out in Development Control Policy DC33 (Car Parking) and developers must have regard to these in determining provision in new development. Parking standards for visitors and disabled people are contained in this policy.

Parking can make a positive contribution to the street scene through the use of high quality street furniture and surfacing. Insufficient parking can lead to footpaths being used inappropriately for parking and a street scene which is dominated by cars.
Car parking, cycle storage and waste storage

**Cycle storage**

11.6 The design and layout of new residential development should take account of the needs of cyclists through the provision of safe, accessible and secure cycle parking.

11.7 Well-designed cycle storage can encourage people to cycle and avoid other areas in the home, such as balconies and hallways, being inappropriately used to store cycles.

A covered cycle unit which is overlooked by nearby windows provides convenient temporary cycle parking for visitors and secure cycle storage for residents. A cycle storage facility which does not provide adequate security or coverage and is not well overlooked.

11.8 Developers should aim to make cycle storage as convenient as access to car parking to encourage cycling as a sustainable mode of transport.

11.9 New flatted development should provide some space either inside the building in a cycle store-room or provide a separate, secure and accessible bike shed within the overall development.

11.10 Development Control Policy DC35 (Cycling), sets out the cycle parking standards and guidelines for new development in Havering and developers must have regard to these in determining the level of provision.

**Waste and recycling storage**

11.11 Waste and recycling storage in new residential development should be sensitively designed and located and not left as an afterthought. Careful consideration should be given to access to waste disposal and recycling facilities, particularly for residents on upper floors of flatted development. Storage areas should be in a position mutually convenient and easily accessible for both residents and waste and recycling collection crews.
### Principles and Further Guidance

- **Consider access, convenience, safety and security when designing cycle storage, car parking and waste and recycling storage.**

- LDF Policies: CP17 Design; DC3 Housing Design and Layout; DC61 Urban Design; DC33 Car Parking; DC35 Cycling; DC40 Waste Recycling; ROM20 Urban Design
- Designing Safer Places SPD, Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- PPS3 (para 16)
- Building for Life: 11, 12 (Streets, Parking & Pedestrianisation)
- Guidance for Residential Travel Planning in London
References and Further Guidance

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- Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them, CABE 2006
- London Plan, Mayor of London, Consolidated with Alterations since 2004
- Manual for Streets, Department for Communities and Local Government / Department for Transport 2007
- Planning Policy Statement 1; Delivering Sustainable development, Department for Communities and Local Government 2005.
- Planning Policy Statement 3. Housing 2006
- Planning Policy Statement 5. Planning for the Historic Environment. 2010
- Providing for Children and Young People’s Play and Informal Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance, Mayor of London March 2008
- Urban Design Compendium 1, English Partnerships/Housing Corporation. 2000
**Useful Websites**

- CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment)
- Greater London Authority (GLA) - [http://www.london.gov.uk/](http://www.london.gov.uk/)

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Glossary

Accessibility The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

Active Frontage A frontage which adds interest, life and vitality to the public realm. It has frequent doors and windows with few blank walls.

Affordable Housing Housing for People whose incomes are insufficient to allow them to afford decent local housing on the open market. Affordable housing comprises social housing and intermediate housing.

Biodiversity The variety of all life forms (animals, plants and living things), the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form part of.

Building line The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

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

Context (or site and area) appraisal A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide or other policy or guidance.

Density The floorspace of a building or buildings or some other unit measure in relation to a given area of land. Built density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); number of units or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; or a combination of these.

Design and access statement A statement that is submitted with a planning application which demonstrates how the guidance set out in circular 1/2006 has been met.

Design principle An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or a development.

Desire line An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

Elevation The facade of a building, or the drawing of a facade.

Enclosure The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

Form The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

Height The height of a building can be expressed in terms of a maximum number of floors; a maximum height of parapet or ridge; a maximum overall height; any of these maximum heights in combination with a maximum number of floors; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.
Heritage Assets  The many and varied components of the historic environment, which have significance, whether subject to statutory protection or not, including any building or structure, site, monument or landscape of historic, architectural, artistic or archaeological interest.

Human scale  The use within development of elements which relate well in size to an individual human being and their assembly in a way which makes people feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.

Inclusive design  Seeks to create an environment which can be easily used by as many people as possible without undue effort, separation or special treatment. It enables everyone to have the ability to participate equally in development’s mainstream activities.

In-curtilage parking  Parking within a building’s site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

Landmark  A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

Landscape  The character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, colours and elements and the way these components combine. Landscape character can be expressed through landscape appraisal, and maps or plans. In towns ‘townscape’ describes the same concept.

Layout  The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

Layout structure  The framework or hierarchy of routes that connect in the local area and at wider scales.

Legibility  The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

Lifetime homes  Homes that are built to be accessible, adaptable and convenient to reflect the changing needs of the population from young children to older people.

Livability  Refers to the environmental and social quality of an area as perceived by residents, employees and visitors.

Local distinctiveness  The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

Major development  A major development is one of 10 dwellings or more or 1,000 sqm and above.

Massing  The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

Mixed uses  A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. ‘Horizontal’ mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. ‘Vertical’ mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

Movement  People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces. The movement network can be shown on plans, by space syntax.
analysis, by highway designations, by figure and ground diagrams, through data on origins and destinations or pedestrian flows, by desire lines, by details of public transport services, by walk bands or by details of cycle routes.

**Natural surveillance (or supervision)** The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

**Node** A place where activity and routes are concentrated often used as a synonym for junction.

**Permeability** The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

**Public realm** The space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible.

**Residential Travel Plan** A package of measures designed to reduce car use originating from housing by supporting alternative forms of transport and reducing the need to travel in the first place.

**Scale** The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person. 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 used simply as a synonym for ‘size’. See ‘Human scale’.

**Street furniture** Structures in and adjacent to the highway which contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting, railings and signs.

**Sustainable development** This covers development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Topography** A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

**Urban design** 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.

**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.
Appendices

Appendix 1. Building for Life Criteria

The following text has been taken from the Building for Life website:

Environment & Community

1. Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs and cafes?

PPS3 (housing): ‘The government’s policy is to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.’

Creating successful residential areas is about much more than just providing opportunities for homes that respond to people’s needs. It is about providing a framework within which communities can grow.

Appropriate community facilities and services, such as open spaces, crèches, day-care and health services, local pubs and other places for residents, are important in this framework. Large developments or schemes in urban areas should include facilities that help meet the needs of the area. Services benefit from being close together so planning should allow for this in areas with greatest access.

Consulting the local community can help make sure that plans reflect community needs as well as encouraging local people to get involved in making decisions about their neighbourhood. For smaller developments, features that might help unite the community could include play areas, a gym and health facilities. If facilities are not provided within the development, the layout should make sure people have easy access to nearby facilities.

2. Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?

PPS3 (housing): ‘Developers should... reflect demand and the profile of households requiring market housing, in order to sustain mixed communities. Proposals for affordable housing should reflect the size and type of affordable housing required.’

Neighbourhoods are more successful when they avoid large concentrations of housing of the same type. A good mix of housing types and sizes is important in creating a basis for a balanced community. Even comparatively small developments can have a wide mix of types of property. Also, a mix of housing types and uses can create more attractive residential environments with greater diversity in building forms and scales.

A mix of accommodation provides opportunities for communities where people can move home without leaving a neighbourhood. A well-designed neighbourhood will provide accommodation that meets the needs of single person households, small and large families as well as offering live-work possibilities.

However, the mix needs to be designed and managed carefully. Layouts should aim to reduce possible tensions between families, older people and students for example by considering the different activities of these groups and maintaining privacy between them.

3. Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?

PPS3 (housing): ‘[The planning system should deliver] a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural.’

We can create neighbourhoods that cater for various socio-economic groups by having a mix of housing tenure. This includes providing social and privately rented accommodation, shared ownership properties and houses for outright sale.
A poor mix of housing tenure, if continued across a number of developments, can lead to a social imbalance and result in unsustainable communities. A large development should have the full range of tenures. For smaller developments, the tenure provision should support the existing mix of the area or introduce new tenures if necessary.

The percentage of affordable housing should be based on an assessment of the area in question. Successful development fully integrates the tenure mix, avoiding differentiation between individual dwellings and parts of the scheme based on their tenure.

**4. Does the development have easy access to public transport?**

PPS 3 (housing): Local planning authorities should consider if a development: ‘Is easily accessible and well-connected to public transport.’

Proximity to good public transport and facilities (see criterion 1) is essential in reducing the number of car journeys and making a place more accessible to a variety of groups. An effective way of achieving this is to link new housing into existing transport infrastructure, such as a railway station, tram route or bus service.

This will vary from place to place. Environmentally friendly travel plans, car pooling, car clubs and other management-led solutions should be considered as part of an overall car strategy. For smaller developments, public transport connections within a 400-metre radius or five-minute walk would be sufficient.

**5. Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impact?**

PPS 3 (housing): Local planning authorities should consider if a development: ‘Facilitates the efficient use of resources, during construction and in use, and seeks to adapt to and reduce the impact of, and on, climate change.’

With growing concern about climate change, building for sustainability is a necessity. Choices about where to build should be influenced by the resources and sustainability of a site. New solutions need to be explored that promote sustainable development, and should be considered from the start when doing risk assessments for land.

There is a wide variety of ways that housebuilders can reduce a scheme’s effect on the environment. This question relates to the overall development where site-wide environmental approaches have been adopted (environmental design for individual houses is covered in criterion 20).

The code for sustainable homes lists the following measures:

- using alternative and renewable energy schemes
- promoting recycling
- using sustainable drainage systems
- reducing construction waste
- prioritising brownfield development
- increasing biodiversity.

**Character**

**6. Is the design specific to the scheme?**

“A thorough appreciation of the overall site context is the starting point for designing a distinct place” Urban Design Compendium 1 p19

The design of individual homes and entire neighbourhoods should be specific to the client’s brief and the context, based on an understanding of the way the local area looks and works. This is part of a strong design process.
Good design is about offering solutions that allow us to build and live more efficiently. It is not about style. A good design should make best use of the land, provide value and create successful places with character, variety and identity.

The overall look and feel of a new development should be considered in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

7. Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape or topography?  
PPS3 (housing): ‘If done well, imaginative design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment.’

Few development sites come as empty blocks of land. Many have existing buildings and some are rich with archaeology or important natural environments. In some cases, buildings are listed or within conservation areas. In others, preservation orders apply to some trees.

New housing should respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture. Historic environments and local landmarks can help give a neighbourhood a strong sense of identity, attracting residents and investors.

A design that reflects and improves the site and its surroundings will help create a sense of character. It does not have to copy the style of surrounding architecture to belong to an area, but may benefit by responding to the scale and materials of surrounding buildings, the aspect of the site and particular views.

8. Does the scheme feel like a place with distinctive character?  
PPS3 (housing): Local planning authorities should consider if a development: ‘Creates, or enhances, a distinctive character that relates well to the surroundings and supports a sense of local pride and civic identity.’

Successful places tend to be those that have their own distinct identity. How a neighbourhood looks affects how residents feel about where they live. Character and quality help increase community pride. The ability of a scheme to create a sense of place greatly depends on the quality of the buildings and the spaces around them. This not only needs architecture of a high standard but a strong landscape strategy. It is about character, identity and variety.

A design with character needs to be supported by strong ideas. These ideas may be about reflecting contemporary society and culture or about responding to local patterns of development and landscape.

9. Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?  
Manual for Streets (2007): “Street layouts...should aim to make the environment self explanatory to all users. Features such as public art, planting and architectural style can assist navigation while possibly reducing the need for signs.” p116

A housing development should have a clear identity and be easy to understand for residents and visitors. A neighbourhood that is easy to get around tends to feel safer and more secure. It will have a clear network of streets, courtyards and alleyways that are interesting, welcoming and people-friendly. This network should link to existing routes and developments.

Navigation can be improved by creating landmarks and focal points, views, clear routes, gateways to particular areas, lighting, works of art and signs.

Layouts such as cul-de-sacs with winding roads and the same types of houses can make it more difficult to get around; they also encourage car use rather than walking or cycling. Corner buildings should be treated with particular care as they are often a useful way of giving directions and helping people to find places. Looking at a sectional drawing through a neighbourhood will help identify the change of scale and heights at key points in the layout, such as junctions or public spaces.
10. Are the streets defined by a well-structured building layout?

PPG 17 (planning for open space): ‘Local networks of high-quality and well-managed open space help to create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe and can play a major part in improving people’s sense of well-being.’

Streets, homes, gardens, places for leisure and parking must be carefully arranged. A successful layout should be characterised by a framework of interconnected routes which define ‘blocks’ of housing, open spaces and other uses. Streets, squares, courts, mews, circuses and avenues are tried and tested layouts which can successfully achieve this.

Streets work well if there is a clear definition of the public and private realm. This can be achieved by arranging buildings to follow a continuous line and by creating active edges with doors and windows opening onto the street, which also increases surveillance.

Design should start with the arrangement of buildings. Footpaths and roads can then be included in that arrangement, and within the wider neighbourhood structure. Generally, buildings should be positioned along and around public spaces, with small blocks that offer architectural variety and frequent entrances along the street.

Streets, Parking & Pedestrianisation

11. Does the building layout take priority over the streets and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?

Car parking: what works where (English Partnerships, 2006): ‘It is only through combining good external public environments with good home environments that successful neighbourhoods can be built.’

The building layout should be the priority in any new housing development. Buildings of the appropriate size, proportion, shape and layout will help create well-defined streets and spaces, which are attractive and user-friendly, improving residents’ quality of life.

In many recent housing layouts, more thought has been given to streets and car parking than to the arrangement of the buildings and the quality of the spaces created between them.

The rigid application of highway engineering standards for roads, junction separation distances and turning circles can create an environment which is unpleasant and difficult to use, especially for pedestrians. Streets and parking facilities should be designed to improve the usability and feel of an area but not to dominate it.

12. Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene?

PPS 3 (housing): Local planning authorities should consider if a development: ‘Takes a design-led approach to the provision of car-parking space, that is well-integrated with a high quality public realm.’

Car parking is one of the most difficult challenges in housing design. Discussions between planning authorities and developers should be influenced by a realistic assessment of likely patterns of car use as well as alternative options for parking. In many cases, a mix of parking will achieve the best results.

At roughly 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare, limiting parking squares and courtyards to 10 spaces will help avoid visual dominance. On-street parking can bring activity to the street and have a traffic-calming effect. Car parking should be designed into the scheme, making sure that the fronts of properties are not dominated by cars, and that there is a good relationship between houses and the street.

In denser developments, experience suggests that where commercial viability and conditions allow, on-street parking combined with well-managed below-building parking provides the most satisfactory solution. Where possible, below-building parking should be efficiently designed to free up more space for attractive streets and more shared public areas. Any development should avoid large areas of unsupervised garage court parking.
13. Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?
PPS3 (housing): Local planning authorities should consider if streets are: ‘pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly.’

Streets are the most used form of public space and they need to be designed to work well for us all. Pedestrians and cyclists need routes that are safe, direct, accessible and free from barriers. Places with low speed limits are safer and can be achieved through the careful treatment of surfaces, junctions and crossings. In a low-speed environment, pedestrian, vehicular and cycle routes need not necessarily be segregated.

Homezones use materials, textures, patterns, furniture and good planting to divert and slow traffic. For busier streets with fast traffic, cycle routes and pavements should be clearly defined.

A good streetscape will offer direct connections and crossings that are convenient and easy to use. It should be well lit, feel safe and make it easy for users to find and follow a route.

14. Does the scheme integrate with existing streets, paths and surrounding development?
PPS 1 (sustainable development): ‘High-quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces.’

New housing does not exist on its own. Streets and footpaths should be connected to existing routes and neighbourhoods, creating a district that is accessible and easy to get around. A well-designed development should be easy to get to and move through, making the most of existing or proposed facilities in the area. This needs streets, footpaths and public spaces which link into well-used routes.

A seamless network of routes and public spaces will help create a community that includes all residents. Safe access points into and through the development increase opportunities for walking and help reduce our reliance on cars.

Designing well-connected layouts depends on the local context (including local security issues) and how the development relates to existing areas. Plans of the surrounding area are useful because they show the continuity between new and existing development.

15. Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?
PPG 17 (planning for open space): ‘In identifying where to locate new areas of open space…carefully consider security and personal safety, especially for children.’

Design has a crucial role to play in creating places that not only feel safe, but are safe. Developments should be planned in a way that makes sure buildings overlook all public spaces, roads and footpaths to increase surveillance.

Windows and doors opening onto all streets and footpaths can provide greater security for users. Bay and corner windows will provide views in different directions, as well as bringing more light into homes.

Blank gable walls facing onto public spaces should be avoided. Street lighting needs to be carefully considered to cover all vulnerable areas. Light levels need to be fairly even throughout developments.

Design & Construction

16. Is public space well designed and does it have a suitable management arrangement in place?
PPG 17 (planning for open space): ‘New open spaces should improve the quality of the public realm through good design.’

The space around buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Any development should be able to provide some public open space, whether it is for children’s play and adventure, or for reflection...
and learning. If this is well designed it will result in a pleasurable place that will be popular and well used. This brings with it economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits.

Good public space is usually planned for a particular use. Too often, public space is the area left once buildings have been planned. This can lead to undefined areas with no specific use.

17. Do the buildings exhibit architectural quality?
PPS 1 (sustainable development): ‘Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.’

Architectural quality is about being fit for purpose, durable, well built and pleasing to the mind and the eye. Good architecture works well for its intended use. Housing design should be well thought through and cater for the residents’ needs. From the design of the exteriors and interiors to the surrounding landscaping, planners, developers and design teams should ensure that a significant proportion of home-buyers have their spirits lifted by what is on offer.

Good architecture is less to do with a particular style and more to do with the successful co-ordination of proportions, materials, colour and detail. Windows need to be arranged to look good but also to work for views and light inside the home.

Details need to be considered as an important part of the building and not as an add-on. Particular care should be given to corners, roof lines and how the building meets the ground. These have a significant effect on the overall impression of a building.

18. Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?
“A good project will continue to provide value for money and meet user needs throughout its lifetime.” National Audit Office, 2004

A well-designed home will need to take account of changing demands and lifestyles of the future by providing flexible internal layouts and allowing for cost-effective alterations. Housing should be able to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

The main consideration is adaptability. For houses, the design could accommodate a downstairs toilet, wider doorways, level entrances and allow for a lift or stair lift to be fitted in the future. The potential to extend back or upwards, or to open up between rooms to allow open-plan living, is valuable, as is garden space and the space to allow a conservatory to be added.

For houses and apartments, if outside walls carry structural loads this allows for partitions to be added or removed inside to suit the owner’s needs. And if rooms are big enough to allow them to be used in a variety of ways, for example, as a work space, study, bedroom or playroom, this adds flexibility.

19. Has the scheme made use of advances in construction technology that enhances its performance, quality and attractiveness?
“We want to encourage quicker, better quality house building through…better procurement, good value rather than lowest cost, and through better design and modern methods of construction”. ODPM, 2003

Advanced building technology can contribute to the environmental performance of a home, reduce defects in construction, improve health and safety on site, and increase overall efficiency. It has been shown that using modern methods of construction, up to four times as many homes can be built with the same on-site labour, and on-site construction time can be halved. Modern methods of construction include a variety of build approaches and products, covering off-site manufacturing and innovations in process and the way people work.

Examples of systems that are considered as advanced forms of construction include prefabricated elements such as ‘thin joint blocks’ (glued brick panels), fast track foundations or advanced methods of cladding. They may involve more substantial forms of construction such as tunnel form (concrete formed units) or precast concrete panels, timber or steel panelised wall units and floor cassettes or volumetric construction (also known as modular construction) of kitchen or bathroom pods or even entire apartments fully fitted prior to installation on site.
20. Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as building regulations?
Code for sustainable homes (DCLG, 2006): ‘In 2004, more than a quarter of the UK’s carbon dioxide emissions – a major cause of climate change – came from the energy we use to heat, light and run our homes.’

Features such as generous space, good natural light, energy efficiency and good sound insulation can greatly improve the popularity of a home and the quality of life for the people who live in it. Well-designed homes will excel in some, if not all, of these areas. This should not be achieved at the expense of the overall design quality of the scheme.

Good space standards contribute to the long-term flexibility and future proofing (able to accommodate changing lifestyle demands) of a home.

For various aspects of building performance, including energy efficiency, the higher levels of achievement listed in the code for sustainable homes is the relevant reference point.

Good sound insulation between homes is important, especially for schemes where there are lots of houses close together. The biggest effect on privacy is sound coming through dividing walls.
Appendices

Appendix 2. Guidance on Design and Access Statements

What is a Design and Access Statement?

A design and access statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal and to explain the proposal in a structured way. Design and Access Statements help to ensure that development proposals are based on a thoughtful design process and a sustainable approach to access. Statements should improve the quality of proposals: in preparing the design and access statement, applicants need to consider and subsequently explain the merit of the design and how it relates to existing setting.

When are they required?

Statements are required for all planning applications except the following:

- Change of use applications unless operational development has taken place
- Engineering or mining operations
- Householder development, including to flats; unless within a Conservation Area
- Extensions to the time limits for implementing existing planning permissions
- Extensions to non-domestic buildings, where the floorspace created does not exceed 100 square metres; unless within a Conservation Area
- Erection, construction, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence or wall up to 2 metres high (or existing height, if higher); unless within a Conservation Area or the curtilage of a listed building
- New buildings in connection with an existing non-domestic use of land less than 100 cubic metres in volume and 15 metres in height; unless within a Conservation Area
- Alterations to existing buildings, where there is no increase in its size; unless within a Conservation Area
- Erection, alteration or replacement of plant or machinery, where the plant or machinery would not exceed 15 metres above ground level or the height of original plant or machinery if greater; unless within a Conservation Area
- Removal or variation of conditions attached to planning permission
- Advertisement consent
- Works to preserved trees
- Non-material amendments to existing planning permissions

What should they contain?

Your statement should cover eight areas. Although you don't have to use each of these sections as a title, it may help you to ensure you have covered the topic and help us to check your statement against certain criteria once received.

The design component:

- Amount; how much is to be built on the site
- Layout; arrangement of public and private spaces
Appendices

- Scale; how big the buildings and spaces will be
- Landscaping
- Appearance
- Appraising the Context
- Use; what buildings and space will be used for

The access component:
- Access; how everyone can get to and move within the space

The Design Component:

1. **Amount:** how much is to be built on the site – this means the number of proposed units for residential use and for all other development, this means the proposed floor space for each proposed use:
   - How the proposal uses will be distributed across the site
   - How the proposal relates to its surroundings
   - Consideration as to how to ensure accessibility for users and between parts of the development is maximised

2. **Layout:** How the proposed buildings, routes and public/private spaces will be arranged on the site and the relationship between them and the existing buildings and spaces around the site:

   The statement should explain why a particular layout has been chosen, eg. the relationships between buildings private/public spaces and how these relationships will create safe, vibrant and successful places. The layout of buildings can also have a profound impact on the energy consumption and thermal comfort during winter and summer, and thus the building’s carbon emission performance.

   It must also demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design and how it reflects the attributes of safe, sustainable places set out in the DCLG’s ‘Safer Places’ guidance document, found in the "downloads" section on the right of this page.

3. **Scale:** the height, width and length of a building or buildings in relation to its surroundings:
   - Details of how the scale of the proposal responds to the specific site and its surroundings/skyline
   - Explanation of the size of the building parts, particularly entrances and facades with regard to how they relate to the human scale

4. **Landscaping:** how external spaces will be treated:
   - Details of design scheme: more than just plants/trees, covers all outdoor spaces - street furniture, road materials etc.
   - Explanation of how the landscaping fits in with the overall scheme
5. **Appearance**: what the proposed buildings and spaces will look like:

- Details of building materials and architectural details
- Pictures of what the scheme would look like based on details included in the application

6. **Appraising the Context**: explanation of how local context has influenced the design:

- Demonstration of steps taken to appraise the context
- Assessment of the site's immediate and wider context in terms of physical, social and economic characteristics
- Indication of how the findings of any consultation have been taken into account
- Identifying opportunities and constraints and balancing of any conflicting issues identified
- Demonstrate that design has evolved from an appraisal of the context

7. **Use**: the use or mix of uses proposed for land and buildings:

- Explanation of proposed uses and their distribution across the site
- Relationship to uses surrounding the site

*The Access Component*

It is important to note that the access component relates only to access to the development and does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings.

8. **Access**: how everyone can get to and moves through the place:

- An explanation of why access point and routes have been chosen and how the site relates to road layout and the public transport network.
- Identification of the access policy/standards adopted (ie. Part M of the Building Regulations, the Disability Discrimination Act etc)
- Access for emergency services should be explained where relevant

*What about Listed Buildings?*

If submitted with a planning application, the design and access statement should be a single combined statement covering the elements described above as well as those outlined below for listed building consent.

For listed building consent, the statement should contain 5 sections:

1. Scale (as above)
2. Layout (as above)
3. Appearance (as above)
4. The design process: Alongside the process described above, where relevant, this section should also explain how the design has taken account of:

- The historic and special architectural importance of the building
- The physical features of the building that justify its designation as a Listed Building and how these will be preserved/enhanced
- The building’s setting

5. Access (as above). Additionally, this section should set out how the legal duties (imposed by legislation) have been balanced against the historical and architectural significance of the building and the need to protect its character and setting.
## Appendix 3. Havering Housing Density Matrix, Development Control Policy DC2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>PTAL</th>
<th>PTAI</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Units per Hectare/Habitable Rooms per Hectare</th>
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<td>Romford pedshed</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
<td>20.01&gt;</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>240-435</td>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<td>200-450</td>
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<td>Suburban</td>
<td>50-110</td>
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<td>200-300</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>10.01-20</td>
<td>Urban</td>
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<td>Rest of Borough</td>
<td>All areas</td>
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<td>0-10</td>
<td>Urban (Harold Hill and Collier Row District Centres)</td>
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<td>(All areas outside the PTAL Zones and Harold Hill and Collier Row District Centres)</td>
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