



Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance

Supplementary Planning Document

December 2010

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This Urban Design Guidance was commissioned by: RENEW; Stoke-on-Trent City Council; Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council; The North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership and Advantage West Midlands. The North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership was dissolved during 2010.



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Produced by Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design.



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How to use this design guide

This design guide is mainly intended for use on screen rather than in print format, as it contains navigation links.

It is strongly recommended that you first, please refer to the strategic urban design vision and any of the key strategic urban design principles that may be relevant. Check that you propose to follow the good practice principles set out in Section 3, Good design: good practice. Then refer to the character area guidance if applicable. Finally, refer to the relevant topic sections that apply to the situation. Over time, regular users of the Urban Design Guide should be able to go straight to the relevant character and topic areas.

The electronic format allows you to cross refer between these sections as necessary and also highlights certain specific cross references, where these occur between different sections.

Related topics are identified by 'Refer to' plus section number and name. Links back from these topics to your original place in the document are identified by 'Return to' plus section numbers only.

Please note that the design guide should not be used in isolation to guide the preparation of proposals. Other steps should include:

- Check compliance with policy in the Core Spatial Strategy and any other guidance in relevant planning policy documents;
- Check any specific requirements the local planning authority may have for the site or proposed development;
- A site visit and appraisal of the site in its context;
- A pre-application consultation with planning officers.

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6 Canal and river network

6.2.1 Areas with a 'green' character
 CR2 Development should take the form of distinct clusters, informally arranged and set in landscapes, in line with the general guidance and typical existing characteristics. Development that takes the form of a continuous building frontage, creating a high degree of enclosure, would be inappropriate in areas with a 'green' character.
 The following detailed principles apply:

Activity

- Make connections to open spaces, parks and play areas;
- Towpaths and other pedestrian and cycle routes alongside waterways should be clearly recognisable as recreational routes.

Building form / massing

- Buildings should vary in their alignment with some being set back creating spaces along the waters edge, others being set at the edge of the canal;
- The proportions, height and massing of buildings should reflect the character of historic industrial development, i.e. development should be clustered with varying building heights and building lines;
- Generally, a similar scale to former industrial clusters, up to an equivalent of 4 storeys, is appropriate for new development.

Architecture
 The architecture should be simple and should respond to the industrial canal side character of existing buildings without mimicking the appearance of the historic fabric.

Views/topography

- The visual impact of proposed new clusters of development must be considered, with the aim being to create high quality new focal points in appropriate locations rather than to have no impact on views at all;
- Consider views towards a proposed development from the water, not only towards it.

Landscape
 Within these areas, the 'green' corridor nature of the canal should be enhanced or extended into the adjoining landscape associated with development. Security should be addressed through careful landscape design to ensure that the desired character is created. Considerations include:

- More naturalistic planting, to help blend the sinuous canal alignment with the softer topography of adjacent open spaces;
- Careful balancing of expansive and enclosed sections of the canal, to provide surprise and interest along the route;
- Use of large-scale wildflower planting, or meadows with minimal management, in preference to municipal mown grass or shrubbery;
- Provision of a strong landscape buffer, where the form of development is not part of a cluster;
- Where open spaces line the waterways views to the canal should be retained/created and access to the towpath encouraged; and
- Any canal-side vegetation should be designed to enhance biodiversity.

Refer to: Section 3.6 Appraising the context

Return to: Section 1.8.7

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Tip: Use the 'Find' Function in the Acrobat Toolbar and the 'Find Next / Previous' buttons, to search for a keyword

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1 Introduction

1.1 This design guide

The importance of design is recognised both nationally and locally within both local authorities. Good design is considered essential for sustainable development and it is recognised as a key contributor to economic value, community health, social well-being and inclusion, as well as to the quality of the environment.

We need good design if we are to create places where people will want to live, to work and to visit. Design is important everywhere, not only in maintaining the quality of places that are already attractive, but also in helping to revitalise and to regenerate places.

Good design is not just about buildings but about places, and includes the way places work as well as how they look. This requires a considered response to a place, based on a good understanding of the particular context.

The guidance included here is urban design guidance. Its focus is upon principles for creating better places, that is, on design issues that influence how a proposal relates to its context. Good design is about imaginative solutions that meet the needs of each client and respond appropriately to their context. In order not to stifle creativity, this guide is not prescriptive and does not attempt to propose specific design solutions.

1.2 Purpose

The main purpose of this design guide is to provide a practical tool to help to:

- Promote good, sustainable, urban design in the sub-region as a whole;
- Explain how spatial principles and design policies in the Core Spatial Strategy will be applied in relation to different places and topics.

- Provide guidance in relation to planning applications: to applicants when formulating proposals; to planning officers when assessing them; and to politicians when making decisions, on what constitutes good, sustainable urban design in this sub-region.
- Provide guidance to public sector commissioning bodies when strategies and proposals are being formulated either directly by themselves, or by others on their behalf.

1.3 Status of document

This design guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which amplifies planning policies in a Development Plan Document (DPD), in this case the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (October 2009). Of particular relevance are the Core Spatial Strategy Strategic Aims 14, 16 and 17, Core Strategic Policy CSP1 - Design Quality, Core Strategic Policy CSP2 - Historic Environment and Core Strategic Policy CSP3 - Sustainability and Climate Change. Refer to [Appendix A1](#)

It does not create new planning policy, but explains in more detail how existing policy will be interpreted. It cannot allocate land for particular uses or sites for development. However, it is an important material consideration in the determining of planning applications.

The accompanying Sustainability Appraisal has been integrated into the process of preparing this design guide from drafts of the strategic vision through to the final document, helping to shape the issues covered.

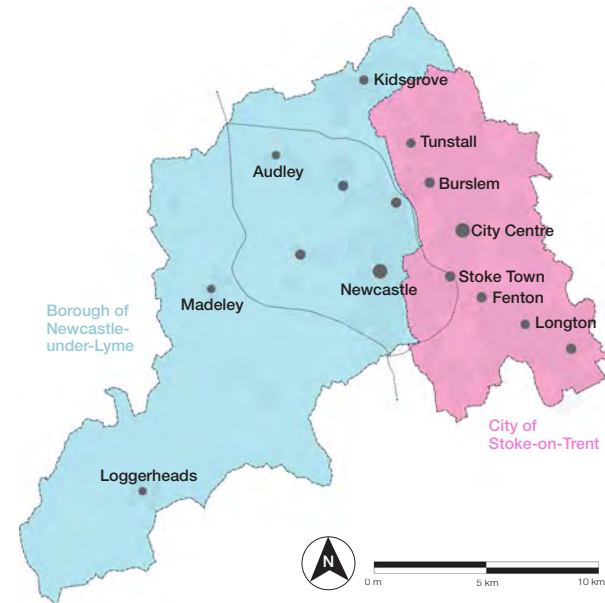


Figure 1.1: Key plan to show the area covered by this urban design guide

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1.4 Scope and coverage

Four types of urban design guidance are provided in this document:

- Strategic urban design vision and key principles for sustainable urban design for the whole area;
- Guidance on processes to follow that will help to support and to demonstrate design quality as now required by the planning system;
- Guidance for selected character areas, these being the main centres, local transport corridors and the waterways network;
- A range of detailed urban design guidance for selected topics, these being residential, employment, historic environment, rural environment and the public realm.

This guidance is applicable to any location within the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the City of Stoke-on-Trent, so for any particular place or topic it will be less detailed than the guidance to be found in a document focused on that place or topic alone. It provides a high level overview, which for certain topics, will be elaborated upon more fully elsewhere in the future.

1.5 Background

This document was prepared by Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design for Urban Vision, the North Staffordshire Architecture Centre, on behalf of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and RENEW, the North Staffordshire Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, working together in partnership with English Heritage, CABE, the Homes and Communities Agency and Advantage West Midlands represented on the Steering Group.

It is based upon urban design appraisals and reviews of policy and other relevant studies and strategies, as set out in the accompanying Baseline Report. It draws upon a number of other sources of evidence prepared for the client group, principally:

- The Core Spatial Strategy (October 2009);
- North Staffordshire Conurbation: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006);
- North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy, (2007); and also
- Planning for Landscape Change (2000) prepared by Staffordshire County Council.

The process involved a wide range of stakeholders through a programme of consultation/ training led by Urban Vision and run jointly with Tibbalds. Details are set out in the accompanying Consultation Summary.

1.6 Terminology

Throughout this document place names are consistent with those used in the Core Spatial Strategy, as follows:

- Stoke-on-Trent refers to the City of Stoke-on-Trent;
- Stoke refers to the town of Stoke-upon-Trent;
- City Centre refers to the city centre of Stoke-on-Trent;
- Newcastle-under-Lyme refers to the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme;
- Newcastle refers to the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Plain English is used wherever possible and a glossary is provided to explain technical terms.



Figure 1.2: Plan showing Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent in their wider context



Figure 1.3: Urban Vision led a programme of consultation and urban design training with key stakeholders, run jointly with Tibbalds

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1.7 Importance of good design

1.7.1 Good design as a regeneration priority

In recent years, the successful regeneration of cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield has demonstrated the value of good design, in promoting a positive image and sense of identity, raising investor confidence, and creating attractive places for people to live and work in and to visit.

This has been achieved through recognising and enhancing the distinctive assets of each place, and by insisting upon good design both where there is public sector investment, and for private sector development proposals. It has also required an investment in design skills and training.

North Staffordshire is now benefiting from a focused approach to regeneration, which aims to transform the economic base, renew the housing market, and provide the facilities that will support a sustainable, post-industrial 21st century city. The regeneration agencies and local authorities are working closely in partnership to coordinate their approaches and make sure that their interventions have the maximum benefit.

The value of place-making, and the benefits of good design, are recognised and a number of initiatives already demonstrate the strong local commitment to raising design awareness and design quality. Examples of this include:

- a. Urban Vision, the architecture centre for North Staffordshire, promotes a range of educational, training and support activities to those involved in regeneration and also to the wider community, including a Design Review service for development, planning and regeneration proposals;
- b. The 'North Staffordshire Conurbation – Assessment of Historical Significance (Dec 2006)' pioneered the technique of urban

characterisation, which assesses the heritage value of existing places and helps to guide future intervention.

- c. The Joint Core Spatial Strategy, the key strategy to guide how regeneration will be achieved through the planning system, which includes Design Quality as a key strategic policy.

Regeneration will bring major public and private investment in physical change. The success of this investment will depend upon how well new developments, both individually and collectively, transform the area's physical environment; how effectively it functions; whether it is truly sustainable; and how positively it is regarded in the future by investors, visitors and residents.

Quality of design and, in particular, quality of urban design, will be critical to transforming the quality of life and to bringing new prosperity to the sub-region.

Good urban design can be a powerful force to help communities make healthier lifestyle choices about exercise, social integration and healthy eating and it can also reduce potentially harmful impacts of development. Through good design developments can be encouraged to consider their health impacts and be designed to have a positive impact on the health of the areas in which they are built. The importance of good urban design to health is well documented and further information can be found by visiting the World Health Organisation website at www.euro.who.int

1.7.2 National importance of good design

Good design is recognised as a priority in both planning legislation and national planning policy. Local planning authorities are required to exercise their functions:

“with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development” (Planning and Compensation Act 2004)

and in doing so:

“must, in particular, have regard to the desirability of achieving good design” (Planning Act 2008).

Sustainable development aims to create places that meet environmental, social and economic objectives in a balanced and holistic manner.

In particular, the government has identified adapting to climate change as the greatest long term challenge facing us today (Climate Change Supplement to PPS1).



Figure 1.4: Manchester - place-making, with good design as a priority, has contributed significantly to the regeneration of the City Centre

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“At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations” PPS1.

“Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.” (PPS1)

PPS1 also makes clear that sustainable development involves design that is high quality and inclusive, both in terms of the end product (the place) being accessible to all and also in terms of the process of design. Community involvement is vitally important to achieving sustainable development.

The local government white paper, Strong and prosperous communities (HM Government 2006), promoted place-making as a key driver for economic prosperity and highlighted the responsibilities of local authorities as ‘place shapers’.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the government’s advisor on design, believes that:

“Sustainable design is an integral part of good design. No building space or place can be considered well designed if it does not contribute to environmental, social and economic sustainability. Conversely no building, space or place can be considered sustainable if it is not well designed.”

Key objectives for design include responding to the local context and creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness (PPS1). This applies both to new development, but also to the historic environment, which already creates and sustains a sense

of local distinctiveness that is important to the character of places (PPS5). PPG15 makes clear the government’s view that the conservation of the historic environment and economic prosperity are complementary objectives and can successfully support one another.

Crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour within the urban environment all have negative impacts upon community well-being and quality of life. As well as the direct costs of crime experienced by its victims, the fear of crime contributes to social exclusion. Crime also threatens the success and vitality of town centres and employment areas by acting as a brake on economic growth and prosperity.

Promoting good design and layout in new development is one of the most important ways in which the Council can address crime issues. Good design and layout make crime more difficult to commit, increase the likelihood of detection of criminal activity and improve public perceptions of safety. Attractive and well-designed environments also encourage a sense of pride and ‘ownership’ amongst the local community.

So, good design is vitally important, not only for our well being today, but also for the well being of future generations.

What is good design? It goes far beyond how places look, to include how they function, or work. PPS1 refers to ‘By Design’ for good practice guidance on design issues. This sets out a series of objectives, or guiding principles, for urban design. These include, the built form, the linkages, the quality of the public realm and the mix of uses.

It also promotes approaches to design that focus on performance criteria or upon design objectives or principles rather than standards.

“Good urban design is rarely brought about by a local authority prescribing physical solutions, or by setting rigid or empirical design standards, but by approaches which emphasise design objectives or principles.”

In accordance with government guidance, the Core Spatial Strategy strategic design policy does not repeat the key guiding principles set for urban design at a national level. Instead it highlights and emphasises those aspects of urban design which are identified as particular priorities within the sub-region.

“Character

A place with its own identity

Continuity & Enclosure

A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished

Quality of the Public Realm

A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas

Ease of Movement

A place that is easy to get to and move through

Legibility

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

Adaptability

A place that can change easily

Diversity

A place with variety and choice”

Figure 1.5: The principles, or objectives, of good urban design are set out in *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System; towards better practice* which accompanies the government’s Planning Policy Statement 1

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1.8.1 The influence of geology

The geology has had a strong influence on the area, with coal seams and deposits of potclays forming the basis for industrial development, which started with coal working during medieval times and developed rapidly during the 18th and 19th centuries. The geology is characterised by a series of faults, which bring the different strata to the surface in a disjointed rather than a continuous pattern.

The most significant deposits of clays lie in the central valley between Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, at the heart of the conurbation.

All this has had a significant influence on the historic pattern of settlement and upon the pattern and quality of landscape.



Figure 1.6: Victorian use of traditional local materials at Hanley Town Hall - red brick, buff brick and buff sandstone



Figure 1.7: Recently restored terraced houses in Knutton with red brick, buff brick banding, sandstone sills, lintels and quoins and blue clay tiles

It has also influenced the palette of local materials traditionally used for built development and the public realm, which still contributes significantly to the character of the conurbation today. This is based upon:

- Red brick;
- Staffordshire blue brick, also used for paving until the end of the second world war;
- Buff brick in limited quantities as a contrasting material;
- Clay tiles for roofing;
- Other ceramic products, such as terracotta, for decoration;
- Brown/grey millstone grits for plinths and paving; and
- Hollington Triassic red and buff sandstone.



Figure 1.8: Contemporary use of traditional materials at South Shelton Health Centre - buff brick, staffordshire blue brick and terracotta cladding



Figure 1.9: The Wedgwood Institute, Burslem in red brick with sandstone details, decorative panels of ceramic tiles and terracotta

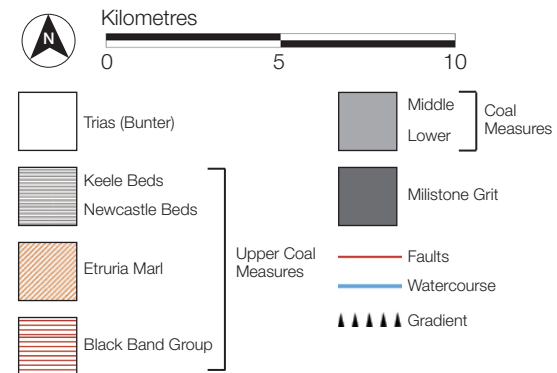
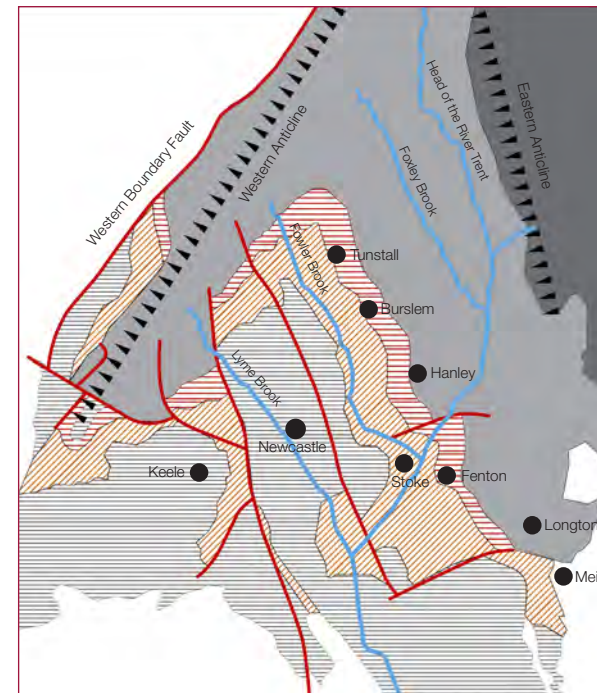


Figure 1.10: Location and siting - the conurbation and its main centres relative to the geology and watercourses

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1.8.2 The influence of topography

The topography of the sub-region is varied and undulating and has had a strategic influence upon its character.

The conurbation is sited across a series of shallow valleys running from northwest to south east. These contain streams feeding into the River Trent, which has its source locally. To the east the landform rises to the millstone grit uplands of the Staffordshire Moorlands, whilst to the west it flattens out gradually into the Cheshire plain.

There is no consistent relationship between the centres and the topography either in the conurbation or in the rural area.

A ridge runs north west to south east along the east side of the central valley of the Fowlea Brook. The 150m contour line projects a number of spurs westward from this ridge towards the Fowlea valley. A number of the centres are positioned generally around this contour. The City Centre and the towns of Burslem and Tunstall in particular are situated on these spurs, giving them a local outlook and prospect.

Stoke, Longton, and Kidsgrove are lower lying relative to the surrounding topography.

Newcastle is sited in the valley bottom at the historic crossing point over the Lyme Brook.

Of the rural settlements, some are positioned on high ground, for instance Loggerheads, whereas others, such as Madeley, are set in a valley.

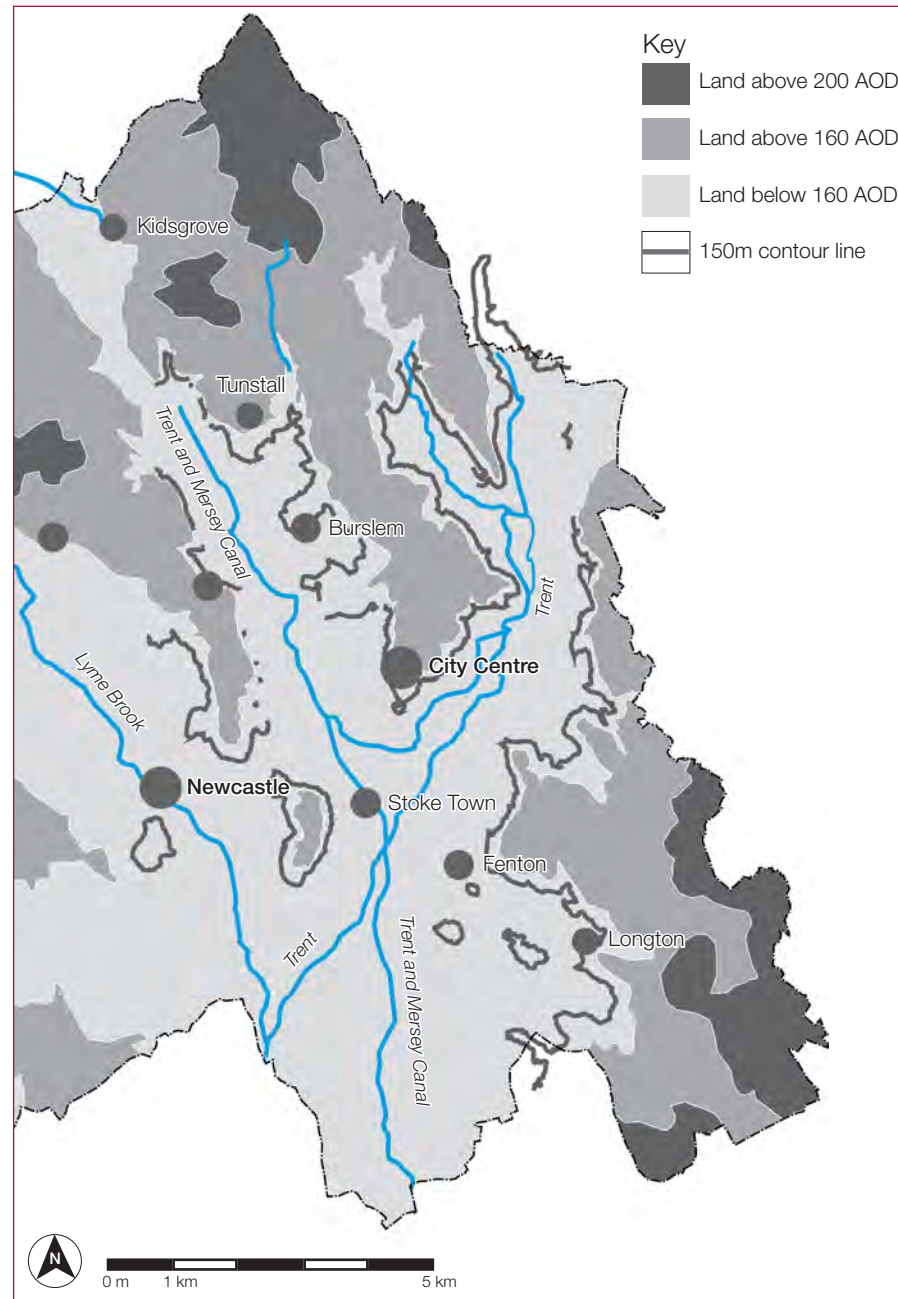


Figure 1.11: The topography of the conurbation

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1.8.3 Historical pattern of development

Much of the distinctive character of the area is the result of the way that places have developed over time in response to the opportunities presented by the geology and topography and other physical characteristics.

Newcastle grew up as a market town around a castle, set at the crossing of the Lyme Brook. Until the end of the medieval period it was the principal town in the area, with today's towns of Stoke-on-Trent being small farming hamlets. In the late 16th and 17th centuries, coal mining and pottery making expanded and continued to do so during the 18th and 19th centuries. By the mid 18th century, the canals were being constructed to transport goods and materials.

The potteries industry included brickworks as well as ceramics, leaving pits where raw materials were excavated. Coal mining also expanded, as did associated iron working. These industries grew up wherever the natural resources, the coal and clays, could be extracted, creating a complicated mosaic of works, housing for workers and despoiled land, interspersed with areas still in agriculture.

The hamlets of Stoke-on-Trent developed into independent towns, most set along the line of what is now the former A50. An extensive railway network served various industrial locations.

The towns benefited from the patronage of wealthy industrialists and were fiercely competitive with one another. Monumental civic buildings and churches characterised this patronage, as did grand mansions and estates. They were generally characterised by red brick with ceramic products, such as terracotta and tiles, used to decorate some of the more important buildings, although civic buildings, churches and some of the larger dwellings were built in buff or red sandstone.

Although Newcastle became a significant industrial town, particularly with coal mining to the west, it retained much of its character as a historic market town.

The hinterland remained largely rural throughout this period of industrial development, with a pattern of large farmsteads, dispersed hamlets and a few villages.

During the mid twentieth century the industrial base declined significantly. The A500 link road to the M6 was built, following the central valley through the conurbation, and opening up access to sites for distribution uses. In 1986 a National Garden Festival was held, in what is now the Festival Park area, to demonstrate how environmental enhancement could stimulate development.

Today the extractive industries have gone but the distinctive settlement pattern, of closely situated but distinct places with a rural hinterland, still remains although it is not clearly apparent. Much of the former industrial land is open space, regenerating landscape or out-of-town development, although there still are many brownfield sites still in evidence.

Village settlements developed for a variety of reasons related to agriculture; agricultural industries, such as milling; industry such as coal and iron working; or to service large estates and, in many cases, their roles and pattern of development changed over time.



Figure 1.12: Fenton in 1898 and today - showing the historical relationship between extractive industries and the settlement, with former industrial land remaining in industrial use or as 'out of town' uses and forms of development

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1.8.4 The distinctive settlement pattern today

Today the conurbation is composed of a complicated mosaic of built development and landscapes. The distinct settlements based around the main centres that can be seen on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1900 are no longer clearly distinguishable, either on maps or when travelling around.

The pattern of development in the latter part of the twentieth century has infilled the areas between places as industries have declined and new industrial development has taken place outside the settlements, mainly in the central valley. The mobility brought by the private car has made sites accessible that once were remote from population, transport and centres.

Almost without exception, towns have developed a car orientated form of development - 'out-of-town' development on their edges. This is generally mono-functional retail, commercial or business development in low cost buildings with poor townscape quality that relies upon the use of the car. Refer to: **Section 1.8.6 'Out-of-town' settlement pattern in the conurbation** for the typical townscape characteristics of this form of development.

This typical pattern applies to the settlements within the conurbation. However, the effect of 'out of town' development on the edges of each of the distinct settlements is that the settlements have begun to coalesce, with 20th century industrial development and 'out-of-town' development now situated in between places and at the heart of the conurbation.

This distinctive pattern of development has a significant impact upon townscape character and quality and undermines the image of the conurbation as a city. It has a particular impact upon Stoke-on-Trent, which has many centres,

and less so on Newcastle, which still maintains a recognisable market town settlement pattern, of centre, suburbs and 'out of town' development towards Kidsgrove in the north and in the central valley.

Not only is there an 'out-of-town' form of development on the edges of places, in between them, but the availability of land on the edges of centres, as industries have declined or relocated, has led to an 'out-of-town' form of development taking place in these locations too. Rather than centres being an intensification of activity expressed in an urban form of development, some have become islands of urban townscape character adrift in areas of out-of town' character. This applies particularly to the City Centre, Tunstall and Longton.

A number of the centres, in particular the City Centre and Burslem, do not have a balance of uses that work together and encourage sustainable living. In particular, these centres have very limited local residential populations within walking distance. They also have significant areas of brownfield land available for development

The settlement pattern both makes it difficult for people to find their way around the conurbation and undermines its image as a city:

- There is little distinction between one settlement and another;
- Many of the routes between settlements have a similar, unattractive townscape character without any sense of place;
- There is little development of a city scale associated with the key routes between places.

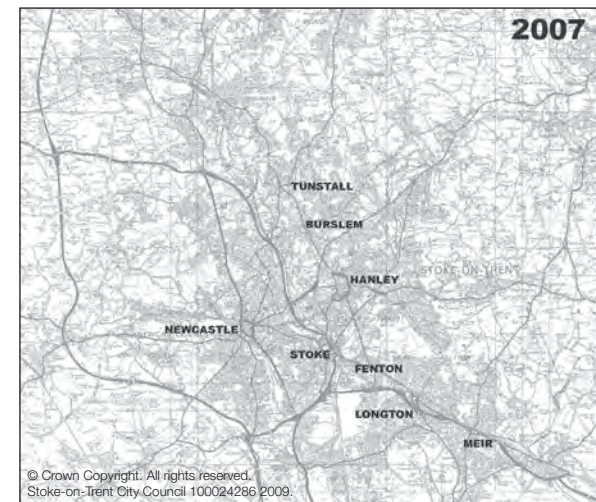
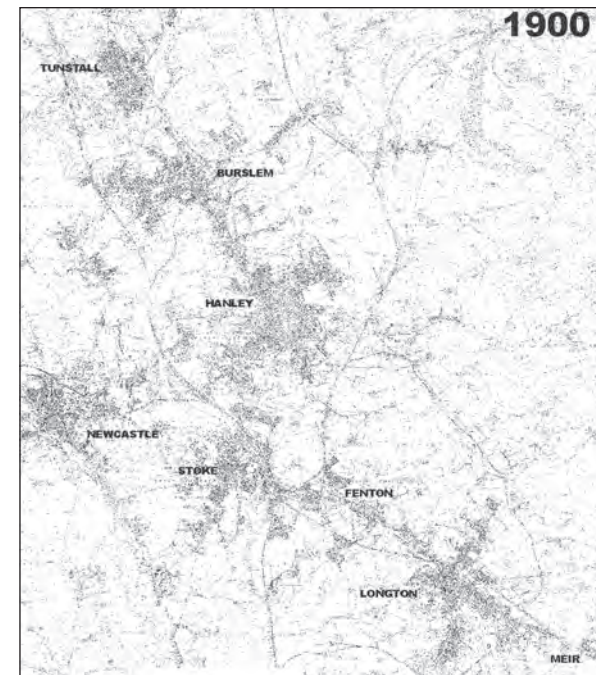


Figure 1.13: The Ordnance Survey maps from 1900 and today show clearly how the pattern of distinct settlements, each based around one of the centres, is no longer clearly distinguishable today

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1.8.5 Urban and suburban settlement pattern in the conurbation

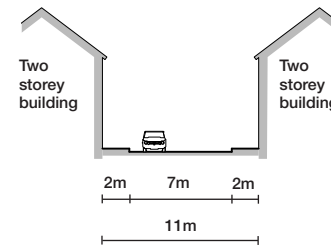
Typically, urban settlement patterns are based around a connected network of streets and other public spaces, defined by blocks of built development. The built form is generally made up of buildings that together create and define building lines close to street frontages and address the public realm, helping both to animate it and to provide it with supervision.

The height of buildings is such that public spaces feel well enclosed, akin to outdoor corridors and rooms, although at a larger scale. The combination of these characteristics creates a density and variety of activity, both in terms of formal uses and also informal activities that take place in the public spaces, which characterises the most successful urban places.

Suburban settlement patterns generally follow similar principles although the relationship

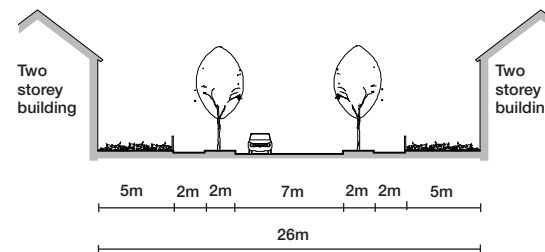
between buildings and street frontages is less direct, with front gardens defined by boundary treatments, such as hedges or walls. A building line is generally defined although less continuous. Individual buildings and plots are generally larger, although building groups may be smaller.

Soft landscape plays an important role in enclosing streets, whether by planting on frontages, or in the public realm, such as street trees. Gaps in the building line often allow views through to a planted backdrop. Return to: [Section 2.7.1](#)



- Generally continuous street frontages;
- Consistent building line.;
- Buildings set close to street frontage;
- Buildings address street;
- Building height encloses street space; and
- Street tree planting provides main 'green' element, possibly also with front garden planting.

Figure 1.14: Urban character - Wellesley Street, Hanley - Example with terraced buildings that turn corners onto cross streets



- Street frontages not continuous but coherent;
- Building line may be consistent or varied;
- Buildings set behind front boundary treatment;
- Buildings address street;
- Building height needs street trees and/ or planted front gardens to enclose street space; and
- Front gardens provide 'green' element, possibly also with street trees.

Figure 1.15: Suburban character - The Crescent, Newcastle - Example with formally arranged layout with semi-detached and small terraces defining frontage, and mature street tree planting, which contributes significantly to the townscape character

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1.8.6 'Out-of-town' settlement pattern in the conurbation

Areas of twentieth century industry are typically characterised by large floorplate 'sheds' of various sizes with no discernible street frontage or building line. The requirements of vehicles govern the arrangement of buildings on the site and the location of access, service areas and car parking. Buildings do not address the street. High fences often form the site boundaries. Access roads may have little or no space for pedestrians. Soft landscape is generally very limited and a

high proportion of the site is covered in hard impermeable surfaces.

Areas with an 'out-of-town' settlement pattern are generally characterised by large floorplate buildings with no discernible street frontage or building line. In some cases buildings address the street, in others they do not. Groups of buildings in close proximity are often unrelated to one another, either in terms of the built form or the organisation of the site, and they tend to be difficult to move between. Some examples provide pedestrian routes within the site and along the building frontage. Large

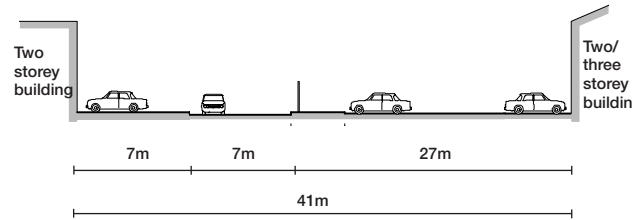
areas of car parking and signage typically dominate the site frontage. Planting tends to be limited to ground cover along frontages and trees set within the car parking grid. A high proportion of the site area is impermeable. Return to: [Section 1.8.4](#)

1.8.7 Settlement pattern in rural areas.

There is no consistent pattern of settlement in rural areas, either between different settlements, nor necessarily within a settlement. Many of the villages display urban or suburban characteristics in part. Refer to: [Section 10.3 Character of settlements](#)



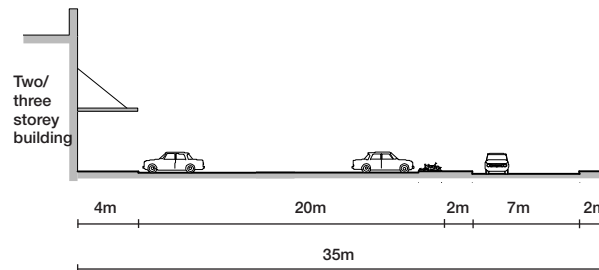
Figure 1.16: Twentieth century industrial character - Govan Road, Fenton Industrial Estate - Example of a typical employment area with big sheds and high fences along the street frontage



- Street frontages not continuous;
- No identifiable building line, may be far from street or close to it;
- Buildings set behind security fences;
- Little or no enclosure to street space; and
- Landscape on frontage may provide 'green' element, generally very limited and with little impact



Figure 1.17: 'Out-of-town' character - Retail on west of Scotia Road, Tunstall - Typical example of large floorplate retail that does not relate to street frontage, set in sea of parking



- Street frontages not continuous;
- No identifiable building line, may be far from street;
- Buildings set behind large parking areas;
- Little or no enclosure to street space; and
- Car park planting or street trees provide main 'green' element, generally meagre with little impact.

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2.1 Strategic urban design vision

The Introduction, and the Baseline Report, outline the complex issues which have shaped the urban form of the conurbation as we know it today. To begin to address the historic problems we need to take both a strategic approach (macro) to urban design and also one at street level (micro). This section on the Strategic Vision deals with the macro level, it is concerned with the relationship between the City and town centres and rural area, as well as working towards a new distinctive and sustainable settlement hierarchy, whilst still respecting the area's special historic character.

At the heart of the Strategic Vision is the need for a more distinct settlement pattern created by a clear pattern of three distinct spatial types:

Urban: for the conurbation settlements.

Landscape led urban: for the areas forming the setting for conurbation settlements and shown on pages 31 and 32.

Rural: the remaining Area.

This will create a more legible and more distinct pattern of settlements and a well connected network of high quality places, each with its own distinctive character. The aim is to create a new sense of place and more immediate and positive image for the conurbation. Ultimately we want to transform the quality of life of people living and working in the area and particularly the urban core and encourage economic success.

The strategic urban design themes guiding this Vision Statement arose from the appraisal and consultation process carried out in the very early stages of preparing the Urban Design Guidance. These themes mirror a number of the key spatial principles and policies of the Core Spatial Strategy, including the hierarchy of centres on pages 36 to 39 of that document.

Each theme is then explained further and key strategic urban design principles are identified in the sections that follow.

Refer to: [Section 2.10 The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on the strategic urban design vision.

Sustainable development is now a national priority and, in particular, places are aiming to adapt in preparation for future climate change.

This means creating places that perform well in terms of:

- a. the economy, with a stable and prosperous economy that provides jobs for the local workforce;
- b. social inclusion, creating mixed and inclusive communities with good access to a range of facilities and opportunities, where people are healthy, active, feel a sense of belonging and will continue to want to live into the future; and
- c. the environment, where impacts on the environment are minimised and well adapted to meet the challenge of climate change.

Each of these aspects of sustainability needs to be in balance with and support the others.

The distinctive settlement pattern of the North Staffordshire conurbation can now be considered as a potential asset rather than as a liability.

In the future, a sense of place and the quality of environment will be a key influence on people's choice of where to live, where to work, where to shop.

The best of both in North Staffordshire: prosperity and quality of life by design.

A place with:

(Numbered as per the following sections)

- 2.2** *A series of successful and thriving centres, each with its own role and character;*
- 2.3** *High quality places for living and working that people aspire to occupy;*
- 2.4** *Better quality connections between places, particularly for non car users;*
- 2.5** *A high quality green space network, easy for all to access;*
- 2.6** *A positive and memorable image based on valuing townscape assets;*
- 2.7** *A legible and more distinct pattern of settlements in attractive settings;*
- 2.8** *A high quality of life into the future through sustainable, well designed development to create places;*
- 2.9** *Good practice that supports the making of sustainable places.*

Figure 2.1: Strategic urban design vision statement - the key urban design themes

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2.2 Successful and thriving centres, each with its own role and character

One of the most distinctive features of the sub-region is that the conurbation is polycentric – it has developed as a series of distinct places with many centres.

To maintain this characteristic pattern it is important that they do not compete directly with one another, but rather that they develop into a strong network of complementary centres, each with a thriving role that meets local needs and contributes to the overall offer.

To do this, each centre will need a high quality, well designed environment, with a form and character of development, public realm and balanced mix of uses appropriate to their distinctive townscape, the role identified for them and their future sustainability.

Centres represent the image of a place in the outside world and so the vitality and quality of the City Centre is a priority for the performance of the sub-region as a whole.

A well designed, vibrant network of centres will contribute towards sustainable development by:

- a. providing shopping and local services within easy reach of residents in different parts of the conurbation, so being accessible to a high proportion of the population;
- b. reducing the need to travel by vehicle to local services and facilities and making it possible to walk or cycle instead; and
- c. helping to reinforce a strong sense of local identity, so contributing towards a sense of local belonging.

Strategic principles: Successful and thriving centres

1. Define a distinctive and complementary character and form of development to support the roles and identity for each of the:
 - a. Strategic centres, City Centre and Newcastle;
 - b. Significant urban centres, with a specialist role that needs to be considered together with the City Centre: Burslem, Stoke;
 - c. Significant urban centres with more of a district centre role: Tunstall, Longton, Kingsgrove;
 - d. Other significant urban centres: Fenton; and
 - e. Rural service centres: (not included in the character area guidance).
2. Expand, diversify and reinforce the strategic centres, the City Centre and Newcastle, in a form appropriate to their character.
3. Provide a mix and local concentration of use and activity within each centre, including housing.
4. Create a high quality public realm with at least one space, somewhere new or existing, which provides a real sense of place and a focus of activity for each centre.
5. Ensure centres project outwardly a positive and welcoming image that encourages people to use them, for example through outward looking development and high quality gateway spaces or developments.

Refer to: [Section 2.10.2 within The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on this theme.

Return to: [Section 4.1](#)
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Figure 2.2: Elephant & Castle, London - one of the first zero carbon growth town centre redevelopment proposals, for a significant area at the heart of Elephant & Castle. It will incorporate an area-based Combined Heat and Power system, water supply and data services, all managed by a Multi-Utility Services Company, which has been established by Southwark Council



Figure 2.3: Artist's impression of the proposed redevelopment of the East-West precinct in the City Centre, which will help to reinforce it as a destination for shopping

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2.3 High quality places for living and working that people aspire to occupy

The pattern of housing and business is highly dispersed and many of the environments considered to be attractive locations are suburban, peripheral or rural, so the existing pattern does not support the hierarchy of centres strongly at present.

A key element of the Work Foundation strategy is to promote existing and to attract new clusters of knowledge based industries, and at the same time to create new housing environments that will appeal to their employers and workforces.

New housing and business and regeneration activity will be targeted into more sustainable locations at the heart of the conurbation. A key urban design priority is that development should support the hierarchy of settlements and centres and strengthen their roles, by being located in or close to centres where possible to improve their balance of uses, and in an urban form.

Urban forms of business and housing, designed to be well located in relation to centres will:

- a. support the economic sustainability of centres;
- b. promote walking and cycling to access shops and other facilities;
- c. be highly accessible in relation to public transport and so reduce the need to travel by car;
- d. provide opportunities to implement area-wide sustainable approaches to infrastructure;
- e. promote the intensification of uses in and around centres in compact and accessible forms of development.

Strategic principles:

High quality places for living and working

1. Create (and reinforce existing) high quality, urban forms of housing development within and close to centres, in particular those in the Inner Urban Core and in Newcastle. It is particularly important for those centres where housing is currently lacking, such as in and around the City Centre and around Burslem centre.
2. Create high quality, urban, forms of knowledge based business development in:
 - a. The City Centre Business District in the south west of the City Centre;
 - b. The mixed use Commercial Quarter to the west side of the City Centre;
 - c. The University Quarter in Stoke; and
 - d. Newcastle town centre.
3. Keele and the University Hospital of North Staffordshire will continue to be the focus of knowledge-based business and medical and healthcare technologies.
4. Integrate new housing and business environments into their wider context, in locations where sustainable transport can be provided.
5. Create a sense of place for each development, based on a clear and appropriate design concept that is responsive to its context.

Refer to: [Section 2.10.3 within The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on this theme.

Return to: [Section 4.1](#) [Section 8.1](#)

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Figure 2.4: Brindley Place, Birmingham - a high quality, urban office quarter, including a mix of uses and a high quality public realm, well linked into its surroundings. Developed on the edge of the centre, it has acted as a catalyst for economic regeneration, supporting the vitality of the City Centre and creating a more sustainable pattern of development



Figure 2.5: City Waterside, Stoke-on-Trent, where a high quality, well designed new urban quarter on the edge of the City Centre is already demonstrating how regeneration can secure more sustainable settlement patterns and design, with urban forms of housing and a mix of waterfront uses

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2.4 Better quality connections between places for non-car users

There are fast road and rail links into the conurbation and effectively two road networks by which to move throughout the conurbation. The strategic roads provide more efficient routes between centres by car than the historic routes that directly link centres, which generally run through built up areas.

The sub-region feels car dominated, although it has relatively low levels of car ownership. So, it is important to promote a quality of environment that encourages walking, cycling and public transport, and more sustainable travel patterns.

A successful network of centres will be reliant on excellent connections between them, which should be well designed to prioritise sustainable modes of transport. However, centres will also require well designed approaches from the strategic route network if they are to be successful in attracting investment.

Creating a high quality urban environment of streets that helps to promote walking, cycling and public transport, and links together centres with public transport, will:

- a. reduce the need to travel by car;
- b. promote accessibility for all; and
- c. help to promote healthy lifestyles.

Strategic principles: Better quality connections

1. Improve walking, cycling and public transport connections between different residential areas, and residential and employment areas.
2. Ensure that centres are well integrated and linked into their surroundings, especially residential areas, for cycling, public transport and in particular walking - creating 'walkable' centres.
3. Create attractive and civilised streets for all users to enjoy using 'Manual for Streets' principles, and manage the impact of traffic, particularly along ring roads around centres and upon transport corridors between centres.
4. Strengthen and enhance the existing and any proposed main approaches into centres from the A500 and Stoke-on-Trent railway station, to create a network of attractive city streets, as follows:
 - a. A direct and high quality vehicular route from the A500 to the City Centre and between the two main centres for business, the City Centre and Newcastle, - the Etruria Road corridor.
 - b. The University Boulevard, a direct link between the station and the City Centre, particularly for public transport access;
 - c. A link from the railway station (west side) to Stoke centre.
5. Improve facilities and the experience of walking, cycling and public transport, and create a better quality of environment along local transport corridors between centres and ring roads.

Refer to: [Section 2.10.4 within The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on this theme.



Figure 2.6 (above and left): Maid Marian Way, Nottingham, where a major traffic route that was dominated by vehicles is now a well designed and civilised street for everyone to use and to enjoy, whether travelling by car, public transport, cycling or walking



Figure 2.7: Streetcar - the proposed sustainable transport system for the sub-region

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2.5 High quality green space network easy for all to access

Green spaces are dispersed throughout the conurbation and on its edges, often occupying land that was historically used for industry or extraction.

The level of provision is relatively high, although the quality of environment is mixed in terms of landscapes, facilities and perceptions of safety and security, in particular.

There is also an established recreational network of greenways along former rail lines and the canal and river corridors, although the potential to create attractive and well designed waterfront destinations has not yet been fully exploited. There is potential to reinforce the sustainable transport potential of the green space network.

To reinforce green space as an asset to the settlement pattern, there is a need to diversify and raise the quality of green spaces, improve natural surveillance and link them together into a fully joined up network that is well connected to and easily accessible from centres, housing and employment areas.

A high quality, diverse and well connected green space network will:

- a. support biodiversity;
- b. enhance the quality of environment and so social well being;
- c. promote healthier lifestyles;
- d. help to mitigate against the warming effects of climate change;
- e. help to promote the image of the conurbation and so its economic sustainability.

Strategic principles:

High quality green space network

1. Create a hierarchy of safe, attractive and varied open spaces and parks complemented by semi natural landscape corridors, with a variety of landscapes, ecological diversity and informal access throughout the conurbation.
2. Reinforce the green space network so that it is fully joined up, creating strategic green space linkages where necessary to complete it, made up of:
 - a. A variety of urban open spaces and parks of different scales and character;
 - b. Green corridors and greenways; and
 - c. Semi natural open spaces/ landscapes.Within the conurbation, link these together into a continuous network, by routes with a 'green' character (potentially on-street in certain places).
3. Create clear connections from all town centres and residential areas into the green space network.
4. Complete the recreational route network along canals, rivers, and other greenways, creating and improving access and integrating them into the wider green space network.

5. Reinforce the canal network as a tourism destination, providing nodes of activity for the enjoyment of both local visitors and tourists.

Refer to: [Section 2.10.5 within The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on this theme.

Return to: [Section 2.7.2](#) [Section 7.5](#)

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Figure 2.8: Forest Park, Hanley provides a semi-natural park close to the City Centre. It also includes a variety of recreational facilities, for instance a skate park



Figure 2.9: Hanley Park provides an opportunity for a variety of urban recreation with playgrounds, formal gardens, playgrounds and boating activities

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2.6 A positive and memorable image based on valuing townscape assets

There is a rich and diverse heritage of townscape characteristics that are distinctive to the sub-region and which help to establish the character and identity of different places within it.

This comes from historical development - historic landscapes, townscapes, buildings and industrial archaeology, and also derives from the natural geography, for instance the topography, which creates opportunities for distinctive views and landmarks, and the geology, which has influenced the use of materials.

In particular, the area is renowned for its ceramic products, which include a wide range of building and surfacing material - red brick, Staffordshire blue brick, clay roof tiles, Staffordshire blue paving bricks, terracotta, encaustic and geometric floor tiles and decorative wall tiles.

To respect the character and identity of the unique townscape of the area, these assets need to be enhanced by well designed development and public realm and considered as part of the living fabric of the place today.

Creating a positive and memorable image by valuing existing townscape assets will:

- reduce resource consumption;
- help to maintain a sense of local belonging, so promoting social inclusion; and
- reinforce local distinctiveness and so the identity of the area by utilising ceramic materials in the external surfaces of buildings and in the public realm.

Strategic principles:

A positive and memorable image

- Ensure that development proposals are responsive to and enhance the local and wider context, being sensitive to it where that context is identified as having a positive value, and improving or transforming it where it is currently assessed as being neutral or negative.
- Celebrate what is distinctive and unique in terms of the historic environment, the built and industrial heritage of the area, retaining, reusing and revitalising elements identified as having statutory or definite historical significance.
- Take advantage of potential assets such as the topography, and the views it creates, both outwards and inwards, particularly those towards the central valley from the settlements and vice versa. In particular, enhance the image of the sub-region through improvements to the landscape and townscape when viewed from the A500.
- Use materials that are characteristic of the sub-region or locality, particularly those produced locally.
- Vary the character of development, for instance, the density, mix, and type, according to the location and context rather than adopting a one size fits all approach.

Refer to: [Section 2.10.6 within The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on this theme.

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Figure 2.10: Emscher Park, Duisberg - the successful re-use of industrial heritage across a sub-region to attract visitors and help to kick start regeneration



Figure 2.11: The former Peppers Garage, City Centre - An existing building in an area with positive townscape value, that has been converted to house new uses, in a manner sympathetic to the character of the original building and of the local area

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2.7 A legible and more distinct pattern of settlements in attractive settings

There are two fundamentally different types of settlement pattern in the sub-region, the conurbation and the rural areas. In each the relationship between the settlements and the areas around them (which can be called their setting) has a significant influence upon their character and identity.

In the conurbation, the settlements are positioned very close to one another so the area around each individual settlement is likely to be in-between the settlements as a group. These in-between areas are generally occupied by:

- green spaces, whether open space or otherwise,
- 'out of town' forms of development, and
- vacant sites.

There is a strategic urban design opportunity to make the settlement hierarchy more distinct, by introducing new uses and developing in such a way so as to strengthen the urban and/ or suburban character of the settlements and create a new, coherent and positive character for their setting.

Creating a more positive and coherent 'green' character through the uses and development in the setting of the settlements within the conurbation will:

- enhance the image of the conurbation as a whole, so helping to promoting economic sustainability;
- help to mitigate the warming effects of climate change through planting; and
- improve legibility by differentiating centres from their settings more clearly.

Strategic principles:

Legible and more distinct settlement pattern

- Maintain, reinforce or create a positive urban, or suburban character, as appropriate to the context, within the different settlements in the conurbation;
- Create a positive, 'green' character for the setting for the different settlements in the conurbation, to form:

“a network of vibrant, complementary centres within a spacious and green urban environment”.

(Core Spatial Strategy paragraph 3.20)

- To maintain, reinforce or create a positive rural character for the settlements and their landscape settings within the rural areas.

Refer to: [Section 2.10.7 within The 'spatial' story of change](#) for more information on this theme.



Figure 2.12: Jubilee Campus, Nottingham - University buildings in a 'green' landscape setting based around a lake and wetlands, which also manage surface water run-off and contribute to cooling of the buildings



Figure 2.13: Vauban, Freiburg - Housing with pedestrian friendly streets and spaces and a 'green' landscape setting both for the area as a whole and for individual buildings

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2.7.1 Existing settlements in the conurbation

Existing settlements in the conurbation have a settlement pattern and form of development that is often confusing. Centres generally retain their historic urban form and street pattern but they are cut off from the areas around them by roads, potential development sites, former industry or out of town forms of development. The wider settlement pattern is not focused on nor well integrated into the centres.

Many parts of the existing settlements, for instance residential areas, or the centres, are generally relatively slow to change over time. It is the quality of future development in areas with little environmental quality that has the potential to enhance the character and identity of the conurbation most significantly.

To reinforce the hierarchy of centres and the settlement pattern there needs to be a clearer distinction between settlements and the areas in-between them. These areas today include a range of industry, out of town forms of development, green spaces, vacant land and some other uses, such as institutions. There is an opportunity to make the settlements more urban in contrast to their setting. This distinction will reinforce the hierarchy of centres and will contribute towards:

- a. promoting walking and cycling and help to reduce the need to travel by car;
- b. creating opportunities for area based energy and heat generation;
- c. helping promote a sense of local identity;
- d. promoting accessibility and social inclusion; and
- e. reinforcing the economic sustainability of centres.

General guiding principles for settlements

1. Where there is an established positive character and townscape quality with a definite value, then new development should improve and reinforce that character.
2. Otherwise, development within centres or the walkable area around them (800m, which corresponds to a 10 minute walk) should be urban in character.
Refer to: **Section 1.8.5 Settlement Pattern**
3. Elsewhere within existing settlements, development should improve the character and quality of the area, generally with an urban character, although it must be one that is appropriate to its context.
4. Infill development should generally follow the established character within an area.
5. Retain and enhance the quality, function, and maintenance of green spaces, such as parks, formal open spaces, playing fields, allotments and tree lined streets.
6. Design and access statements should demonstrate which character of development is appropriate to the site location and how it is intended to achieve that character.



Figure 2.14: Highgrove Road, Trent Vale, in some parts of existing settlements there is already an established townscape character with definite value. In these areas new development must respect that character



Figure 2.15: Oakridge, Basingstoke, a Building for Life Gold Standard development creating a new urban character, with mixed use local centre (top) and three storey town houses around a new park

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2.7.2 The setting of existing settlements

The setting of most of the existing settlements in the conurbation includes areas of little or no townscape value or environmental quality such as cleared brownfield land, transport infrastructure, 'out of town' forms of development including retail parks, and fragmented commercial and industrial development. (For instance refer to areas identified as having negative value in the "North Staffordshire Conurbation: Assessment of Historical Significance").

The conurbation is polycentric; it is made up of a number of distinct settlements. To reinforce its unique character, the setting of each settlement should have a character that is distinct from the character of the settlement itself.

A suburban character is not appropriate today when there is a need for more sustainable patterns of development. So a new 'green' character is required, based on compact, sustainable forms of development with soft landscape as a key component of the townscape, combined with new thinking about the uses of landscape in these areas. This will:

- enhance the character of the conurbation, so helping promote economic sustainability; and
- help adapt the conurbation to future climate change.

General guiding principles for the setting

1. Contribute where possible to creating a fully joined up 'green infrastructure' network of landscapes, throughout the conurbation, to include such things as the green space network, the river/canal route network, ecological corridors, flood plains, allotments, potential biomass production, green roofs etc.

Refer to: [Section 2.5 High quality green space network](#)

2. Define and reinforce a semi-natural character for these new landscapes, to be informal, naturalistic, open, wild and flowing and low maintenance, promoting high levels of surveillance wherever possible.

3. Where built development takes place in the setting of the existing settlements, and where there is no established landscape character, create a strong landscape framework for coordinating the design of the public realm and the frontages of built development, for the area as a whole rather than on a site by site basis.

4. Development in the setting of settlements should:

- Respect any existing positive townscape and landscape character;
- Ensure that street frontages incorporate planting and have a 'green' character;
- Define or follow any area wide public realm and landscape guidance;
- Incorporate landscape design that contributes to a semi-naturalistic landscape character;
- Integrate with or join up the green space network where opportunities arise;
- Promote biodiversity; and
- Incorporate landscape based environmental sustainability measures, for instance green roofs, SUDS related wetlands, ground source heat pumps beneath planted areas.

5. Design and access statements should demonstrate which character of development is appropriate to the site location and how it is intended to achieve that character.



Figure 2.16: River Quaggy, Lewisham - One component of a project to re-naturalise the river, removing concrete culverting in parks and open spaces and creating wetlands. This not only enhances the open spaces but also helps to reduce the risk of properties flooding by creating areas of new floodplain



Figure 2.17: Bedzed, Hackbridge - green roofs contribute to surface water management and provide garden spaces for all residents and can help to create a 'green' setting in areas that are viewed from higher ground

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2.7.3 Rural areas

The settlements within the rural areas have a variety of settlement patterns and character shaped by their historical pattern of development. Some settlements will be under pressure for intensification, in particular the larger villages or 'rural service centres', where it is proposed to concentrate new development within the rural area.

The landscape character and quality is mixed, with some high quality landscapes, and others, particularly close to the conurbation, where landscape restoration of former industrial or extraction sites is required. Many of these landscapes are already in restoration, transforming the quality of landscape on the western edge of the rural areas in particular.

This approach will:

- a. create more mixed and more viable communities in the larger villages, which can sustain a good range of local shops and services;
- b. reduce the need to travel to local facilities and, at the same time, will support public transport services to larger centres.
- c. promote health and well being, through improving the landscape setting for communities and providing new landscapes that are accessible to the public; and
- d. promote biodiversity.

General guiding principles for rural areas

1. Actively conserve and manage high quality landscape settings to retain and enhance the established landscape character.
2. On the fringes of the conurbation, where the quality of landscapes is moderate or low, enhance visual character, continue to regenerate and restore landscapes to strengthen the landscape quality of the setting for the conurbation and create a strong green edge for settlements.
3. Create recreational links and greenway connections between rural landscapes and the conurbation where opportunities arise.
4. Development in existing rural settlements should respond to the unique character and setting of each, including a thorough understanding of the settlement pattern, its setting within the wider landscape and how this has developed over history. This also applies where the boundaries of rural village envelopes are being defined.
5. Locate new development within rural village envelopes wherever possible, and minimise the impact on existing landscape character and features of any value.
6. Design and access statements should demonstrate which character of development is appropriate to the site location and how it is intended to achieve that character.

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Figure 2.18: Elmswell, Suffolk - a new rural development with a distinctive rural character, to provide affordable living for families within a rural community



Figure 2.19: Apedale Country Park - a rural landscape in restoration, formerly the location of coal-mining, quarrying and steel production and now a place for recreation

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2.8 A future quality of life through sustainable, well designed development

Developments that are built today need to be fit for purpose into the future. That means they must address the implications of climate change, so that the sub-region is well adapted and will be a place that people will want to live and work in the future. So sustainable and inclusive urban design and place-making principles are essential.

There is a need to conserve resources and to use them wisely, in forms of development that will last into the future. All places need to be looked after and how this is to be done needs to be considered during the design process, so that it is not an onerous burden.

Developments that are built today will become the heritage of tomorrow. It is appropriate for today's buildings to be an expression of our times, and it is important that they are also an expression of quality that will last into the future, so that they will contribute to the heritage and identity of an area. This requires good place-making.

Sustainable design does not stop at urban design but needs to be carried through architectural design into the detail and specification.

Sustainable urban design principles for good place-making will:

- a. Help to reduce the environmental impact of development and mitigate its potential effects;
- b. Promote high quality of living environments and contribute towards creating healthy and sustainable communities;
- c. Encourage walking and cycling rather than travel by car by promoting compact, urban forms of development;
- d. Help to support economic prosperity.

Strategic principles: Future quality of life

1. Create high quality, well designed and detailed developments, buildings, public realm and open spaces that will be robust, accessible to all and fit for purpose into the future.
2. Ensure that developments, buildings, public realm and open spaces have urban design quality, resulting from an appropriate role, function and response to their context, and thereby help to create safe and attractive places.
3. Consider the future implications of climate change and incorporate measures to conserve resources and mitigate potential impacts.
4. Make sure that developments, buildings, public realm and open spaces are designed with management and maintenance implications in mind and then manage and maintain them accordingly.

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Figure 2.20: Blue Planet at Chatterley Valley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, a highly sustainable logistics depot that will be carbon positive and the first BREEAM Outstanding building in the country



Figure 2.21: Eco terrace, Chesterton - the existing housing stock will need to be upgraded as part of adapting for climate change. This example demonstrates how Victorian terraced houses can be retrofitted to raise their environmental performance to meet today's requirements

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2.9 Good practice

Research, for instance the CABA Housing Audits, shows that well designed development tends to be the result of good practice ways of working between the different parties, both public and private sector, involved in the development process.

The Core Spatial Strategy prioritises partnership working towards delivering high quality development. Delivering design quality will require the commitment of all partners, throughout all the steps in the design process relative to planning, from initial strategy formulation, through to implementation.

The challenge of climate change means that everyday practice has to evolve to address the increasingly important issues of sustainable urban design. New ways of working and new processes are needed to make sure that the process is inclusive, the right factors are taken into account at the outset and that solutions address the issues adequately.

These will require 'joined up' thinking, not only between the different parties, but to include new partner and the wider community. New issues now have to be considered that have not been critical in the past. Strong leadership and inspired designers are needed to create sustainable developments that achieve everything that is being asked of them.

This is particularly important at the masterplanning level of design where the future of whole areas is being considered and the opportunities for sustainable design are at their greatest, but must also apply to site specific design proposals.

Key pointers for good practice include:

1. Recognition that good design is essential to the delivery of sustainable development.
2. An inclusive, coordinated and cooperative approach is required, between the various parties, including between the design team and local planning authority, within the local authority itself, with other public sector partners and with the wider community.
3. Draw upon external sources of specialist design advice, for instance Urban Vision's design review service, or specialist local authority officers, eg conservation or urban design officers.
4. Follow a good practice approach to the design process, and record it succinctly in the Design and Access Statement to accompany planning applications.
5. Consider implementation at all stages of the design process, to ensure that design proposals are realistic and the desired design quality achievable.

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Figure 2.22: An example of good design practice within the region - Scotia Road, Tunstall, where the design evolved through a process of pre-application design review to address the street frontage and create a high quality public realm both on the street frontage and within the site

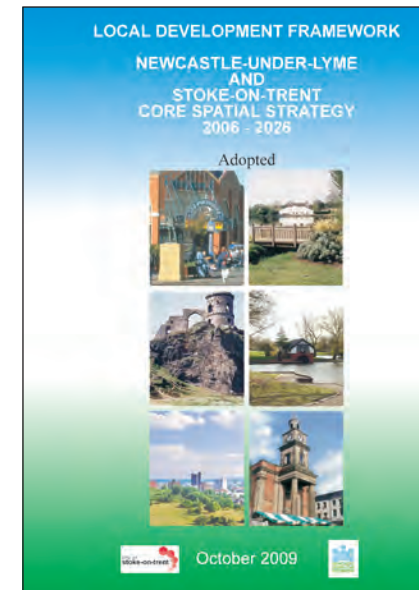


Figure 2.23: The Core Spatial Strategy, a good example of co-operative working and joined up thinking, which demonstrates that a sub-region wide approach can successfully be adopted to address the issues faced in the area

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2.10 The 'spatial' story of change

2.10.1 Background to the strategic urban design vision

The purpose of the strategic urban design vision is to:

“define and promote key spatial considerations and urban design principles at sub-regional level”

This will help facilitate and guide the process of social and economic transformation that is already well underway in North Staffordshire.

So the strategic urban design vision is based on the spatial strategy, spatial principles and strategic policies set out in the Core Spatial Strategy.

It has also been informed by a number of other strategy and appraisal documents that have been prepared as part of the evidence base for the Core Spatial Strategy and other adopted DPDs, in particular:

- North Staffordshire Conurbation: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006);
- Transforming North Staffordshire, by the Work Foundation, (2008);
- North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy, (2007);
- Planning for Landscape Change (2000) prepared by Staffordshire County Council.

The strategic urban design vision shows how the Core Spatial Strategy spatial principles and strategic policies should be expressed in development to address the key urban design issues which have been identified by:

- Urban design appraisal;
- Review of background documentation; and
- The consultation/ training programme.

The key findings of these stages of work are set out in the Appendices.

A key role for the strategic urban design vision is to promote an integrated and comprehensive approach to regeneration and to inform partnership working so that it successfully delivers high quality development. This includes public, private and voluntary sector partners.

The strategic urban design vision amplifies the Core Spatial Strategy and is mainly intended to inform the production of more detailed policy and guidance for parts of the sub-region, for instance masterplans, Area Action Plans, and SPDs for different areas, whether promoted or prepared by local authorities other public sector agencies or the private sector.

The key principles will also shape and guide development proposals, particularly where these are of a significant scale or in significant locations within the sub-region.

In the following sections, the spatial 'story of change' is explained further and summarised in a series of diagrams.

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Figure 2.24: A wide variety of different environments can be found in the sub-region today

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2.10.2 Successful and thriving centres, each with its own role and character

Multiple centres reduce the need to travel from homes to local services and help to promote local walking and cycling, provided there are efficient public transport services connecting them together. However at present some centres lack a well integrated residential community within easy walking distance.

Most of the centres are inward looking, often with a ring road or bypass isolating them from their surroundings. They often have blank frontages and/or the rear of properties on display, presenting a negative image to the outside world, which does little to attract new visitors. There is an opportunity for development to improve the relationship between centres and the wider area. This applies particularly to the City Centre. Newcastle is an exception, with a clear sense of arrival and positive first impressions when approaching from the east or south.

Improving the external image of the City Centre will help to create a more positive image for the conurbation as a whole and to promote an increase in the numbers of people who live, work and shop within it.

Centres are a key focus for a mix of uses. As such, they present an opportunity to introduce area wide approaches to energy generation and supply, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), particularly where the scale of new development may be significant, for instance in the City Centre. Similarly, the capacity of utilities will require consideration, and wherever possible opportunities should be taken to enable the future installation of area-wide utilities and waste management systems, even if they cannot initially be provided.

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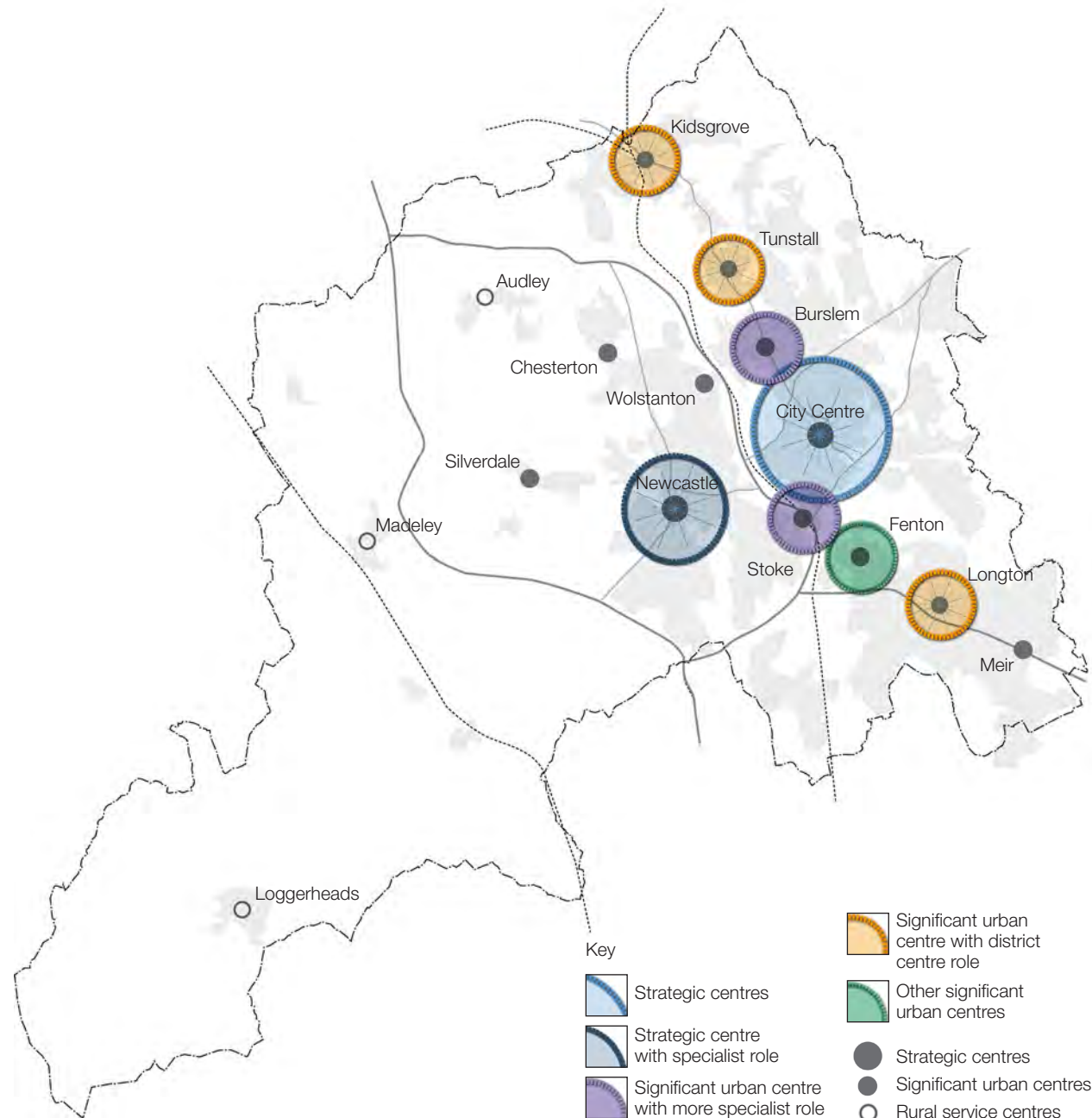


Figure 2.25: Strategic urban design theme - Successful and thriving centres, each with its own role and character

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2.10.3 High quality places for living and working that people aspire to occupy

The distinctive settlement pattern offers the opportunity for people to lead a more sustainable lifestyle, living and working close together within a thriving urban place, somewhere with all the facilities of a large city but with local services close to home.

The strategy for economic regeneration is fundamental to the future sustainability of the sub-region as a whole, in economic, but also social terms. It will promote more sustainable communities, places where people will continue to want to live and work, into the future.

It depends upon enhancing the attractiveness and, at the same time, the sustainability of the environment, so that the sub-region can position itself as a high quality place, which supports and promotes sustainable and healthy lifestyles. The quality of design, both in terms of the design of specific development proposals and more strategic urban design issues, is a vital part of the strategy for achieving these aims.

The success of centres is highly dependent upon the population using them. Generally, that means a local population with easy access to the centre, which generates life and activity and helps to promote a safe and secure public realm by supervising public spaces.

The relatively compact nature and higher density of urban forms of housing and business development, if well designed, is resource and energy efficient and also helps to promote sustainable forms of transport, whether walking, cycling or public transport.

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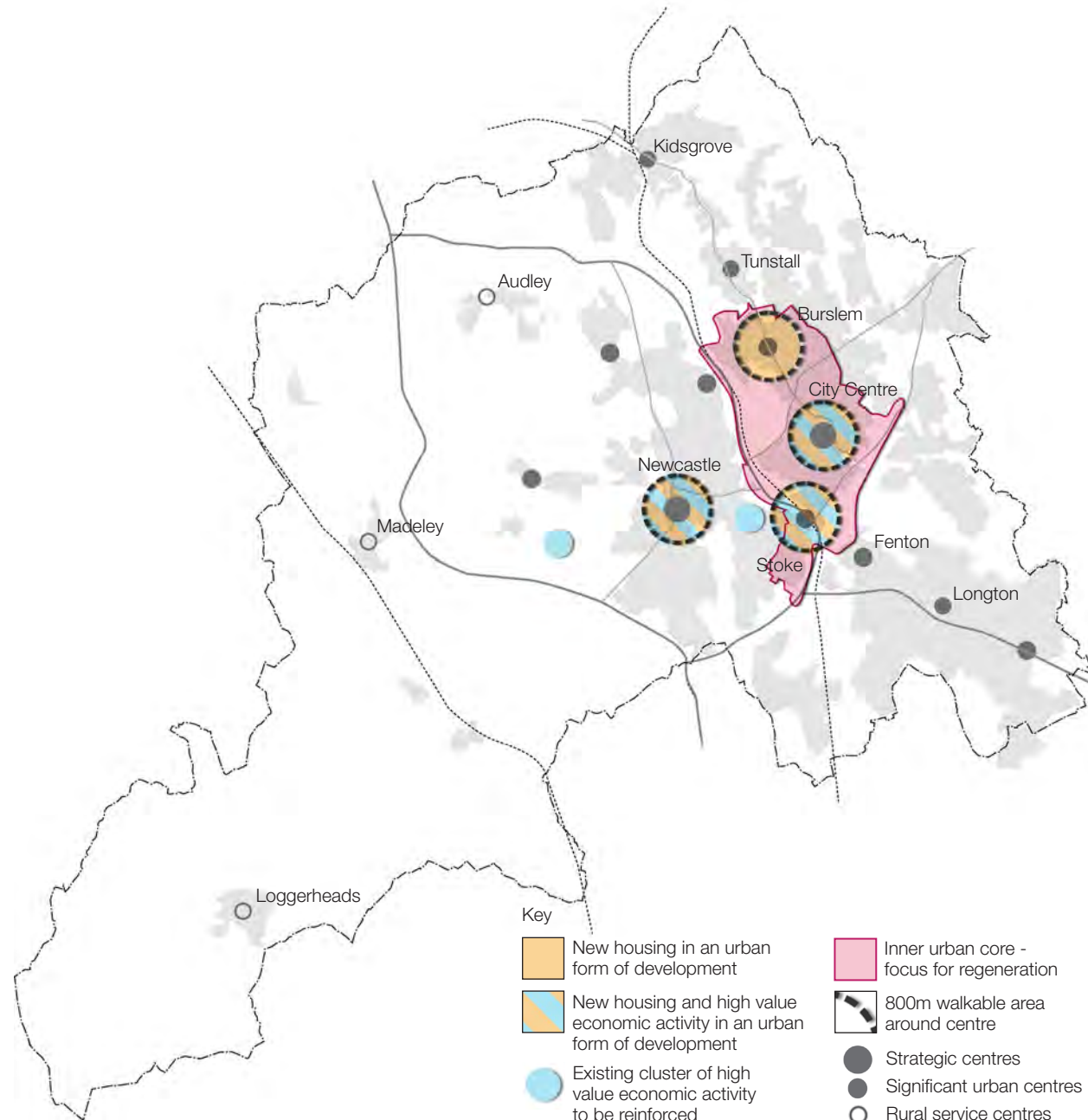


Figure 2.26: Strategic urban design theme - High quality places for living and working that people aspire to occupy

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2.10.4 Better quality connections between places for non-car users

Complementary centres need to be able to work together to provide the shops, services and facilities that in other places would be found in one city centre. So, if the conurbation is to function as a successful network of centres, it is vital that there are efficient connections between them, to allow people to reach any of the centres without inconvenience.

Effective and attractive connections for walking, cycling and public transport as well as for car use will help to make the conurbation as a whole more inclusive and accessible to all communities.

Major cities such as Birmingham and Nottingham are already successfully managing the impact of traffic on busy routes, enhancing the environment and promoting non car modes of transport. The result is to create successful city streets, attractive places for all users, no matter how they travel.

Creating good connections between centres will also help to encourage healthier and more sustainable lifestyles. The quality of facilities and of the environment will influence how people choose to travel, and will help promote more sustainable modes of transport.

There is an opportunity to promote the routes between the main centres, particularly the former A50 between Longton and Kidegrove, as sustainable transport corridors, with an increase in priority for some form of reliable and sustainable public transport system. However, cross valley connections are also important, to link together the strategic centres, the key clusters of economic activity (such as the universities and hospital) and Stoke-on-Trent railway station.

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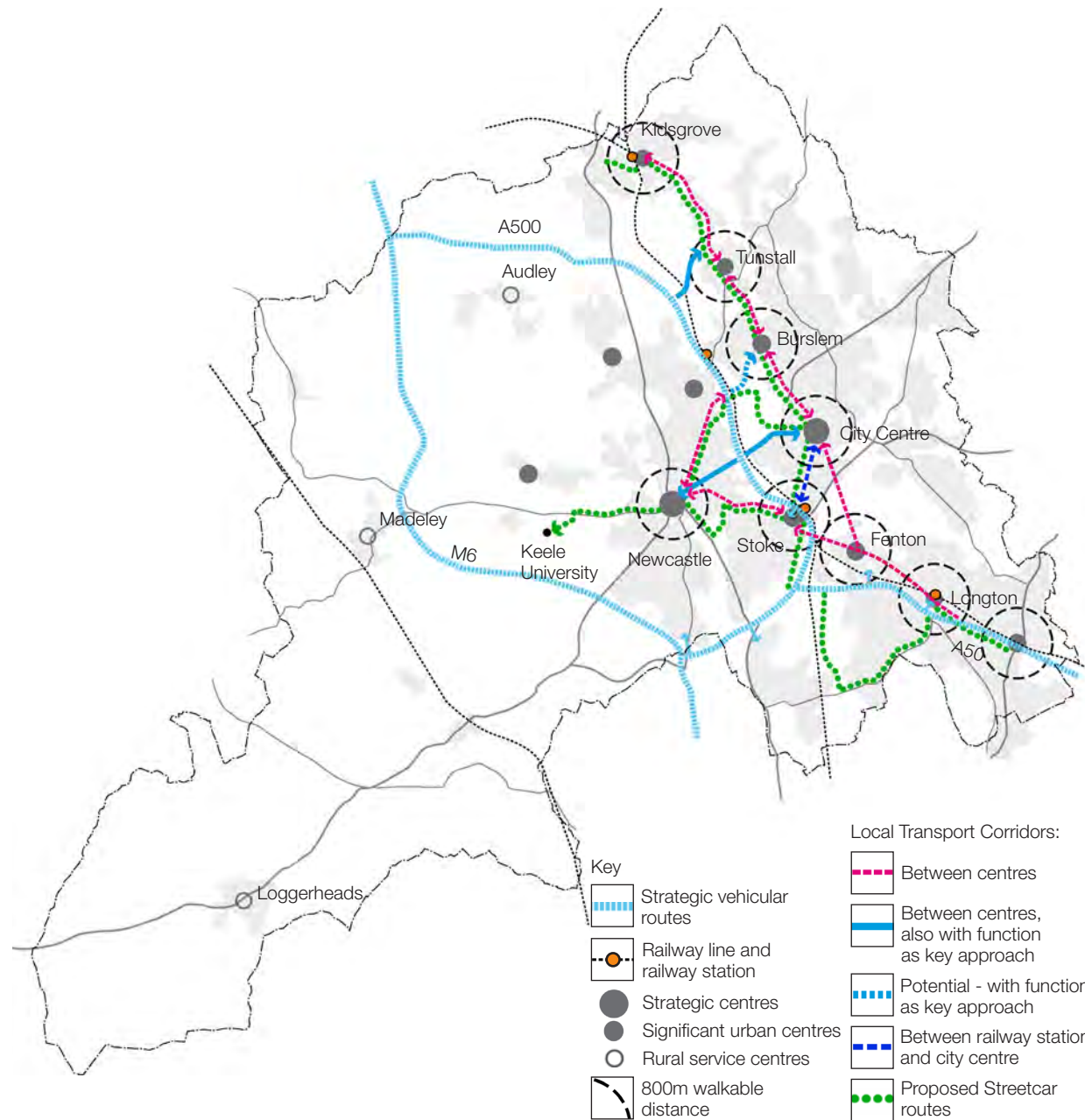


Figure 2.27: Strategic urban design theme - Better quality connections between places for non-car users

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2.10.5 High quality green space network easy for all to access

A high quality, fully joined up and accessible green space network has the potential to contribute significantly towards a positive image for the sub-region. It can help to establish a spacious green environment for the different settlements of the conurbation, so helping to support their economic and social sustainability and their distinct identities.

The green space network can provide a variety of different landscapes, helping to support biodiversity and to create joined up wildlife corridors through the sub-region. The North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy makes detailed recommendations for clarifying the hierarchy of green space within the conurbation and enhancing the quality of existing open spaces.

The value of waterways can be exploited, for recreation and tourism, but also in terms of their inherent appeal as a setting for places to live or to work. The canal network also has potential for use as a sustainable mode of transport.

Where waterways have been culverted, there may be potential to re-naturalise them to reduce flood risk, creating wetland landscapes to increase biodiversity and also increasing their appeal.

Green spaces help to promote healthy lifestyles, both actively by encouraging walking, cycling, sports and other recreational activity, but also contributing to well being simply as a place to relax. Green spaces within and between settlements will also help to manage the impacts of climate change, preventing temperatures rising in the conurbation, absorbing carbon dioxide and providing shade and shelter in built up areas.

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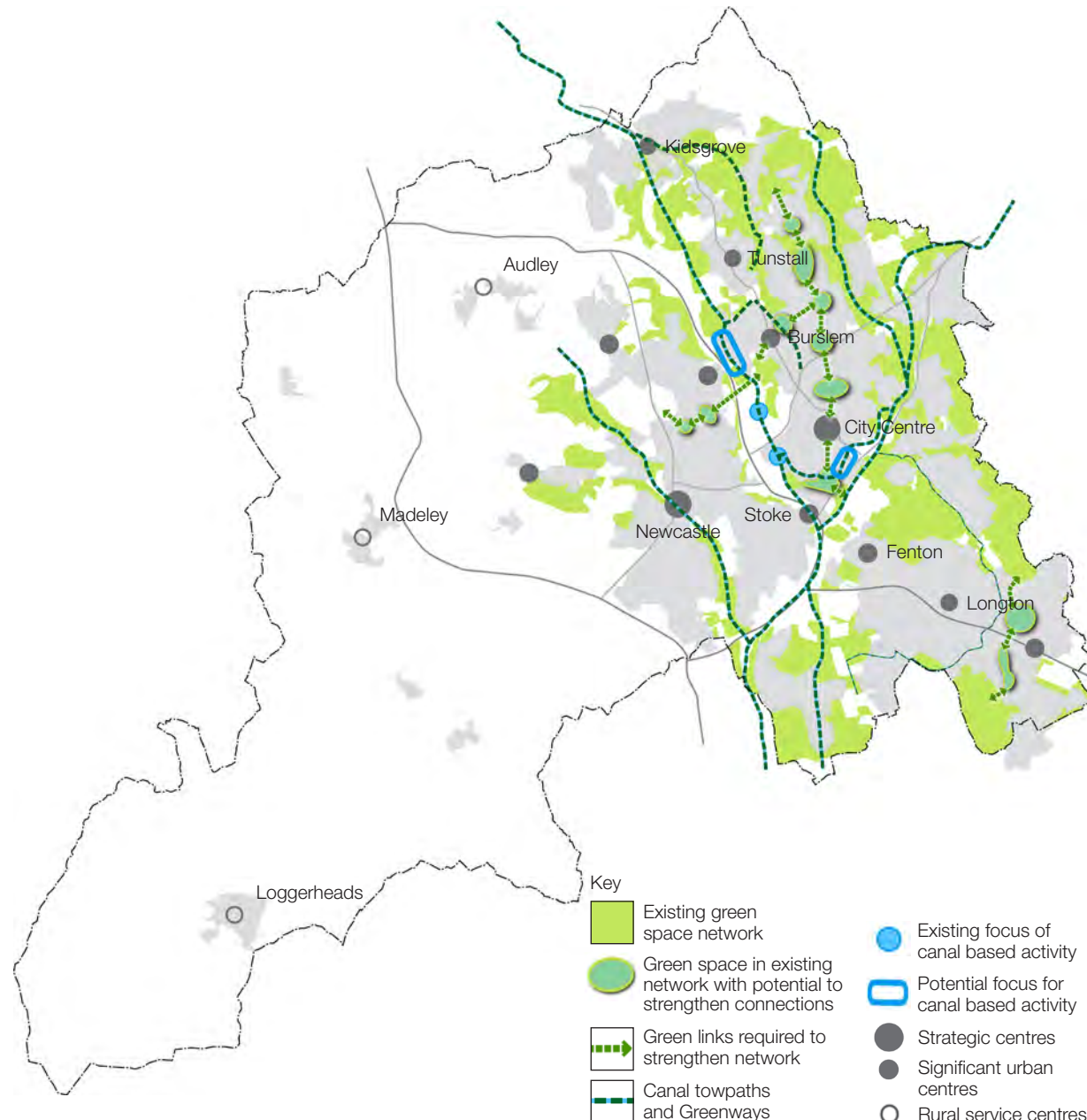


Figure 2.28: Strategic urban design theme: Green space networks

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2.10.6 A positive and memorable image based on valuing townscape assets

The historic environment is a resource that cannot be recreated, it is non renewable. It helps to create a sense of place. Valuing the historic environment, reusing buildings and adapting landscapes, contributes to the cultural value of a place, to the quality of life for local communities, towards economic regeneration and sustainable development.

Distinctive places are so because they draw on the unique characteristics surrounding their development, including the historic pattern of change, historic fabric of value, local traditions of building, and particular features of the local area and the site itself. All of the key principles identified in the strategic urban design vision will help towards making places more distinctive and memorable.

The sub-region has a rich and diverse historic environment, including historic landscapes, townscapes, buildings and industrial archaeology. In the many parts of the sub-region where the historical significance has been assessed as definite in value, the historic environment can and should be a significant influence in shaping a distinctive sense of place for the future.

However, in other places where the existing fabric does not have a positive value at present, the priority will be for regeneration or development to transform or enhance the character and to create a new sense of place. This will also help to create a more positive image for the conurbation in the outside world and for those passing through on strategic routes.

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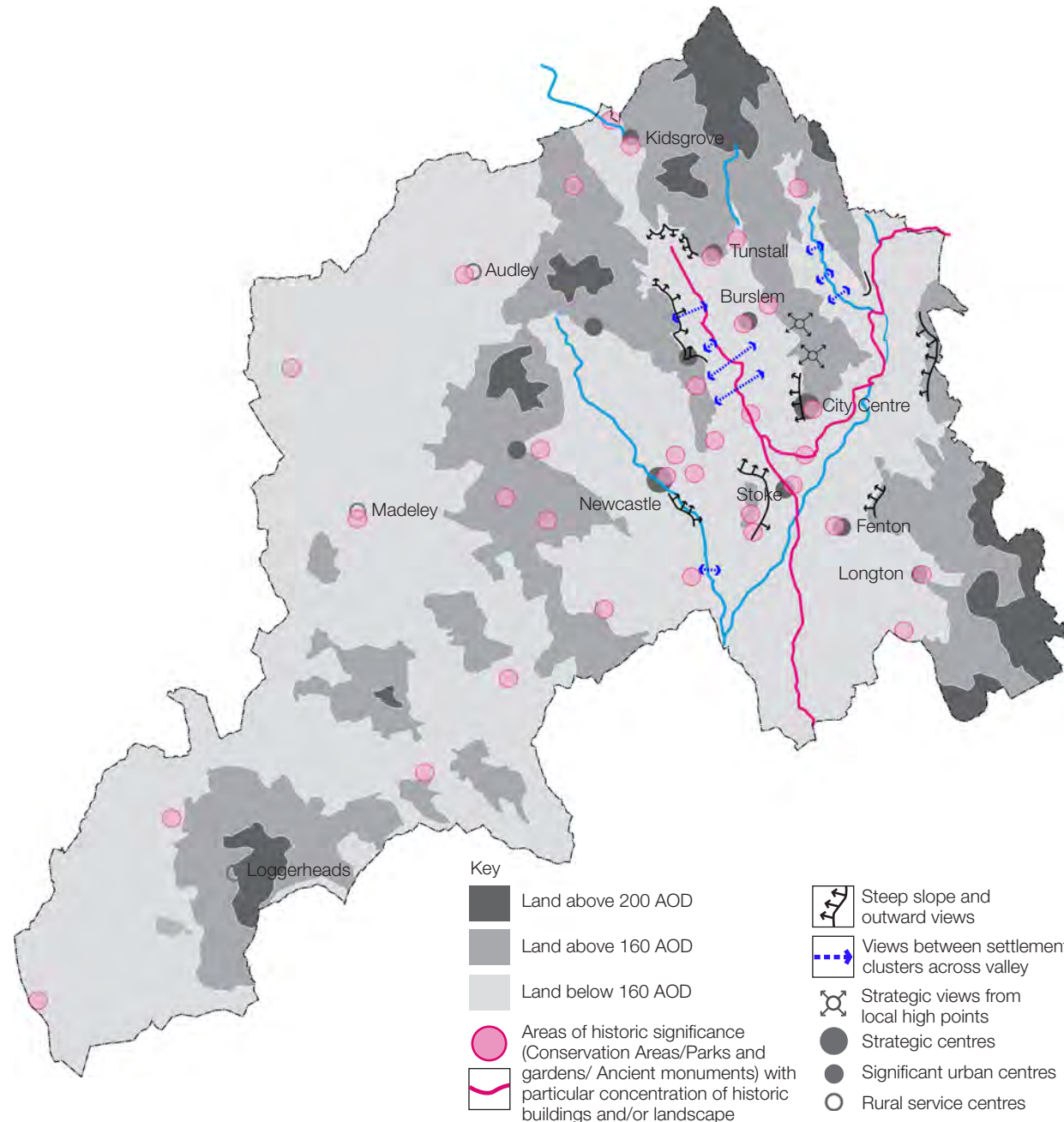


Figure 2.29: Strategic urban design theme - A positive and memorable image based on valuing townscape assets

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2.10.7 A legible and more distinct pattern of settlements in attractive settings

A more distinct settlement hierarchy, with a clear pattern of urban settlements in a 'green' setting, will help to create a well connected network of high quality places, each with its own distinctive character.

Urban forms of development within centres and the walkable areas around them will create a concentration of population, workforce and activity that is characteristic of thriving centres.

The intensification of the pattern of development towards centres will signal their presence so helping to make the conurbation less confusing to navigate.

Similarly, the walkable areas around the centre will also have an urban form of development, although not the mix of uses characteristic of a centre. Development in these areas will introduce people living and working close to centres where facilities are concentrated.

Elsewhere in existing settlements the introduction of development with a more urban character will help to create some sense of place and points of focus in an environment where there is often little of either.

This more urban settlement pattern is a more sustainable settlement form, promoting accessibility to facilities, workplaces and transport. Urban forms of development, because they are compact in nature, can also be designed to perform well in terms of environmental sustainability.

In-between the settlements, in their setting, the character of development needs to be distinct and the Core Spatial Strategy aspiration is for it to be a green urban environment.

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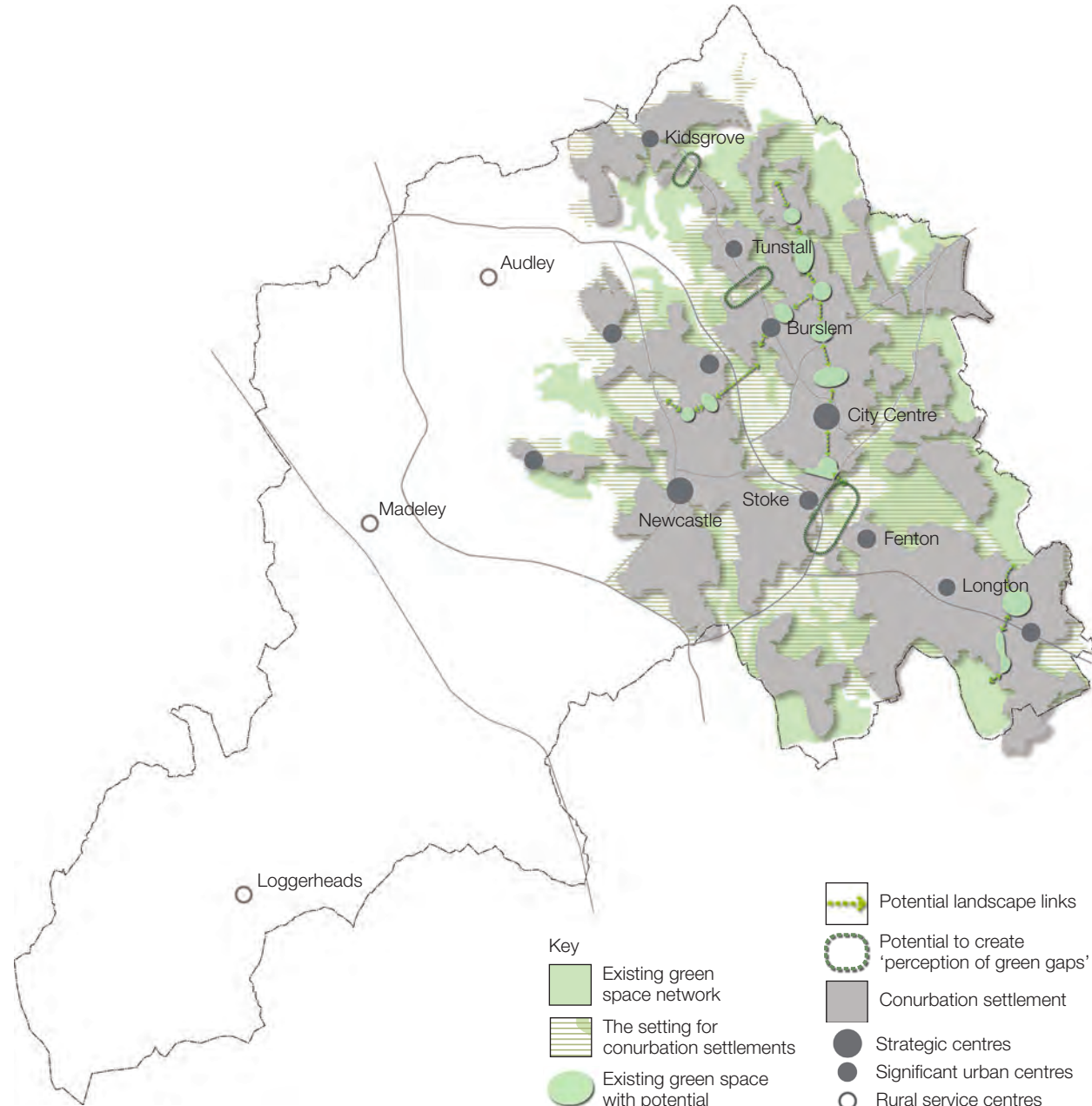


Figure 2.30: The conurbation and its setting

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A suburban character could provide the landscape component of a 'green' character. However, although the environment can be very attractive, suburbs are not a good model for today's development. They are land hungry, with development generally at a low intensity, which means that they cannot support many facilities and those they do may well be out of walking range, needing a car to access them.

To meet today's challenges of climate change, new patterns of development are needed, with the landscape quality of the best suburban areas, but with higher development densities, promoting walking and cycling, and supporting facilities and public transport at a local distance from the home.

These areas also need to address the challenges of climate change, reducing energy consumption and harnessing renewables where possible, dealing with surface water run-off on site wherever possible, providing tree planting to reduce any potential heat island effect and to cool the built form in summer.

The rural areas also provide a distinctive pattern of settlement and landscape and there is a need to make sure that rural settlements are sustainable in social and economic terms. Concentrating future development into the larger villages will help to make sure that there are local services to access, and places which can support public transport. The role of the landscape setting is also significant in rural settlements, particularly so near the conurbation, where the landscape is often under pressure from influences that affect its environmental quality.

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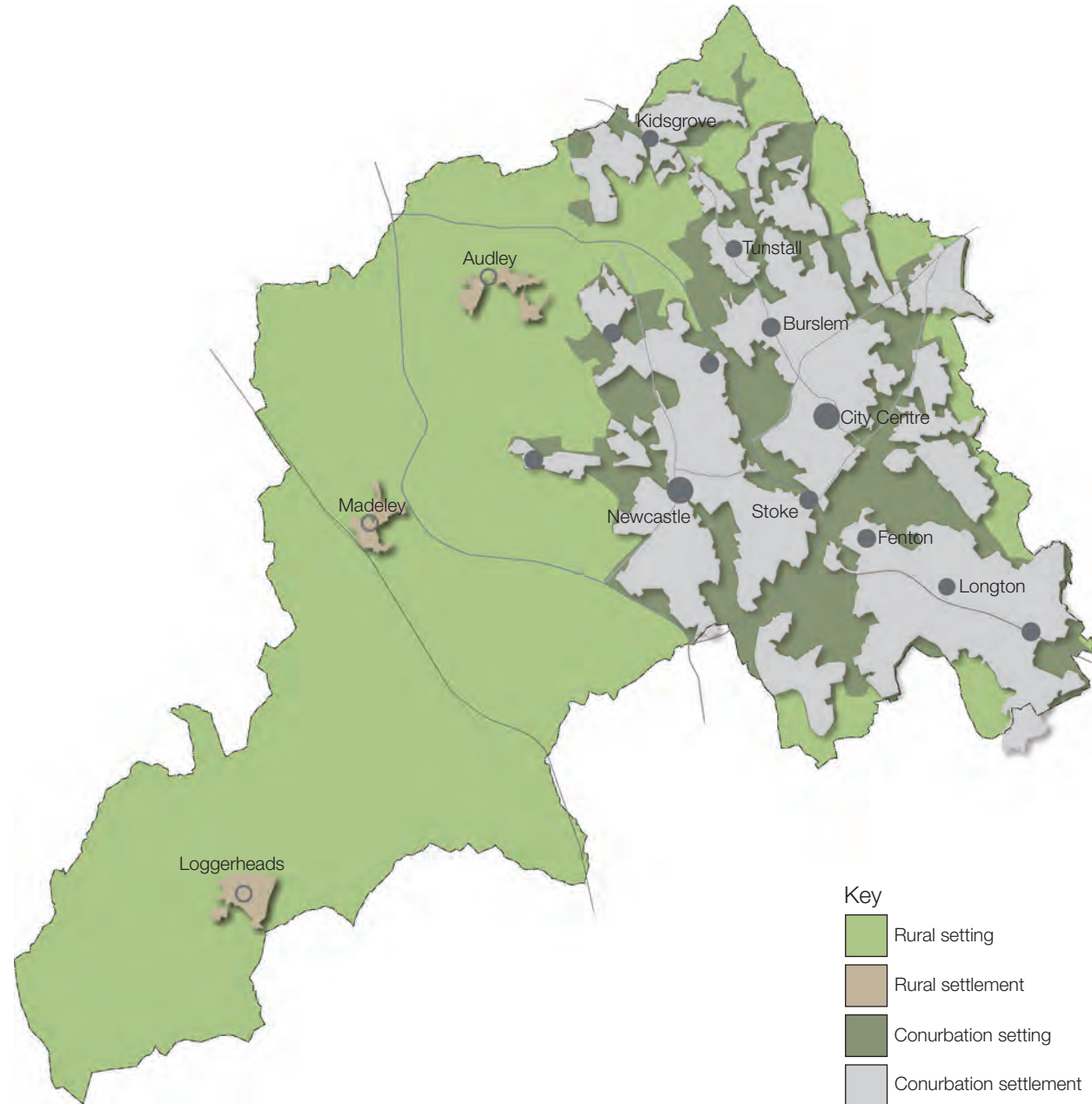


Figure 2.31: Settlements and their setting

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3 Good Design: Good Practice

3.1 Introduction

Good practice is one of the key themes of the strategic urban design vision where a number of pointers for good practice are provided.

Refer to: [Section 2.9 Good practice](#)

The government has introduced a requirement for Design and Access Statements (DCLG Circular 01/06) to support almost all planning applications. The purpose of these is:

- a. To tell the story of why the proposal is as it is, and why that is appropriate for the circumstances; and
- b. To illustrate the process of design that has led to the proposal and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.

The next section outlines what a good practice Design and Access Statement should include.

The Core Spatial Strategy strategic design policy requires that new development should:

“Be based on an understanding and respect for Newcastle’s and Stoke-on-Trent’s built, natural and social heritage.”

A well prepared Design and Access Statement is the most effective way to communicate this understanding to all those who may be involved in considering a planning application, whatever their role, including planning officers, councillors and local residents.

3.2 Design and Access Statements

Design and access statements should form an integral part of the design process, used by the design team to help record the decisions undertaken and inform the evolving proposals. A good statement will:

- a. Be concise;
- b. Be specific to the application;
- c. Outline clearly the factors shaping the design; and
- d. Incorporate accurate and informative visualisations to clearly explain the proposal.

3.2.1 Document contents

The document should set out how the scheme has evolved, from an analysis of the site and its context, through to the final design. The key constituents are outlined below.

The intention of a Design and Access Statement is not to describe the existing situation or the proposal in great detail. Rather it is to tell the story of the proposals, explaining why they are as they are, and setting out the justification for them and the benefits they will bring.

Consultation should form part of the design process. The statement should clearly identify how this was undertaken (for instance meeting with the planning officers, local neighbours and/ or public consultation exercises) and how it influenced the design.

Design and Access Statements for residential schemes should ideally set out how the proposal relates to the 20 ‘Building for Life’ questions.

See www.buildingforlife.org for further information.



Figure 3.1: Detailed sources of guidance on preparing Design and Access Statements have been prepared by C A B E and the Urban Design Group. For details refer to Appendix A3

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3.2.2 Introduction

This should provide a brief summary of the purpose of the development, setting out what it is for. This need only be one sentence or brief paragraph but it makes it absolutely clear at the outset.

3.2.3 Analysis

This section should provide an outline of the analysis undertaken of the site and its context in accordance with the advice below. Refer to Section 3.6 Appraising the context. The length of this section will depend on the size of the scheme. For more complex schemes this should take the form of a number of analysis diagrams with accompanying text, followed by a summary of the key constraints and opportunities. For smaller schemes, annotated constraints and opportunities diagrams may be sufficient.

3.2.4 Concept

This section should present the design concept that has evolved in response to the constraints and opportunities that were identified. If different concepts were considered, it should outline what the alternatives were and the basis for selecting the final concept.

3.2.5 Options (if appropriate)

This section should demonstrate how the design has evolved from a design concept to a final design, providing a summary of the design options that have been considered as the scheme has evolved. It should provide a summary of their strengths and weaknesses and the basis for selecting the final version.

3.2.6 The proposal

This section should outline how the scheme responds to the site context and meets the needs of the brief. The following issues should be addressed:

Use: How the mix of uses fits into the area and

supports local needs and policy objectives, for instance how a new school will complement new housing provision. It should include:

- a. A justification in terms of land use policy and also the land use context i.e. how the proposal will complement the surrounding uses;
- b. An explanation of how the uses work well together;
- c. An illustration of how the differing access needs of various uses have been taken into account.

Density: The density of development and why this is appropriate, including:

- a. The impact the development will have on a neighbourhood and the way it works, through the density of users generated, for example the population density of a housing scheme, office occupancy levels etc, and why this would be appropriate for the locality.

Layout: How the layout has been decided upon and how it relates to the surroundings, including:

- a. How buildings and spaces in and around the site relate to one another;
- b. The reason for the location of different uses across the site;
- c. The movement structure and how inclusive access across the site will be ensured.

Scale, Bulk & Massing: The size of buildings and spaces throughout the site and how they relate to their surroundings, including:

- a. Relationship with adjacent buildings;
- b. The scale of different parts of a building and how they relate to one another;
- c. Three-dimensional form.

Landscape/ Amenity Space: This should be an integral part of the design approach and should include:

- a. How the treatments will reflect any broader strategy, the intended function of the spaces and contribution to sustainability aims;
- b. The management and maintenance strategy;
- c. How it will help meet the needs of all users, including those who are access impaired.

Appearance: This is the visual representation of the scheme. This should include:

- a. The design rationale that underpins the proposal and how this has informed the detailed aspects of the scheme;
- b. How the appearance fits with other aims (for instance, if the intention is to create a landmark building, its appearance, scale and use should reflect this);
- c. Accurate visualisations or precedent images;
- d. Possibly the effects of time (seasonal, weather, day/night).

3.2.7 Access and movement

This should cover both vehicular/ transport access and inclusive access, including:

- a. An explanation of access and movement in a wider context, including links between the site and surrounding roads;
- b. How different modes of transport (including emergency vehicles and servicing and refuse) will move to and through the site, outlining the hierarchy of routes for different users;
- c. How walking and cycling will be encouraged;
- d. The relationship between the internal layout and external spaces - entrance locations etc;
- e. How inclusive access will be achieved across the site;
- f. Consultation undertaken with relevant parties, including community groups or technical specialists in addressing inclusive access issues.

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3.2.8 Sustainability

This section of the statement should summarise how sustainability has been considered in the formulation of the proposal including:

- a. How the planning policy context and the use of nationally described sustainable building standards have been taken into account in the scheme design;
- b. Key sustainability principles that have been adopted;
- c. The strategy adopted for energy, including minimising demand, efficiency of supply and the use of renewables and its relationship to current Building Regulation requirements;
- d. What is the TER (Target Emissions Rate) and BER (Building Emissions Rate) for non-domestic development, expressed in kgCO₂/m² per annum, and for domestic developments what is the TER (Target Emissions Rate) and the DER (dwelling emissions rate) for each building (expressed in kgCO₂/m² per annum)?
- e. The strategy adopted for water resources, including minimising potable water consumption and surface water management (drainage);
- f. Waste management, including recycling; and
- g. Maintenance and management.

Return to: [Section 7.2](#)

3.3 The design process

There are six key stages in the design process which relate to planning, as shown on the design process diagram. To achieve design quality, commitment is needed at each of these stages, by all those who are involved in the development process.

The focus is on how the design approach relates to the planning process and particularly how it can help with preparing an informative and persuasive design and access statement to support a planning application.

The stages of the design process are essentially similar for projects of all sizes. However, larger scale projects need to consider a wide range of issues throughout the design process.

The following sections identify some general good practice pointers for different scales of development.

Refer to: [Section 3.4 Site specific design proposals](#)

Refer to: [Section 3.5 Masterplan proposals](#)

The guidance relating to site specific design proposals is not intended to guide the planning strategy for major or complex development proposals, where it is expected that professional planning advisors should be part of the development team.

There will always be circumstances that mean the design approach for a project needs to address specific issues through the planning process. In these cases, contact the local planning authority for an early discussion and to agree the approach to be taken.

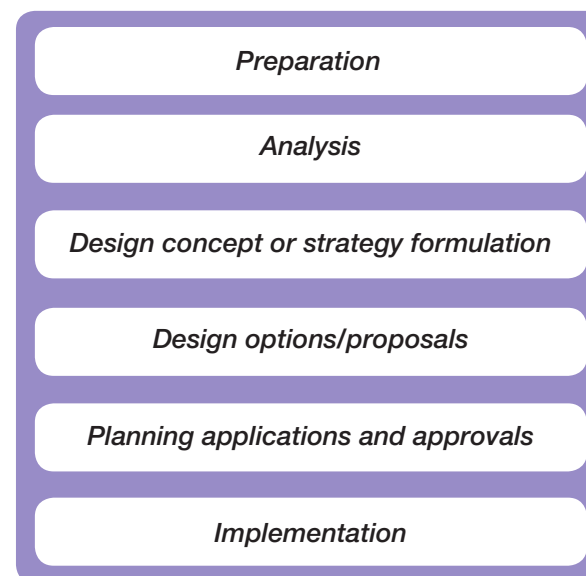


Figure 3.2: Design process diagram

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“While the planning system has a key role to play in delivering better design, the creation of successful places depends on the skills of designers and the vision and commitment of those who employ them”

By Design

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3.4 Site specific design proposals

3.4.1 Prepare

The design team

Select and appoint the design team who will prepare a planning application. Make sure this includes someone with design expertise, that is an architect, or in the case of the design of the public realm, a landscape architect or urban designer with appropriate skills and experience, who already has or will develop an understanding of the local context as part of the project.

For all projects of any size, it will also require someone with expertise in sustainability, both advising on energy carbon emission reduction strategies and to carry out pre-application sustainability assessments. For larger projects, make sure the team includes the range of skills that will be needed, such as transport specialists.

The brief

Be clear about the brief. Design quality is heavily influenced by the aspirations and expectations of the client. For a project to be likely to receive planning permission, it must also take into account the quality expectations of the local planning authority, as set out in the Core Spatial Strategy and any other adopted Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document.

Responsibility for developing the client's initial brief usually lies with the design team although everyone involved in the project needs to be aware of it. Think about how to create value, not only how to minimise cost.

The contents of a brief should include:

- a. The site;
- b. The purpose and aims of the proposed development;

- c. The type of development, size and capacity, use and range of functions it should accommodate;
- d. The quality and image of the development eg is it a flagship headquarters building for the client or a back office?
- e. Targets for environmental performance, such as Code for Sustainable Homes level, Building for Life standard and Lifetime Homes criteria; and
- f. Budget and timescale.

3.4.2 Analysis

Understanding the place and local circumstances is a vital part of coming up with an appropriate design concept. Demonstrating the suitability of the design approach is one of the main purposes of the design and access statement so this step is very important. It is essential that this includes as a minimum, for a small site, the characteristics of the site itself, its surroundings, opportunities to promote sustainability, and also any planning policy relevant to the development.

It is also important to consider whether any other factors are relevant to or should influence a particular project. Refer to: Section 3.6 Appraising the context.

Thinking sustainably about design

To deliver truly sustainable design it is vital that design teams sustainably consider the sustainability of the design from the very start. A sustainable design is one that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable.

The design must seek to reduce its impact upon the environment, and also reduce the environment's impact on the design. The first process is called mitigation, the second adaptation.

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Mitigation

The design must demonstrate how it reduces the development's impact on the environment, for example:

- a. Carbon emissions;
- b. Water consumption;
- c. Sustainable travel modes;
- d. Material use;
- e. Construction method; and
- f. Surface water mitigation.

What targets have been set for CO2 emissions (kgCO2/m2); potable water consumption; recycled material content; sourcing of materials; construction waste minimisation targets (m3 of waste / 100m2 of gross internal floor area or tonnes waste/100m2 of gross internal floor area)

Adaptation

The design must also demonstrate how it will cope with future climate change. The West Midlands Regional Observatory has identified for the West Midlands the following shifts in weather:

- a. Hotter drier summers;
- b. Wetter warmer winters; and
- c. More intense weather events (rain storms; high winds; extended dry periods; extended cold spells – snow and ice).

It is imperative that sustainability is dealt with as an integral and essential part of the design process and clearly illustrated through the Design and Access Statement. Sustainability should not be a secondary consideration for developers in formulating development proposals; as it won't be a secondary consideration for authorities when determining planning applications.

The design approach should accommodate today's requirements for sustainable design but should also allow for future upgrades, for example, solar panels may not be provided now but roof forms should allow for their potential installation in future.

Sustainability must be considered at the same time as the appraisal of the context. The Core Spatial Strategy requires development to demonstrate compliance with best practice standards (nationally described sustainable building standards) and the incorporation of on-site or near-site renewable or low carbon energy provision where viable. The requirements for sustainability measures must be sensitive to market conditions and not unduly constrain development. If the requirements are not viable; the onus will be on the applicant to clearly demonstrate this by a financial assessment.

Certain sustainability issues may have a particular influence on the appropriate design approach for a site, including energy/ CO2 emissions; surface water run-off; and ecology. These need to be considered as part of, or together with the Appraisal of Context. The energy strategy should be based on the energy hierarchy below:

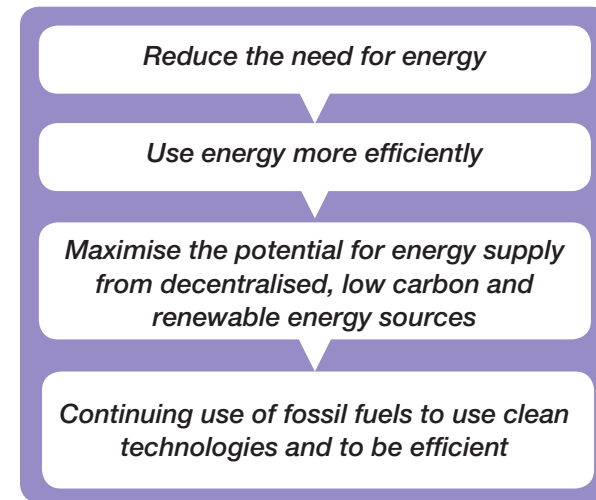


Figure 3.3: Energy hierarchy - the energy strategy should start at the top level, moving down through the levels only where necessary

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Thinking sustainably about design also includes sustainable construction (not covered in this guide) and helping to encourage more sustainable lifestyles, for instance in terms of promoting walking, cycling and public transport.

The West Midlands Sustainability Checklist www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk is an interactive on-line tool to guide developers on how to address sustainable development within major development proposals.

Involving others

Consultation is likely to take place at more than one stage of a project.

Initially this should include consulting with planning officers, and other technical discussions. For most projects, it should also include consultations with interested local people to find out what they feel is important or how the proposals could help to improve the area.

Consultation should take place at the stage when there is an initial appraisal and some conclusions have been drawn, so that these can form the basis of discussion.

3.4.3 Design concept or strategy formulation

It is important to have a strong design concept that underpins the proposals. This design concept must be appropriate to the circumstances, including the policy framework, the local context and the client requirements.

3.4.4 Design options/ proposals

There are always alternative approaches to developing a site and some of these should be considered before proposals are formulated. The preferred approach should be based on consideration of:

- a. Technical feasibility,
- b. Economic viability, including value as well as cost criteria;

- c. Sustainability;
- d. How well it reflects the design concept and results of the initial stages of work;
- e. The views of planning officers and the wider community;
- f. Any independent review from a source such as the Urban Vision Design Review panel; and
- g. For residential developments the Building for Life criteria, which provide a useful tool in choosing options.

The preferred approach can be identified and refined as the design is developed in more detail to form a planning application. It is important to make sure that the planning application reflects what is intended to be built.

3.4.5 Planning applications/approvals

The information required for a planning application will vary depending upon whether it is proposed to be in outline or in detail. It should be discussed with planning officers well in advance of submitting the application.

In almost all cases a Design and Access Statement is required to support and to explain the proposals.

Sufficient information must be provided to allow planning officers, politicians and the local community to assess the proposals. This should include information on materials and colours.

Planning applications will need to be supported by evidence that demonstrates how development proposals meet the policy requirements for sustainable development.

Where proposals are considered by an external body, such as a local or national design review panel, then the views of this body should be given weight in line with the level of expertise of the panel.

Where proposals are unusual or innovative, additional information on how the building is intended to be detailed may be required to provide sufficient evidence of the design quality of the proposals to allow a decision to be made. This will apply particularly where a landmark building is proposed in a prominent location.

Planning conditions may require more detailed information, on materials, colours, details and landscape to be approved following the grant of planning permission.

3.4.6 Implementation

The planning approval will set the quality of a scheme in terms of the building form, composition of elevations, material and external landscape.

However, many design decisions remain to be taken as the proposals are designed in detail and then constructed. During this time the design quality of the building can easily be eroded if insufficient care is taken.

Developments must be built in accordance with the planning permission, any legal agreements and matters approved under planning conditions. Any variation to these will require a new planning permission unless the variation is not material in relation to the original planning permission.

The planning authority should be consulted to confirm whether a proposed variation requires permission.

Refer to: [Section 3.6 Appraising the context](#)

Or scroll down to [Section: 3.5 Approach to masterplan proposals](#)

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3.5 Approach to masterplan proposals

This applies to large scale site specific proposals where a masterplan is needed because development is likely to be phased or carried out by a number of different developers, and to area-wide masterplans.

A masterplan is a document that sets out three dimensional proposals for buildings, spaces, land use and movement strategy, together with a strategy for their implementation.

3.5.1 Prepare

The design team

Select and appoint the team who will prepare the masterplan. This is likely to need a broad range of skills. Make sure this includes a design team with urban design expertise to take a significant role in the project and someone with the capability to act as design coordinator or project manager of the team. Depending upon the nature of the project it may be more suitable for the urban design skills to be architect, landscape architect or planning led.

The range of skills is also likely to include specialists in some or all of: architecture, transport, landscape, property market, development economics, planning, environment and sustainability. Other skills may also be needed. In some cases, the client group may wish to contribute some of the skills that the team requires. If this is the case, then time and resources must be dedicated for this purpose.

The team needs to be able to work in an integrated way to prepare and test a masterplan effectively.

The role of the client and the brief

It is important that the client, or a client representative, takes an active role in the process of preparing a masterplan. At the outset this means setting a clear and concise brief that outlines the desired the scope of work and a realistic budget.

The nature and purpose of the masterplan needs to be thought through and will depend upon:

- The place and the type of development being proposed;
- Whether it is led by the public or private sector;
- The property market and economic circumstances;
- Proposed funding and implementation.

The brief should set out the client's initial aims for the masterplan in terms of design quality, social, economic and environmental aspirations. These should include aspirations relating to sustainable development.

Once the team is appointed then the client will need to provide all the relevant background and baseline information to the team in a way that allows it to be assimilated quickly and efficiently. Generally the client will be familiar with much of this information and able to assemble it relatively efficiently so that the masterplan team can quickly get up to speed with the project and the place.

The most effective ways of working are those where there is a close working relationship and collaboration between the client and the masterplanning team.

Where there is a multi-headed client group, the client input into the masterplanning process needs to be managed so that there is a means of reconciling any issues or differences between different parties. This may be done by someone acting as client project manager, or it may be part of the role of the masterplanner to work towards a client group consensus.

“A masterplan is a document that sets out three dimensional proposals for buildings, spaces, land use and movement strategy, together with a strategy for their implementation.”

Creating Successful Masterplans: A Guide for Clients, CABE

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3.5.2 Appraising the context

Understanding the place and circumstances is a vital part of coming up with an appropriate masterplan vision. The masterplan should set out how it responds to the issues and influences that are identified. Refer to: Section 3.6 Appraising the context for more detail on those issues that would normally be expected to be covered, although there may well be others that are identified in a particular case.

Thinking sustainably about urban design

Climate change has been identified as the key challenge facing us and the government has set out a timetable for increasing these requirements so that new housing is zero carbon rated by 2016.

Substantial reductions in carbon dioxide emissions can be achieved on a site by site basis, however, masterplans offer much more significant potential to achieve carbon saving through an integrated approach to sustainable development.

It is vital that design teams think sustainably about urban design and integrate all of the sustainability issues identified, including those of infrastructure and utilities, into the masterplanning process at an early stage. The design team should also identify opportunities for area-wide energy provision (such as decentralised energy networks) as well as site based approaches.

To reduce carbon dioxide emissions, it is important that the energy strategy is based on an energy hierarchy, as set out below. This means opportunities for passive measures that maximise the attributes of a site, for instance for solar gain or sheltering, should be considered as well as technological solutions. A similar approach may also be applied to water consumption and to waste.

This is likely to extend beyond technical energy or water issues into broader urban design issues, for instance considering the most appropriate mix of uses to be accommodated to make Combined Heat and Power (CHP) viable.

At a masterplan level, sustainable development means developing an urban design concept that maximises the inherent benefits of a site or area, whilst minimising any adverse impacts.

The design approach should accommodate today's requirements for sustainable urban design but should also allow for future upgrades, for instance where utilities are being upgraded, allowance may be made for sustainable infrastructure, such as for future district heating.

Thinking sustainably about urban design also includes helping to encourage more sustainable lifestyles, for example by promoting walking, cycling and public transport.

The West Midlands Sustainability Checklist www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk is an interactive on-line tool to guide developers on how to address sustainable development within major development proposals.

Involving others

A masterplan requires consultation and communication with interested parties. This should include a wide range of stakeholders, in the public, private and voluntary sectors and may well need to involve local residential and business communities and/ or their representatives.

Consultation should allow people to influence the objectives of the masterplan and the options appraisal, rather than simply commenting upon it once it is nearly finalised.

Issues that a sustainable masterplan should consider:

Mix/ quantum of development;

Employment;

Energy/carbon emissions;

Heritage/culture;

Community amenities/facilities;

Crime and safety;

Cultural diversity;

Health and well being;

Water use/flood risk;

Infrastructure capacity;

Transport provision;

Pollution;

Ecology/biodiversity/landscape;

Waste management/recycling/materials.

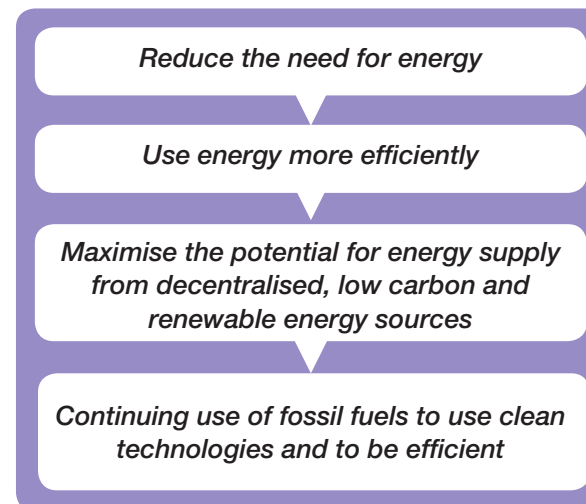


Figure 3.4: Energy hierarchy - the energy strategy should start at the top level, moving down through the levels only where necessary

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3.5.3 Vision, design concept or strategy formulation

It is important to have a strong vision that underpins the masterplan proposals. This vision must be appropriate to the circumstances, including the policy framework, the local context, the client requirements and also to the aspirations for the character and quality of the future development of the wider area.

3.5.4 Design options/ proposals

There are always alternative ways in which a vision can be translated into masterplan proposals and it is important that some of these should be explored and tested before the masterplan is finalised. It is vital to have a good understanding of the technical feasibility and economic viability of the proposals.

Testing options can also help to identify the benefits associated with different approaches in terms of a range of aspirations and the results of such evaluations may be used to inform consultation.

This stage is an opportunity to test the initial aspirations and to translate some of those into more specific targets, for instance in relation to reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Following the testing of options, the preferred masterplan proposals can be identified and refined.

3.5.5 Planning status - Outline application/SPD

Careful consideration needs to be given to the status of a masterplan, particularly to whether it will be implemented privately through land ownership arrangements between two parties or through giving it status via the planning system.

Masterplans can be given planning status either through the mechanism of an outline planning application, or through being adopted as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) as

Area Action Plans or Supplementary Planning Documents.

Where an outline planning application is to be pursued then an Environmental Assessment (EA) may be required. This should be established at the start of the masterplan process, as the formal requirements for environmental impact assessment will influence the scope and nature of technical work that underpins the masterplan. In cases where an EA is not a formal requirement, there will still be a need to set out how sustainability has been considered as part of the Design and Access Statement. The West Midlands Sustainable Planning Checklist www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk can provide a useful self assessment for this purpose.

If it is the intention that the masterplan will form part of the LDF, then it is vital that the masterplan process is agreed with the local planning authority at the outset so that it meets the statutory requirements for LDF documents, in particular relating to consultation and sustainability appraisal.

3.5.6 Implementation

A strategy for implementation is a key element of a masterplan document. A masterplan is intended to promote development by increasing certainty and promoting confidence in developers.

The intended route to implementation should have an influence on the nature and scope of a masterplan from the outset.

Masterplans are generally prepared where there are several different parties who will become involved in the development of an area. Consideration needs to be given to how the relationships between the different parties will work so that the masterplan can be realised.

Phasing the delivery of a series of developments that make up a masterplan will be vital to its success. A phasing plan should be included indicating the sequence in which the different sites are to be developed and the accompanying sequence of public benefits or infrastructure delivery.

The level of detail in a masterplan may vary. A detailed masterplan may in itself define the character and quality that is to be achieved. Alternatively, other approaches can be adopted that set out how the quality of the masterplan will be secured, such as design codes.



Figure 3.5: Preparing Design Codes: A Practice Manual published to accompany PPS3, provides guidance on design coding

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3.6 Appraising the context

The design approach to developing a site or an area must be informed by a good understanding of the site in its context.

This means analysing the site itself and its wider surroundings, including its structure, three dimensional form and how it functions. It should identify the opportunities and also the constraints that will influence the form of development.

This will provide a sound basis for a design concept that responds to the features of the locality, contributes to the sense of place and makes the most of all the opportunities.

The factors that should be included in assessing the context are outlined below. Not all of these will have a significant influence on every site.

The degree of detail needed for each and the appropriate form of presentation in a Design and Access Statement will depend on how relevant that factor is to the site and the proposals. Often a number of these issues can be covered in a single diagram with annotation and a short explanatory text.

The appraisal should go beyond a description of the current situation, to identify those factors that are, or are intended to be, an influence on the proposals, both in terms of constraints and also opportunities for the development.

It is important to understand the characteristics of the site itself at the start of the project. These may need to be recorded formally as the baseline conditions to be able to demonstrate what the impacts of the proposed developments are likely to be.

3.6.1 The site - Its qualities

Landform/ topography

The land form and topography will need to be identified, through a levels survey if there are slopes on the site. Level changes within or at the edges of a site must be clearly identified. Any potential stability or ground conditions issues should be investigated. Where land reclamation or reforming is required, then the reconfigured site should take into account any opportunities to manage surface water run-off.

Orientation

This includes the orientation of the site in terms of the landform, its relationship to the street pattern and access to the site, relative to the sun path and the prevailing winds (particularly in rural and/ or exposed locations and for tall buildings in urban areas). An appropriate strategy for development will need to address both energy and urban design issues.

Existing landscape

This should cover the position of any mature trees on site together with other landscape features such as mature hedgerows and any designations for their protection such as Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). It may also include watercourses and ecological habitats. Where any of these are proposed to be affected by development then an assessment of their condition and quality or significance will be needed.

3.6.2 Existing buildings and structures

Existing buildings and structures should be identified and assessed. This may include their condition, their fitness for purpose and their townscape quality.

Heritage assets

Any listed buildings or structures, historic parks or gardens, other heritage designations such as scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas, buildings of special local interest and archaeological potential should be identified, as should the need for any additional forms of consent, for instance conservation area consent, building consent or scheduled ancient monument consent.

Residential amenity

Where new development will be sited close to existing housing, it is important to make sure that any neighbouring properties are accurately shown on drawings, together with the position of any windows that could possibly be affected.

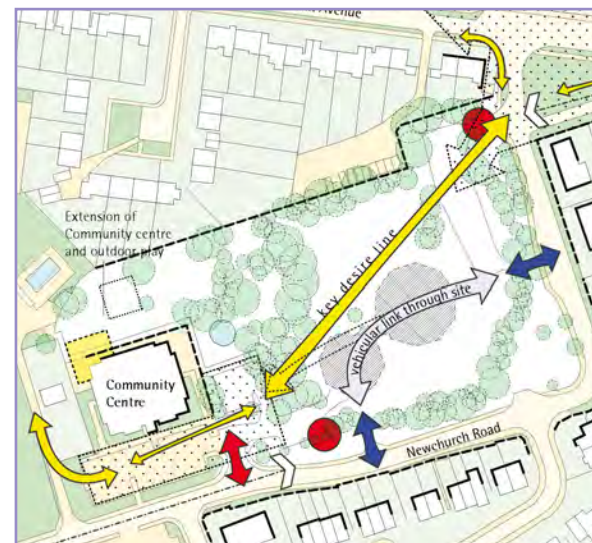


Figure 3.6: A simple diagrammatic assessment of site characteristics

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3.6.3 The place (Physical context) - Its qualities

Strategic context

As well as analysing a site in its local context, it is important to be aware of how the location sits within the regional context and how it relates to the wider transport network, the landscape or cityscape as a whole.

If the strategic context is an important influence, then this may be mapped, identifying the influence of key features such as:

- a. Transport corridors - roads, railways, canals;
- b. Transport nodes - railway stations;
- c. Natural features - water bodies, nature reserves;
- d. Open spaces - squares, parks;
- e. Existing or potential energy centres;
- f. Settlements or urban quarters - town centres.

Land use context

The appropriate land use mix for a given site relates to the land use mix found in the surrounding area. This can help to define what uses there might be a demand for.

Such an analysis might identify:

- a. Areas of broadly similar land use character, such as residential, commercial, town centre mixed-use;
- b. Key destinations that might shape how people move through the area (desire lines), for instance a supermarket;
- c. Uses that might generate a demand for complementary functions, for instance commercial uses might generate a demand for cafes and restaurants;
- d. Community facilities/ amenities, which occupants of the new development might wish to use.

Historic context

An understanding of how the settlement pattern of the area has developed over time will help to root proposals into their context. This will include:

- a. Appreciation of the history of the area and how it has developed (eg as an industrial centre, as a rural settlement based on farming etc);
- b. Understanding the key structuring elements that should guide proposals, such as transport corridors, and the historical pattern of streets and development;
- c. Identification of historic elements that should be retained;
- d. Where relevant, reference should be made to the Historic Environment Records, managed by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

This can be presented as a chronological mapping exercise, identifying the different stages in the evolution of the place, with some text to explain the factors shaping the physical development of the place and their relevance to the design approach.

Settlement pattern

An analysis of the existing settlement pattern illustrates the relationship between built and unbuilt space and can help guide the form of new development in terms of layout, block structure, plot size, street width etc.

It may also help to identify where the built form creates and encloses strong street frontages, and where this is weak.

A figure ground diagram is often used to show the built development relative to unbuilt space, as in figure 3.7.

Townscape character

A sound understanding of the townscape character of the locality helps to make sure that proposals relate well to their surroundings. This includes:

- a. The scale of buildings - including building heights and massing of surrounding development;
- b. Views - key long and short views, vistas, landmarks and focal points;
- c. Architectural style and character, which may refer to the period of construction, relationship to the street, roof types/ lines, materials, boundary treatments etc;
- d. Buildings that make a positive contribution to the townscape (identifying those with statutory significance, i.e. listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments) and those which make a negative contribution.



Figure 3.7: A figure ground diagram shows the built form in black and spaces left as white, as here. This can help to identify different patterns of development, here highlighting the character of the built form

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Landscape character

It is important to develop a full understanding of the 'lie of the land' and define its characteristic features, in order to design proposals that respond positively to the landscape and topography. This analysis should identify:

- a. Topographical features;
- b. Key landscape features within the locality;
- c. Key green spaces and green chains within the locality and how they are linked;
- d. Trees;
- e. Any sites of nature conservation significance (Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsar sites etc.);
- f. Archaeology.

Movement and accessibility

The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate how access to the proposals will be achieved, in its widest sense. So it is important to understand the existing movement patterns and flows of people and traffic. The analysis should identify:

- a. The hierarchy of vehicular routes, from main roads, down to minor streets used for access only;
- b. The characteristics of these routes, including identifying those carrying larger vehicles, location of any pinch points etc;
- c. Pedestrian and cycle movement;
- d. Areas of informal pedestrian movement; and
- e. Areas of pedestrian and vehicular conflict.

Movement also includes public transport, in particular bus routes and stops, but also railway stations for rail services.

Accessibility to local facilities and services is also important, which may include centres, local

schools, health and community facilities. The potential for access to local facilities can either be described in simple form using isochrones - diagrams indicating distances that represent notional walk times, or more exactly using actual walk times along existing routes.

Accessibility also refers to access for everyone, that is including people with mobility problems.

3.6.4 The place - Environment

Pollution

The nature and form of any development should also be influenced by any bad-neighbour uses or environmental problems located close to the site, including certain types of industrial uses, major roads or railways, etc. The analysis should identify and map any potential issues, including any potential sources of:

- a. Air pollution;
- b. Noise pollution and vibration from adjacent uses or activities;
- c. Site contamination (see ground conditions below);
- d. Light pollution.

Utilities

The location, nature and capacity of services and infrastructure all need to be ascertained at an early stage. These include:

- a. Electricity supply;
- b. Gas supply;
- c. Water supply;
- d. Data/ telecoms.

The condition of the utility networks and the existing load may need to be established. For masterplan proposals, it is important to address any capacity or renewal issues and to identify opportunities that may arise as a result of the proposed development.

Drainage and flood risk

Drainage capacity and, in particular, surface water run-off is an important issue that climate change adaptation needs to address, as is flood risk and flood protection, where appropriate. This applies at both the level of site specific schemes and also to masterplans.

Generally surface water run-off is required to be minimised and sustainable urban drainage solutions for surface water drainage are required wherever possible. It is important to understand local conditions, the potential for different types of sustainable drainage solution, including where retained water may become a resource, and their requirements, at an early stage of the project.

In the case of an area of flood risk, then a Flood Risk Assessment will be required and early discussions with the local planning authority and Environment Agency will be necessary.



Figure 3.8: An accessibility diagram can help to show the location of local facilities relative to a study area

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Ground conditions

Ground conditions include such matters as:

- a. The underlying geology and its stability, which influences foundation design;
- b. The soil conditions, which may influence the type of drainage;
- c. The presence of contamination; and
- d. The presence/ history of mine workings or industrial activity and their influence on the potential for development.

Other environmental issues

A range of other environmental issues may be relevant to certain situations and may also need to be considered if and when the scope of any environmental assessment is being defined. These may include such things as:

- a. Microclimatic factors (for instance relative to tall buildings);
- b. Daylight/ sunlight and the potential to utilise passive solar gain to reduce off site energy demand.

3.6.5 Social Context

Social factors may also guide the nature and form of any development proposal. The appraisal should consider what facilities and needs exist within the locality and how the development might respond to them in terms of the following:

- a. Housing mix, type and tenure, in particular the provision of affordable housing and responding to local need/ demand for specific types of housing for minority ethnic groups;
- b. Shortfalls in essential community requirements such as for health, social care, the elderly or people with limited mobility and educational needs;

- c. Community facilities - any shortages of various forms of community provision, including community centres, cultural and leisure facilities, crèche/ nursery provision, religious facilities or open space;
- d. Community safety - any community safety issues arising from surrounding development i.e. dead frontages, a degraded physical environment, routes with poor levels of overlooking etc;
- e. Relationship of the site to surrounding community facilities.

These issues can be included in the analysis of the place in all but major proposals where an environmental assessment is likely to be required.

3.6.6 Economic Context

Economic factors may also need to be considered at an early stage to inform the nature of development proposals. These could include:

- a. Housing need and/or market assessment - the shortfall of housing and of what types within the area;
- b. Local workforce;
- c. Retail spending patterns; and
- d. Property market, supply side and demand.

3.6.7 Planning Policy Context

The proposals will also be informed by planning policy, which should be taken into consideration from the outset. These will be found in Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents that together comprise the Local Development Framework.

Planning officers should be consulted to confirm the relevant policies and guidance that apply to any particular site.

3.6.8 Future Development

In considering the wider context, developments which are under construction or have planning permission should also be taken into consideration.

Proposals for new development should avoid prejudicing the development of adjacent sites for instance through locating habitable room windows on flank walls where they could impinge upon privacy and suffer loss of daylight from future proposals.

Where a need to create a local energy centre has been identified, then proposals should not prevent this being delivered.

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4.1 Introduction

Places are judged by the quality of their centres. Successful centres is a key theme identified in the strategic urban design vision, which sets out strategic urban design principles and also identifies a number of urban design issues.

Refer to: [Section 2.2 Successful and thriving centres](#)

Several other themes also refer specifically to centres, as follows:

Refer to: [Section 2.3 High quality places for living and working](#)

[Section 2.4 Better quality connections](#)

[Section 2.5 High quality green space networks](#)

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies the diversification and modernisation of centres as a key focus for regeneration (SP2). It also requires new development to respect the existing character, identity and context and to contribute positively to an area's identity and heritage (CSP1). Identification of the complementary roles and identities of the centres as catalysts of regeneration is one of the priorities for partnership working to achieve comprehensive area regeneration (CSP9).

This guidance relates to centres as places. It outlines key urban design principles that apply generally to all centres. Then for each of the key centres, it summarises:

- The key features that contribute to its distinctive character at present; based on urban design appraisals carried out for this SPD, with townscape quality based on the 'North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance'.
- The Core Spatial Strategy vision for its role; and
- Specific guidance on how the key urban design issues should be addressed, in the form of a diagram and a series of urban design principles.

The key centres for which there is specific character area guidance are:

- the City Centre,
- Newcastle;
- Burslem;
- Longton;
- Stoke;
- Tunstall;
- Kidsgrove, and
- Fenton.

The guidance is intended to shape development proposals and also to guide masterplans that may be commissioned.

Reference should also be made to relevant LDF documents. Those available at the time of preparation of this document are listed.

4.2 General guidance

For each centre, the challenge is to guide and promote development that is appropriate to the character of that centre, and its future role and position in the hierarchy of centres identified by the Core Spatial Strategy. The key urban design issues that need to be addressed in all centres are as follows:

C1 Create a diverse mix of uses and a concentration of activity, to support the vitality of the centre.

- Wherever possible, centres should contain a carefully designed mix of uses so that neighbouring uses coexist well together. Large scale mono-functional developments or areas must be avoided.
- Include uses on upper floors wherever possible and where this is not viable, allow for future access.



Figure 4.1: There is a large number and variety of monumental buildings, both civic and commercial, in the centres of the sub-region



Figure 4.2: Reminders of the potteries industry, whether in the form of museums, historic pottery buildings or ceramics used in public art, are found in many centres

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- c. Address the street with active uses at ground floor level wherever possible, and windows/entrances elsewhere. Avoid blank street frontages, but if essential, ensure their length is limited to part of the frontage only and that upper floors provide good street surveillance.

C2 Reinforce or create (where none exists at present) an urban form and height and an appropriate scale of development.

- a. Create an urban settlement pattern, with a well connected street network that also links well to the wider area.
- b. Define street frontages, with buildings set at back of pavement or, for residential, with privacy strips rather than front gardens.
- c. Buildings that are significantly taller than their surroundings should be regarded as tall buildings and the criteria set out in the CABE/English Heritage guidance on tall buildings should be applied. Generally, this is likely to apply to buildings of 6 storeys or above.
- d. Create landmarks, either by height or by quality of design, in locations identified for potential landmarks.

C3 Reinforce and improve the appeal and image of each centre, as necessary.

- a. Create positive approaches with well designed frontages and evidence of town centre activity that will help to attract people into the centre;
- b. Create new, and enhance existing, gateways at arrival points, to include high quality new buildings and public realm;
- c. In potential landmark locations, development and public realm must be of particularly high quality.

C4 Retain, enhance and create (where none exists at present) a distinctive built form character and identity that will form tomorrow's heritage.

- a. Retain locally distinctive settlement patterns where they exist, with limited intervention to improve their function, only where necessary.
- b. Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas;
- c. Transform the quality of environment and establish a new, positive character for the area, where the townscape is currently identified as having negative quality;
- d. Ensure that developments are of high urban design and architectural quality and have a coherent approach to sustainable design.
- e. Include materials and colours that relate to those traditionally used for buildings and landscape.
- f. Maintain and enhance key long and local views into and out of centres.

C5 Create a high quality public realm and good pedestrian/ cycle linkages.

- a. Enhance the public realm of key pedestrian spaces within the centre, as appropriate;
- b. Create excellent pedestrian linkages to the wider area, and along key desire lines where routes do not currently exist.
- c. Ensure that all pedestrian routes are safe and attractive, well overlooked and well lit.
- d. Ensure that servicing is not visually prominent from pedestrian routes, streets or ring roads.



Figure 4.3: A wealth of ornate Victorian townscape can be found in most of the centres



Figure 4.4: Some centres have particular built form characteristics, here Newcastle (left) with a strong Georgian heritage and Burslem (right) with a range of manufacturing heritage from different eras



Figure 4.5: Markets, both indoor in market halls and outdoor markets in market places are a characteristic common to almost all the centres

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4.3 City Centre

4.3.1 Key features of existing character

- Its compact nature at present, bounded by the ring road, Potteries Way, and extending no further than Marsh St to the west.
- It includes a mix of uses including national and local retailers, market, food & drink and culture.
- It is sited on a hillside with the land falling away except to the north, so is visually prominent.
- It generally has an urban settlement pattern with a street network defined by development blocks.
- Small areas each have their own distinctive street pattern – the informal, linear high street following contours (Town Road); an irregular grouping of public spaces and small development blocks on the slopes (eg the Tontines); and an irregular grid with strong diagonal streets, also on the slopes (South Street to Cheapside).
- These street patterns create many corner plots and buildings are designed to address corners.
- Buildings date from the Victorian era and more recent redevelopment, mainly examples of local commercial architecture with few ‘polite’ or monumental buildings. There are a number of listed buildings. Generally townscape quality is found in Victorian rather than more recent developments, and the Albion Street Conservation Area is the best example of townscape quality.
- The building material used is generally brick, with Victorian buildings often having buff brick or stone decoration. Victoria Hall is a good example of the modern use of ceramics.
- Building heights average around 3 storeys, although examples of taller buildings include the Potteries Centre and Telephone Exchange,

- Generally, where there is positive townscape character, buildings have a small scale, created by articulation or decoration of elevations.
- The pedestrianised shopping streets create a variety of pedestrian public spaces, but there are no green spaces, although Forest Park is close to the northern side of the centre.

4.3.2 Key features that detract from character

- A lack of diversity, particularly of any significant residential or business presence.
- Features of its skyline, which neither suggest a place of historic interest nor a dynamic, contemporary centre.
- The settlement pattern along Potteries Way, the ring road, where the urban form has become fragmented, and the centre introverted, with the backs of buildings exposed to public view.
- A lack of active street frontages in many locations towards the edge of the centre.
- The use of a variety of materials and colours that do not always respond to the character of the centre.
- The low heights of buildings towards the edges of the centre, where two storey buildings are not city centre in scale.
- The lack of green spaces within the centre, although Forest Park is close to the north, but lacks good pedestrian links.
- Poor pedestrian links to the wider area, particularly across Potteries Way.

4.3.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for a nationally recognized and vibrant City Centre, which includes a retail core, business district and cultural quarter.

When Potteries Way is completed, the City Centre (as a place) will extend to the new ring road.



Figure 4.6: A corner plot on Brunswick Street and Piccadilly addressed by the built form. Here the corner is chamfered with a small clock turret. The facade is ornate, with a small scale, using typical local materials of red brick and buff sandstone dressings



Figure 4.7: Victoria Hall, an example of the contemporary use of local materials, in this case terracotta cladding, relating the building to its City Centre context. Although the building is large, the elevation has a human scale that fits into the City Centre

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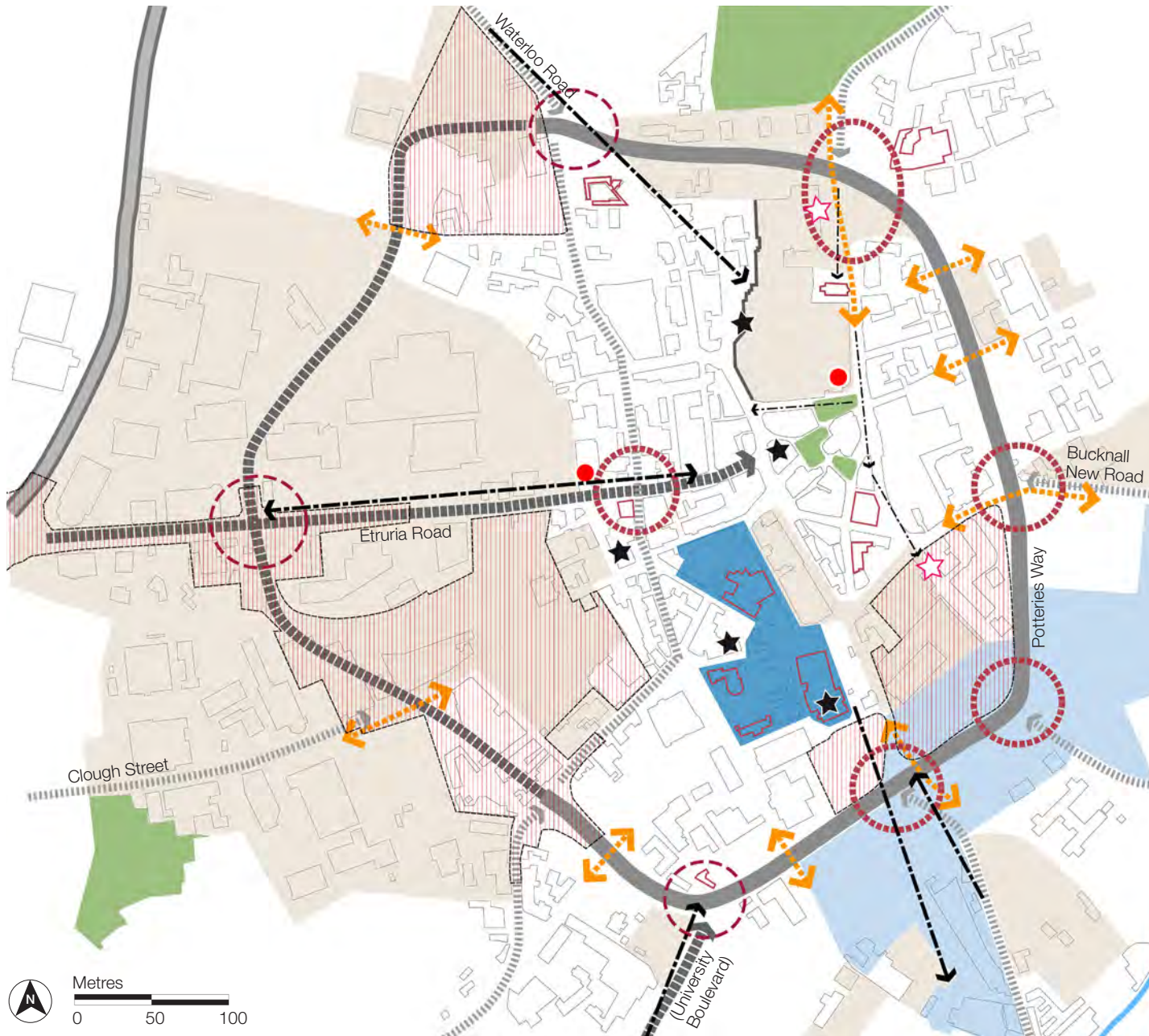
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- Key
- Conservation Areas where character and appearance are to be preserved and enhanced
 - Areas with some positive townscape character and quality to be improved and reinforced
 - Listed buildings, where the building, its features of architectural or historic interest and its setting are to be preserved
 - Areas with negative townscape quality require transformation of environmental quality
 - Existing gateway needs enhancing
 - Future potential gateway to be established
 - Prominent skyline edge
 - ★

 Skyline landmark
 - ☆

 Potential landmark location
 - Existing landmark building
 - Key long views
 - Other key views
 - Key spaces
 - Major transport corridor requires to be designed as city scale urban street
 - Proposed major transport corridor requires to be designed as city scale urban street
 - Key vehicular routes require to be designed as urban street
 - Existing major vehicular route
 - Key pedestrian link requires improvement
 - Location of major development schemes

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Figure 4.8: City Centre urban design issues to be addressed

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4.3.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres, particularly by:

Expanding the diversity of City Centre activity

- Introduce business and residential uses.
- Promote development densities to achieve a concentration of uses and activity, compatible with environmental quality (see below).

Extending the urban form of the City Centre and creating an appropriate City Centre scale

- Building heights should be a minimum of 3 storeys on all street frontages. For a major City Centre, generally, heights of 4-6 storeys could be expected although many thriving city centres have significant areas at 3 storeys.
- Where a proposal relates to an area of positive townscape character creating a positive scale relationship with the small scale of existing buildings.
- Generally aiming to increase building heights and scale to be more suited to a major city centre.

Improving the image and appeal of the City Centre

- Buildings must address the ring road where they are proposed for sites adjoining it, by providing active frontages, pedestrian access etc.
- Define and follow a consistent building line for the Etruria Road Corridor, aiming to create a boulevard character.
- In potential landmark locations, assess the potential impact upon skyline views and make a positive contribution to them.

Retaining and enhancing its distinctive character

- In particular, new development should not cut off views of the rural areas from within the City Centre.
- In much of the City Centre, there are opportunities to create new positive character. Use creative and innovative design to establish character where it is weak at present.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- Public realm enhancement of key pedestrian spaces within the centre, such as Tontines Square and Town Road within the City centre.
- Creating excellent pedestrian linkages to the wider area, particularly across Potteries Way and from the existing City Centre towards the west and beyond the completed Potteries Way.

Opportunities for environmental sustainability

The potential expansion of the City Centre creates an opportunity to introduce sustainable area-based approaches to heat and power generation, waste disposal and upgrading utilities and other 21st century infrastructure, for instance decentralised energy networks and data networks.

Relevant information:

Conservation areas: Albion Street Conservation Area

LDF: City Centre and Etruria Road Corridor AAP (in progress)

LDF evidence base: City Centre Master Plan and Public Realm Strategy (in progress); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)



Figure 4.9: The City Centre is lively and supports a range of uses and activities, but would benefit from an enhanced public realm



Figure 4.10: A coherent approach to landscape within the City Centre will help to relate together different character areas. The distinctive pattern of public spaces in the Tontines presents an opportunity for creating a high quality public realm that will encourage a wide range of use and activity and also help to establish a positive image for the City Centre as a whole

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4.4 Newcastle-under-Lyme

4.4.1 Key features of existing character

- Its compact nature, bounded by the ring road.
- It has a good mix of uses, including multiples/specialist retail, market, food & drink, culture, evening economy, leisure and civic uses.
- It is sited in a valley bottom.
- It has an urban settlement pattern with a street network well defined by development blocks.
- The town centre as a whole has the distinctive settlement pattern of a medieval market town, with a broad market street into which pavilions have encroached historically, now still the market square in part.
- A distinctive pattern of relatively narrow plots throughout the historic streets of the centre.
- Buildings generally date from the Georgian period and more recent redevelopment, following a characteristic pattern of simple, regular and formal facades and vertically proportioned openings. There are a number of listed buildings. The central streets are designated as the Town Centre Conservation Area and have a coherent and positive townscape character.
- The building materials vary and include brick, with examples of render, and with stone used for dressings and plinths.
- Building heights are generally around 3 storeys.
- Buildings generally have a human scale, created mainly through the rhythm of plot widths and the regular design of facades.
- The pedestrianised shopping streets create a variety of pedestrian public spaces and the Queen's Gardens and churchyard of St Giles provide green space within the town centre, with others within walking distance.
- The approaches from the east and south allow views into the historic centre and create positive gateways.

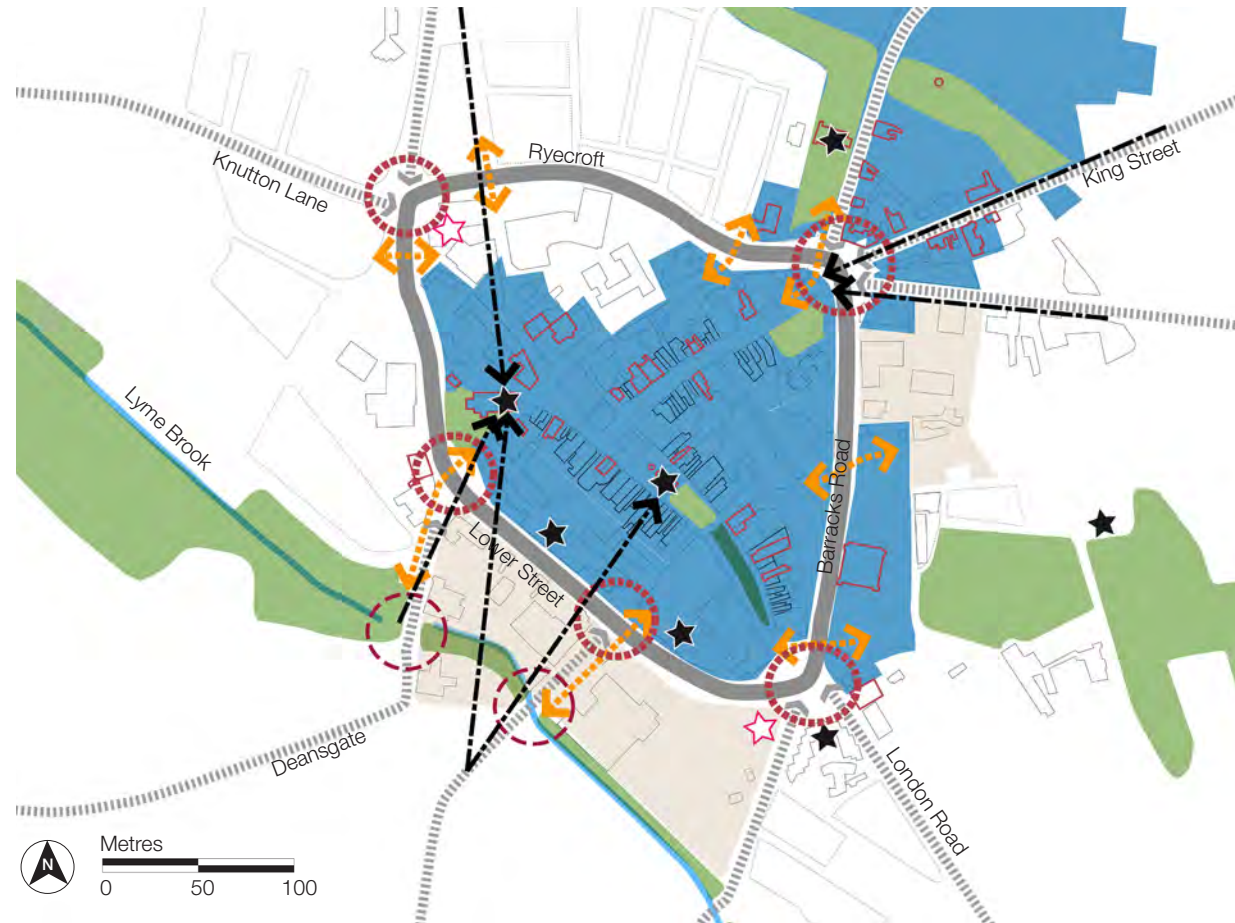


Figure 4.11: Newcastle town centre urban design issues to be addressed

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4.4.2 Key features that detract from character

- m. A limited amount of residential within the town centre to support its vitality
- n. The settlement pattern along the ring road where, to the north and west in particular, it has become fragmented and, in other places, the layout creates leftover spaces.
- o. The ring road acts as a collar around the centre and there are vacant sites on the outer edges of the ring road.
- p. Inhospitable pedestrian links at subway level across the ring road.
- q. Lack of human scale to ring road, caused by retail rear elevations and blank frontages.
- r. The quality of public realm design does not match the quality of townscape.
- s. Poorly defined and unattractive gateway spaces in approaches from the western side.
- t. Poor pedestrian links to the Lyme Brook in the valley bottom.

4.4.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy vision is for a university and historic market town with high quality shops and a cluster of professional and medical services intermixed with town centre living. As a place, the aim is for town centre activities to extend across the ring road into immediately adjoining commercial areas. Further guidance is found in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre SPD. As a place, the aim is to improve and strengthen the linkages across the ring road to improve the attractiveness of adjacent commercial and town centres areas.

4.4.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Diversifying town centre activity

- a. Introduce business and residential uses into the edges of the town centre both within and outside the ring road.
- b. Integrate any retail uses outside the ring road into the town centre by providing direct, generous, high quality pedestrian links at surface level.
- c. Use a mix of uses to integrate large floorplate users into the market town scale at street level.

Extending the town centre's urban form and scale within and across the ring road

- a. Create a network of streets with blocks of development similar in scale to the existing town centre and integrate the scale of car parks into the settlement pattern.
- b. Be generally in the range of 3-4 storeys, to create an urban scale, with potential for taller buildings of up to six storeys to address the ring road in landmark or gateway locations.
- c. Relate the design of frontages to the rhythm of historic plot widths.

Retaining and enhancing its distinctive character

- a. Use contemporary design to respond to the ordering principles of the historic townscape rather than copying historic buildings.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- a. Create a high quality public realm, with simple, uncluttered, elegant, contemporary design.
- b. Ensure that development adjoining the ring road contributes towards direct, generous and safe pedestrian crossings.
- c. Create new high quality pedestrian linkages to link the centre with the Lyme Brook.



Figure 4.12: The rhythm of plot widths is a characteristic feature of much of the town centre and contributes to its distinctive character. The variety of materials on facades, including brick and render, emphasises the historic plot structure

Relevant information:

Conservation areas: Town Centre Conservation Area

LDF: Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre SPD (2009)

LDF evidence base: North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006); Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2008); Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan (2008); Draft Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey Newcastle-under-Lyme: Historic Character Assessment (2009)

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4.5 Burslem

4.5.1 Key features of existing character

- Its compact nature, formed around the Market Place, Queen Street and St John's Square.
- It includes a mix of uses, including local retailers, food & drink, banks, professional offices and creative industries, and Ceramica, a visitor attraction.
- It is sited on a hillside with the land falling away on all sides except the east.
- It has a highly distinctive, urban settlement pattern with a network of three public spaces connected by streets, in most places well defined by development blocks.
- A fine historic environment, the best example in the sub-region.
- A characteristic rhythm of plots around the market place and on Queen Street, and small units around the market hall, creating variety and interest on the street frontages.
- Buildings generally date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a number of listed buildings relating to the potteries industry and fine examples of monumental civic architecture, set amongst nineteenth century three storey terraced buildings with shops at ground floor. The centre is designated as the Burslem Town Centre Conservation Area.
- Building materials are most commonly brick with clay tiles, although some facades are rendered and stone is used for the more prestigious buildings.
- The Market Place and Swan Square provide pedestrian spaces, both with high quality public realm. Burslem Park and the greenway network are within walking distance.
- The approach from the west provides a view of the monumental Old Town Hall, now Ceramica.

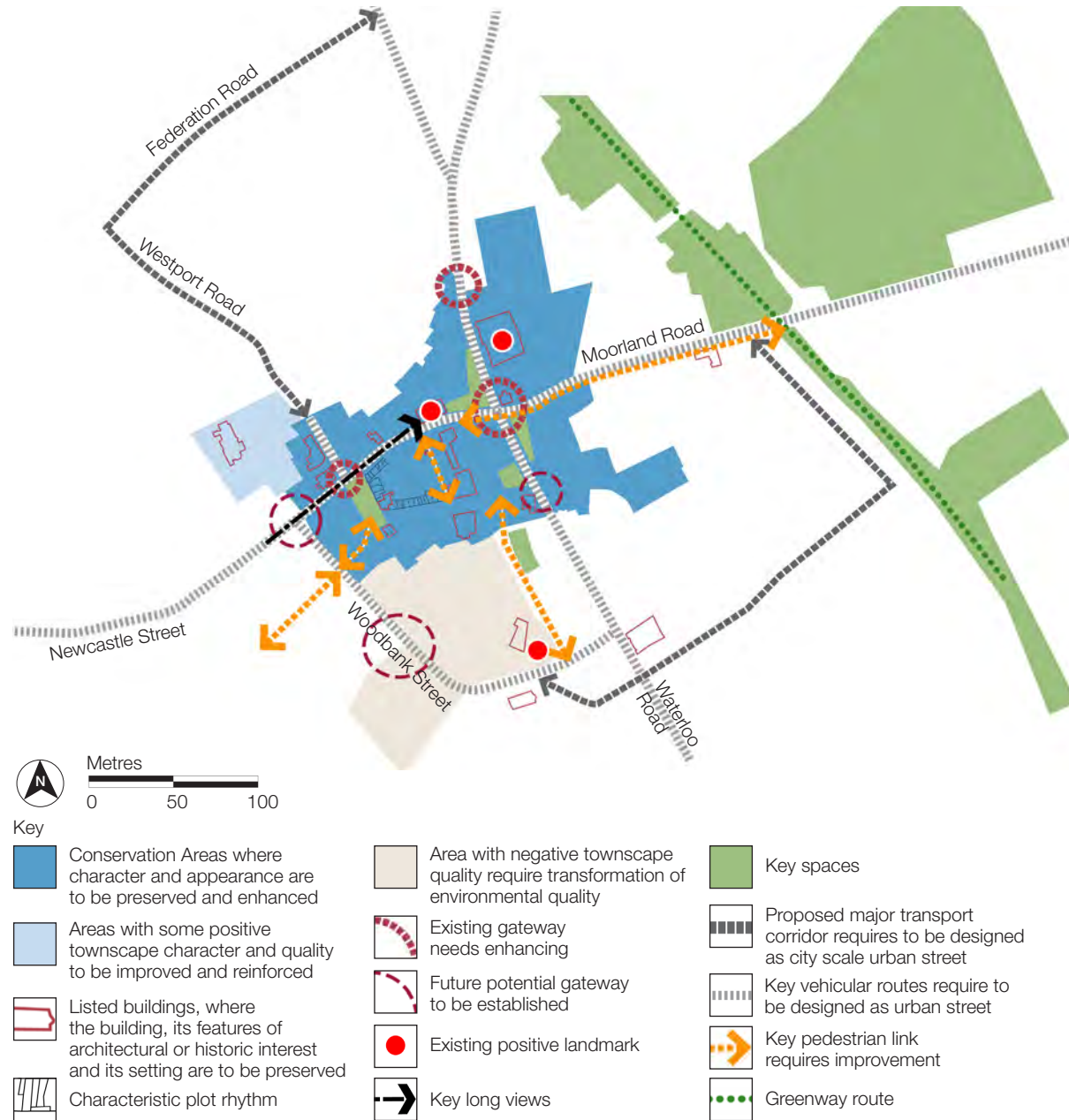


Figure 4.13: Burslem town centre urban design issues to be addressed

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4.5.2 Key features that detract from character

- a. Lack of residential within or around the town centre to support its vitality.
- b. Lack of activity generally.
- c. Vacant, closed market building at heart of town centre, also reduces pedestrian movement between Queen Street and Market Place.
- d. Large vacant former industrial sites on the edges of the centre.
- e. Dominance of traffic, although passing trade may well be of importance.
- f. Waterloo Road passes through the town centre, but divides it in two.
- g. Few pedestrian links.
- h. Poor quality pedestrian links to greenway and Burslem Park.

4.5.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for heritage led regeneration, based upon cultural and creative enterprise and other employment, and supported by new housing to increase its vitality and vibrancy.

4.5.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Reinforcing town centre activity

- a. Introduce small business and residential uses into and around the town centre.
- b. Promote activity to generate interest and attract more people into the town centre.
- c. Revitalise or reuse the market hall.

Completing and extending the town centre's urban form and scale beyond the key street frontages

- a. Create a network of streets and development blocks in former industrial areas with sufficient connections to encourage walking.

- b. Be generally 3 storeys, to create an urban scale.
- c. Relate the design of frontages in the centre to the rhythm of historic plot widths.

Retaining and enhancing its distinctive character

- a. Use contemporary design to respond to the ordering principles of the historic townscape rather than copying historic buildings.
- b. Ensure that new buildings represent good examples of today's design to add to the built heritage.
- c. Continue to restore and bring historic buildings with definite townscape value into use.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- a. Continue to enliven and create a high quality public realm, with high quality contemporary design.
- b. Manage traffic to enhance the pedestrian experience without removing passing trade.
- c. If further sections of ring road are to be constructed, ensure they take the form of streets and do not sever pedestrian links.

Relevant information:

Conservation Areas: Burslem Town Centre Conservation Area

LDF evidence base: Burslem Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2005); Burslem Masterplan and Urban Design Action Plan (2004) (currently saved SPG); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)



Figure 4.14: The eclectic range of historic building stock, including monumental, industrial and commercial buildings, in a variety of materials, gives Burslem its distinct character. Buildings express the era of their construction rather than any dominant architectural style and the Ceramica shop sets a precedent for contemporary architecture. Many existing buildings would benefit from re-use and refurbishment



Figure 4.15: Swan Square is a recent example of high quality public realm which has transformed a space, creating a new, dynamic sense of place. New uses and activities within the town centre will help animate its street and public spaces

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4.6 Longton

4.6.1 Key features of existing character

- The curving nature of the main shopping streets in particular of The Strand.
- It includes a mix of uses, including national and local retailers, a market and out of town format retail, with the Gladstone Pottery Museum, a visitor attraction, at the edge of the centre.
- It is sited in the valley with the land rising up into residential areas to the north in particular.
- The Strand and Market Street have an urban settlement pattern, well connected together by the routes through a pedestrian precinct.
- Buildings are generally commercial buildings that date from the Victorian era. The centre is designated as the Longton Town Conservation Area.
- The Gladstone Pottery Museum as an example of the former industrial development prevalent in the area.
- Building heights are generally 2-3 storeys.
- Building materials are generally brick with some rendered frontages and some stone used for dressings and decoration.
- The pedestrian precinct provides pedestrian space within the town centre.
- A large format supermarket is well connected into The Strand and to the covered market.
- Times Square and the Town Hall create a gateway space at the entrance to the town centre from the west, with the railway bridge defining arrival from the north.

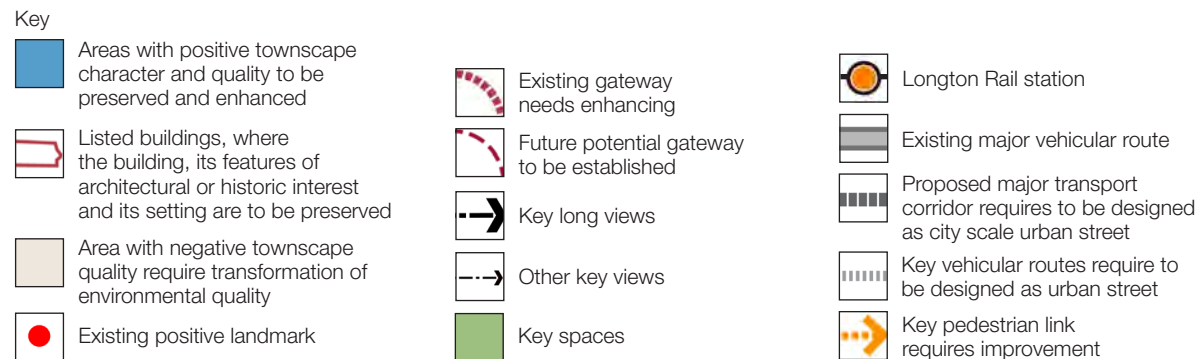
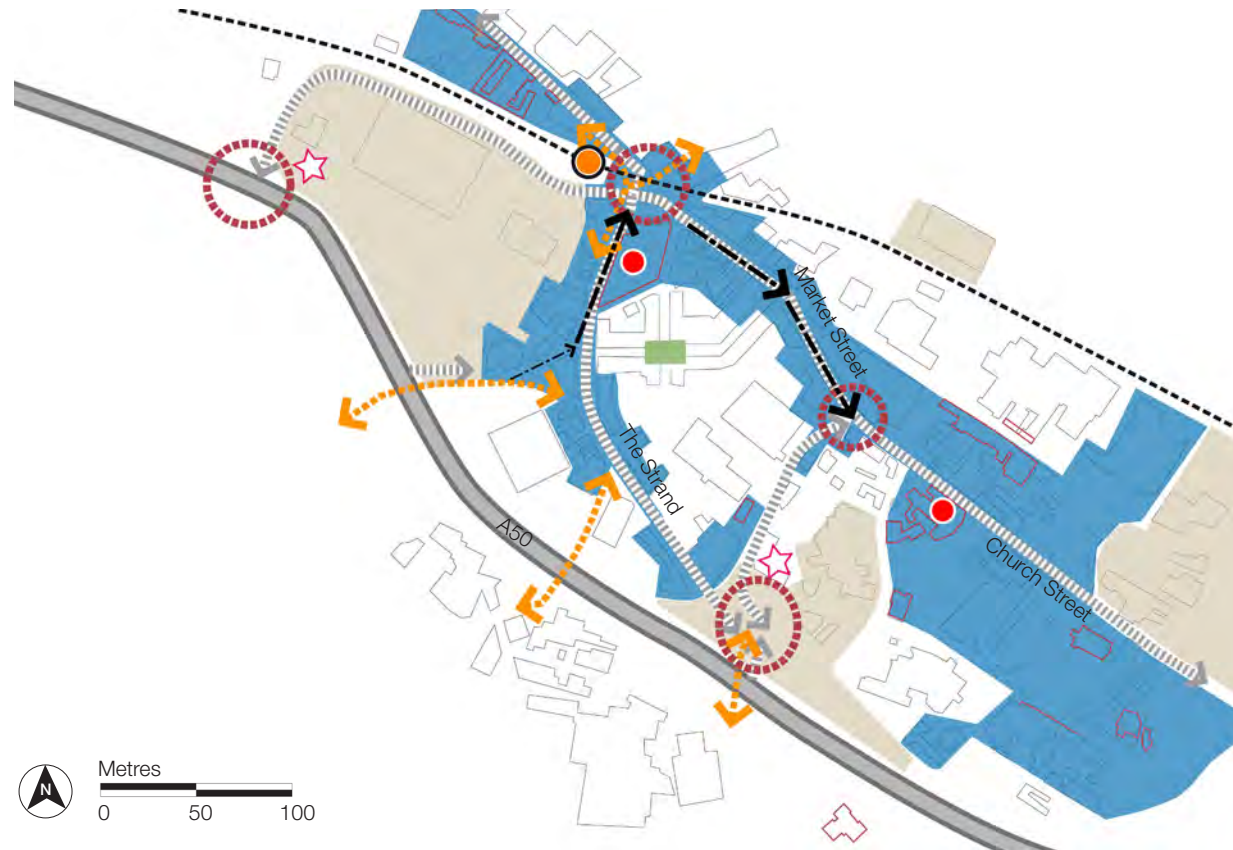


Figure 4.16: Longton town centre urban design issues to be addressed

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4.6.2 Key features that detract from character

- The settlement pattern on the south-western side of the town centre, where an out of town form of development has fragmented it.
- The A50 and in particular its approaches which cut the centre off from its surroundings on the south side.
- Vacant/ under used former industrial sites and premises on the eastern edge of the centre.
- Dominance of traffic within the main shopping streets.
- Town centre backs onto A50, so presents a negative image to outsiders.
- Although footbridges provided across A50, poor quality links between town centre and footbridges
- Poor pedestrian links to station and residential areas to north.
- Poor quality public realm design in Times Square.
- No green space or soft landscape in the town centre and poor links across Time Square to nearest open space to north.

4.6.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for improving the range of facilities in Longton so that it can continue to provide important district centre facilities to serve the south east of the conurbation, for instance shopping and services including; banks, legal services, medical services etc.

4.6.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Reinforcing town centre activity

- Introduce new development into and around the town centre to support its vitality and effectiveness as a district centre.

- Revitalise and reuse vacant buildings and sites.
- Create a quality of environment that can allow an evening economy to develop.
- Enhance visitor infrastructure and extend the visitor experience beyond the Gladstone Pottery Museum.

Extending the town centre's urban form and scale

- Extend the urban form of development to the south and east of the existing shopping streets.
- Be generally 3 storeys, to create an urban scale.
- Define key gateways on the approach from the south with built form.

Retaining and enhancing its distinctive character

- On the south side of the town centre, use the creative design of new development to establish a new and positive character.
- Restore and bring historic buildings with definite townscape value into use.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- Enhance Times Square as a key gateway space and improve pedestrian crossings.
- Manage traffic in the main shopping streets, reallocate space to pedestrians and improve public realm quality to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Create a high quality pedestrian link between the Gladstone Pottery Museum and The Strand.

Relevant information:

Conservation Areas: Longton Town Conservation Area

LDF evidence base: Gladstone Pottery Conservation Areas Appraisal (2008); Longton Master Plan (in progress); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)



Figure 4.17: Longton covered market and the Gladstone Pottery Museum are both valuable assets for the town that each attract a variety of people. However, they are poorly linked together, so that visitors to the Museum are not encouraged to visit the rest of the town centre on foot



Figure 4.18: There is a variety of materials in the town centre, with the Market (left) in brick with stone decoration and buildings on Market Street (right) in render and stone



Figure 4.19: The 1960s shopping precinct is occupied, but would benefit from refurbishment to create a stronger sense of place

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4.7 Stoke

4.7.1 Key features of existing character

- Its spread out nature, currently extending mainly along Campbell Place, Church Street and Glebe Place.
- Stoke-on-Trent main line railway station is just over 5 minutes walk away.
- It includes a mix of uses, including national and local retailers, a market and large supermarket, with Stoke-on-Trent Council offices and other businesses.
- It is sited in the valley with the land rising up into residential areas to the west.
- It generally has an urban settlement pattern, with a connected network of streets and development blocks.
- Buildings include commercial and potteries buildings that date from the Victorian era. The centre includes Church Street Conservation Area.
- Building heights are generally a mix of 2 and 3 storey buildings.
- Building materials are generally brick with some rendered frontages and stone used for prestigious buildings such as banks, the Town Hall and St Peter's Church.
- St Peter's Churchyard provides green space for pedestrians within the town centre.

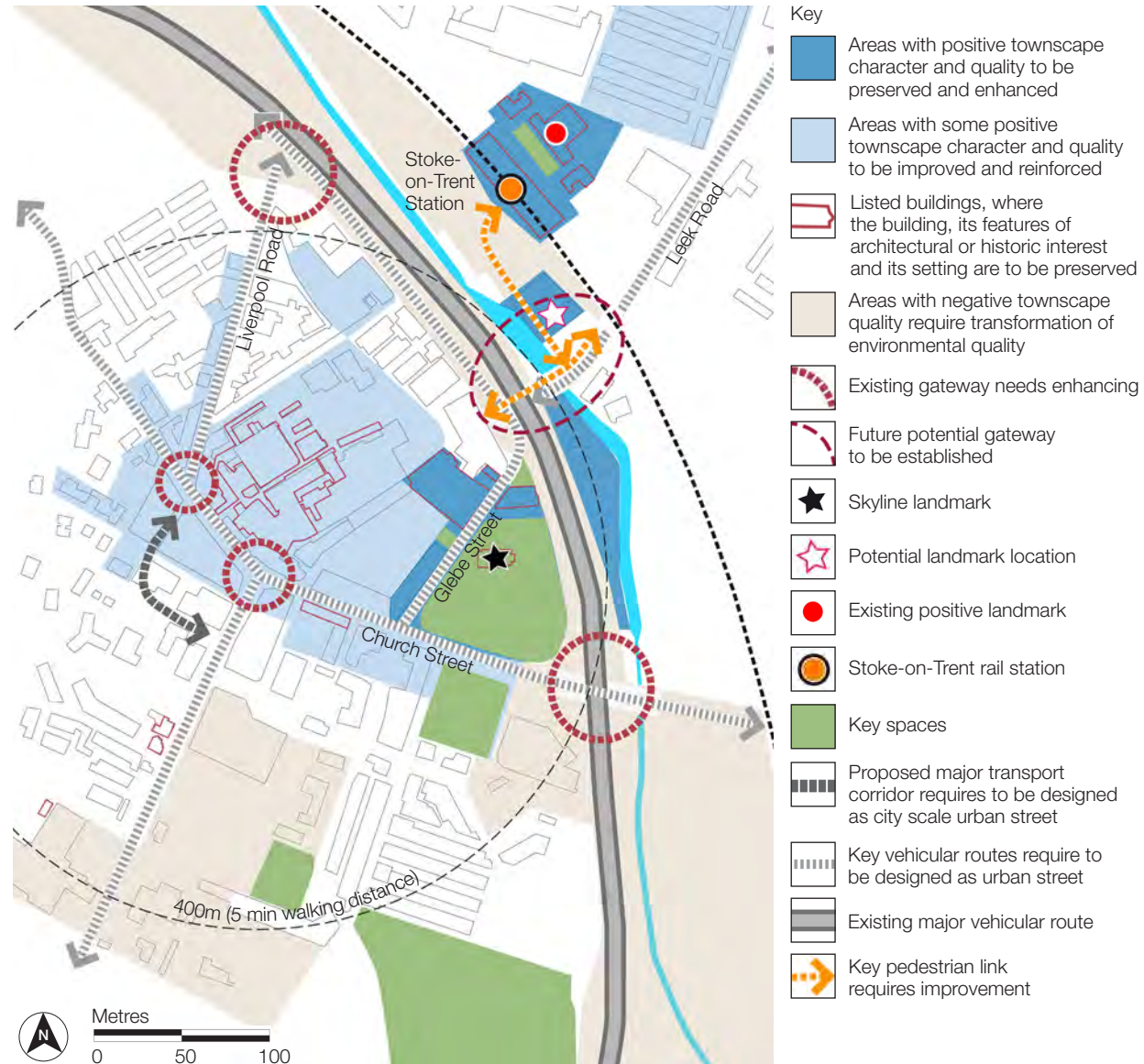


Figure 4.20: Stoke town centre urban design issues to be addressed

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4.7.2 Key features that detract from character

- The settlement pattern on the southern side of the town centre, where it has become fragmented.
- The A500 and the Leek Road, where the quality of environment severs the railway station from the town centre.
- Significant vacant former industrial sites particularly to the south and also at the heart of the centre.
- Dominance of traffic within the shopping streets.
- Scale and quality of public realm in car park that forms part of setting to Town Hall.
- Poor quality pedestrian links to railway station and university and residential areas to north.
- Poor quality public realm design in shopping streets.

4.7.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for strengthening the role of Stoke as an administrative centre, University town and nationally important destination for ceramics factory shopping.

4.7.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Reinforcing town centre activity

- Introduce new development into and around the town centre to support its vitality and effectiveness as a district centre.
- Revitalise and reuse vacant buildings and sites.
- Encourage university related activity to support the town centre.

Extending the town centre's urban form and scale

- Extend the urban form of development to the south along London Road.
- Be generally 3 storeys, to create an urban scale.
- Create a new gateway to the town centre from the station, by reorganising access to allow for a route to the south of the railway line.

Retaining and enhancing its distinctive character

- On the south side of the town centre there are opportunities to create new character with new development.
- Restore and bring historic buildings with definite townscape value into use.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- Manage traffic in the main shopping streets, reallocate space to pedestrians and improve public realm quality to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Create a high quality pedestrian link between the railway station and university and the town centre.
- If any sections of ring road area built, then they must be designed as streets and allow good pedestrian links to cross them.

Relevant information:

Conservation Areas: St Peter's Churchyard Conservation Area; Winton Square Conservation Area

LDF evidence base: Winton Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2008); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)



Figure 4.21: London Road Stoke, an example of a building of townscape interest in the centre



Figure 4.22: The Market is a key landmark building and public space close to the heart of the centre



Figure 4.23: In Swindon, historic industrial buildings have been converted into a successful outlet shopping centre and visitor attraction. The role identified for Stoke includes ceramics factory shopping

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4.8 Tunstall

4.8.1 Key features of existing character

- Its linear nature, primarily based around the High Street and Tower Square.
- It includes a mix of uses, including national and local retailers, a market and large supermarket, with some residential in close proximity.
- It is sited on relatively high land, with the land rising up towards the north.
- It has an urban settlement pattern, with well defined street frontages around the High Street and Tower Square.
- Buildings are generally commercial buildings with shops at ground floor level, dating from the Victorian era, focused on the former Town Hall and Market building. The centre includes Tower Square Conservation Area.
- Building heights are generally 2 and 3 storeys, with the scale increasing towards the former Town Hall and the north of the High Street, but generally two storey around Tower Square.
- Building materials are generally brick with stone decoration, some rendered frontages and stone used for prestigious buildings such as banks.
- Tower Square is of particular interest being an unusual local example of a formal arrangement that acts as a setting for a key building.
- Gateway at north end of High Street has attractive 'green' character. The greenway network and Victoria Park lie close to the east of the town centre.

4.8.2 Key features that detract from character

- The settlement pattern on the eastern side of the town centre, where it has become fragmented by out of town forms of development.

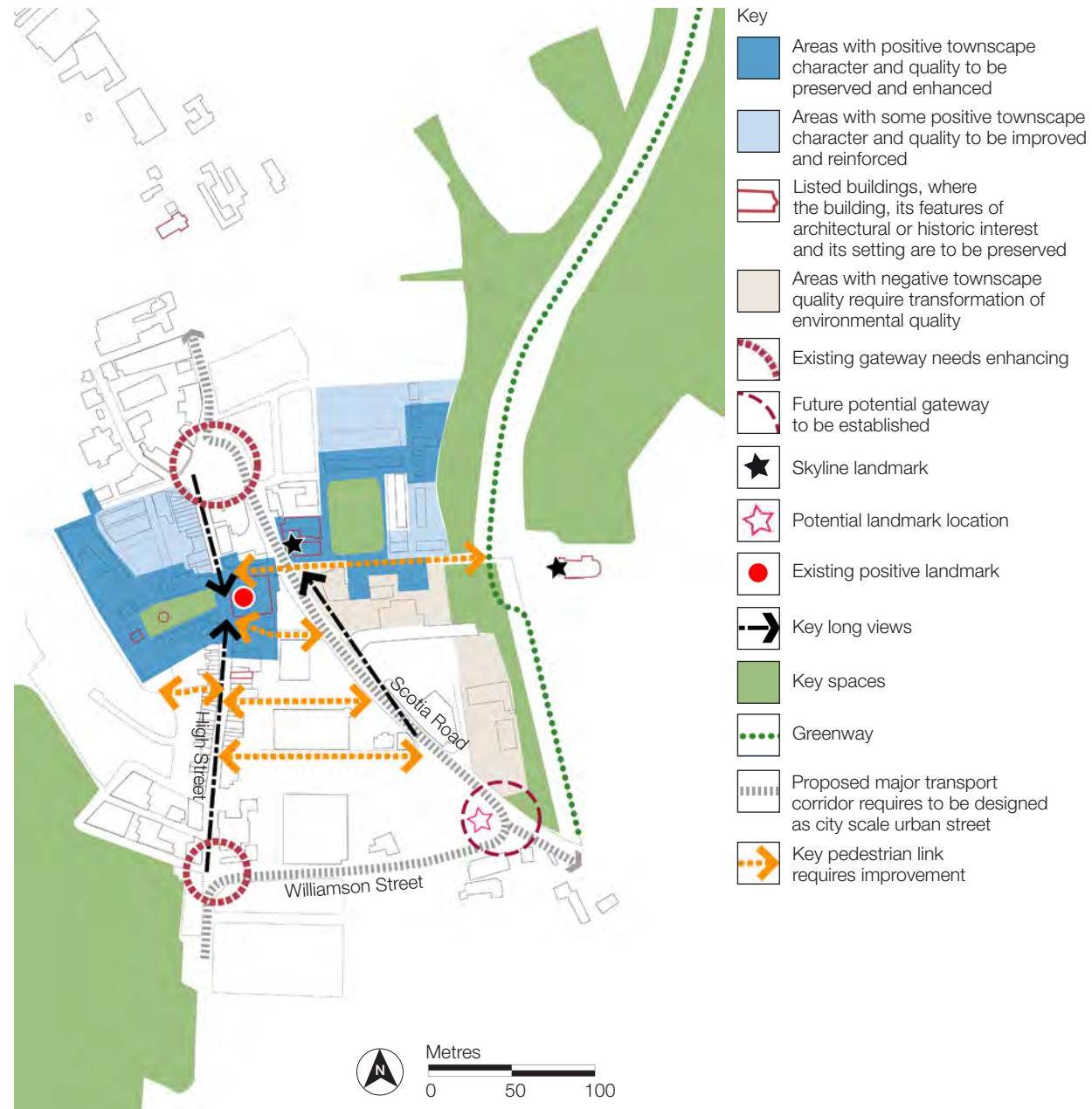


Figure 4.24: Tunstall town centre urban design issues to be addressed

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- b. The urban form is fragile and breaks down just behind the High Street frontages to either side, with large scale retail and car parks to the east and small scale backland car parking areas to the west.
- c. Scotia Road, which by passes the High Street and divides the residential and non-residential areas in two, rather than being designed as a street that integrates different parts of the centre together.
- d. Poorly connected and poor quality environment of pedestrian links between out of town format retail and the High Street.
- e. Highway design dominated gateway on Roundwell Street to south end of High Street.

4.8.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for strengthening the role of Tunstall as a district centre, with new development and improvements to access routes through and around the centre.

4.8.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Reinforcing town centre activity

- a. Introduce new development into and around the town centre to support its vitality and effectiveness as a district centre.
- b. Revitalise and reuse vacant buildings and sites and encourage use of upper floors of existing buildings.
- c. Ensure that any new areas of town centre activity are well linked into and encourage visits to the existing town centre, in particular the High Street.

Extending the town centre's urban form and scale

- a. Extend the urban form of development to the east and south along Scotia Road and Williamson Street.
- b. Ensure that development addresses key pedestrian links into the wider area.
- c. Be generally 3 storeys, to create an urban scale.
- d. Create new gateways to the town centre from the south, with new urban forms of development and high quality public realm.

Retaining and enhancing its distinctive character

- a. On the south side of the town centre there are opportunities to create new character with new development.
- b. Restore and bring historic buildings with definite townscape value fully into use.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- a. Improve the directness and quality of experience on pedestrian links between Scotia Road retail developments and the High Street.
- b. Improve pedestrian links to the greenways and parks to the east.
- c. Improve pedestrian links to residential areas, particularly to the east.
- d. If any new sections of access road are built, then they must be designed as streets with good pedestrian links across them.

Relevant information:

Conservation Areas: Tower Square Conservation Area; Park Terrace Conservation Area

LDF evidence base: Tower Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007); Park Terrace Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)



Figure 4.25: Tunstall has an enclosed High Street lined by a number of buildings of historic value



Figure 4.26: Tower Square, with high quality public realm that crosses over the High Street to integrate the former Town Hall and Market building into the space and provide them with an appropriate setting



Figure 4.27: New large format retail on the east side of Scotia Road, a good example of creating an high quality, urban form of development

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4.9 Kidsgrove

4.9.1 Key features of existing character

- It includes a mix of uses, including local retailers, with some residential in close proximity.
- It has a railway station.
- It is sited in the valley.
- It has an urban settlement pattern around Liverpool Road, with well defined street frontages.
- Buildings generally have a domestic and intimate scale with shops at ground floor level, dating from the Victorian era. The centre includes Kidsgrove Conservation Area.
- Building heights are generally 2 storeys.
- Building materials are generally brick, with some rendered frontages.
- Gateway at north end of High Street has attractive 'green' character.
- The greenway network is well integrated into the town centre.
- The canal network and a number of open spaces lie close to the town centre.

4.9.2 Key features that detract from character

- The split nature of the centre, which is part on Liverpool Road and part on Market Street.
- The fragmented nature of the settlement pattern to the north of Market Street, dominated by large areas of car parking.
- A lack of integration and poor quality pedestrian links between the canal and railway station the main streets of the centre.
- Highway dominated design on Liverpool Road.

4.9.3 Future role

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for strengthening the role of Kidsgrove as a district centre, with new development and excellent sporting and leisure facilities.

4.9.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Extending the town centre's urban form and scale

- In particular to create a more urban form in Market Street/ Heathcote Street.
- Building heights should be in the range of 2-3 storeys.
- Create a public space and sense of place in the Market Street area.
- Address and exploit the canal frontage.

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- Create a public space and sense of place in the Market Street area.
- Improve and enhance the quality of pedestrian links to the railway station and canal.

Relevant information:

Conservation Areas: Kidsgrove Conservation Area
LDF evidence base: North Staffordshire:
Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)

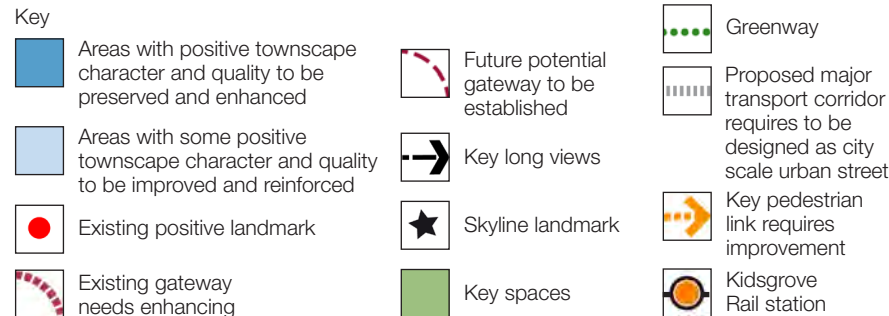


Figure 4.28: Kidsgrove town centre urban design issues to be addressed



Figure 4.29: Two storey terrace houses with non-residential ground floor uses create an active approach into the town centre



Figure 4.30: Birmingham has successfully reconnected its canals into the urban fabric and transformed them into leisure and visitor destinations

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4.10 Fenton

4.10.1 Key features of existing character

- It includes a mix of uses, including local retail, a market, courts, church and health facilities, with residential well linked into the centre.
- It is sited in the valley.
- It has an urban settlement pattern with well defined street frontages around Victoria Road and Albert Square.
- Buildings are generally 2-3 storeys in height, dating from the Victorian era with the buildings around Albert Square being of significantly larger scale. The centre includes Albert Square, Hitchman Street and Victoria Place Conservation Areas.
- Building materials are generally brick, with some rendered frontages.
- Soft landscape contributes significantly to the character of Albert Square and to the south.
- Open spaces lie south of the town centre.

4.10.2 Key features that detract from character

- The two distinct locations of the centre, which has retail on Victoria Road and other functions clustered to the south of City Road around Albert Square.
- The fragmented nature of the settlement pattern in between the two parts of the centre and also to the south of Victoria Place.
- A lack of integration and poor quality pedestrian links between the two parts of the centre.
- A lack of urban form along the south side of City Road.
- Highway dominated design on City Road and Victoria Road.

4.10.3 Future role

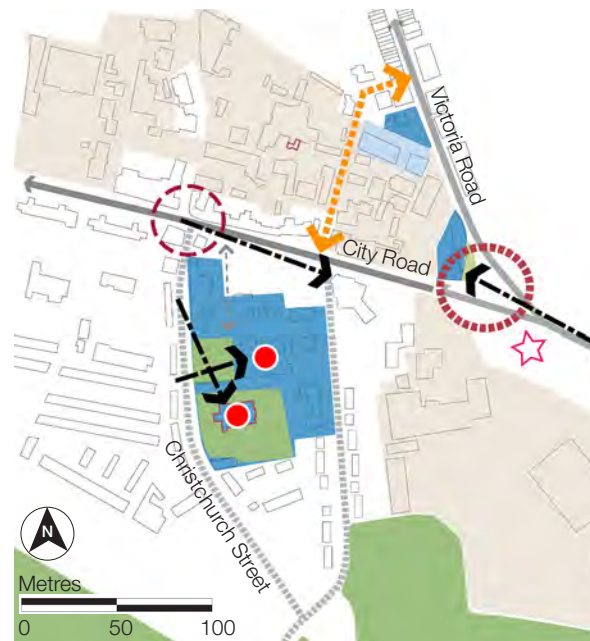
The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a vision for strengthening the role of Fenton as a local shopping centre, and as a sport and leisure focus.

4.10.4 Design guidance

New development should comply with the general principles for centres and also contribute towards:

Extending the town centre's urban form and scale

- Creating an urban frontage to the south side of City Road, maintaining a public market space behind.



Key














	Areas with positive townscape character and quality to be preserved and enhanced		Existing gateway needs enhancing		Key long views
	Areas with some positive townscape character and quality to be improved and reinforced		Future potential gateway to be established		Key transport corridors
	Area with negative townscape quality require transformation of environmental quality		Potential landmark location		Proposed major transport corridor requires to be designed as city scale urban street
	Listed buildings, where the building, its features of architectural or historic interest and its setting are to be preserved		Existing positive landmark		Key pedestrian link requires improvement
					Key spaces

Figure 4.31: Fenton town centre urban design issues to be addressed

Creating a high quality public realm and good pedestrian linkages

- Manage traffic and enhance the street space as a whole to signal the presence of the centre.

Relevant information:

Conservation Areas: Hitchman Street Conservation Area; Albert Square Conservation Area, Victoria Place Conservation Area

LDF evidence base: Hitchman Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2008); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2006)



Figure 4.32: The civic scale and formality of Albert Square, with the imposing courts building defining the space



Figure 4.33: The presence of Fenton as a centre could be signalled on City Road and Victoria Road by street design that crosses both sides of the road, unifying the space and helping to manage traffic speeds.

Local transport corridors between centres

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5.1 Introduction

Creating better quality connections is one of the key themes of the strategic urban design vision, with a key principle specifically relating to the local transport corridors connecting centres.

Refer to: [Section 2.4 Better quality connections](#)

The local transport corridors between centres provide connections through different parts of the conurbation.

Refer to: [Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)

5.2 Existing transport corridors

Two parallel vehicular networks exist in the conurbation. These are:

Primary vehicular transport corridors

The key strategic vehicular routes, the A500 and A50, and other transport infrastructure is generally found in the valleys. Its purpose is to distribute traffic fast and efficiently.

These routes provide limited opportunities for improvement, other than:

- Environmental improvements at junctions/ access points to improve local distinctiveness; and
- Landmark opportunities in strategic locations along the strategic transport routes, to raise awareness of the conurbation.

Landscape improvements to the A500 corridor have been completed in recent years.

Local transport corridors between centres

These are routes that provide direct connections between the various centres. Generally these are not the primary vehicle routes, although there is some overlap between the two networks.

The design guidance in this section applies to transport corridors that provide direct connections between the main centres. It includes both existing transport corridors and proposals for new ones. Generally these routes are local transport corridors, including the former A50, although some also function as primary vehicle routes.

Where these routes are, or could potentially be, primary vehicle routes, it is particularly important that they are designed with care so that they are perceived to be part of the city and to join rather than to separate places, for people moving by all modes of transport.

There are many other local transport corridors within the sub-region such as Moorlands Road. Some of these also have a mixed use role and function and it would be appropriate to treat them as streets in the same way as local transport corridors identified here.

5.3 Creating city streets

Manual for Streets makes the distinction between 'streets' that typically are lined with buildings and serve multiple functions, and 'roads' that are essentially highways with the sole purpose of accommodating vehicular traffic.

Successful streets fulfil a range of functions in order to meet people's needs as places for living, working and moving around in. They should:

- Be lined and fronted by buildings;
- Be lined by public spaces and parks;
- Stimulate a variety of uses alongside them;
- Accommodate a variety of transport modes, including walking and cycling;
- Provide access to individual developments and streets that are lower in the hierarchy;
- Allow pedestrians to cross.

In contrast, roads such as dual-carriageways, or by-passes, tend to contribute very little to the overall quality of a place. They often detract from the experience of local communities and take other people past places at a speed that does not allow appreciation or encourage stopping.



Figure 5.1: Waterloo Road between the City Centre and Burslem, existing local transport corridors between centres are often lined with uses such as residential, or mixed use development, so in effect they already have the use characteristics, although not the public realm design, of streets rather than roads

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They have been designed as environments to be experienced from within a vehicle at speed, so for other users the environment is bleak and lacking in quality at any level of detail.

The transport corridors between centres generally have the built form and use characteristics of streets rather than roads, being lined for the most part by urban forms of residential, mixed use and industrial development, with some open spaces and countryside and some 'out-of-town' forms development (both retail and industry).

However, at present they tend to be dominated by vehicular traffic and, whilst they have footways, the environment and traffic management regime does not currently promote walking or cycling. The space is generally designed as a road.

Through routes can be the city's arteries, creating life and activity. Pedestrian and vehicular movement should be seen as an opportunity to create lively, mixed purpose routes and as a situation to be managed rather than a problem to be mitigated. Travelling along the local transport corridors could become a positive experience, a journey that is marked by events and changes of character along the route including unfolding views, variations in topography, built form, planting and the pattern of use.

To create lively streets, roads need to be designed to serve a variety of functions. This requires a careful and multi-disciplinary approach that balances potential conflicts between different objectives.

T1 Design local transport corridors between centres to function more as streets for people rather than roads for motor vehicles. Streets should generally be designed to serve a variety of functions and should avoid giving the car precedence over people.

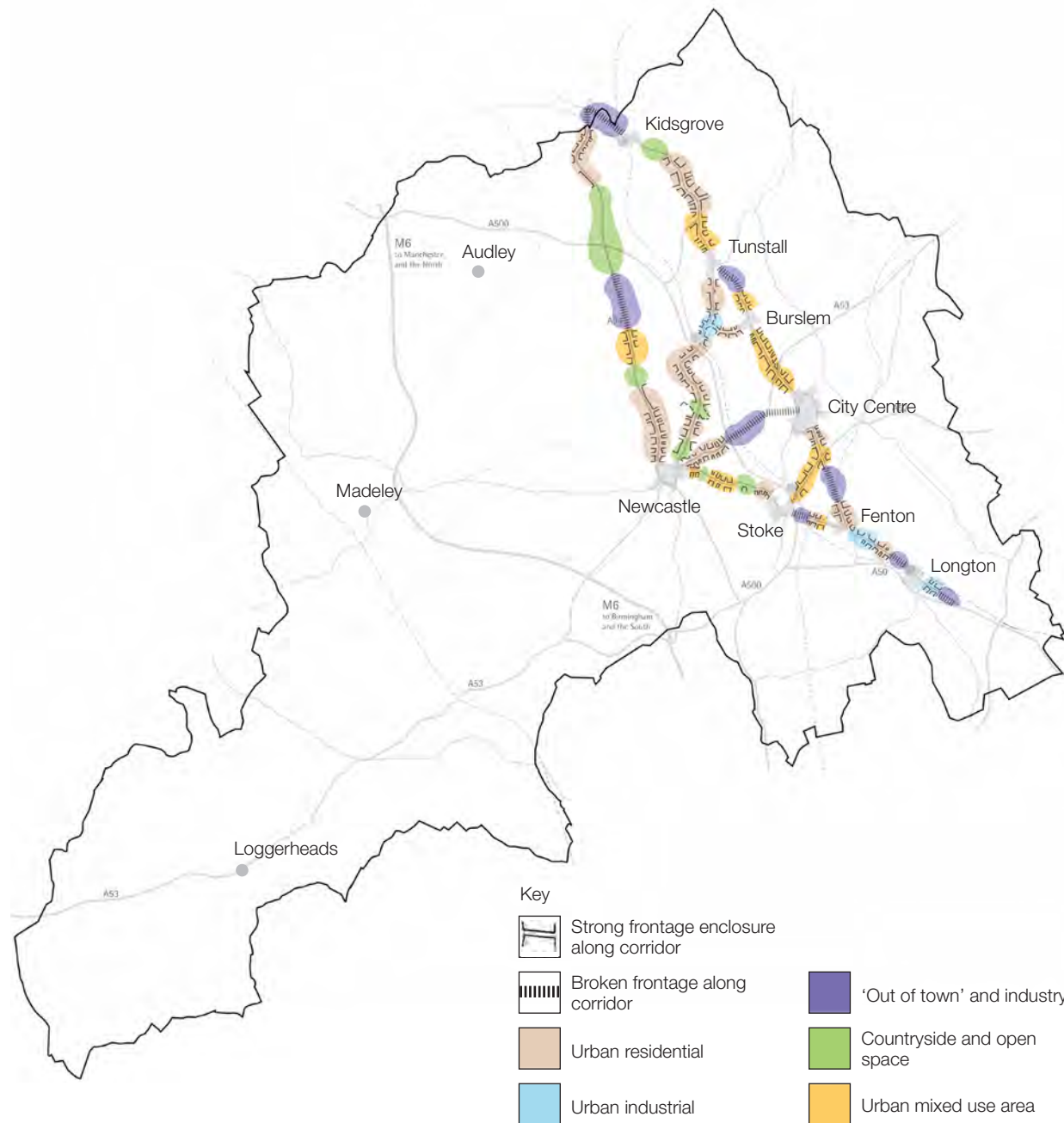


Figure 5.2: The character of local transport corridors today

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5.4 Promoting sustainable modes of transport

Streets are one of the most persistent elements that make up our environment. In many places street alignments can be traced back through history. Over time, they have proved themselves capable of being used in different ways according to the needs of the time.

Historically, the A50 was the main route that linked the different settlements that are now the main centres of Stoke-on-Trent. This route is now a series of streets lined with development, allowing experience of geography and local places.

Today there is a potential opportunity for the local transport corridors, and the former A50 in particular, to adapt once again to respond to current challenges, and to become sustainable transport corridors, with a focus on public transport and cycling, which also enhance local distinctiveness and function as successful city streets.

A good public transport network connecting the different centres together is an essential component of a successful polycentric place.

T2 Design local transport corridors between centres to promote and enhance sustainable modes of transport, including:

- **Public transport;**
- **Conditions for cyclists; and the**
- **Pedestrian environment.**

Currently buses provide the only street based public transport mode in the sub-region.

Bus priority measures may be appropriate on the local transport corridors between centres and, if well designed and integrated into public realm enhancement proposals, could start to upgrade the environmental quality of the transport corridors.

Stoke-on-Trent has a history of trams and there may be the opportunity in the future to revive historic routes (generally still in existence) to provide more sustainable and effective public transport links between centres.

Local transport corridors provide an opportunity to establish cycling as a priority mode of transport, as one element of the wider urban cycle network. These routes provide very direct links between centres and would be likely to appeal to commuter rather than leisure cyclists.

When undertaking highway improvements on local transport corridors, designers should explore the opportunities for introducing cycle provision, for instance providing separate phasing for cyclists at major junctions, so that they can cross in safety. Cycle lanes should be clear, direct routes that avoid unnecessary surface changes and kerbs.

The tendency to walk is influenced not only by distance but also by the quality of the environment created by the street space, including vehicular speeds, and by the buildings defining the street, including the degree of activity on the frontages.



Figure 5.3: Streetcar is a Bus Rapid Transport proposal which will transform bus travel in terms of its quality, speed, reliability and comfort. Initially, the Green Line is proposed to run between Keele University and Kidsgrove via Newcastle, Stoke railway station, the City Centre, Burslem and Tunstall, so linking together many of the main centres and clusters of economic activity. A second line is also being considered, which could potentially run from Newcastle via Festival Park to the City Centre and then south to Stoke railway station, Trentham Lakes and Meir



Figure 5.4: Where new local transport corridors are to be provided, or where there is sufficient space on existing local transport corridors, then opportunities to create segregated cycle lanes should be pursued, as here in Amsterdam

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5.5 Character of local transport corridors

Local transport corridors connect together the different settlements and centres. For people travelling around the conurbation they have a significant influence upon whether places seem to be distinct or have coalesced. The character of a transport corridor is created by:

- The design of the street space itself;
- The treatment of the boundaries alongside it; and
- The development to either side.

The plan locates the local transport corridors in relation to the existing settlements and the areas in-between them, or their setting, as identified in the strategic urban design.

Refer to: [Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)

The treatment of the local transport corridors themselves and also development alongside them clearly has the potential to contribute to distinguishing between different settlements and so reinforcing their hierarchy.

In existing settlements, streets should generally be spaces defined and enclosed by buildings, providing animation and activity alongside them. In the areas in-between existing settlements at present, streets are mainly lined by landscape, countryside or tree and boundary planting. In these locations, appreciation of the landscape and open space is more important than a strong sense of built enclosure.

There is an opportunity to create the perception of 'green gaps' to differentiate more clearly between different places and to emphasise the close relationship there is with landscape throughout the conurbation.

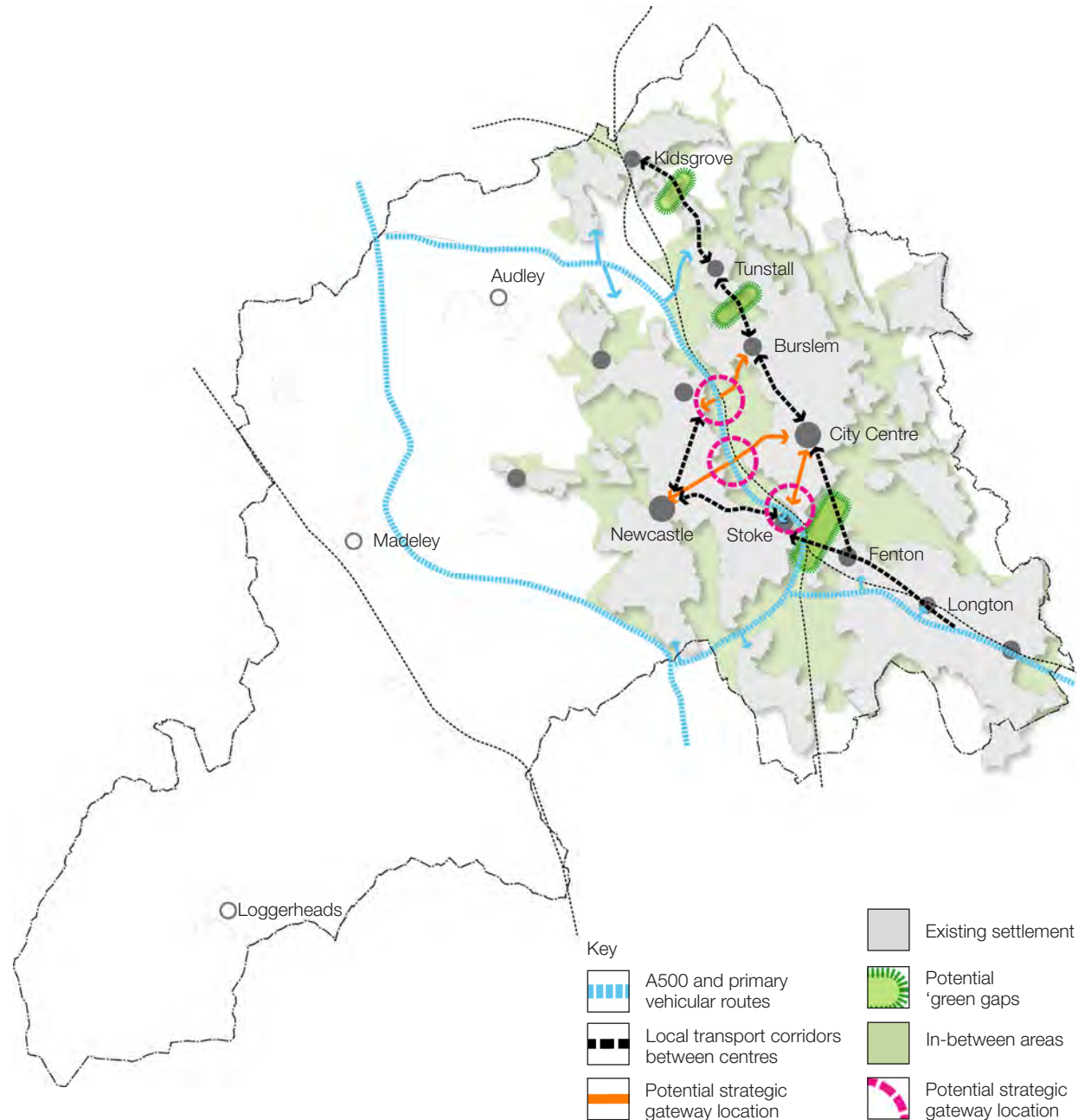


Figure 5.5 Potential for 'green gaps' and strategic landmarks

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5.5.1 In existing settlements

In existing settlements, local transport corridors are generally lined by development, such as housing, industrial and mixed use areas, for instance local centres. Buildings are generally set at the back of pavements or in front gardens. This creates urban streets with a degree of animation along them. The pattern of uses along the transport corridors varies, including residential, commercial and retail/ local centre uses.

T3 New development on local transport corridors within settlements should reinforce or create an attractive, urban street frontage that is appropriate to the context and the location of the site within the settlement. Proposals should justify the approach to the character of the street frontage.

New development should help to create well defined, coherent, building lines appropriate to the location within the settlement, in order to enclose the street space and create an urban character.

Key considerations are:

- The position of the building line should relate to other building lines, provided these are appropriate for the location within the settlement.
- The continuity and consistency of the proposed building line should relate to those in the surroundings, provided these are appropriate for the location within the settlement.
- The scale of the proposed building should relate to the width of the street to enclose the space.

T4 New development on local transport corridors within settlements should contribute towards creating a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

The internal arrangement of a building affects the potential for interaction with the street, so influencing the degree of surveillance of the public realm and the safety and sense of security of pedestrians. Buildings set close to the street frontage can provide a high degree of supervision. However, this must be balanced with the need for people to feel that they have sufficient privacy in their homes in particular. Where streets are busy, environmental factors, such as noise and air quality also need to be taken into account.

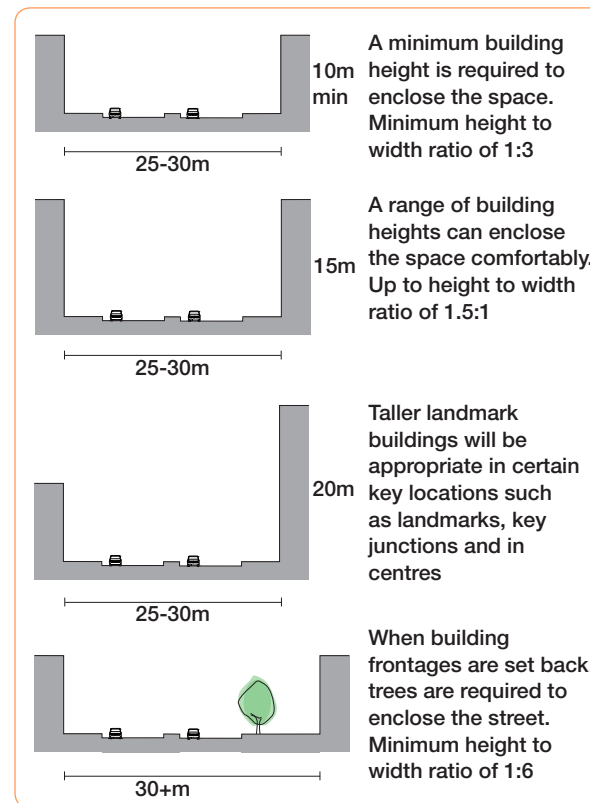


Figure 5.6: Building heights appropriate to enclose urban streets of similar scale to existing ring roads. (Ratios based on Urban Design Compendium)

Where possible, proposals should include:

- Ground floor mixed uses;
- Entrances from the street frontage;
- An internal arrangement that will help to supervise the public realm;
- A degree of privacy for residents through the design of the frontage, for instance by means of vertically proportioned windows, more public rooms overlooking the street, external privacy strips and/ or front boundary treatments;
- Design measures to address any potential environmental concerns, for instance acoustic screening, thicker glazing, winter gardens.

Single aspect residential units that look out only onto busy streets are not generally appropriate. Also refer to: **Section 7.6 Relationship between dwellings.**

Return to: **Section 7.3**

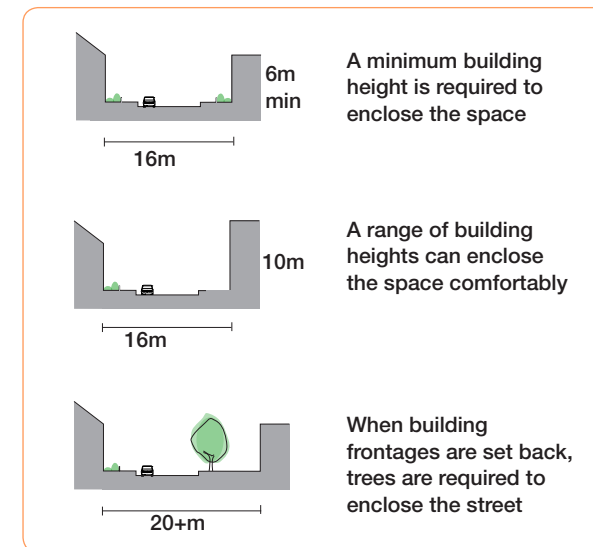


Figure 5.7: Building heights appropriate to enclose the typical scale of local transport corridors between centres. See figure 5.6 for typical ratios of height to width

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5.5.2 In-between existing settlements

In-between existing settlements, local transport corridors are generally lined by out of town retail parks, industrial areas, derelict land, agricultural land and allotments.

None of the built forms of development contributes significantly to an attractive street environment, as they are generally large buildings set back from the frontage, with extensive areas of surface car parking.

There also tends to be very little coherence in terms of layout, built form and landscape.

The aim is to maintain and reinforce the polycentric settlement hierarchy of the sub-region, and to enhance its character overall, by creating a distinct 'green' character for these disparate uses, or for other uses that may be developed in these locations in the future.

T5 In-between existing settlements, the main aim is to maintain or to create a 'green' character through landscape treatment along the local transport corridor, rather than to create character through the built form alone.

Where redevelopment is proposed, the street frontage should provide a strong green landscape framework for the street.

Where there is currently no built form, then future development should also maintain views and a sense of openness, with a variety of links (for recreational access if appropriate and for wildlife) to any areas of landscape beyond.

Where unattractive development currently lines roads, opportunities to introduce new boundary planting to screen car parking or open storage areas should be investigated and pursued where possible.

On-street tree planting and SUDS will also contribute to creating a 'green' landscape character.

Proposals should justify the approach to the character of the street frontage.

The strategic urban design vision sets out more fully some of the opportunities to establish the desired 'green' character for these areas.

Refer to: [Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)

Detailed design principles are to :

- Provide or intensify planting along street frontages to enhance the sense of place, improve the cohesion of what is currently a dispersed and often incoherent development pattern and to unify diverse forms of built development.
- Where possible prepare a coherent landscape strategy on an area wide basis rather than a site by site basis to maximise the impact and create a coherent 'green' character.
- Incorporate landscape related environmental sustainability measures to soften frontages, for instance SUDS, or ground source heat pumps.
- Provide, or contribute towards the provision of pedestrian and cycle links between different settlements where appropriate, along direct routes.
- Provide pedestrian crossings in locations that relate to desire lines and strengthen the pedestrian route network.



Figure 5.8: Bremen, Germany, tree planting can help to establish a distinct character for a route



Figure 5.9: Sustainable drainage measures can provide an opportunity to 'green' streets



Figure 5.10: Street trees soften the urban environment and create positive outlook for residents

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T6 The perception of 'green gaps' should be created in certain key locations, to differentiate more clearly between different places and to emphasise the close relationship there is with landscape throughout the conurbation. The key locations which have been identified are:

- Between Tunstall and Kidsgrove;
- Between Hanley and Stoke; and
- Between Burslem and Tunstall.

Other locations may also be identified as being suitable for this approach.

Special efforts should be made to 'green' the edges of local transport corridors in these locations, either within development site boundaries or in the public realm, and to create a distinct landscape character rather than an urban character on either side of the transport corridor. This may either be associated with development proposals or implemented as a public realm enhancement scheme.



Figure 5.11: Poor quality existing environment with little sense of enclosure and coherence, is an opportunity to create a 'green gap'



Figure 5.12: Good example of car parking screened by landscape



Figure 5.13: Good examples of tree planting and landscape buffers alongside transport corridors



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5.5.3 Strategic landmark and gateway locations

New development adjacent to local transport corridors should promote improved navigation through its layout, form and design.

It is difficult for an outsider to distinguish between different places in the conurbation and most people have experienced a sense of confusion when negotiating their way through it.

Development on local transport corridors between centres must contribute to providing recognisable intersections and landmarks to help people differentiate between the different routes more easily.

A well considered signage strategy can help, but should not be relied upon as the only solution.

T7 Provide high quality landmark buildings at strategic gateway locations to announce the presence of, and arrival at, the conurbation. These locations are at the key junctions between the strategic transport network and those local transport corridors between centres that are the key approaches to the main centres at the heart of the conurbation:

- ***At the west end of the proposed Etruria Road boulevard;***
- ***At the junction of the potential Burslem link and Wolstanton; and***
- ***On land to the south west of the railway station.***

Landmark development in any of these locations will help to establish a new image and identity for the conurbation. To fulfil this role, it must be of the highest quality of design.

Landmark buildings may be taller than the general heights of buildings around them or they may stand out from their surroundings by their particular quality of design and detail alone.

T8 New development in all gateway locations must be of particularly high quality.

Gateway locations can be found:

- a. At key junctions on the route network, and
- b. At the main arrival points for centres, identified in the Centres Character Area Guidance.

The priority in all gateway locations is for development, public realm and highway works to stand out in terms of quality, rather than necessarily in terms of size and bulk. In these locations, development should:

- a. Be of particularly high quality in their design and construction;
- b. Create a high quality landmark element and so contribute towards creating a memorable place.

From a traffic planning perspective, especially in the City Centre and Newcastle town centre, it may be desirable to locate multistorey car parks at the termination of transport corridors, where they meet the ring road. These are generally gateway locations and car parks in such locations would need to be very well designed in terms of their scale, massing and elevations.



Figure 5.14: Strategic gateway location to the southwest of the railway station - an opportunity for a landmark development



Figure 5.15: The Experian building in Nottingham is a good example of how contemporary architecture and lighting can help to establish high quality, dramatic landmark building in a gateway location

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T9 Within settlements, on local transport corridors between centres, design measures should be employed to reduce the impact and speed of vehicular traffic wherever possible, so as to improve the environment and promote walking and cycling.

The impact and speed of cars can be reduced by measures such as:

- Changes in surface, for example where there is a higher concentration of activity, such as a local shopping area, surface changes may help to improve the sense of place;
- Designing to minimise clutter, for instance by avoiding highway railings wherever possible; and
- Introducing an element of on-street car parking.

T10 New development should enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment along the local transport corridors within centres.

Within settlements, transport corridors must be pedestrian friendly so as to create positive living environments and encourage walkable neighbourhoods.

Also refer to: **Section 11.2 Successful streets and spaces**

5.6.1 Footways

The width of footways will need to vary to take account of pedestrian volumes and different activities along a route. However any such variations in footway width should be carefully considered and designed to avoid creating a fragmented building line and awkward corners.

Generally in areas with higher pedestrian flows, for example in areas with local shops, footways should be wider.

5.6.2 Crossing points

Opportunities for pedestrian crossing should be maximised to ensure that local transport corridors are not acting as a barrier between areas.

Pedestrian crossings should be:

- Wide and direct (i.e. straight, not dog-legged), and
- Relate to key routes and desire lines, taking into consideration the wider movement network.

5.6.3 Street trees

Street trees help to define streets and also to reduce the impact of cars on the environment.

Local tree officers should be consulted at an early stage where there are existing street trees close to a development proposal.

Key considerations for development include:

- Minimising any impact on any street trees; and
- Providing new street tree planting, where possible.

T11. Services, utilities and street lighting should be integrated into the design of the streetscape.

When designing new proposals or improvement schemes, early consideration must be given to services. Streets are the main locations for drainage and utilities and these can have a major impact on design and maintenance requirements.

Any opportunities to provide infrastructure for area wide energy systems should also be taken into account at an early stage so that public realm works do not preclude them at a future date.



Figure 5.16: Potsdam, Germany, well designed footways and street trees create a high quality pedestrian environment

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A number of connections have been identified where key approaches to centres are to be created or enhanced.

Improving the quality of transport corridors that also function as the main approaches into centres, including the City Centre, will help to create a more positive image. These present a first impression of a place to visitors and will have an impact on perceptions of the overall quality of a place.

5.7.1 Etruria Boulevard (Etruria Road)

The alignment of Etruria Road dates back to before 1898. At that time it already provided one of the key approach roads into the City Centre (then Hanley). At that time, it was tightly enclosed by Victorian terraces and factory walls. Over the decades, there have been many changes to the urban fabric and today Etruria Road is lined by a mixture of often poor quality low rise industrial warehouses, surface car parks and modern retail outlets. Most of these are set back from the street at varying distances, with little sense of enclosure of the street space, and presenting a poor quality approach to the City Centre.

Guiding design principles for enhancing Etruria Road to create a boulevard are:

Activity

- Encourage commercial business and employment uses and promote economic activity along the boulevard;
- Promote active ground floor uses to create vibrant and safe pedestrian routes; and
- Create a generous pedestrian friendly footway on either side of Etruria Road with trees or other soft landscape.

Development form

- Buildings should create street frontages and address the boulevard;

- A formal setting and rhythm of buildings should be achieved where possible;
- A consistent building line should be established, so that buildings are set back from the boulevard by a consistent distance.
- Building heights should be consistent and urban at around 3-4 storeys;
- Building lines should be as continuous as possible so as to enhance the formality of the boulevard;
- Within the City Centre ring road, 'shed' typologies should not be acceptable; and
- Car parking should not dominate the frontages of any development.

Detailed design

- Aim to design the public realm to restrict vehicular speeds; and
- Provide formal tree planting and planted verges to emphasise the importance of the route and to create a coherent character and enhanced pedestrian environment.
- Ensure high quality materials, lighting and street furniture are used in a consistent manner.

5.7.2 University Boulevard

New development along the University Boulevard corridor should enhance the land use mix, create a strong relationship with the street and contribute towards an enhanced public realm.

In its southern section, the University Boulevard follows the alignment of College Road, through Hanley Park and then via a new link to Hinde Street and Potteries Way. This new alignment creates a direct route from the station to the City Centre improving legibility and cutting travel time.



Figure 5.17: Etruria Road today (Etruria Boulevard opportunity)

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The alignment of College Road (formerly known as Victoria Road) dates back to before 1898. For large parts it is still lined with Victorian terrace housing and Hanley Park adds further to the character of this route. The street is generally well enclosed, with an established character and a mix of uses, including a variety of shops close to the station and university.

The boulevard is envisaged to be a public transport priority corridor. Buses or alternative future modes of transport as well as cyclists will have priority along this route.

The aims for this route are to:

- Create an excellent public transport link between the City Centre and the station; and
- Reduce the impact of the car and create a high quality public realm.

Guiding principles include:

Activity

- Encourage a mix of uses, including university and other education related uses, local shops and residential uses.

Development form

- Buildings should create street frontages and address the boulevard;
- Promote active ground floor uses to create vibrant and safe pedestrian routes; and
- Buildings should relate in scale to the existing built form, at around 2-4 storeys, with landmark buildings in key locations.

Detailed design

- Introduce formal tree planting to create a coherent character for the boulevard and to emphasise its importance;
- Design to encourage cycling;

- Provide wide pedestrian crossings points, ideally raised and with change of materials;
- Use high quality materials, for example setts, that reduce the impact of the road and consider changes of surface in key locations to enhance the sense of place, for example when passing through Hanley Park; and
- Integrate public art, for instance at key junctions.

5.7.3 Any future potential Burslem link

A new city street connection from the A500 to Burslem could potentially provide a more direct link, with better access, into Burslem and could potentially relieve parts of Middleport from heavy traffic.

Guiding principles for any such link would be:

- Ensure that the character of the route contributes to the differentiation in character between settlement and 'green setting' areas, so that either buildings or landscape define the edges of the route;
- Design as a city street with managed traffic speeds and provision for pedestrians;
- Promote high quality development at strategic and local gateways;
- Allow views to adjoining open spaces and the Trent and Mersey Canal; and
- Provide a segregated and continuous cycle lane alongside it.



Figure 5.18: Hanley Park either side of the existing College Road

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6.1 Introduction

The strategic urban design vision identifies key principles relating specifically to the canal and river network.

Refer to: [Section 2.5 High quality green space networks](#)

The Trent and Mersey Canal, including the Harecastle Tunnel between Kidsgrove and Middleport; the Caldon Canal and the Shropshire and Union Canal all run through the sub-region.

Canals are an important historic and cultural asset. They were of fundamental importance to the industrial development of the area and add significantly to the area's heritage and character. Their value is recognised in their designation as Conservation Areas.

Also refer to: [Section 2.6 Positive and memorable image](#)

Canals can act as a catalyst to development and regeneration, offering educational, tourism and recreational opportunities as well as heritage value.

However, in many parts of the conurbation, the waterways are not well integrated into the wider area. To some extent this is because industrial areas still line the canals, whereas in other cities, the appeal of watersides as places to live has already been exploited. Even where waterways run adjacent to residential areas, the houses tend to back onto the canals and river.

The canal network provides a ready-made traffic-free 'green' network within the conurbation and links into the surrounding countryside for recreational use and also has potential for transport, for instance commuting to work.

The image of the conurbation, when viewed from a boat, is generally positive. Development along the canal corridors should aim to retain this distinctive character at the same time as enhancing access and promoting pedestrian use and other activity along the network so that it feels safe to use.

Canals also offer a number of other opportunities for promoting sustainability, for instance to transport goods and material and for development to utilise the canal for heat exchange and water transfer subject to British Waterways agreement.

There are a number of rivers and brooks running through the conurbation. The most notable are the River Trent, which has its source just to the north on Biddulph Moor, and Lyme Brook, which runs through Newcastle. Others are: Ford Green Brook, Causley Brook, Scotia Brook, Fowlea Brook and Longton/ Cockster Brook.

Several are culverted for parts of their length and many have water quality issues resulting from pollution from industrial areas and overflows from sewer and/ or minewaters. The EU requirement to improve watercourse quality as a result of the Water Quality Directive will create opportunities to reconsider the forms that rivers take and the landscapes associated with them

In many places, consideration is now being given to renaturalising waterways, creating wetlands and recreating floodplains where they pass through open spaces to manage flood risk and to increase biodiversity. This has created opportunities for open spaces with more varied and interesting landscapes, which become more popular as a result.



Figure 6.1: Canals provide the opportunity for family recreation such as boating, walking and cycling, in a green setting, generally in-between the existing settlements



Figure 6.2: River Trent path, a route for walking and cycling through the landscapes in-between settlements in the conurbation

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6.2 Character of the canal and river network

The experience of travelling along canals in this area, for instance the Trent and Mersey Canal, is very 'green', with adjacent uses screened by dense landscape buffers.

Within this landscape, historic industrial buildings such as potteries, create clusters of development alongside the canal. These are informal groups of buildings, each with a variety of building heights, forms and set backs from the canal. In between these clusters of development, the canal is generally lined by mature landscape.

This character is locally distinctive and creates a positive impression that is worth retaining. By contrast, in many cities, canals have a strongly urban, industrial character, with warehouses located at the edge of the towpath, creating a high degree of enclosure.

CR1 The form and character of development along the canals and rivers should generally retain and reflect the 'green' or 'urban' character typically found today.



Figure 6.3: In-between settlements, edges are generally lined with planting, creating a 'green' character. This is interrupted in key locations by development clusters



Figure 6.4: Typical historic industrial development cluster in area with 'green' character, an assembly of forms with varying building heights, building line and roof forms











Figure 6.5: Potential development in areas of urban character, with a strong building line along the canal frontage

Focus based around water related activities, i.e. canal boats

Edges of the canal are densely planted, screening development

Key

-  Area with urban character, within existing settlements
-  Area with 'green' character, in between settlements
-  Existing hub of canal-side activity
-  Key potential hubs of canal-side activity - destinations
-  Opportunity for development cluster in 'green' setting (indicative locations)
-  Opportunity to strengthen development edge in relation to 'green' setting
-  Street links across canal/ river
-  Edge of existing settlement

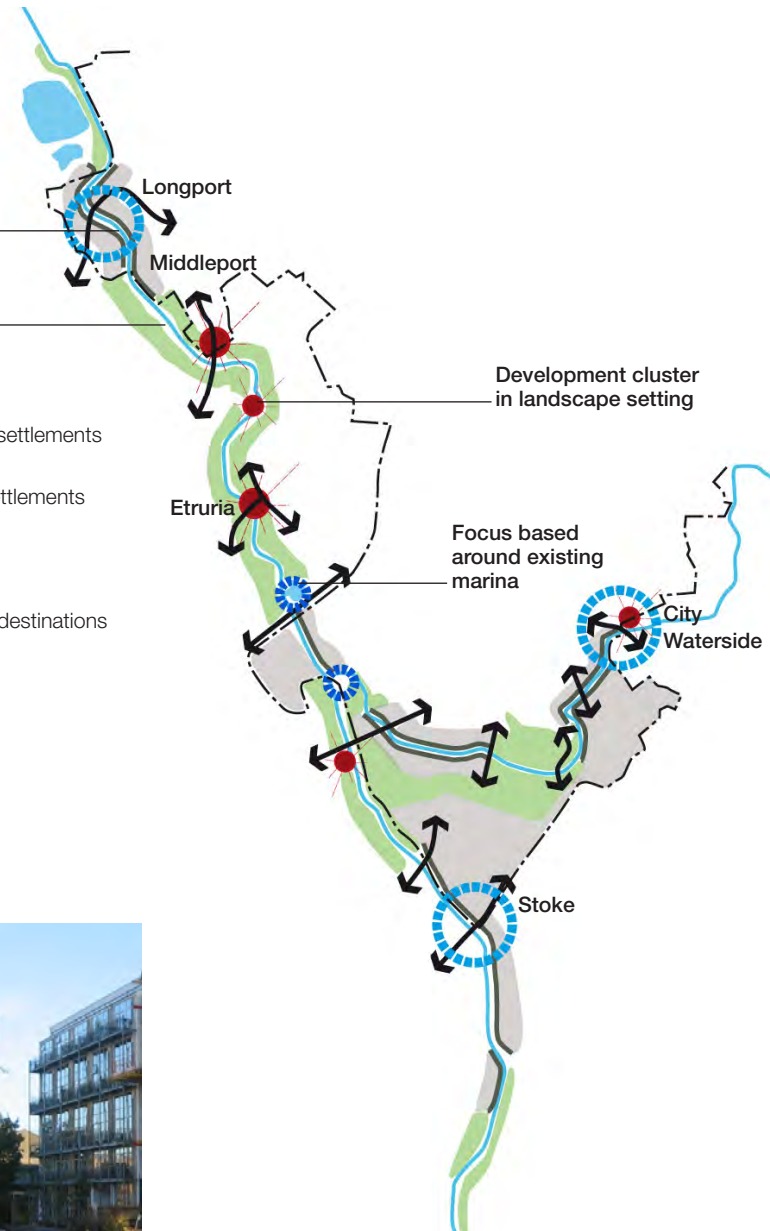


Figure 6.6: Diagram showing opportunities to create key waterfront destinations in relation to areas with 'green' and urban character

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6.2.1 Areas with a 'green' character

CR2 Development should take the form of distinct clusters, informally arranged and set in landscapes, in line with the general guidance and typical existing characteristics. Development that takes the form of a continuous building frontage, creating a high degree of enclosure, would be inappropriate in areas with a 'green' character.

The following detailed principles apply:

Activity

- Make connections to open spaces, parks and play areas;
- Towpaths and other pedestrian and cycle routes alongside waterways should be clearly recognisable as recreational routes.

Building form / massing

- Buildings should vary in their alignment with some being set back creating spaces along the waters edge, others being set at the edge of the canal;
- The proportions, height and massing of buildings should reflect the character of historic industrial development. i.e. development should be clustered with varying building heights and building lines;
- Generally, a similar scale to former industrial clusters, up to an equivalent of 4 storeys, is appropriate for new development.

Architecture

The architecture should be simple and should respond to the industrial canal side character of existing buildings without mimicking the appearance of the historic fabric.

Views/topography

- The visual impact of proposed new clusters of development must be considered, with the aim being to create high quality new focal points in appropriate locations rather than to have no impact on views at all;
- Consider views towards a proposed development from the water, not only towards it.

Landscape

Within these areas, the 'green' corridor nature of the canal should be enhanced or extended into the adjoining landscape associated with development. Security should be addressed through careful landscape design to ensure that the desired character is created. Considerations include:

- More naturalistic planting, to help blend the sinuous canal alignment with the softer topography of adjacent open spaces;
- Careful balancing of expansive and enclosed sections of the canal, to provide surprise and interest along the route;
- Use of large-scale wildflower planting, or meadows with minimal management, in preference to municipal mown grass or shrubbery;
- Provision of a strong landscape buffer, where the form of development is not part of a cluster;
- Where open spaces line the waterways views to the canal should be retained/created and access to the towpath encouraged; and
- Any canal-side vegetation should be designed to enhance biodiversity, in particular through the use of local species.

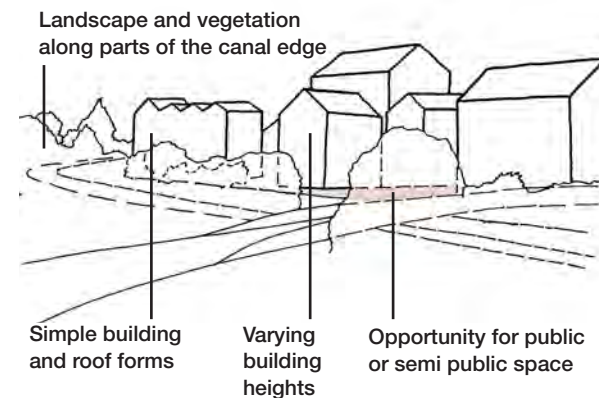
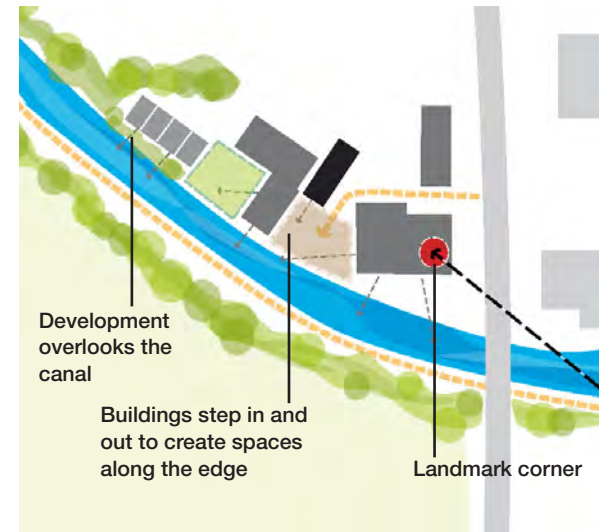


Figure 6.7: Diagram and illustration showing an appropriate character for development in areas with a 'green' character

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6.2.2 Settlements, areas with an 'urban' character

CR3 In settlements, development should enclose and, ideally, front onto canals and rivers, creating a more urban form and encouraging activity and animation along the waters edge.

The following detailed principles apply:

Activity

- Promote a mix of uses and activity, including industrial, residential and public uses;
- Especially in the locations identified as destinations in section 6.2 above, development should maximise the opportunity for a fine grained mix of uses.

Creating a safe environment

- In settlements, towpaths are likely to be an integral part of the pedestrian and cycle network. Safety and passive surveillance along these routes should be maximised where possible by:
 - Providing access roads that include the towpath as an integral part of the scheme.;
 - Avoid lengths of fencing and parking areas.
 - Avoid dense planting and screening that obscures eye-level views;
 - Avoiding confinement and places to hide: there should be visibility around corners and to onward destinations where possible and blind spots should be avoided;
- Permeability and boundary treatments: blank walls or building elevations should be avoided;
- The continued and effective management of canal-side vegetation;
- Lighting to access points, bridges and on routes where usage is high.

Built form and massing

- Respond to the townscape and create relationships to the waterside that continue to promote the human scale of the waterways;
- Consider the proportions, height and massing of buildings in relation to the distance from the water as well as those of existing waterside structures;
- Buildings should positively address the waterway in the form of gardens or balconies.

Architecture

- The architecture should be simple and in character with the industrial canal side character. Contemporary development is encouraged and proposals that mimic the look of the historic fabric are not appropriate.

Views/ topography

- Landmark corners/buildings should be encouraged in appropriate locations. For pedestrians and cyclists travelling on the towpath, buildings provide important landmarks to identify places and routes;
- Consider views 'outwards' from the waterways, not just into the water from the edges.

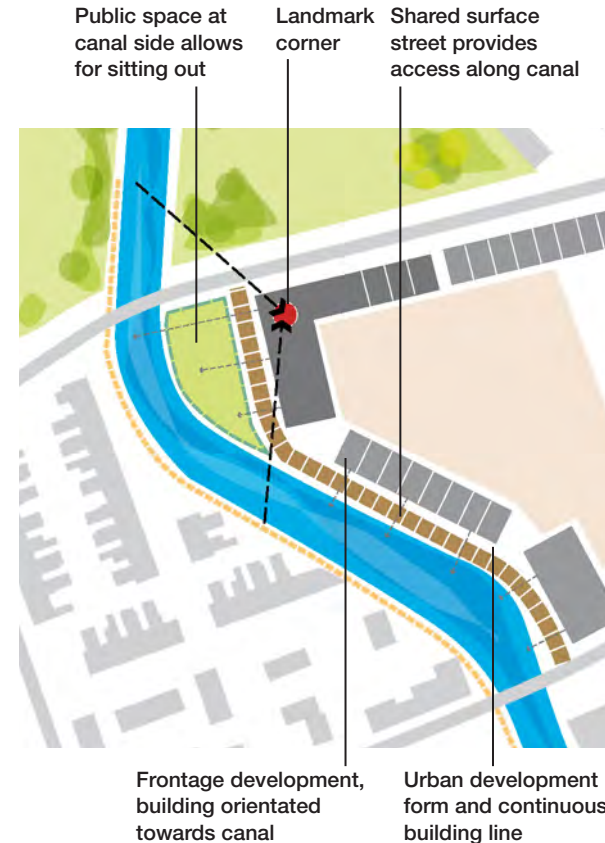


Figure 6.8: Diagram showing an appropriate layout for development in settlements where there is an urban character

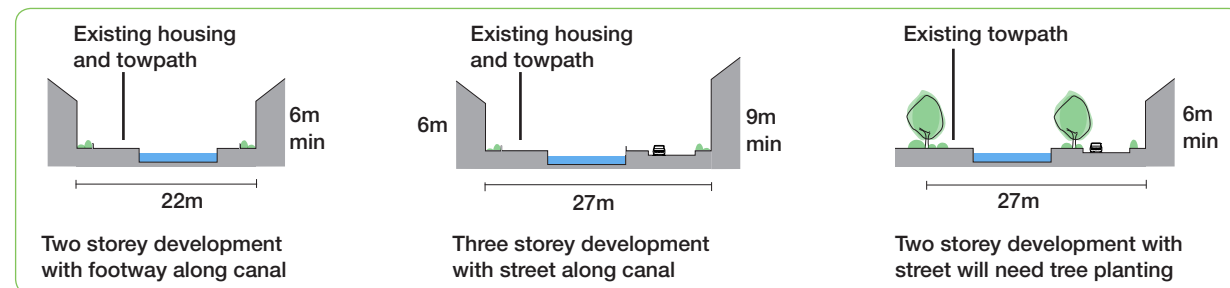


Figure 6.9: Sections showing scale of development required to create an urban character on canal side

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6.3 Creating destinations

Development alongside canals is an opportunity to improve the environment for the whole of the conurbation and to create waterfront destinations that appeal to land and water based tourists and local people.

CR4 Development proposals for waterfront destinations should be designed to have a sense of place based upon a mix of uses that supports pedestrian and boat based activity, high quality public spaces and built form.

The strategic urban design vision defines three particular opportunities for creating hubs of activity:

6.3.1 Longport and Middleport

This area has an urban character and is one of the few places where development and industrial activity line the canal. The existing wharf and active pottery add to the sense of activity and animation. This positive character could be exploited by encouraging a mix of uses along the canal side.

A derelict pottery site provides a prime opportunity for this type of development. Its historic buildings could provide accommodation for such activities. Any redevelopment of these sites should:

- Provide a destination and landmark development, retaining and reusing historic structures;
- Create public spaces that are accessible from the canal side as well as the street; and
- Encourage mixed use ground floor activities.

6.3.2 Festival Park marina

The marina, adjacent pub and leisure centre already create a destination. The aim should be to reinforce it and enhance its quality, to create a vibrant hub of activity, by encouraging supporting uses that attract people to the area with high quality built form and public realm.

6.3.3 Stoke-on-Trent station

Currently the canal in this location is of little interest, being enclosed on both sides by unattractive walls. However there is a significant opportunity to enhance the appeal of the canal as part of a wider strategy to create access to the station from the south west and to orientate it towards the centre of Stoke.

Swift House, a former bonded warehouse, is a locally listed building which does not exploit its location in relation to either the canal or station. It is a location where a high quality redevelopment could create a distinct landmark for Stoke and for the conurbation as a whole.

Any development on the site between the canal and the station should aim to:

- Reinstate and make accessible the locally listed lower floors of the building;
- Provide access to and from the canal;
- Provide active uses at lower levels; and
- Provide opportunities for boats to moor.

6.3.4 City Waterside

The canal-side is to be developed for residential uses. A focal point on the canal will animate the frontages and provide a concentration of non-residential uses.

A marina may also be suitable in this location, helping to diversify the mix of uses, increasing levels of activity and supporting the viability of non-residential uses.

There are a number of other, smaller scale, existing hubs of activity along the waterside and there is potential to identify future mid-points for waterside activity nodes, if the opportunity arises.



Figure 6.10: Middleport - former pottery buildings in this area present a potential opportunity to create a canal-side destination that draws visitors and local people to enjoy the waterfront location



Figure 6.11: Merton Abbey Mills, London, a visitor destination based on a complex of industrial buildings and a watermill on the River Wandle. There is a mix of uses, including restaurants, bars, a small theatre, shops and workshops and weekend markets, which draw people to enjoy the waterfront location

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6.4 General guidance

CR5 Development along the canal network must respect its heritage and historical significance. It should retain and conserve the range of buildings and structures associated with their industrial heritage. New development must be designed and built to the highest quality, so as to contribute to the heritage of the future.

Built structures such as locks, weirs, stone walls or kerbs, bridges, aqueducts and tunnels are an important part of the overall heritage value. The industrial buildings and structures associated with them and also the housing for the workforce all contribute to the heritage of the canal network.

CR6 Waterside development proposals should protect and enhance the ecological value of the waterway corridor where possible, for example by introducing appropriate planting, re-naturalising edges and ensuring that water doesn't get polluted during construction or afterwards.

The narrow strip of land occupied by these waterways, canals and rivers contains a wide range of wildlife habitats including slow flowing freshwater in the canal channel, emergent fringing vegetation, towpath grasslands, hedgerows, woodland and scrub, and reed-beds. The canals and rivers themselves provide an important link to adjacent habitats.

In some places the natural eco-system has been reduced as canals and rivers have been forced in by concrete walls. Often environments with higher ecological value are also easier and cheaper to maintain than areas that are well manicured and managed.

Sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS) can help to alleviate the stress of storm water flows on canals and other waterways.

CR7 Development proposals alongside the canal and river network should ensure that the waterside is accessible to members of the public, and should allow for a fully connected up network to be created in the future.

Where development proposals adjoin existing routes along the waterway network, such as the towpath, new safe and attractive public access points should be provided where they do not exist within the local area already.

Detailed considerations should include:

- Plenty of access points along route to ensure that it is convenient to use.
- The width of the towpath and access routes: ensure there is sufficient width for all users.
- Avoiding industrial boundary treatments, such as steel palisade or concrete panel fencing.
- Generally retaining and incorporating natural stone kerbs where they exist, with resin bonded gravel footpaths, with the exception of hubs of activity where a more creative and contemporary approach to the design of the canal side may be appropriate.



Figure 6.12: Brindley Place, Birmingham, where the canal side has become a real focus of activity



Figure 6.13: Swimming planters create the opportunity to re-naturalise the river/canal edge, enhancing both its appearance and biodiversity



Figure 6.14: Etruria Industrial Museum - a traditional approach to the canal side and towpath

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7.1 Introduction

Residential development falls within one of the themes identified for the strategic urban design vision.

Refer to: [Section 2.3 High quality places for living and working](#)

There are key principles in other themes that specifically relate to residential. In particular, refer to:

[Section 2.4 Better quality connections](#)

[Section 2.5 High quality green space networks](#)

[Section 2.6 Positive and memorable image](#)

Well designed residential areas are a key strand of the RENEW strategy, to create more sustainable communities and to support the renewal of the housing market, and also as one of the prerequisites for the success of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership Business Plan.

The guidance in this section applies to all types of residential environments, including care homes and student accommodation as well as houses and flats.

7.2 Integrating into the context

It is important that living environments should be integrated into their surroundings, to make sure there is good accessibility between different parts of a place, and also to help reinforce a positive identity for the area.

This needs to be based upon an appraisal of the site in its surroundings to ensure that development:

- Relates well to existing facilities;
- Connects to the surrounding context; and
- Responds positively to the site/ surroundings.

Refer to: [Section 3.6 Appraising the context](#)

The conurbation has a fragmented and confusing street network. In parts of the area, the historic settlement pattern is one of residential areas built to serve industries that no longer exist, with a legacy of derelict sites and insular development pockets that act as barriers to movement. Into this, major new roads have been introduced, increasing severance further.

In other parts of the area, residential areas built to house people displaced by slum clearance are remote from centres, employment and other facilities.

R1 New housing must be well sited so that centres, jobs, local facilities such as shops, schools, health provision, social care services and recreation, including open spaces, are accessible.

Designers must ensure that:

- The siting and layout of a development encourages access to a centre and/ or local facilities by means other than by car.
- The form and scale of development reflects its proximity to local facilities and infrastructure, i.e. providing a more urban form and scale close to existing centres or transport corridors with good public transport accessibility.

R2 New development must be well connected to provide direct and convenient links and routes into the surrounding area.

Providing direct and attractive connections between housing, places of interest and facilities helps to create a more convenient and inclusive place.



Figure 7.1: The conurbation has good examples of housing from the early 20th century



Figure 7.2: A distinctive local characteristic - Victorian terraces with end buildings that 'turn the corner'



Figure 7.3: Mill Rise care home and health centre, set around a public space - an example of good urban design today

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The layout of development should:

- a. Connect into existing routes around the site;
- b. Ensure that any new pedestrian routes connect to the facilities and places that people wish to visit and incorporate any existing or potential desire lines that cross the site;
- c. Accommodate the needs of different users, for instance connections may include some pedestrian and cycle only paths and spaces.

R3 New housing must relate well to its surroundings. It should not ignore the existing environment but should respond to and enhance it, exploiting existing site characteristics, such as mature trees, existing buildings or long views and incorporating them into the proposal.

The context appraisal in the Design and Access statement should include a statement about the existing character of the area and how it is relevant to the proposals.

Refer to: [Section 3.2 Design and access statements](#)

Where site characteristics are incorporated into new housing, they help to create a memorable and distinctive place.

In many parts of the conurbation, open spaces and streets are lined by rear elevations, close boarded fences and service areas. This leads to an unsafe and unattractive environment. New housing should address and help to animate the public edges of the site, to help to create a sense of security.

The characteristics of the site may also offer potential for using environmental technologies.

Designers should make sure that development:

- a. Exploits existing site features and characteristics;
- b. Helps to enhance the character of the surrounding area;
- c. Faces outwards wherever possible, to address its surrounding rather than turning its back on the wider area;
- d. Incorporates environmental strategies for drainage and energy that make the most of the potential of the site and surrounding features.

The contextual appraisal should help to identify an appropriate sense of place for the new development. In some places, the approach might be to change or to improve the character of the area, for instance, creating a sense of focus by means of a more urban form of development, or introducing more variety or diversity with new housing types or forms. In others, it might be to relate sensitively to a strong existing character, by following a similar scale and form of development.

7.3 Distinctive sense of place

The character of a place is influenced not only by what buildings look like and the mix of uses within them, but also the way in which the layout and design of buildings and spaces work together in relation to their context, to create townscape. The design of the public realm of streets and spaces, helps to create a memorable place that people can easily find their way around. The use of materials and landscape also helps to create a sense of local character.



Figure 7.4: Lock 38, new housing which exploits the site's historic features, converting the historic factory frontage for housing with linked new build to define the street space



Figure 7.5: Lock 38 also retains historic bottle kilns on the canal frontage and makes them the focus of views from the street through the development

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R4 New housing must create a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces that contributes to the legibility of the area.

Key considerations are:

- The street width must be designed to accommodate the types of movement and other activities that are intended to take place in the space.
- Landscape should be included within the street.
- Opportunities for on-street car parking should be designed into the development where possible, so that there are places for visitors to park.
- Providing sufficient distance between the fronts of houses to provide adequate daylight and sunlight to internal spaces. This will vary according to the orientation of the street and the height of the proposed buildings, and should be considered specifically in relation to each site.
- Ensuring there is sufficient distance to provide residents with privacy whilst inside the house. This will vary according to the size and position of windows and any on-street landscape.

Creating a hierarchy of different road types makes places more distinctive, which helps people to find them more recognisable. The Urban Design Compendium sets out a hierarchy of typical road types. For residential developments the following are likely to be relevant:

- Main road (routes providing connections across the city);
- Avenue or Boulevard (roads with formal generous landscaping);
- Residential Street (designed to encourage traffic calming);
- Mews/ shared surface road (shared space for parking and other uses).

Developers will be expected to create a hierarchy of different street types for new housing, not necessarily based on the above list, that works with the overall design approach to character. Each development is different, so this guide cannot set out prescriptive details of how a hierarchy of streets should be designed.

Varying the width of streets helps to define where they stand in the overall hierarchy.

It is important not only to create connections into the surrounding area but also within the site itself. Wherever possible a connected layout of streets should form the basis for new housing layouts. Provision should be made for bus routes or stops where appropriate.

The Manual for Streets provides detailed guidance on street design, and designers should consult it in addition to this Guide.

Figure 7.6: Sadler's Park, Burslem, the character of different streets varies, with buildings that relate to the historic character of industrial buildings (to the left) and a new more domestic character (to the right). There is a visual link through to the Town Hall at the heart of the centre of Burslem



Figure 7.7: Sadler's Park, Burslem, which has a well connected street network that links into the town centre and other existing local streets. It is based upon the historic street pattern but has transformed parts of it into pedestrian and cycle routes through small open spaces

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R5 Buildings must define the street space with a coherent building line that relates to existing building lines where they form a positive characteristic of the area. Infill development should generally follow the existing building line.

Designers must consider how continuous the building line should be and whether to continue an existing local pattern or whether new housing can add richness to the character of the area.

Street frontages are created by buildings facing onto a street, activated by windows and front doors overlooking the public realm.

Streets with a distinct character display a consistent approach to the building line.

Changes in building line can create a more formal or informal character; they can also define strongly linear streets and more static places such as squares.

The more continuous a building frontage is the more urban in character it feels i.e. a street of terraced houses is more urban than a street of detached houses.

There is generally a preference for continuous building frontages as these are more economic in terms of land-take, resources and energy efficiency.

Where a frontage is not continuous there is an opportunity for planting to soften the street scene

and/ or to accommodate parking between the buildings, while walls, garages and outbuildings can help to maintain continuity where there is no frontage.

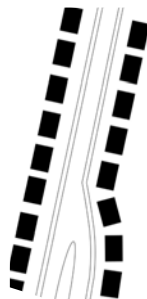
Key considerations are:

- Provide, where possible, a continuous street frontage i.e. an unbroken building line;
- Provide frontages on both streets in corner situations so that proposals ‘turn the corner’;
- Where frontages are not continuous, the rhythm of buildings and gaps must be designed with care. Note that an urban form cannot be created simply by placing detached houses very close together.

Figure 7.8: Buildings of a similar height can be arranged to create streets with different character, depending upon such factors as:

- the position of the street in the street hierarchy, which may influence its width (R4)
- the position and continuity of the building line (R5);
- the relationship of the building height to the width of the space (R6);
- the treatment of the space between the building line and the street, the front garden (R7) and;
- the design of the street space itself, the public realm (R8).

The designer must understand the context and demonstrate that the choices made are appropriate to the site and its location. These examples are typical of the character of different streets today.



- Residential street with suburban character;
- Regularly spaced two storey semi-detached houses, with consistent building line;
- Front gardens with some landscape although in many cases now used for parking, with consistent use of low walls as boundary treatment - allows overlooking of street from house;
- Road width allows on-street parking on one side only, with footways separated by grass verge and street tree planting, however little to keep traffic speeds low.

- Residential street with urban character;
- Terraced houses with consistent building line, on one side directly at back of footway;
- Small, slightly raised front areas on one side of street, with consistent use of low boundary walls, so allowing overlooking of street; on other side no distance for privacy, no means of refuse storage;
- Road width allows on-street parking on both sides, with narrow footways, no soft landscape in street, however little to keep vehicle speeds low.

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R6 Streets and spaces must be defined and enclosed by buildings. Where there is good reason not to do so, for instance to relate to an existing character, then the space should be enclosed by soft landscape.

Enclosure is the relationship between the width of the street or other public space and the height of the buildings around it. It has a significant impact on the character of that street.

Two storey dwellings enclosing a narrow mews street will create a very different character from the same buildings along a wide tree-lined boulevard. Taller buildings, for instance three storey town houses, will create a more enclosed, or contained street space than lower buildings, such as two storey terraced houses.

Successful urban places are generally characterised by well enclosed spaces. Places in urban areas with few, or very low, buildings around them often feel very open or sometimes bleak.

The distance that dwellings are set back from the street also affects the enclosure of the street space.

Refer to: **Section 5.5.1 In existing settlements**

Landscape, in particular tree planting, can also create a sense of enclosure for a space, either in combination with buildings or in its own right.

Key considerations are:

- The height of the building should create a degree of enclosure that responds to the size of the space and to the wider context.
- In more suburban and rural locations, landscape should be used to contribute towards the enclosure of spaces.

R7 The treatment of the space between the building line and the street must contribute to the character of the development.

Buildings right at the back edge of the footway with no front garden result in a very strong sense of enclosure and an 'urban' feel to the street; whereas buildings set back behind large, green front gardens will enclose the street less strongly and have a softer, more suburban or rural character.

In addition to the building line, the boundary treatment itself will affect character. Fences, walls, hedges, railings or - alternatively - no boundary, all have a significant effect on character and should be designed in as part of the overall scheme.

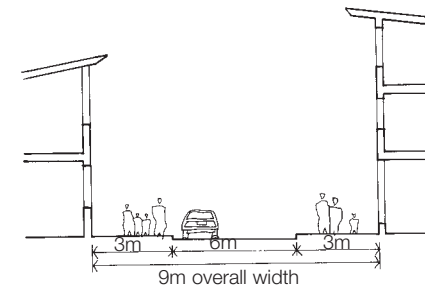
- Boundary treatments may be used to strengthen the sense of continuity of a frontage provided that they have a sense of permanence, for instance, garden walls rather than close boarded fences.
- For a given street or space, the boundaries should generally be consistent in alignment and treatment.
- The design of the front boundary and any front garden or privacy strip should provide opportunities for planting and for other forms of 'personalisation'.

R8 Public realm is an important element in creating a sense of place. Open spaces, soft landscape, materials and street furniture should be used to support the distinctive character of streets and should be carefully considered to support the overall design concept.

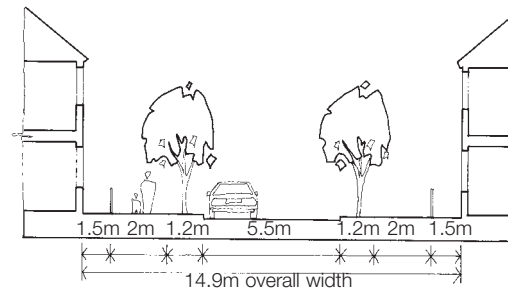
The public realm ties together new development and provides a focus and sense of place for a new community. Refer to: **Section 11.2 Successful streets and spaces**

The Manual for Streets provides detailed guidance on street design, and designers should consult this in addition to this Guide.

High Street



Principal Street



Street

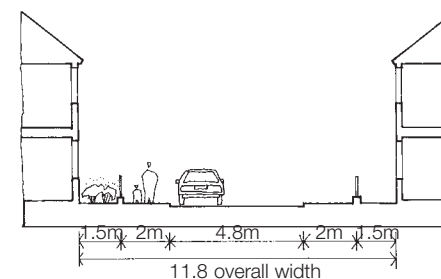


Figure 7.9: This example of a street hierarchy in a new urban village in Lightmoor Telford, shows how the street width and design of elements within it, such as front gardens or privacy strips, width of footway, tree planting and carriageway width can all contribute to creating a variety of character, even with similar building heights

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Key considerations are:

- Adopt a consistent approach to the use of street furniture - it should reflect the identity of the locality.
- Use materials that reflect the locality and relate to those being employed for the buildings.
- Incorporate any existing natural features, such as streams, hills, trees or wildlife habitats into the landscape for the development.
- Incorporate local species into the landscape.

7.4 Managing parking and traffic

Recent years have seen a change in thinking about parking, moving away from fixed standards of allocated parking spaces to a more flexible approach. The Car Parking guidance published by English Partnerships (EP) encourages thinking about 'how' rather than 'how much'.

Current guidance suggests avoiding a large number of allocated parking spaces. Research has shown that the more spaces you allocate the more you have to provide. Shared spaces in public or communal areas are more practical and suitable for today's needs.

Car parking is an important aspect of any housing scheme and how it is dealt with can make a big difference to the perceived environmental quality and townscape.

On-street parking provides convenient parking for visitors at the front of dwellings. It can add activity and animation to the street scene, especially where it is formed by a simple widening of the road, or where it is an integral part of a homezone. It also helps to reduce traffic speeds.

R9 A good residential layout generally incorporates a variety of parking solutions. The design principles discussed below should be

followed in considering how to accommodate parking within new development.

7.4.1 Parking within the curtilage of a property

Where parking and garages are accommodated in front of the main building line in front forecourts/ gardens, this can result in cars and/or garages dominating the views both along the street and from the houses themselves.

Key considerations are:

- Avoid parking within front gardens.
- Set garages or car ports behind the building line.
- Consider tandem parking (see diagram here) as an alternative to parking cars side-by-side.

7.4.2 Integral garages

Accommodating well-designed integral parking can help to accommodate the car, while also creating a positive street scene, allowing passive surveillance and enabling the design of continuous frontages.

Key considerations are:

- In housing with an urban character, garages integrated into the building envelope may be required.
- The potential for accommodating residential space and/ or balconies above garages should be explored.
- Where houses with integral garages are proposed, the houses should be wide enough to also provide a habitable room at ground level fronting the street, or else the first floor will need to be designed to help animate and overlook the street.

7.4.3 Basement or undercroft parking

Basement or undercroft parking is usually provided for flats. It places the cars out of sight under the building or in a semi-basement under a raised ground floor level.



Figure 7.10: The degree of spaciousness and formality of the street, together with the building line, creates different character

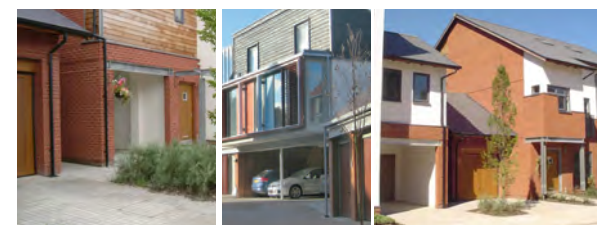
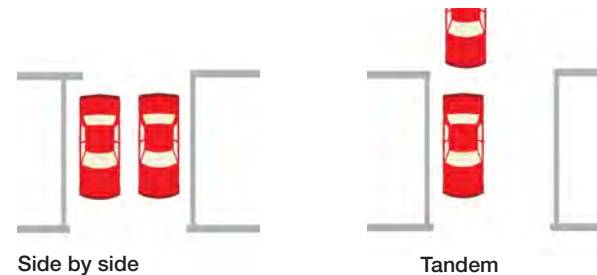


Figure 7.11: A variety of parking solutions for integral garages or car ports

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This allows an urban street scene to be created with occupied ground floor frontages.

Key considerations are:

- The ground floor of accommodation must still relate to street level. A raised ground floor can provide a degree of privacy for residents while still overlooking the street.
- If the undercroft creates a low podium, then design it to have a positive purpose, for instance with raised terraces for dwellings.
- Locate and design the access with care, so that it does not become an intrusive element in the street scene.

7.4.4 Flat over Garages (FOG)

Also referred to as chauffeur units, FOGs are blocks of garages grouped together with a flat above, with its own ground level front door onto the public realm.

Key considerations are:

- Make sure that the ground floor parking and the upper storeys will work together, for instance designing in large windows and balconies at first floor level to help provide overlooking and animate the street.

7.4.5 On-street parking

R10 Parking should be designed to integrate discreetly into a diverse and attractive street environment, rather than dominating it.

Dealing with on-street parking is crucial to creating an attractive, functional and comfortable street environment. Too often, little thought is given as to how to integrate the parking into the overall street scene in a subtle way.

The landscape scheme must include any on-street parking from the outset, and should use planting,

street furniture, and other elements to ensure that the parking does not dominate the street scene.

Key considerations are:

- Parking bays should be designed as an integral part of the street;
- Planting, of a suitable type and scale, should be employed to soften the visual impact of cars whilst not impeding visibility for drivers.

7.4.6 Traffic calming and homezones

R11 In residential areas streets should be designed as places to live as much as for vehicles to move.

Traffic speeds can be reduced through a variety of different integral design measures and the overall layout of development itself, rather than being reliant on traditional measures such as speed bumps. Solutions should be imaginative and contribute to the feel of the street as a place for people as much as the car.

Key considerations are:

- Reduce traffic speeds through the design and management of streets and spaces, which can be achieved using either the building line or within the street space itself - vehicle speeds should be kept to 20mph or below.
- Design traffic calming measures as an integral element of the street scene rather than introducing the standard elements that are used to retrofit existing streets.
- Where possible design residential streets as homezones.
- Where streets cannot be used as through routes for traffic at present i.e. due to highway restrictions or due to a forthcoming development site, design them to allow for connections to be introduced at a future date.

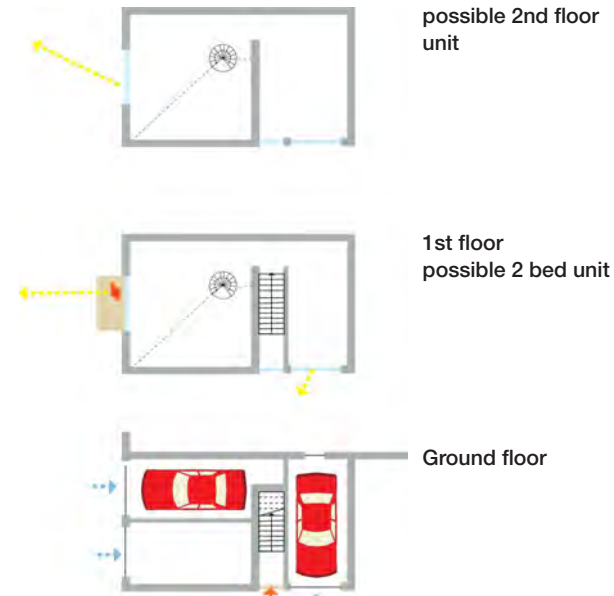


Figure 7.12: Illustration showing one option of how flats could be incorporated above garages but avoiding the entrance being dominated by a long run of garage doors



Figure 7.13: Changes of surface material, combined with a narrowing of the street space and tree planting, provide visual interest and help to keep traffic speeds low in this example of a homezone

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7.4.7 Courtyard parking

Courtyards must be clearly designed to be either public or private. Generally a public courtyard is enclosed by residential frontages, is easily accessible and works as a coherent, public space. Private courtyards are generally suitable for flatted development and a smaller number of units.

Key design principles:

- The space should allow for a variety of functions, not only car parking;
- The space should be overlooked and defined by fronts of dwellings;
- Good quality materials should be used avoiding wall-to-wall tarmac;
- Landscape should be used to soften the visual impact of cars and to structure the space;
- Parked cars should be organised in small groups;
- The space is designed to look good with and without cars;
- They should be meaningful spaces in their own right and an attractive amenity for residents;
- Entrances should be designed to give a feeling of entering private space. They also may be gated or have access otherwise restricted;
- Boundaries should be robust and close boarded fences should be avoided.

7.5 Variation in character

If new housing development is to create a sense of place in response to the local context, then it needs to be designed to have a character specific to that location.

R12 Residential development should be designed to contribute towards improving the character and quality of the area.

Proposals will be required to demonstrate the appropriateness of their approach in each case.

Development in or on the edge of existing settlements should respond to the established urban or suburban character where this exists already and has definite value. Where there is no established urban or suburban character, new development should demonstrate that it is creating a new urban character that is appropriate to the area.

Development that is in-between existing settlements should contribute to establishing a positive 'green' character and improving the quality of the environment.

The strategic urban design opportunity is to strengthen the character and improve the quality of the environment in the sub-region, in particular in those areas that are in-between or on the edges of existing settlements, which can be described as the setting for those settlements.

The aim is to create a more coherent pattern that reinforces the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres, as this is one of the most distinctive features of the sub-region.

In existing settlements, the character of new residential development should respond to any established positive townscape character of definite value. Where there is no such character, the character of new development should generally be urban, with the form and scale of development varying according to whether:

- It is located within the centres or the walkable area around them (800m); or
- Elsewhere in existing settlements;

Where residential development is proposed in between settlements, then it should be designed carefully to contribute towards creating a high quality environment with an appropriate 'green'



Figure 7.14: Courtyards for parking can be designed to be attractive spaces



Figure 7.15: Potsdam, Germany, this example of a courtyard space within a block of housing contains parking at ground floor level, with residents' private deck areas above and a communal garden area in the centre

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character and, where relevant, towards creating the strategic green space network.

Refer to: [Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)

[Section 2.5 High Quality green space networks](#)

R13 The assessment of an appropriate site density must be design-led and should consider massing, height and bulk as well as density. Where a scheme is well related to the local character (scale, bulk and massing) it may locally exceed recommended area-wide densities, subject to other planning issues.

As density increases, the care with which a scheme is designed must increase, to make sure that dwellings will provide a good quality of life for residents, by providing adequate space, lighting, amenity space and outlook (see also sections 7.6 and 7.7).

Density generally describes how many dwellings occupy a defined area of land. This measurement, although widely used, can be misleading and may not coincide with general perceptions or reflect the existing character appropriately.

The two places illustrated in figure 7.17 show how different types of housing can be built at the same density with very different results in terms of the form of development.

Variations in character are often created by varying the densities locally within a larger area in response to the appraisal of the site in its context. This approach, where it is justified by a contextual appraisal and strong design concept, should be supported, rather than expecting schemes to reach a uniform density in all parts.

In these circumstances, it will be necessary to demonstrate that:

- a. The scale, bulk and massing relates well to that

of surrounding buildings;

- b. There is an urban design justification for the scale being greater than the surroundings, for example, it is a gateway to a major centre or provides a landmark in a prominent location;
- c. Where density locally exceeds normal standards, a high quality living environment will still be created i.e. in terms of amenity space provision, daylight penetration, overlooking etc;
- d. The impacts upon surrounding buildings and spaces are reasonable in terms of sunlight/day-lighting, privacy and overlooking, and microclimate.

R14 Developments must provide an appropriate balance of variety and consistency, for example by relating groups of buildings to common themes, such as building and/or eaves lines, rhythms, materials, or any combination of them.

Creating a sense of place requires an appropriate level of variety. Too much variety and any sense of overall identity is lost. Too little variety and a place becomes monotonous. Existing places can provide good examples of the right balance between variety and consistency.

Often new housing developments contain a great deal of variety at the level of house types, with many different materials, colours, and 'features', such as different window types and sizes and materials used at random. This means that there is little consistency at the level of streets or areas, which makes it difficult to identify a particular street or to find your way around.

Key considerations are:

- a. Design with the group or street scene in mind as well as the individual building.
- b. Use design decisions relating to elements such as materials, building and roof forms and lines to create areas of identifiable character.



Figure 7.16: Example of Amsterdam, individual buildings vary, but a consistent character is achieved as all use the same material, similar window proportions have a vertical rhythm



Figure 7.17: London, developments of a similar density may have very different characters, for instance Oldfield Road 80 dph (left) and Iroko 74 dph (right)



Figure 7.18: Too much variety within a street means that all streets are likely to look the same

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A consistent approach to the public realm, in terms of materials and details, is generally effective in helping to create a coherent identity for an area. This can then accommodate a variety of architecture within this consistent framework.

The following examples show how density, streets, housing typologies and parking can be brought together in different ways to create a variety of character.

7.5.1 Urban location (predominately flats or town houses)

Especially in, or close to, centres and in areas that are close to public transport and facilities, a more urban form of development with a higher proportion of flats is appropriate.

Terraced housing, particularly town housing, is also urban in form. Semi-detached and detached housing is generally not appropriate, as these forms are more suburban in character.

Key design principles:

- Main entrances should be clearly identifiable as such, accessible from the street and safe.
- Communal areas should be accessible, well lit and welcoming, as this encourages 'ownership' by occupiers;
- The number of stair cores should be maximised to animate the street frontage and avoid long internal access corridors;
- Consider privacy and security of ground floor dwellings without compromising appearance. Privacy may be achieved by, for example raising

the ground floor (providing careful consideration is given to the Building Regulations Part M) or providing a buffer between windows and the pavement. Single aspect residential units facing the street are not appropriate at ground floor level;

- Bins and cycle storage need to be carefully designed in, to provide safe and convenient access;
- All units should have private open space, either in the form of gardens or balconies;
- Balconies should be of a usable size, allowing for a table and chairs, and positioned to maximise views and sunlight and minimise impact from noise sources;
- A mix of unit and tenure types should be provided.

Example 1: Iroko, London

- Mixture of maisonettes and terrace houses;
- Corner locations emphasised with ground floor retail units;
- Communal garden and play space and private space in the form of balconies and gardens;
- Parking on street frontage;
- High proportion of family houses (up to six bedrooms) at relatively high densities;
- Affordable housing.

Haworth Tompkins Architects and
Coin Street Community Builders



On-street parking and tree planting along smaller side street

Retail units are located in strategic corner locations

Secure patios create entrance area to each ground floor flat

Clearly articulated entrances

Balconies provide private space for upper units



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7.5.2 Urban infill block - mixed use

In centres and along local transport corridors mixed use development is encouraged, subject to policy. If non-residential ground floor uses do not seem feasible at the time of a planning application, then buildings should be designed to be flexible, for example by raising floor to ceiling heights to 3.5 to 4m at the ground floor level.

While designing a mixed use building the different uses need to be considered and potential conflicts resolved. Attention should be given to such matters as ventilation shafts, service areas and position of stair cores.

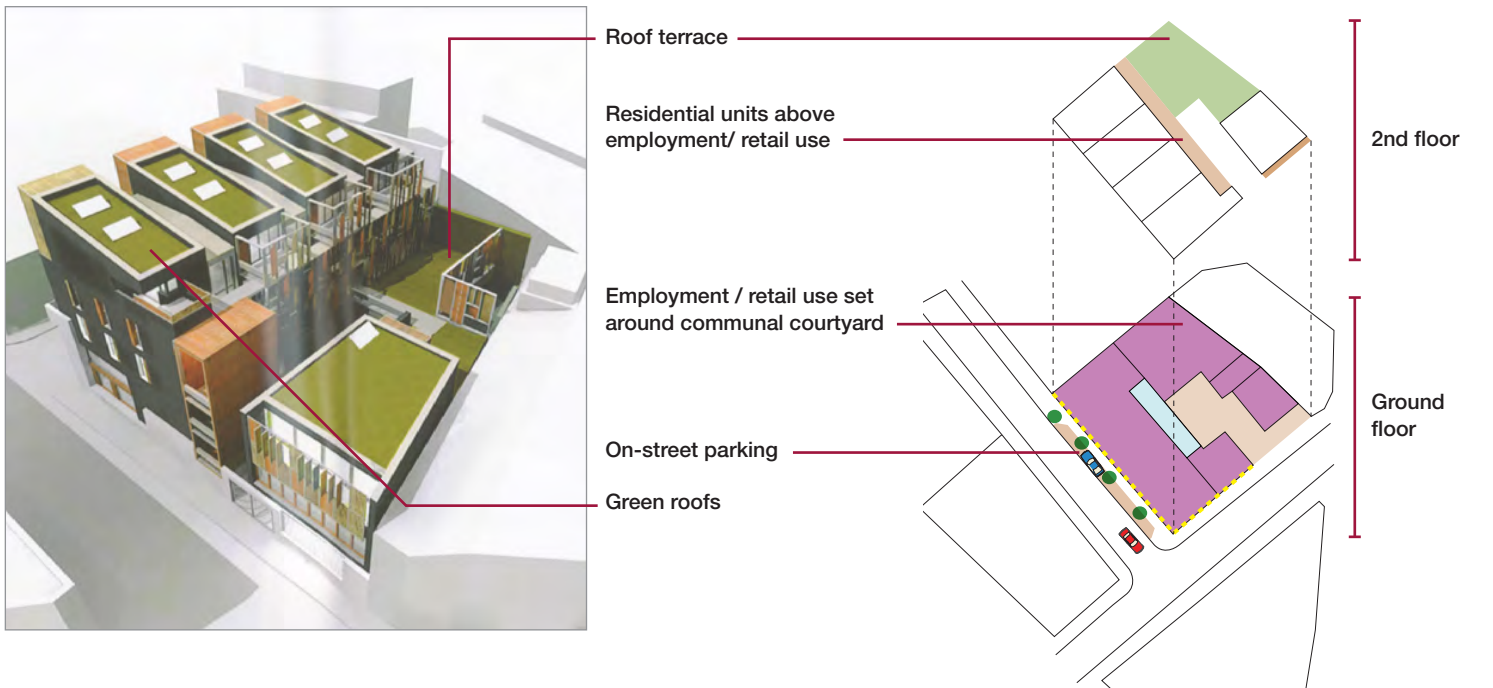
Key design principles

- Mixed uses should be encouraged at ground floor level;
- At ground floor in key locations, in order to allow for future changes of use, floor to ceiling heights should be designed to be 3.5- 4m, where this is appropriate in relation to the context;
- Ventilation shafts need to be accommodated so that they do not have a negative impact on residential units above in terms of noise, smell or appearance;
- Service areas and bin storage must be carefully designed so as not to create a negative outlook for residents or in the public realm;
- Large blocks of development should be broken down into a series of smaller blocks and should relate to the topography; and
- In centres and along major transport corridors ground floor residential units may be raised slightly to create added privacy, making sure that Building Regulations (Part M) and other accessibility requirements are being met.

Example 2: Rushworth Street, London

- Tight urban site (800sq m) and context of rich history of small-scale industrial activities;
- 1160sq m of employment space on ground and first floor and 5 two bedroom apartments and 4 maisonettes above;
- Limited parking provided on-street;
- Building located at edge of pavement in character with surrounding.

Loates Taylor Shannon Architects



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7.5.3 Residential street

In urban and suburban locations a mixture of terraces, semi-detached houses and small blocks of flats may be appropriate.

Flats are particularly suited to corner locations, as they can be designed more easily to turn corners and create focal points.

Key design principles

- Entrances should be at the front of buildings and accessible from the public realm;
- Private front gardens should be designed with robust, continuous boundary treatments to ensure privacy and a clear distinction between private and public space;
- Bins and cycle storage need to be considered from the outset and must form an integral part of the design; and
- Rear gardens to houses should be of usable size.



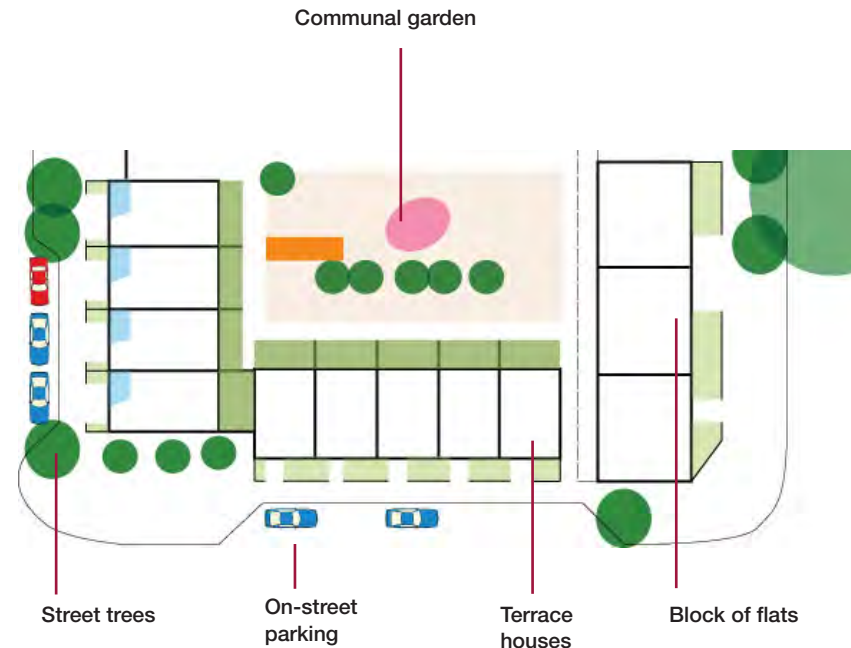
Figure 7.19: Variation in the roofline can create opportunities for integration of solar panels even where the building line is not oriented towards south

Example 3: Cooper's Road, London

- Modern interpretation of traditional terrace house;
- Simple building forms;
- Consistent boundary treatment;
- Roofs and ducts designed to allow for solar panels to be fitted in the future;
- Continuous building line;
- Good use of materials;
- Carefully designed detail and integrated bin stores;
- High quality streets.



ECD Architects and Peabody Trust



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7.5.4 Mews/homezone street

Mews and homezones are a type suitable for all urban, suburban and rural areas. Generally they create an urban form of development which can be formal or informal in arrangement and can incorporate houses as well as flats.

Mews are generally tucked behind the main residential street frontage, so provide an opportunity to introduce smaller houses without reducing the scale of the wider development.

Mews street principles

- Units should have primary frontages and windows, if not entrance doors onto the public realm;
- Buildings set at edge of pavement or behind small landscaped strips to ensure privacy;
- Building heights tend to be between 2-2.5 storeys, but in specific locations 3 storeys might also be appropriate;
- Public realm should be designed with smaller scale or textured materials to enhance the pedestrian feel. Tarmac should be avoided; and
- Tree planting and landscape should form an integral part of the design.

Homezone principles

Homezones are residential streets in which the road space is shared between motor vehicles and other activities, such as walking, cycling and playing. Principles set out in the Home Zones Guidance from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation are:

- Design for maximum traffic speed of 10 mph;
- Ensure there is a clear entrance to the homezone;
- Use shared surface that is designed to be accessible for all;
- Integrate on-street parking; and
- Keep the character of the street unified.

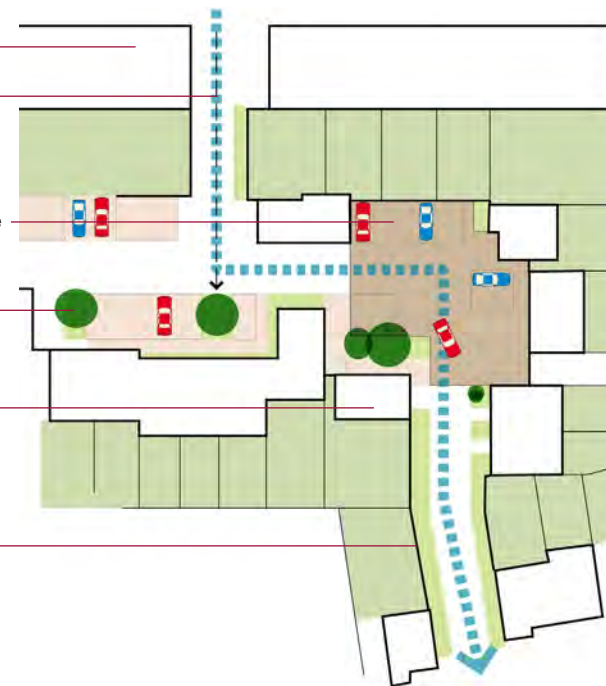
Example 4: Merton Rise, Basingstoke, proposed mews

- Mixture of houses and flats over garages;
- Key views are terminated by frontages and/or feature tree;
- Pedestrian priority area, designed to homezone principles;
- Houses provide high degree of enclosure with minimum front gardens.

PCKO Architects and Bellway Homes



- Housing on street frontage
- High degree of enclosure at junction to main road
- Parking is part of the overall design of the space
- Trees provide focal points and soften the overall appearance
- Buildings sit at edge of shared surface
- High walls provide clear definition between public and private



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7.6 Relationships between dwellings

To create high quality places where people want to live, designing and constructing to a high quality is essential. That means attention to detail.

The relationship between dwellings, the design of the dwelling itself and the space immediately associated with it are all important if we are to create housing that is capable of enduring and accommodating people's needs and changing lifestyles throughout their lives.

The relationships between dwellings affect quality of life and must be designed with care. Designers should consider:

- a. The privacy of occupants;
- b. External space; and
- c. Fronts and backs and how they relate.

R15 Buildings must be designed to provide reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms.

Especially in urban areas where developments are designed to higher densities, privacy is likely to become an issue. Different people have different perceptions of privacy and an individual's expectations are likely to change at different stages of life.

Studies have shown that perceived privacy is determined more by the degree to which one hears one's neighbours than by overlooking. It is difficult to screen against noise, whereas windows can always be curtained. This is particularly relevant when designing flats.

Where there is an equivalence of overlooking, i.e. residents can overlook one another in a similar manner, there is generally less concern about the issue than where it is one-sided, such as an upper floor flat overlooking a house.

The appropriate degree of privacy varies, with less distance being reasonable on the street (public) side and more on the garden (private) side. It also depends upon how rooms relate to one another.

Distance is one means of avoiding overlooking. However, the dwelling may also be designed to achieve privacy through other means, for instance by the location, type and orientation of windows, which may allow distances between dwellings to be reduced.

If distance cannot be achieved, then a design based approach must be adopted. Each development should be assessed in terms of its particular design solution.

R16 Developments must provide some form of private or shared communal outdoor space, in the form of balconies, terraces and/or gardens for each dwelling. This space should be usable and should relate to the house type and occupiers.

For instance, a family sized 3 bedroom house is more likely to require a larger garden area than a small 2 bedroom house. The appropriate size of private external space to be provided for each dwelling should be determined in relation to the provision and location of local open spaces.

R17 Generally the fronts of buildings must relate to other fronts, across streets or other forms of public realm. Backs of dwellings should relate to other backs to create a more private zone.

The aim in new housing is to create active street frontages that are safe and attractive to use, and also to create areas for residents that are more private. However, if the issues of privacy and security are carefully resolved, then other approaches may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

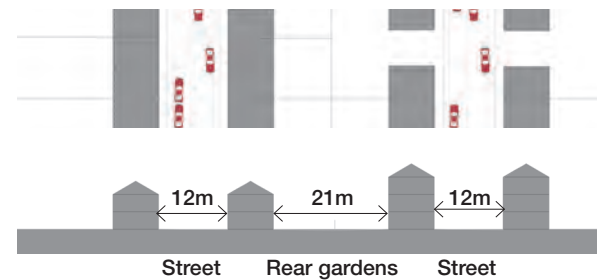


Figure 7.20: 21m is a generally accepted rule of thumb distance for there to be no overlooking between buildings at the rear where people expect more privacy. 12m is a generally accepted rule of thumb distance for there to be sufficient privacy across streets



Figure 7.21: Building focused around internal patio

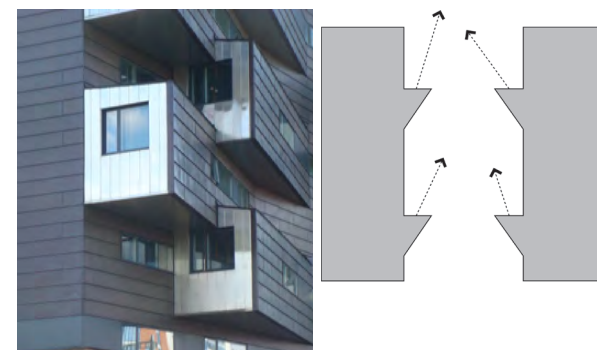


Figure 7.22: Examples of how an alternative, design led approach can prevent overlooking. Angled windows direct views

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Key considerations:

- Windows should be positioned so as to ensure privacy without compromising the need for light;
 - The floorplan should position private rooms, such as bedrooms, on the less public side of the building, away from busy streets;
 - Private amenity space should be provided where it is less overlooked and away from noise. However, the positioning of balconies will need to take into account both the desire for sunshine and the benefit of animating and supervising the street;
 - Private amenity space must be accessible and usable. Balconies should provide sufficient space for a table and chairs to be placed on them.
- Bin stores and recycling facilities should be designed to screen bins from public view, whilst providing residents with easy access to them;
 - Meter boxes need not be standard white units: consider a bespoke approach that fits in with the materials used for the remainder of the building. Position them to be unobtrusive.
 - Bicycle storage facilities should be secure and conveniently located for the use of residents;
 - The materials used for walls and fences should relate to the materials used for the remainder of the building. Boundaries to public areas, such as streets, should be robust, for instance brick walls or railings, avoiding the use of less robust solutions such as close boarded timber;
 - Carefully position flues and ventilation ducts, ensuring they are as unobtrusive as possible. Use good quality grilles that fit in with the approach to materials for the building as a whole; and
 - Ensure that gutters and pipes fit into the overall design approach to the building and aim to minimise their visual impact.

Return to: [Section 5.5.1](#)

7.7 Design of the dwelling

Good proposals can be let down by the ‘forgotten elements’ - those things that are forgotten about until the last moment and then shoe-horned into a design. As noted in ‘By Design’, if they are barely noticeable, then they have been well designed.

R18 The following elements, often the ‘forgotten elements’, must be considered early in the design process and integrated into the overall scheme:

- **Bin stores and recycling facilities;**
- **Meter boxes;**
- **Bicycle storage;**
- **Walls, fences and gates;**
- **Lighting;**
- **Flues and ventilation ducts; and**
- **Gutters and pipes.**

R19 Dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of space and light, including sunlight.

Key considerations:

- Dwellings should be designed to allow space for all residents to enjoy a meal together in the living/dining area;
- Dwellings should provide storage space i.e. space for wardrobes in bedrooms;
- Dwellings should provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling.
- Dwellings should be designed to be dual aspect where possible. North facing single aspect flats must be avoided.



Figure 7.23: A good example of providing private amenity space in the form of a balcony

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R20 Housing must be designed to be adaptable where possible. Design and Access Statements will be expected to demonstrate how adaptability has been considered.

Measures to promote adaptability may include:

- Providing a flexible arrangement that allows for residents choice and customisation;
- Adequate circulation space for wheelchairs;
- Car parking space with direct and convenient access, and capable of being enlarged;
- The incorporation of information and communication technology into dwellings; and
- Allowing for a home office to be provided.

Some residential buildings have stood the test of time better than others. For example, traditional terraced houses have been adapted and extended over the years to accommodate changes in the way we live. If new housing is to have longevity, it must be designed to be adaptable.

‘Lifetime Homes’ (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk) gives practical advice and technical criteria for designing flexible buildings.

R21 New housing must be designed with care and with a coherent design approach that influences the whole building from its form, to the elevations and including the detailing (whatever the architectural style may be).

Modern houses are often a pastiche of the dominant forms of housing from different eras in history. However, they often lack the three dimensional qualities of traditional buildings. Windows are flush with external walls. Eaves barely overhang the walls. Porches, balconies and bay windows appear to be ‘stuck on’ to a simple box rather than being an integral part of the design. Changes in materials and brick colour are used

instead of richer detailing that casts shadows and creates interest.

This results in buildings that are debased versions of historic styles. If a traditional design approach is followed, then it must be correctly proportioned and detailed and use historically appropriate materials.

Generally

Buildings should generally be designed as follows:

- As a three dimensional whole, with elements such as bay windows being designed in rather than being ‘bolted-on’;
- With windows and doors set back from the external facade of the building, which introduces some depth and modelling to the facade;
- To incorporate three-dimensional detailing, that again gives ‘depth’ to a building;
- So that changes in materials relate to the design of the building, rather than as an arbitrary way of creating interest. When elements have a purpose, they have a more genuine character; and
- To reflect some of the attractive qualities of the local historic form of housing, for instance in terms of the scale and proportions of elements.

Contemporary approach

Should a contemporary design approach be adopted, then the following principles apply:

- Changes in material should relate to the form and articulation of the building, rather than be used in an arbitrary way to create interest;
- Generally building forms should be simple and well proportioned, and over complicated, fussy elements should be avoided;
- Where there is no modelling of the facade, the quality of detailing will be of particular importance.



Figure 7.24: These two examples of housing built by housing associations demonstrate that design quality can be achieved in affordable housing

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7.8 Conversions of terraces

In common with other housing market renewal areas, this sub-region has a number of areas of small Victorian terraced workers housing where the housing market has been weak or has failed. Some of these areas have been identified in the North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance as having historic significance and value. In these cases, it is recommended that an intensive assessment of historical significance is carried out before regeneration proposals are formulated to establish their value in detail.

In locations such as these, the potential challenge is to find a means of altering these terraces to appeal to today's lifestyles whilst retaining their distinctive character and historic value.

R22 Where the assessment of small Victorian terraced houses shows them to have a definite historical significance and value, then the full range of opportunities for restoration and conversion should be explored.

This may include:

- Amalgamation of small units into larger family dwellings, either laterally within a terrace or across the rear between two terraces;
- Selective demolition to create new public spaces and introduce small blocks of flats;
- Introduction of homezones, to create a more pedestrian friendly and appealing domestic environment;
- Introduction of small open spaces and play facilities; and
- Improving thermal performance by increasing insulation internally and enhancing airtightness of windows.

7.9 Extensions to dwellings

Alterations and extensions to dwellings are most commonly carried out by individual householders.

Regulations set out criteria for determining whether alterations and extensions require planning permission or whether they are deemed to be 'permitted development'.

This guidance refers to extensions which will have an influence on the urban design quality and character of the area, that is a potential influence upon the street scene. These are generally side or front extensions.

R23 Extensions to dwellings should be well designed and contribute positively to the townscape character.

Where the area is identified as having positive historical significance, then key considerations include:

- Where there is a regular pattern and rhythm to the built form, with a repeated built form on a consistent building line and with consistent gaps, then any extension on the frontage must not unbalance the rhythm.
- Where gaps between buildings allow views to a green backdrop that contributes to the established, positive, character of the area, extensions should not close such gaps.
- Extensions should follow one of two alternative approaches, either to be a seamless extension to the form and scale of the original building or clearly subservient to it.
- The form and design of the proposed extension must be well considered and complement the existing building, either by adopting its style or by contrast.



Figure 7.25: Shed KM, Urban Splash conversion of small terraced houses to create contemporary dwellings



Figure 7.26: Smallthorne, an example of an extension at the same scale as the original building but set back from its frontage, which continues its materials and key details



Figure 7.27: Longton Road, Trentham, a successful example of the use of contrasting materials and details on an extension to a listed building

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8.1 Introduction

Employment development falls within one of the themes identified for the strategic urban design vision.

Refer to: [Section 2.3 High quality places for living and working](#)

There are key principles in other themes that also specifically relate to employment.

Refer to: [Section 2.4 Better quality connections](#)

Well designed new employment development of a variety of types is a key strand in the regeneration strategy, both to help sustain existing communities within the sub-region and to support the diversification of the economy into a knowledge driven and 'experience' economy.

8.2 Integrate into context

A key principle of creating better places for working is that new working environments should be well integrated into their wider context.

Refer to: [Section 3.6 Appraising the context](#)

Some of the most important considerations are:

- Exploiting the features of the site.;
- Relating well to the local context; and
- Responding to the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area.

E1 Business development should be designed to respond to and exploit key features or characteristics of the site and the local context.

Each site has its own particular characteristics. Responding to these is one way to help create a development with its own character. They may include the features of the site itself or qualities it gains from its context.

Where possible, business development should retain and exploit the distinctive features of the site

as part of a scheme of proposals. This includes the site topography, any remnants of historic landscape, structures or buildings, landscape and ecological features such as hedges and trees, water courses or bodies etc

Views to be considered should not be limited to arrival at the site by car. Many sites are visually prominent from major routes through the area by road, from the railway or from the canal. Views from all of these transport corridors are important to the image of both the business and the wider place. Developments should be designed to address these views where they occur.

Designers should ensure that:

- The most distinctive features of the site and local context have been identified through the site appraisal.
- The key views of the site from all locations and transport modes have been identified within the analysis.
- The scheme design responds to the key features and views identified.

E2 Business development should be designed so that complementary facilities and services and residential areas are all easily accessible.

Workplaces are a vital part of a successful place and should be designed to be an integrated part of that place. People at work also need to be able to reach other facilities and services, for instance shops, cafes, sports and leisure facilities, child care and schools.

To encourage sustainable living, the balanced mix of uses should aim to include employment, facilities and services as well as residential areas all located so that they are easily accessible to one another, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport.



Figure 8.1: Hanley Job Centre, a good example of a new development with an urban form, sited in the area outside the City Centre but within a walkable distance to the centre



Figure 8.2: Employment development in Middleport has a character that is appropriate to its canal side location within a settlement

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Sites close to centres and with good public transport accessibility will be particularly suitable.

Area wide sustainable approaches to energy generation and heating perform most efficiently where there is a balanced mix of uses that each generate and use heat at different times of day.

E3 Business development should be designed to contribute towards improving the character and quality of the area. Proposals will be required to demonstrate the appropriateness of their approach in each case.

For development in existing settlements then it should respond to the established urban or suburban character where this exists already.

Where there is no established urban or suburban character, new development should demonstrate that it is creating a new urban character that is appropriate to the area.

Development that is on the edge or in-between existing settlements should contribute to establishing a positive 'green' character and improving the quality of the environment.

The strategic urban design opportunity is to strengthen the character and improve the quality of the environment in the sub-region, in particular in those areas that are in-between or on the edges of existing settlements, which can be described as the setting for those settlements.

The aim is to create a more coherent pattern that reinforces the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres, as this is one of the most distinctive features of the sub-region.

In existing settlements, the character of new business development should respond to any established positive townscape character of

definite value. Out-of-town forms of development, dominated by car parking, and industrial development with no environmental quality must be avoided.

Where there is no such character already, the character of new development should be:

- a. Urban, where it is located within the centres or within the walkable area around them (800m);
- b. Either urban or suburban elsewhere in existing settlements;

Where business development is proposed in other areas, then it should be designed carefully to contribute towards creating a high quality environment with an appropriate 'green' character and, where relevant, towards creating the strategic green space network.

Refer to: [Section 2.5 High quality greenspace networks](#)

[Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)



Figure 8.3: Lower Don Valley, where planting has been used to create a 'green' character for industrial development and enhance the environmental quality of the area. Trees and shrubs have been planted and in front of the boundary line of each plot, so that a secure boundary treatment can still be provided

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8.3 Creating a sense of place

People spend around a third of their waking life at work, so the quality of the places we work in is as important as that of the places we live.

Workplaces should be well designed, attractive environments that people enjoy using in themselves, as well as being successful in attracting businesses to occupy them. They must also add to the quality and character of the place and help to maintain or increase its appeal.

For some types of business, there is already an established property market, whereas for others, such as financial and professional services, there is a strategic need to promote investment and attract more businesses.

This sector is footloose and sensitive to the image and quality of a place.

The context appraisal should include an assessment of the existing character of the area.

Refer to: **Section 3.6 Appraising the context**

This should help to identify an appropriate sense of place for the new development. In some situations, the approach might be respect or enhance the existing character of the area, for instance where a single building is being introduced into an established context. In others, it may be appropriate to create a new 'quarter' with its own character.

E4 Sites and developments must be arranged so that it is easy for a visitor to find their way around and to create a positive impression on arrival.

Developments should ensure that:

- Pedestrians can identify a clear route into the site and to the entrance of the building. i.e. they should not have to walk through parking spaces to reach an entrance, although shared surfaces may be appropriate.

- Service and infrastructure are integrated sensitively into the design of the building i.e. storage, tanks, refuse and other servicing requirements should not dominate on arrival.

E5 Buildings should address the street.

The building should face towards the street so that the site frontage is as well supervised as possible by windows and entrances.

The entrances should be clearly visible on arrival by foot or by vehicle.

E6 Boundary treatments should form an integral part of the design of proposals for business development.

The quality of the environment is strongly influenced by the design of the street frontage, how the buildings and landscape are arranged and how they relate to the public realm.

The treatment of site boundaries has a significant impact on the quality of the public realm. The quality of environment must be the primary concern and any security considerations must be integrated into a well designed solution.

A coordinated approach to boundary treatments helps to create a coherent character for a business development.

Key considerations are:

- The proposed boundary treatment must relate to the public realm and adjacent boundary treatments.
- The boundary treatment should provide security without impinging upon other community safety issues i.e. providing passive surveillance.

The built form will be heavily influenced by the type of business the development is designed to accommodate. Different approaches will be appropriate in different locations and contexts.



Figure 8.4: Dudson Centre, City Centre, where an appropriate mix of uses helps to make business environments more attractive for the people who work there



Figure 8.5: North Staffordshire Hospital Clinical Medical Centre, a development on the A34 frontage at the entrance to the site. It addresses the corner using a drum and expresses the main core as a taller vertical element. Together with a bridge for pedestrians these elements combine to create a memorable gateway at the entrance to the hospital site

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The scale of business development is almost always greater than that of dwellings in terms of plot size, footprint and, in some cases, height.

E7 Building height, bulk and scale should be considered in relation to the existing context and also in relation to any DPDs or SPDs which may set out a vision for transforming the character of the place.

In locations that are identified in this guide, or in other area-based DPDs or SPDs, as landmark or gateway locations, then an increase in height relative to their surroundings is likely to be desirable, provided that the design of the proposal is of the highest quality in other respects.

Otherwise, in general, the height of proposed buildings should relate to, rather than necessarily reflect, those found in the surrounding area.

Where there are significant differences in height and/ or bulk between immediately neighbouring buildings, the design approach should ease the change. This can be done in a variety of ways using the form and massing of the building, including attic storeys, bays and set backs.

The perceived scale of buildings can be moderated by:

- a. Articulation of the building line or roof line;
- b. Grouping elements on the elevations to influence their rhythm and proportions; and
- c. The use of colours and materials.

The potential impact of a proposed development should be considered from a variety of viewpoints, not only the street frontage.

Key considerations are:

- a. Identification of the site as a gateway or landmark location in this guide, or other relevant DPDs or SPD, where it may well be appropriate

- for a building to be taller than its surroundings.
- b. There should be a positive relationship between the height and bulk of the proposed development and those in its immediate surroundings.
- c. The relationship should be considered from key viewpoints in the public realm, not only from the front.
- d. Where there are changes in height, bulk and/or scale between the proposal and neighbouring development, these should be managed/ moderated by the design of the building.

E8 The approach to materials should generally be a simple one, focusing on high quality materials and components, with the appropriate level of intricacy and detail being guided by the nature of the viewer experience.

In general, the preference is to focus on a simple, well proportioned design approach, using high quality materials, with simple, well designed details.

Where people come into close contact with a building, for instance around entrances or along the street frontage, is an appropriate place to focus the quality of materials, colour and texture.

Where buildings are only viewed at speed, such as from the A500, then large blocks of colour or a single material may be appropriate.

The visual impact of large elevations can be reduced by the use of materials of colours to break down the scale and relate it to other buildings in the surrounding area.



Figure 8.6: One Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester, where the introduction of a substantial office development has helped to regenerate Piccadilly Gardens and the area around it. The development relates well to its context and helps to extend the business district in the City centre



Figure 8.7: Blue Planet, large scale carbon positive industrial development that uses a sculptural form and a gradation in colour on its elevations to make sure it sits well in its surroundings. All of its energy and heat comes from renewable sources and its drainage is sustainable, with rainwater harvesting and controlling of surface water run-off on site, using a series of ponds which have been landscaped to enhance local ecology and to create areas with public access

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Developments must demonstrate:

- a. A coherent approach to the use of materials and colours.
- b. A design approach that identifies the places where the building will be experienced from and responds to the viewer experience.

E9 The design of roofs and roofscapes need be carefully considered in relation to the context, and should respond to whether and how they will be viewed.

The topography of the areas means that in many places the roofs of buildings are highly visible.

For development on the valley floors, the expanse of roof can be visually prominent in long views across the conurbation. The shape of the roof and the colour and finish of roof material should be carefully considered.

In these locations, the potential for using ‘green’ or ‘brown’ roofs should be investigated. These roof types would contribute towards creating the desired character in ‘green setting’ areas. They also have a role to play in controlling the rate of surface water run-off, and so contribute towards SUDS.

For development on hills, it is the roof profile that may be prominent. Views from the surrounding areas should be considered. The roof line will need to be composed either to draw attention or so that it recedes as a backdrop element. Any plant at roof level should be screened and should be unobtrusive in long views.

Designers should address the following:

- a. The visual prominence of the roof in both close and long views.
- b. The form and profile of the roof in response to its location.

- c. Choice of roof materials appropriate to the context.
- d. The potential impact of elements such as plant and services in key views.

8.4 Managing parking and servicing

E10 Car parking should be positioned unobtrusively and well designed and landscaped.

In general, limited areas of car parking for the use of visitors should be positioned between the building and the street frontage. Where parking is provided on the street frontage, then high quality boundary treatments will be required to the street frontage, and the quality of design will be of particular importance.

Other car parking should be positioned away from the street frontage.

Key considerations are:

- a. Position parking carefully to minimise its visibility from the street.
- b. Design and construct car parking to create attractive spaces, including space for planting trees and hedges or shrubs to act as visual screens and to break down the scale of the car park.
- c. Wherever possible, incorporate SUDS measures such as swales or permeable paving into the scheme to facilitate drainage and flood attenuation.



Figure 8.8: Roofs of buildings in valleys are often visually prominent, in this case in views from Sneyd Hill Park



Figure 8.9: Tree planting softens and help to screen car parking and also provides shade in summer



Figure 8.10: Gravel filled swale is part of sustainable drainage and allows planting to be incorporated into parking areas development.

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E11 The impact of servicing areas upon the public realm should be minimised through locating them sensitively and screening.

Servicing is a key part of the operation of much business development. However servicing areas often have a negative effect on the quality of environment.

Key considerations are:

- a. Wherever possible, service areas should be located away from the main arrival points and the street frontage.
- b. To mitigate the potential visual impact of any service areas positioned close to the street frontage, they should be screened by soft landscape or other boundary treatments that will improve the quality of views.

8.5 Large sites for phased development

E12 For larger sites, where individual development plots are likely to come forward over time, a masterplan should be prepared to guide the design of new development.

Proposals for business development often take place on a site by site basis with no overall coherence or consistency between sites.

While businesses should be able to express their corporate identity through their physical development, it is important that business areas contribute to the environmental quality of the place for all those who live in and use it.

One of the key ways of achieving this is to adopt a coordinated approach to certain elements of the development, so that there is a level of coherence between different sites that may be developed separately.

This is likely to relate to the design of the public

realm itself (see below), but it may also relate to the design of frontages, or to the landscape, or to certain characteristics of the buildings themselves, for instance through a palette of materials, colours, or plants.

A masterplan or design guide is a tool for coordinating an area-wide approach to such issues.

8.6 Public realm

E13 New business developments should integrate with the surrounding public realm making well designed connections to the surrounding network of streets and spaces, including greenways, that are safe and attractive to use

The form of business development must help to provide people with the opportunity to walk, cycle or use public transport, rather than to use their car. The public realm needs to be designed not only for the convenience of vehicles but also for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy.

Where there are opportunities, development should also contribute towards joining up more fully the network of green space, by means of public access or public space, or landscape that performs an environmental function.

Refer to: **Section 11.3 In existing settlements**

Designers should make sure that:

- a. The development connects into surrounding streets and spaces.
- b. The materials proposed are high quality and appropriate to their context.
- c. Where the proposals are located within a changing context, the proposed landscaping treatments/materials are consistent with those planned for the locality.



Figure 8.11: Campbell Road, Stoke is a complex of office buildings, which contributes to the public realm despite large areas of parking. The buildings relate to the street frontage, car parking areas are screened and subdivided by planting and include pedestrian routes to building frontages

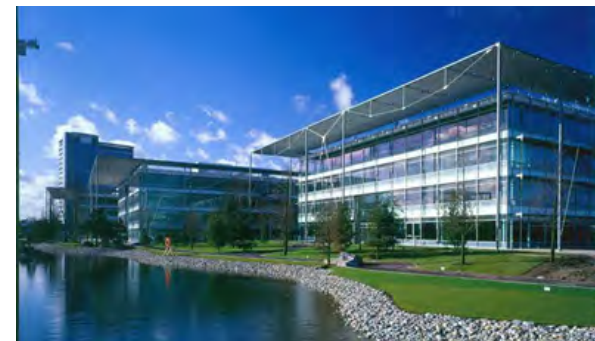


Figure 8.12: Chiswick Business Park is a large scale, prestigious office development in urban London. The buildings are integrated into a high quality public realm and open space setting. The lake plays a key role in the environmental strategy, contributing both in terms of sustainable drainage and cooling of buildings

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8.7 Creating character appropriate to context

High quality places combine a variety of different densities, unit types and sizes, parking arrangements and street types. These elements contribute to an interesting environment provided they are carefully designed, follow a design concept and create a hierarchy of places.

The following examples show how the design of a single business type, headquarter offices, can respond to their specific context and create a character for the development that is appropriate.

In each case, the site lies in an urban context, within or close to a centre and near a railway station.

8.7.1 Urban offices on restricted site

This occupies a restricted urban site in the city centre, adjacent to the railway station.

The design approach was to create a large headquarters office building, with deep floorplates.

This fills the restricted site, with a bridge link across to an existing building, creating a private street between them that is used for surface car parking.

The 5 storey building includes an attic storey with a strong cornice line, relating it to its existing neighbour, a four storey building.

Example 1: Capital One, Nottingham

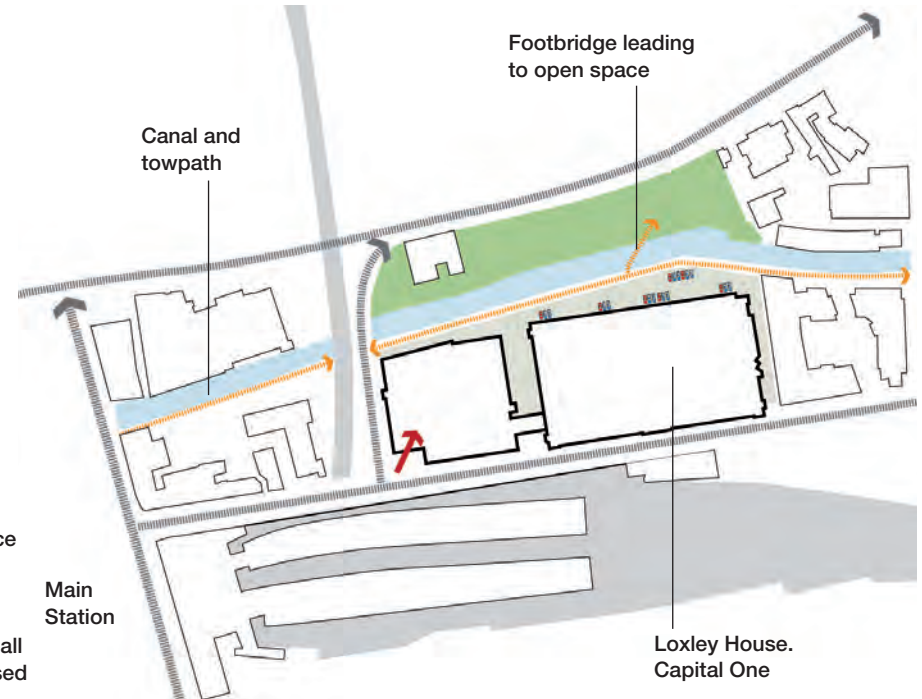
- a. Restricted site adjoining railway and with canal frontage;
- b. Urban building providing a well defined edge hard up against the pavement;
- c. Successfully creates public streets with robust high quality materials;
- d. Employs a mixed mode heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system, harnessing low energy air displacement cooling.

ORMS



The building creates a well defined street edge

Well designed entrance located on prominent corner, providing inclusive access, with ramp and steps to small external space on raised plinth



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8.7.2 Urban offices as large floorplate user

This occupies a large site in a historic urban regeneration area that was formerly the railway engineering works, close to the station and on the edges of the town centre. The neighbouring buildings are listed buildings.

The design approach was to create a deep plan office building over two storeys, with natural top-lighting.

This allowed the building to define a series of different public spaces around it, so that it contributes to making the area feel urban.

The spaces follow pedestrian desire lines to the station, creating an attractive route and also providing an attractive setting for the main approach to the building.

The entrance and public facilities associated with the National Trust are located on the public square, helping to animate the edge of the space.

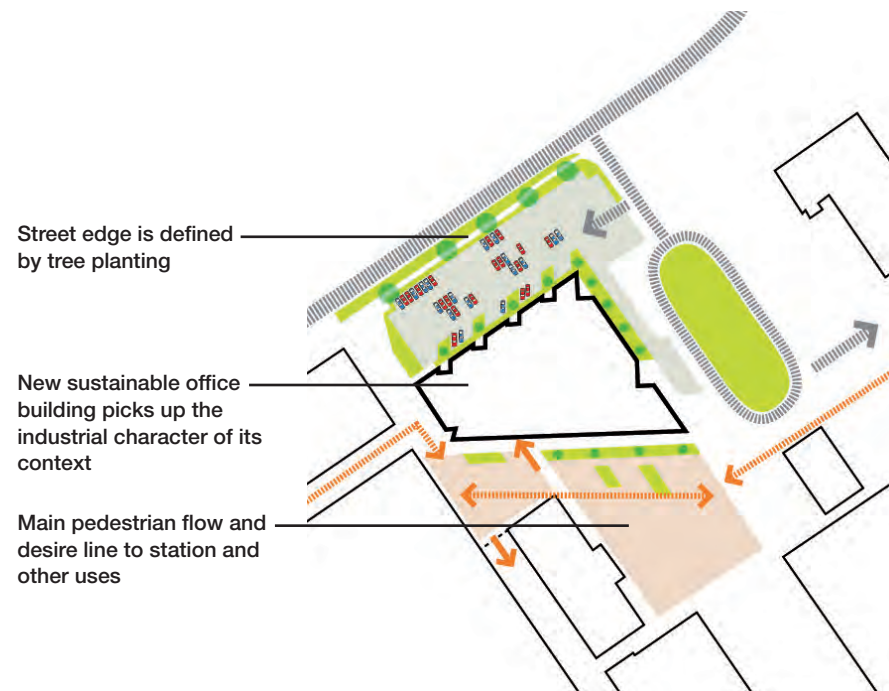
Car parking is accommodated in a separate space on the other side of the building. Although it fronts onto a street, it is well designed with landscape and tree planting to define the edge of the street.

The building is of a similar height to the neighbouring listed buildings. Its deep plan and saw tooth roof form provide an echo of the former railway sheds that once occupied the area.

Example 2: National Trust HQ, Swindon

- a. Large site in former industrial area close to station;
- b. Contemporary building set within historic context;
- c. Creates sequence of attractive pedestrian spaces for the public to enjoy;
- d. Highly sustainable buildings in environmental terms.

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9 Historic environment

9.1 Introduction

The historic environment is identified in the strategic urban design vision.

Refer to: [Section 2.6 A positive and memorable image](#)

The Core Spatial Strategy strategic policy CSP2 defines historic environment as:

“The historic heritage of the City and the Borough including buildings, monuments, sites and areas of special archaeological, architectural or historic interest”

It seeks to preserve and enhance its character and appearance.

North Staffordshire has a unique, rich and diverse heritage and many historic assets, some already well known and well loved, others not yet cared for or cherished. Today’s environment is one of our most significant environmental resources, one that needs to be conserved and adapted to meet future requirements, as part of sustainable development, rather than being replaced wholesale.

The character of the historic environment in the urban part of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent has been analysed and classified by extensive and intensive surveys published as the ‘North Staffordshire Conurbation: Assessment of Historical Significance’ (December 2006). This indicates the relative significance of the various parts of the conurbation. This guidance seeks to retain and enhance the character of those areas classified in the surveys as having positive value.

Some historic assets, designated nationally or locally, are subject to national law, policy and guidance intended to protect their significance. These are scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and locally significant archaeological sites and monuments.

English Heritage, the government’s advisor on heritage, provides good practice guidance on a wide range of issues relating to the historic environment (www.english-heritage.org.uk).

The Core Spatial Strategy also identifies that the local authorities will prepare Conservation and Heritage Guidance SPDs. These will set out in detail how the Core Spatial Strategy policies and national guidance will be interpreted locally, and elaborate upon the guidance here. This guidance focuses on new development in the historic environment rather than on works to existing fabric.

9.2 Special architectural or historic interest

The North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance classifies historic assets. Those identified as having positive value are as follows:

- Statutory significance, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, already identified as having special architectural or historic interest by their designations;
- Definite value, areas with high townscape value provided by good groups of well detailed buildings, where the Assessment of Historical Significance identifies their special architectural or historic interest;
- General, streets of medium quality late 19th to 20th century buildings with cohesive qualities, but which are not identified as having ‘special’ architectural or historic interest.



Figure 9.1: Betheda Chapel, City Centre on Heritage Open Day 2007. Historic buildings are often cherished by local people, and those who have known and used them. Here, people queued for an opportunity to see the restoration works in progress



Figure 9.2: Hanley Park on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, is a Victorian public park that is popular with local residents today

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In addition, the Core Spatial Strategy identifies that Local Lists of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest will be maintained by each of the local authorities. The special architectural or historic interest of these buildings will be identified in each of the Local Lists.

All of the above contribute to the character of the historic environment. The English Heritage and CABE Guide 'Building in Context' provides guidance on the right approach to new development in historic environments.

HE1 Heritage Assets include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Importance, and areas identified as having definite value in the North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance and the Historic Environment Records.

New development that may affect the character of these locations must demonstrably be based on a detailed appraisal of the context. It should demonstrate that it relates well to the qualities of the site and of the place identified in that appraisal.

It should contribute to the identity and heritage of the area through its quality of design in terms of the strength and sensitivity of its design concept and well detailed use of high quality materials; and its contribution to the composition of the townscape as a whole.

Refer to: [Section 3.6 Appraising the context](#)

The guidance below does not include Scheduled Ancient Monuments. For works relating to these, contact the local planning authority.

9.3 Listed buildings

Heritage assets add value in a variety of ways. They can be landmark buildings with a distinctive silhouette marking highpoints, ridges and hills in the landscape as our churches do, clearly marking the separate settlements. But they are often more modest structures that give character to a place through the use of local materials and their colour and texture.

Spaces, such as parks, gardens, cemeteries and battlefields are also defined as heritage assets and as such have their own settings and character which need to be carefully considered when evaluating the context for new development.

Where development is proposed in the context of a listed building, the Local Planning Authority requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building. The development proposal need not be associated directly with the listed building, it may be related to a separate site that is within its context.

The setting of a listed building is decided on a case by case basis. For any development proposal within the vicinity of a listed building, it is advisable to agree the setting with the local planning authority at an early stage.

Key considerations for deciding the setting are likely to include locations within or facing:

- The garden or grounds, particularly if they were laid out to complement its design or function;
- Any public space which relates to the listed building;
- Locally, the street in which a listed building is situated; and
- Key views of the listed building, from viewpoints within the public realm, so for instance a



Figure 9.3: Dudson Centre, City Centre, a mixed use development to bring back into use a Potteries kiln and workshops. Elements of new build with a clearly contemporary approach are integrated into the original complex and designed and detailed in a manner that is sympathetic to the industrial nature of the original complex

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9.4 Conservation Areas

development behind a listed building may be considered to be within its setting if it will be visible in views of the listed building from the space in front of it, or from further afield.

HE2 New development must preserve or enhance the setting of any listed heritage asset.

Development must ensure that:

- If the development is viewed in relationship with the listed heritage asset then the listed heritage asset, rather than the new development, should remain as the focus of those views, and it should not diminish the ability to appreciate the special architectural or historic interest of the listed heritage asset. This means it should normally have a subservient role.
- It relates well to the listed heritage asset, in terms of height, massing, scale and materials palette;
- It maintains or improves the character of the street to which the listed building contributes.
- It must allow an appropriate amount and arrangement of space around the listed building to allow its special interest to be appreciated.

9.3.1 Curtilage buildings

Pre 1948 buildings that are associated with a principal listed building are also listed and require listed building consent for alterations, even though they may not feature in the description of the listed building. The local planning authority must be contacted to determine whether this is or is not the case.

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of buildings within a Conservation Area and consent is also required for the removal and works to trees. Planning permission will be required for development proposals and in a number of Conservation Areas there are Article 4 Directions that would otherwise be permitted development.

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies that the local authorities will produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. These define in detail the special interest of the area; its condition; problems, pressures and capacity for change; and the need for further guidance, which is provided within Management Plans.

HE3 New development in or adjoining Conservation Areas should demonstrate how it will contribute to the character or appearance with reference to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for each area.

Where these documents are available they can be found on each Council's website. They should be referred to at the outset of a project, to help shape development proposals.

HE4 New development in a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance its character or appearance.

It must:

- Where redevelopment is proposed, assess the contribution made by the existing building to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and ensure that the new development contributes equally or more.

- Strengthen either the variety or the consistency of a Conservation Area, depending upon which of these is characteristic of the area,
- The development must not adversely affect the setting or detract from the qualities and significance that contribute to its character and appearance.



Figure 9.4: Victoria Hall, City Centre - The extension to the listed building provided new facilities that allowed the hall to continue to have a viable use into the future. These were provided in a new building which leaves the historic building intact and its historic fabric largely undisturbed. The design of the extension relates well to the height, bulk and scale of the original building and is set back from the line of its frontage. It is clearly a contemporary building although it uses a typical local material, terracotta

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A number of factors contribute to the character of a Conservation Area, including the historical pattern of development and the evidence of different buildings from different eras, reflected in its streetscape and architecture. Unless a Conservation Area displays a unity of architectural style, then new development should positively contribute to the character of the area through a contemporary expression of architecture, rather than a design approach emulating traditional detailing from a particular past period.

If a traditional design approach is to be followed, then it must be correctly proportioned and detailed and use historically appropriate materials.

9.5 Areas and buildings of special local architectural and historic interest

Areas of special local architectural and historic interest are those assessed as having definite value in the North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance. Buildings of Local Architectural and Historic Interest are identified by each local authority and are also assigned definite value.

The Assessment of Historical Significance also identified that, within the conurbation, there is under-representation of buildings on the statutory List, local List and of Conservation Area designation. In some locations areas or buildings identified as being of definite value may be upgraded to statutory designation in the future.

HE5 Areas and buildings of special local interest contribute to the identity and heritage of the area. Proposals must identify their special interest and capacity for change. Based on this assessment, new development should preserve, enhance, or improve the character and appearance of these areas, as appropriate.

9.6 Registered parks and gardens

There are a number of Registered Parks and Gardens in the sub-region.

HE6 Proposals for new development should preserve or enhance the settings of these gardens.

9.7 The public realm

The quality of the public realm has a significant influence upon the quality of the historic environment. The key principles set out in Section 11 Public Realm must be followed in streets within areas of special architectural or historic importance. In particular, traditional and high quality materials must be incorporated in any street enhancement works.

Refer to: [Section 11.5 Landscape materials](#)

9.8 Adapting to climate change

The challenge of adapting to climate change means not only that new development needs to perform well in environmental terms, but that the existing building stock will also need to be upgraded. The energy efficiency of traditional buildings will need to play its part in this, and many of these traditional buildings will form significant historic environments.

English Heritage provides advice for homeowners on how to adapt traditionally built homes to climate change. There are many ways to upgrade the thermal performance of traditional buildings that do not have an impact on their character and appearance. These should be pursued in the first instance, whether they be draught-proofing and loft insulation, or installing more efficient boilers, etc.

Further information

National policy statement: PPS5

LDF: Stoke-on-Trent Conservation and Heritage Guidance SPD (forthcoming)

Newcastle Conservation and Heritage Guidance SPD (forthcoming)

LDF evidence base: Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (programme in progress); List of Buildings of Local Architectural and Historic Interest; Conservation Area Maps; Historic Environment Record (HERs); North Staffordshire: Assessment of Historical Significance (2000); Draft Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey Newcastle-under-Lyme: Historic Character Assessment (2009); Shop Fronts in Conservation Areas Design Guidance; Historic Farmsteads, Preliminary Character Statement, West Midlands Region (2006)



Figure 9.5: Dresden, this alleyway is a rare example of the historic Staffordshire blue brick paving still in evidence today

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10.1 Introduction

The rural areas are identified in the strategic urban design vision.

Refer to: [Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)

The aims for development within, or to extend, existing rural settlements are:

- To respond to the unique character and setting of each, including a thorough understanding of the settlement pattern, its setting within the wider landscape and how this has developed over history. This also applies where the boundaries of rural village envelopes are being defined.
- Development should celebrate what is distinct and positive in terms of rural characteristics and topography in each locality.
- Generally to locate new development within village envelopes where possible and minimise the impact on the existing landscape character.

The key aims for their settings, in this case the countryside, are:

- To conserve and manage landscapes to retain and enhance the established landscape character, where it is already of high quality; and
- To continue to enhance, regenerate and restore landscapes and to create a strong green edge for the conurbation and rural settlements, where the existing landscape character is not already high quality.

10.1.1 Other statutory and policy designations

A large proportion of the rural area is also covered by other policy designations that aim to protect the environment, such as the Green Belt which protects the openness of land around the conurbation, Conservation Areas which protect the character of the built environment, and nature conservation designations such as Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Biological Interest (SBI), and Local Nature Reserves. Within all of these areas, reference should also be made to national and local policy and guidance relating to these designations.

Identifying appropriate locations for development is, in the first place, a matter of policy.

This design guidance applies to locations where development complies with policy requirements. It is also intended to inform future policy and guidance, as it may need to evolve.

This section on design issues in rural areas supplements the guidance in other sections of this urban design guide.



Figure 10.1: Villages in the rural areas have a diversity of character. Most villages have some distinctive character that has a real sense of place as here in Keele (top) and Audley



Figure 10.2: Many villages have 19th century housing, often in a form of ribbon development as here at Bar Hill, Madeley



Figure 10.3: Most villages have more recent suburbia, as for instance in this example in Loggerheads

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10 Rural environment

10.2 Landscape Character

RE1 New landscapes and new development, where it is considered appropriate for policy reasons, should retain and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character and ecological diversity of the area and should incorporate them into proposals wherever possible.

This includes elements such as:

- Field patterns and lanes;
- Landscape features, such as trees and hedgerows;
- Wetlands and watercourses;
- Typical species of vegetation;
- Habitats that support local characteristic features.

Historically, settlements in rural areas were often shaped by the landscape character that existed before development took place. Traces of that character may be found in places, providing local distinctiveness and a link to its history.

The rural areas defined here lie mainly within the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (no 61) Regional Character Area as defined in the County landscape character assessment.

This area of rolling farmland includes villages such as Loggerheads and Betley. A part of the plain within Staffordshire is an intensive agricultural landscape of dairy farming, with some stock rearing, but it is giving way to arable farming in places.

The more intact areas of landscape with a positive character show an irregular pattern of hedged fields, ancient hedgerows and large numbers of over-mature hedgerow oaks. The extensive network of small, often sunken, winding lanes, the dispersed pattern of small rural villages and the

traditional red brick architecture all help to give the area its own character.

The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain can itself be subdivided into two character areas:

The Woodland Quarter is a locality of sandstone hills and large woodlands to the south west of Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Maer and Hanchurch Hills are a block of uplands over 400m with a varied and undulating landform, which creates a small scale landscape of ridges and valleys. Slopes are often wooded and there are large trees.

The Northern Meres and Mosses is an area of clay lowlands to the north of the Woodland Quarter. This area in particular is under commuter pressure, resulting in property improvements and some erosion of rural character.

To the north east of Stoke-on-Trent, around Mow Cop, is the remains of a prominent landscape feature with the character of the Low Peaks beyond.

Smaller areas of landscape around the northern and eastern fringes of the conurbation fall within the Potteries and Churnet Valley (no 64) Regional Character Area. This includes:

- Coalfield/ fringe farmlands areas, formerly extraction sites, now in agricultural use fringe farmlands; and
- Restoration land, former industrial/ quarry workings not in agricultural use, but acting as informal open space, generally found as pockets between housing.



Figure 10.4: Rural landscape showing the character of high quality, more intact, areas of landscape within the rural areas - in this case the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain



Figure 10.5: Apedale Country Park: A successful example of the restoration of a former industrial landscape on the fringes of the conurbation for recreational use, now providing a green landscape to the conurbation, supporting ecological diversity and helping to promote healthy lifestyles

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10.3 Character of settlements

The oldest villages were developed for agricultural reasons, often in a ribbon format along water courses or key routes at road junction points, or associated with large estates and their estate farms, for instance Betley, in relation to Betley Hall. These villages were often extended later in response to industrial requirements, sometimes related to agriculture, for instance mills, at Madeley, or extraction, for example at Alsager Bank.

There has been uneven development pressure across the rural areas, which is reflected in today's settlement patterns. Villages close to the conurbation or associated with industrial activity, now have a mixed development pattern spanning through the centuries, for instance, Madeley, with a rural centre, terraced workers housing and 1930's semi-detached housing.

Development in rural settlements must respond to the unique character and setting of each, taking into consideration a thorough understanding of the settlement pattern and its setting in the landscape.

The character of a place as a whole comes from all of its parts, although often the pre-twentieth century development is considered to contribute most to the character and identity of a place. It is the parts of a settlement that have a positive character that should be considered in the design of new development, which in many cases, will be the historic character.

Where new development is directly related or linked to the historic core of a village, then it should relate to the characteristics of the historic part of the village.

RE2 New development associated with existing villages should retain, enhance and incorporate some of the existing features and characteristics of the settlement pattern, wherever possible.

Refer to: [Section 3.6 Appraising the context](#)

This includes the typical patterns of:

- The streets - how wide and how straight, do they cross contours or follow them?
- The shape of building plots - whether they are characteristically wide fronted or narrow and whether all are of the same type and size;
- The positioning of buildings within a plot - how far they are set back from the street frontage and how consistent is the positioning;
- The orientation of buildings on the plot - do they face the street or sit at an angle to it?
- The proportion of the plot and the plot frontage that is built up; and
- The grouping of buildings on plots.

The character of a village is the result of much more than just the appearance of its buildings.

As in urban areas, much of the character is set by the settlement pattern - the pattern of streets and plots and how the buildings occupy plots. However, rural settlements tend to be more strongly influenced by the landform and landscape.

They are also typically, although not always, more informal and varied in their settlement pattern than urban areas. Streets may reflect the line of former field boundaries rather than the most direct route from A to B; plots may be all the same size or may vary; buildings may be positioned so there is no clear building line; and they may be grouped in a variety of ways than in consistent groups. All of these factors influence the character of a specific village.

Where new development follows the principles of the settlement pattern of a particular village, it will help to fit it into that village. Each village is different and it is important to understand the specific characteristics of that village rather than to apply generic village design principles.

Return to: [Section 1.8.7](#)



Betley

- Long, generously sized plots.
- Detached buildings or small groups.
- Irregular building line.
- Buildings set back from street frontage.



Audley

- Long narrow plots.
- Generally, terraced groups of buildings.
- Building line of each terrace generally consistent, but not always parallel with street. Varies between terraces.
- Buildings set close to street frontage.

Figure 10.6: Betley and Audley: Different settlement patterns in different villages. Figure ground diagrams, as shown above, are a simple tool to help understand and show the existing settlement pattern and also to show the proposed settlement pattern, including development proposals

10.4 Setting in landscape

RE3 The location and design of new development must respond to and should not harm the setting of the village in the landscape.

Designers should make sure that development:

- Retains the features that contribute to the landscape character;
- Maintains gaps in the settlement pattern, which separate different groups of dwellings, or which provide the setting for significant buildings or places, for instance the local church or public house;
- Retains soft vegetation in the village, for instance soft verges, hedgerows, trees in the public realm and on plot.
- Maintains and enhance open spaces to make them appropriately rural in character, whilst providing good facilities for local people, for instance for children's' play.
- Where possible, contributes new features that enhance the setting of the village in the landscape.

The relationship between the village and its landscape setting contributes to its character, particularly where the landscape comes right into the heart of the village. This may be recognised open space, but farmland or woodland may also help to make up the character of a village.

RE4 New development must be carefully composed in relation to important views into or out of a village, so that the setting of the village in the landscape is not harmed but is maintained or enhanced.

This should include:

- Existing views into the village from beyond its boundaries, which may include the road network, places accessible to the public, and other settlements;
- Existing views of the wider landscape from the village itself;
- New views into and out of the village that might be created through development.

The characteristics of views which are likely to be important to the setting of the village in the landscape are:

- The skyline of the village and its most significant buildings, or features - are they landmarks in key views?
- The balance between vegetation and buildings in long views - for instance, are there layers of trees with buildings visible between them?
- The nature of the edges of the village - is it less densely developed towards the edges or does it contrast strongly with the landscape around it?

In a village, key views that contribute to the setting of the village in the landscape are likely to include:

- Views along key routes, streets or paths, into the wider landscape beyond;
- Views across open spaces or gaps in the settlement pattern;
- Views from the setting of important buildings such as the church.

In these views, the ability to see into the landscape is likely to be important as is the openness of such views.



Figure 10.7: Madeley, key views within the village are those which set the Pool area in landscape, so that both to the north and south there is a soft landscape setting of trees behind the mill and church

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10.5 Built form character

RE5 *New development in the rural area should respond to the typical forms of buildings in the village or locality.*

In doing so, designers should generally take into account and respond to:

- The pattern of building forms that helps create the character of a settlement, for instance whether there is a consistency or variety;
- The ways in which buildings address the street;
- The heights of buildings;
- Roof forms and slopes, for instance whether there are gables or eaves facing the street;
- The ways that buildings are grouped together either on a single plot or on several plots, for instance whether larger buildings are made up of several smaller scale elements;
- The ways that roof forms are grouped, for instance whether there are dormers and what form they typically take;
- Opportunities that building form offers for environmental sustainability, including passive measures, such as solar gain or shelter, and active measures such as roof slopes suitable for solar panels, either now or in the future.

Environmental considerations have influenced the form of development throughout history and many of the typical building forms seen in villages today are a reflection of that past influence. Today environmental measures are once again important for our future. Where they need to influence the form of a building then they should do so provided that the development responds to the character of the village in some of the other ways identified in this section.

RE6 *The elevations of new buildings must be well composed, well proportioned and well detailed.*

New development should be sympathetic to the traditional character of a village. However, this does not mean that it must look the same as the other buildings. High quality contemporary design can be responsive to and enhance the character of a village, provided it follows the other principles outlined in this section.

If a design approach replicates a historical style, it must be demonstrably based upon careful observation and replication of the prevailing styles, details and materials in the locality.

RE7 *New buildings should respond to the materials, details and colours that may be distinctive to a locality.*

Designers should aim to incorporate into their schemes some or all of the following:

- Materials that are distinctive to the locality, either to the rural area as a whole or to a particular village, for instance dark red-brown bricks or Staffordshire blue bricks;
- Typical ways these materials may be used, for instance in decoration;
- Colour palettes that relate to or complement traditional materials or other local features;
- Details similar to characteristic traditional details, for instance in relation to eaves, or gables or dormers.

New developments may use materials, colours or details in the same way as in existing traditional buildings. However, there is also scope to use these locally distinctive elements in different ways that reflect the nature of building today rather than the methods of the past. This approach is also a valid way to respond to local distinctiveness.

Using local materials, colours or details in themselves is not sufficient to make a development fit into the local character of a village.



Figure 10.8: Betley: Rural vernacular buildings dating from the pre-industrial era were built in the materials that were available locally, in this instance in Betley, in a timber frame, with lime plaster and thatch. In many instances, their siting, orientation and design were a direct response to local environmental conditions



Figure 10.9: For sustainability reasons, there is renewed interest in building with locally sourced materials in a manner that responds carefully to environmental conditions. This may mean local bricks but it could also mean using local timber or, for instance, straw bales. A wide variety of buildings may result from this type of approach



10.6 Public and private space

RE8 The relationships between public and private space and the transition between them in new developments should relate to the existing character of the village.

10.6.1 Public spaces

Refer also to: **Section 11.3 In existing settlements**

The design of public streets and spaces in new developments should take into account:

- Existing landscape features such as hedgerows, trees and watercourses, retaining and incorporating these into proposals wherever possible and coming up with site specific rather than standard solutions to any issues of access, forward visibility and supervision of spaces so that there is no loss of character.
- The types of roads and streets that are characteristic of the locality, retaining the character of those that exist already and creating new routes with similar characteristics. Small winding, often sunken lanes are identified as part of the landscape character of the area and this character should not be diluted if development takes place.
- Rural routes do not generally correspond to standard highway practice, rarely being a standard width carriageway with two footways. When designing new routes, design solutions should be found that balance highway safety with creating and maintaining a rural character.
- Routes within rural settlements should be designed to keep vehicle speeds low, through appropriate design measures, avoiding urban traffic solutions such as mini roundabouts or speed cushions.
- Aim to remove all clutter of signage and highways controls from village streets so far as possible and make sure that any necessary

signage and street furniture is appropriate in character.

- Design in changes of level with care, particularly where there is a level change between the development plots and the street. Consider solutions that create a character for the space, such as a raised footway with soft verge

10.6.2 Boundaries and private spaces

The design of the boundaries between public and private spaces and of private gardens themselves both contribute to the character of a rural settlement. They should take into account:

- Boundary treatments should reflect those found in the village in nature, scale and material.
- Where they are a local characteristic, front gardens with soft landscape should be provided or retained.
- Tree cover in private gardens can contribute significantly to the character of a village, both in front and rear gardens, particularly where trees are mature.

The erosion of front gardens is to be avoided. Where proposals for car parking in front of buildings require planning permission, then some soft landscape should be retained. Preferably parts of the front boundary treatment should be also retained. Areas of hard-standing should be kept to a minimum and should be appropriate to a rural setting, for instance gravel or strips of brick paving, rather than large areas of concrete block paving. Surfaces must allow surface water to percolate into the ground.



Figure 10.10: Wrinehill, example of how streets influence the character of a place, in this case a narrow private lane with a glimpse view of the landscape beyond. A gravel surface, grass verge and planting as part of the boundary treatment all underline the rural character



Figure 10.11: Wrinehill, these new houses maintain the feel of an existing lane by retaining significant trees and hedges and introducing front gardens with shrub planting and hedges as the boundary treatment

Further information

National Policy Statement: PPS7

LDF evidence base: Draft Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey Newcastle-under-Lyme: Historic Character Assessment (2009)

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11 Public realm

11.1 Introduction

The public realm is identified in the strategic urban design vision under a number of themes.

Refer to:

[Section 2.2 Successful and thriving centres](#)

[Section 2.3 High quality places for living and working](#)

[Section 2.4 Better quality connections](#)

[Section 2.5 High quality green space networks](#)

[Section 2.7 Legible settlements and settings](#)

[Section 2.8 Future quality of life](#)

A high quality public realm — streets, public spaces and green spaces — can have a significant influence on the health, social well-being and economic life of an urban area.

Building on existing successes such as the Greenways, the provision of a good quality public realm can help to provide a recognisable image for the conurbation as a whole, as well as offering a means of creating distinctive character for the individual settlements.

Memorable streets and spaces have a strong character that gives them a real ‘sense of place’ and distinctiveness. They characterise a specific location, rather than somewhere that you might see anywhere in the country. Not every street or space can be memorable or unique but all should aim to achieve key urban design principles relevant to their type.

Green infrastructure also has an important role to play in terms of climate adaptation.

This section sets out principles that apply generally to the design of streets and spaces; those which are specific to landscapes within settlements or within ‘green setting’ areas and key principles relating to greenways.

11.2 Successful streets and spaces

PR1 Streets and spaces, including public spaces and green spaces, should fulfil a variety of functions, of which vehicular movement is but one, including: social and recreational activity that supports daily life and promotes healthy lifestyles; and helping to manage environmental quality.

Successful streets and spaces, including public spaces and green spaces, are characterised by a number of qualities, which must be designed into any new provision to be developed, and must also be incorporated into the redesign of existing streets and spaces. These are as follows:

- A connected network, with a clear hierarchy of routes;
- Safe, inclusive and accessible to all;
- Robust and fit for purpose, now and into the future;
- Contribute to the character of the area; and they must be
- Accompanied by realistic proposals for management and maintenance.

The following principles elaborate on each of these qualities.

PR2 Streets and spaces must be designed to create connected networks that link into the surroundings, for pedestrian and cycle movement and preferably also for vehicular movement.

Key considerations include:

- Making connections into the wider network of streets and spaces not just the street around the site perimeter, wherever possible for walking and cycling in particular;



Figure 11.1: The Queen's Gardens, Newcastle is an example of a successful public space on the edge of the town centre. It fulfils a variety of roles, mainly as a place for informal recreation and relaxation, but also creating a positive image for the town centre. It acts as a gateway space, which allows views into the historic streets from the ring road approach. It has a clear, formal and traditional character and identity, with bold formal planting and is well maintained. A key pedestrian route along Ironmarket passes alongside, so the space is well integrated into the wider area and well overlooked so feels safe to use



Figure 11.2: Sadler's Park, Burslem, new housing development on the edge of the town centre where the street layout is directly connected to the town centre and the tower of Ceramica acts as a landmark for a key route through the development

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- b. The directness of routes for pedestrians and cycles, to encourage commuting by foot and cycle: for instance, the potential for new ‘heavily trafficked’ greenways;
- c. Integrating desire lines and greenways into proposals as a fundamental part of the design;

It is not always possible, and occasionally not desirable, for the vehicular network to be as connected as the pedestrian and cycle network. However, the design of streets should allow for through connections to be made in future, even where it is not possible today.

PR3 Streets and spaces must be inclusive, that is they should be public, accessible and safe for all to use.

Key considerations are:

- a. Provide access for all, free of clutter and with ramped access routes where necessary. Surfacing should be appropriate for the location and intended use.
- b. Create an environment which is safe and active during the day and also — where appropriate — encourages activity outside work hours;
- c. Ensure that routes are immediately apparent to the user, with clear sight lines and forward visibility and a generous width.
- d. Provide and support a range of activities and facilities that appeal to all members of the community, including formal provision, such as play areas, and also creating opportunities for informal and spontaneous use, for instance through providing steps that can be used as seating.

PR4 The design of streets and spaces must contribute to the character, identity and environmental quality of an area.

Places should be easy to understand, with a clear hierarchy of routes and spaces, that is supported by the built form. Views to marker buildings or other features will help the users orientate themselves;

Create interesting places that balance diversity — for instance in architectural form, planting species and landmark buildings — with consistency, such as the use of a coherent architectural style, or palette of materials.

Street trees can reinforce the hierarchy of routes, so helping people find their way around. They can also help to establish a positive character for a neighbourhood.

PR5 Streets and spaces should contribute to the future heritage of an area, that is, they must be well designed, robust and capable of adaptation to support a variety of patterns of use and activity, both now into the future.

Key considerations include:

- a. Be adaptable in order to permit a range of uses. These might include sitting, socialising and events;
- b. Be flexible in order to allow change over time and provision of evolving technologies;
- c. Embed environmental sustainability within the layout, design and choice of materials. This should reflect the microclimate, local supply and manufacturing processes of materials, ease of maintenance, water conservation and biodiversity through planting.

PR6 The long term management and maintenance of streets and spaces and their landscapes, including street trees and SUDS, must be considered by designers at the outset, in relation to such matters as the layout and design, choice of materials, street furniture and planting species.



Figure 11.3: Clearly defined and legible pedestrian/cycle route along the Don Valley



Figure 11.4: Examples of high quality footways following desire lines and with clear sight lines to provide easy and direct routes and encourage walking

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Regular maintenance is often as important as the initial investment into a space and particularly in relation to green spaces, this includes investment in on-site staff. Poorly maintained green spaces soon become magnets for antisocial behaviour, discouraging users and initiating a downwards spiral of decay.

Good management can lead to better use and supports an investment in better quality, as people adapt their behaviour to their surroundings. Tackling low-level antisocial behaviour has an effect on more serious offences and rapid responses to vandalism send a clear message that abuse will not be tolerated. More surveillance means that higher quality materials and furniture are less likely to be vandalised than unsupervised and poorly used areas.

Investment in the long term management of spaces may involve consideration of the reinstatement of park keepers to reassure visitors while discouraging unsuitable behaviour. Other management factors that influence the quality of spaces include the corporate policy framework and clarity of lines of responsibility within the management structure; and the degree of engagement with the community (including groups creating problems) in the process of reclaiming or establishing a park.

Targeting limited funding towards one location at a time, so as to maximise its impact is a more effective approach than minor works across a large number of spaces

PR7 New development must contribute to the quality and success of streets, public spaces and green spaces.

Key considerations include:

- a. Ensure that buildings front onto the street, public space or open space, with windows and doors to help to animate the space and provide passive surveillance;

- b. Avoid positioning blank walls, token windows, and features such as car parks on the street frontage or around spaces, where activity and supervision are required.
- c. Buildings must define the edge of streets and spaces and should be of a height to enclose streets and public spaces;
- d. Create new links into the surrounding network of streets/green spaces (including canals and rivers), along existing or potential desire lines.
- e. Design building orientation and height so that associated public spaces are attractive to use, for instance create shelter from prevailing winds or draughts, allow sunlight and daylight, provide shade in summer;
- f. Ensure that the detailed design of building edges and space on the frontage, for instance front gardens and boundary treatments, enhances the safety, quality and appeal of the public realm.

Return to: [Section 5.6](#) [Section 7.3](#)

11.3 In existing settlements

Most of the street network will be within settlements, the places people live. Manual for Streets provides detailed design guidance for streets in residential areas. Streets, public spaces and green spaces within settlements should be designed to promote and support activity and they should provide durable solutions for intensive use.

The design of streets and public spaces within centres presents different challenges to those in residential areas. In centres there are more complex vehicular and pedestrian movement requirements, and a need to create attractive settings for a variety of uses such as work, leisure and shopping. They also tend to be the location for public spaces.



Figure 11.5: Central Forest Park, a local example of poor design quality, where housing does not address the park at one of the entrance points. The housing does not help to supervise the pedestrian route or park activity and the close boarded fence is a poor quality boundary treatment. Equally the housing gains no benefit from the park in terms of a positive outlook (although in this case it predates the establishment of the park). In locations such as this, limited new development may be appropriate to improve the relationship between the park and its surroundings



Figure 11.6: Victoria Park, Tunstall, where housing addresses the park across a residential street. The houses have large windows at ground and first floor level which give residents attractive views and also provide overlooking, which helps to supervise the open space

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A separate section follows on the specific issues relevant to centres and to public spaces.

This guidance relates to the design of streets and open spaces in other parts of settlements, both existing and for new development.

Although a strong character is often associated with old places, well-designed new streets and spaces can also create places which people cherish and they can act as destinations in their own right.

The typical characteristics found within the urban public realm are formality, order and regularity, with a predominance of hard paved surfaces and more limited structural planting.

Within any settlement, there will and should be a range of spaces and street types, based on their scale, location, type of movement and levels of use.

PR8 The design of streets and public spaces must consider all modes of transport and, in particular, must encourage walking and cycling. It must be appropriate to the nature of movement and other activities that the street may support and to its role in the street hierarchy.

Busy arterial roads demand a different treatment from a residential cul-de-sac. However, many considerations apply in all cases:

- Traffic and parking should not dominate the street scene to the detriment of pedestrians.
- Vehicular speeds should be managed through design where necessary.
- The application of rigid highway engineering solutions should be avoided.
- Pavements should be wide enough to cater for expected pedestrian levels, but should also

be scaled so that the built form can define and enclose the space.

- All pedestrian crossings should be at grade.
- Views or sightlines should ensure onward visibility for pedestrians.
- Long runs of pedestrian railings or pens should be avoided: these encourage higher traffic speeds and give less priority to pedestrians.
- Signage should be consistent, avoiding standard solutions wherever possible, and appropriate in scale to the context.

Within settlements, open spaces of different scales are a key part of the green space network

PR9 Good quality green spaces provide a sense of place for existing neighbourhoods and also for new development, where they can create a structure and establish a character for a new area. They should be linked together to form a fully connected green space network running throughout the conurbation.

Many of the principles that govern streets also apply to green spaces.

Within settlements, green space may include:

- Parks, gardens and other open spaces;
- Playgrounds;
- Outdoor sports;
- Semi-natural open spaces; and
- Greenways.

Design considerations include:

- Surveillance is always vital: informal supervision of spaces, which in turns encourages greater usage and activity.
- Encouraging activity, particularly at entrances and along through routes, including walking, standing and seating;



Figure 11.7 Sheffield, generous pedestrian crossing from railway station into city centre across traffic calmed main vehicular route



Figure 11.8: Sheffield, cycle lane marked on-street and denoted by a subtle change in paving colour and white line



Figure 11.9: Sheffield, high quality paving with subtle delineation of drop-off bays

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- c. Promoting patterns of activity throughout the day, that will be of interest to all sections of the community: more activity results in greater informal surveillance and less crime.
- d. Provision of outdoor leisure and recreational facilities and associated buildings or structures, orientated towards the south or south west wherever possible for microclimatic reasons.
- e. Microclimate, including noise, wind and orientation to the sun at various times of the day;
- f. Providing a safe environment, whether through lighting or by indirectly encouraging activity and hence greater informal surveillance;
- g. Balancing enclosure and openness: providing enclosure through taller elements such as built form, structures and tree planting, to make the space feel comfortable for users; but retaining a sense of openness and outlook, particularly where there are views to local landmarks or across the wider area.
- h. Creating strong edges to the green space through formal planting, roads and buildings around the perimeter.
- i. The decision to create a variety of different characters within a space, or the continuity of a single character through a number of spaces;
- j. Sustainable planting that will offer year-round interest and ecological value. Species that will outgrow the space or create maintenance problems should be avoided.
- k. Providing wetland areas that contribute towards neighbourhood sustainable drainage schemes.

Wherever possible there should be building frontages around the perimeter of a green space, and preferably residential frontages, to overlook and provide passive surveillance of it at different times of day and into the evening.

There are a number of examples of successful Victorian parks within the conurbation, which have many of these characteristics, for instance Hanley Park or Burslem Park.

Central Forest Park is a more recent example of a different type of landscape, where an appropriate theme, together with facilities to support activity, has helped to make it a success.

Such parks act as focal points within neighbourhoods and, when well managed, they attract a wide variety of users.

They also add value to residential areas around them. High quality green space need not be expensive and, in many cases, is offset by an uplift in land values. It may also support higher density housing around the perimeter, where an increase in communal green space provision offsets any potential loss of private space.

PR10 The links between green spaces to create a fully connected green space network will need to include new forms of 'green' link through already developed residential neighbourhoods as well as the existing and proposed greenway network. Where opportunities arise, through development or regeneration, these 'green' links should be created.

Refer to: **Section 2.5 High quality green space networks** for locations where these 'green' links are desirable. Key considerations for these 'green' links include:

- a. Planning new interventions in the existing urban form, such as pocket parks and small scale community spaces, to create a co-ordinated strategy for 'green' links between existing larger green spaces.

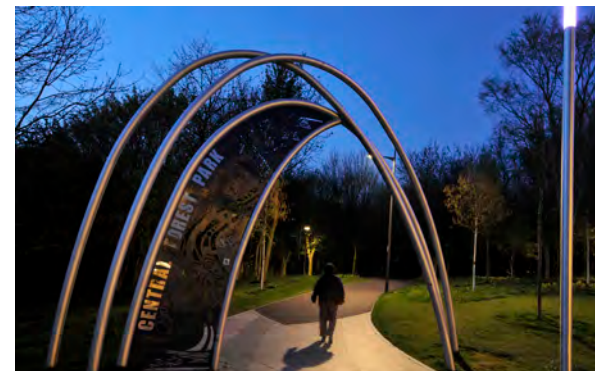


Figure 11.10: Facilities within Central Forest Park are designed to be inclusive, supporting a range of activities that appeal to a variety of people of different ages and interests, each well designed for its purpose. Safe routes to use after dark are well lit, with clear forward visibility

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- b. Soft landscape in streets where 'green' links are required, including tree planting, hedges and front gardens and potential SUDS features if streets are being retro-fitted to reduce surface water run-off.
- c. Outdoor leisure/recreational facilities such as play areas and ball courts along 'green' links.

PR11 Tree planting is a simple but effective means of transforming urban landscapes. Tree planting, especially of street trees, must be considered and will need to be integrated into proposals from the outset.

Tree planting is a simple but effective means of transforming urban landscapes. Suitable situations might include:

- a. Key locations on the transport corridors between centres where the potential for creating 'green gaps' has been identified.
- b. Entrance 'gateways' from outside the conurbation, for example the A53 from Leek.
- c. As 'green links' between new or existing parks, particularly to highlight and enhance the appeal of walking between them and to contribute towards joining up the green space network in existing settlements.
- d. To provide shade and shelter in urban areas with canopies filtering strong sunlight in summer while allowing winter sunlight to help reduce any future 'urban heat island' effect.

Return to: [Section 8.6](#) [Section 10.6](#)

11.4 In centres

The public realm acts as the focal point for civic, public, commercial and creative life. The design and quality of streets and spaces within a centre is a reflection of the aspirations and distinctive qualities of the particular locality. It also helps to

identify it and to set it apart from other centres.

Civic spaces are at the heart of centres. These squares, plazas and promenades have busy functions as focal points for pedestrian activity and public events. Their scale, quality and strong sense of place represents the identity of the centre, forming local landmarks and reinforcing legibility by providing memorable settings for key monuments and buildings.

Streets in centres may often carry less traffic than other key routes, as vehicular movement may have been restricted or diverted to enhance the pedestrian experience and safety of the centre. Vehicular use of such streets is primarily by public transport and servicing vehicles.

The following guidance relates to such streets and spaces.

PR12 To encourage the use of centres, the public realm must be safe, prioritising the movement of pedestrians over vehicles and also reducing the fear and likelihood of crime.

The key considerations include those set out already for successful streets and spaces. Particular importance should be paid to:

- a. Create priority for pedestrians, through careful design of road layouts, removal of clutter and provision of adequate crossing facilities;
- b. Design other streets so that pedestrians do not feel like 'second class citizens' in relation to vehicles: ensure pavements are of a generous width, create convenient crossing points, design bus stops and shelters to be pleasant places to wait;
- c. Enhance crossing points by using direct, wide routes over roads to help reduce the barriers to pedestrian movement found around the centres;



Figure 11.11: Soft landscape, here in the form of street trees and a linear green space, softens the urban environment and establishes a 'green' character, which could be appropriate on a 'green' link. It is also well adapted to climate change, with the trees shading the space in summer, yet allowing sunshine into it in winter months



Figure 11.12: Potteries Way, where planting of street trees and hedging has transformed the quality of the environment

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- d. Ensuring that all spaces have a clearly defined function and are capable of supporting a diverse range of uses and activities.
- e. Designing spaces to reinforce areas or buildings of historic significance, such as civic or other landmark buildings, or local importance, such as local community facilities or shops.
- f. Ensuring active uses at the ground floor level and also upper floor uses within mixed use buildings wherever possible, to maximise passive surveillance of streets.
- g. Ensure that spaces are well lit.
- h. Within large scale new development, starting with the space in the connected network of routes and using it as the focus for built form rather than denoting 'leftover' spaces as public realm.

PR13 Within each centre, a clear hierarchy of spaces should be created, through the use of materials, design and street furniture, in order to indicate how routes relate to each other. New public spaces should relate to this hierarchy.

A spatial hierarchy of streets and spaces is important as it helps visitors and residents to navigate around the area, allowing clear and confident route-finding without the use of signage. Establishing a hierarchy involves the consideration of how each street should be used.

Issues involved in this would be the relative amounts of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, parking, speed of vehicles, width of road and the use of the buildings adjoining the road.

Once a hierarchy is established, it should be reinforced by the use of a suitable, varied palette of materials. This palette helps in the visual identification of routes and provides a coherent look and feel to the area.

PR14 Street furniture clutter must be avoided and a coordinated effort should be made to organise streetscape elements efficiently.

An unnecessary clutter of streets signs, bollards, benches, railings, litter bins, and light columns in a street can significantly detract from its appearance and obstruct pedestrian movement, especially for the partially sighted.

The design of streets and public spaces should address the likely patterns of use both during daytime and the night-time hours. Within centres, it is to be expected that evening use will be encouraged, so good quality lighting and surveillance must be provided.

Routes between leisure facilities, car parks, bus stops and railway stations are of particular importance; these are likely to be focal points for activity in themselves.

Centres should become accessible for all, at all hours, in order to broaden the range of people and activities involved.

Key principles for achieving this are:

- a. Removing obsolete signs and street furniture;
- b. Maximising the clear pavement area for pedestrians by locating street furniture in a single strip;
- c. Avoiding excessive 'fencing in' of pedestrians with guard rails;
- d. Where possible, combining signs and street furniture (e.g. fixing signs to lighting columns);
- e. Coordinating types, styles and colours of street furniture for the length of the street; and
- f. Using a limited palette of paving and other materials to keep the street visually simple.

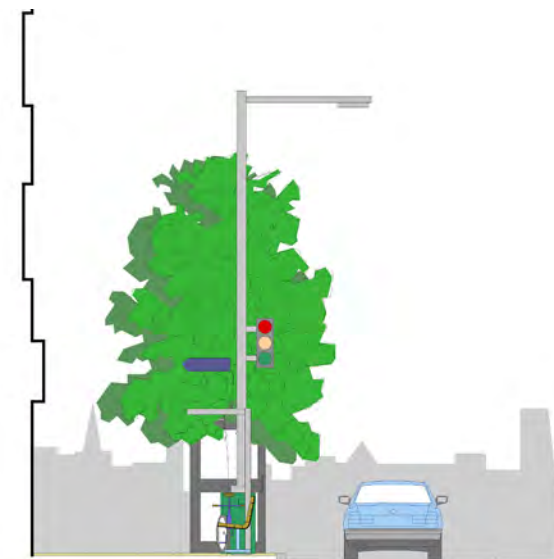


Figure 11.13: Removing street clutter from the street scene-before and after

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PR15 Within centres, materials and street furniture must be both high quality and robust, but not defensive. Paving should acknowledge the possible incursion of vehicle traffic, but should not stringently follow highways standards.

Within centres, it is essential that the quality of landscape materials and street furniture is high. Further guidance on materials is set out below.

Key considerations include:

- A clear design ethos should be adopted: avoid a mix of modern and pastiche elements.
- Siting of street furniture and colour or design palettes should be coordinated. This can sometimes be an issue where more than one authority or agency is involved in street design. In such cases, items are often added but nothing is taken away, resulting in clutter.
- Source bespoke furniture for particular locations, but avoid historical pastiche and consider the scale of the forms to ensure they complement the space and do not overpower it.
- Signage should be consistent, avoiding standard solutions wherever possible, and appropriate in scale to the context.
- Consider the quality of detail, which ensures the long term permanence of the space.

PR16 Plant species should be robust, provide multi-season interest and be easily managed. However, this should not result in predictable, municipal planting.

Discussions with utility companies and highways engineers should aim to create a more amenable growing environment for street trees. Large tree pits with root barriers and root trainers should be specified where possible.

The use of plants in centres requires careful preparation and specification. Urban environments are much more demanding than suburban and rural locations, through increased activity, moisture and heat stress, pollution and restricted root growth.

Some cities have pioneered the use of more colourful, novel species in low-maintenance designs within urban situations.

PR17 Artworks in public spaces should engage, inspire, create delight and provide an emotional attachment to the place. Installations should be fully integrated into the overall design and planned from the earliest stage.

Token features should be avoided, and the art should complement the existing and new landscape.

Ceramics can be used in contemporary ways to create artworks that interpret the historic traditions of the sub-region.

The nature of the public art should be tailored so that it is appropriate for the specific circumstances, whether it be a piece of art within the public environment, or art which has been developed with the public involvement.

The durability, long term management and maintenance implications of public art need to be considered from the outset so that the artwork is robust, fit for purpose and an asset to the local area over the long term.

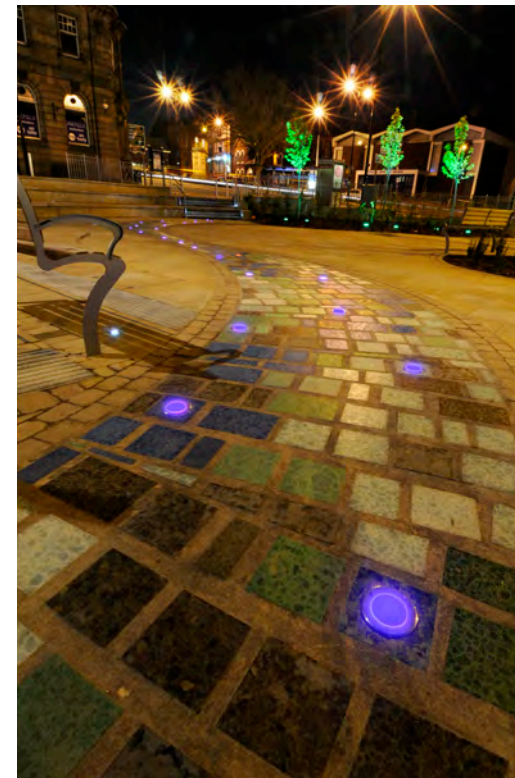


Figure 11.14: Swan Square, Burslem, where the use of public art, in this case ceramic tiling in the surface of the square, and light installations are helping to define a new more dynamic character for the centre

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PR18 Traditional local materials should be used as key components of the landscape of streets and spaces where possible. Where non-traditional paving materials are proposed, traditional laying patterns can help to reinforce local character.

Typical regional building materials that can be specified today include:

- Staffordshire blue bricks;
- The brown/grey millstone grits from the Peaks;
- Red and buff Triassic sandstone from Hollington; and
- Staffordshire pink gravel.

North Staffordshire's manufacturing history, in particular in brick making and ceramics, means that there are strong traditions of the use of local materials for paving. There are still local sources of production of the historic materials and, where these are no longer available, of materials with similar qualities and character.

Historically, road surfaces in North Staffordshire were paved in Macclesfield stone setts and footways were paved in Staffordshire blue dust bricks with Macclesfield stone kerbs. Sometimes the dust bricks had diamond or penny surface relief for improved grip and occasionally cast iron edgings reinforced the corners of footways.

Although many of the quarries that supplied the local paving and building stones no longer function, local or regional building materials should be used where possible.

Traditional materials are timeless although they can provide a sense of continuity with the history of the place. However, their use does not imply any need to follow a traditional approach to the design overall, or to other elements, such as street furniture.

Materials strategies can help to coordinate the design of the public realm in a place. They often form part of wider public realm strategies which also consider the roles and activities of different streets and spaces, street furniture and signage.

They can be of use within existing centres where enhancements works are being carried out, and in new residential developments.

If implemented early, they ensure a consistent, harmonious and high quality street scene. This way, issues such as discordant or conflicting colours, patterns and materials and unregulated clutter can be avoided.

Key considerations for paving materials are:

- It is preferable to use high quality paving materials sparingly rather than lower quality, less attractive materials over a wider area.
- In general, keep paving simple and neutral, so that it forms a setting for the architecture and the activities that take place in the space.
- Avoid excessive pattern-making in contrasting materials that does not reflect the form of the street.
- Avoid using strong colours for street furniture which may clash with the surrounding buildings.
- Use a limited materials palette, based on local materials, for instance metal, stone and brick, together with planting to introduce an element of softness.
- Relate to the colour of traditional materials, for instance some granites are similar to Macclesfield stone.
- Ensure that surfaces provide slip resistance.
- Ensure ongoing maintenance and repairs by utilities are coordinated and controlled.

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Figure 11.15: Tower Square, Tunstall, where the historic space has been designed as a setting for the Town Hall with a simple and neutral paving scheme that takes the High Street into the space

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Landscapes are a key component of the setting for the existing settlements in the conurbation. At present, these are very varied in their nature, quality and permanence. Particularly in the Inner Urban Core, at the heart of the conurbation, many of these landscapes are currently brownfield land and so may well become allocated as development sites in DPDs. These areas also include:

- A number of existing green space landscapes, which lie in between the different settlements; and
- A wide variety of informal open spaces, together with other open areas, not necessarily accessible to the public, but capable of contributing to the overall variety of landscape character and to ecological bio-diversity.

The Core Spatial Strategy identifies 'strategic green space linkages' running through many of these locations, in between the different settlements.

Developments should use these landscapes as a positive visual asset as well as a context for built form.

PR19 Development on the edges or between the different settlements that make up the conurbation should aim to use soft landscape to structure the site and create a positive sense of character and identity.

Design considerations include:

- The existing topography and landscape character. Views of open landscapes should be maintained and enhanced to provide interest to residents and visitors, and provide a sense of place and orientation;
- Incorporating and encouraging sustainable technologies, features and lifestyles, possibly including biomass energy, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), routes to encourage

walking and cycling and tree planting to reduce carbon dioxide levels;

- Measures to identify and protect existing biodiversity, which is often associated with brownfield sites;
- The inclusion of new woodland planting. Trees can screen urban areas and create visual breaks between settlements, offer an attractive setting for industrial and residential development, and increase the biodiversity of open spaces to provide ecological corridors. These should relate to the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets. Planting of small woodlands with predominantly native broadleaf varieties and species-rich hedgerows is appropriate. Planting should be kept clear of key viewing points and away from greenway routes.
- 'Green gaps' which help to engender a greater 'sense of place' to different settlements;
- Naturalistic, informal, fluid, flexible landscape styles, or semi natural landscapes;
- Including low maintenance 'semi natural' areas, where problems of tipping are not likely to be an issue. Natural regeneration can create ecologically valuable habitats with minimal intervention. Mowing can be drastically reduced in many areas, with a positive result in terms of biodiversity and character;
- Vegetation should be on a large scale, and reflect topography and new built forms;
- Maintaining and enhancing greenway links to the countryside, and promoting leisure and recreational opportunities in close association with them. Such routes can offer clearly signed trails from the city centre to the countryside;
- Extend the greenways principle to create a fully joined up network of 'green' route for cycling and walking throughout the conurbation;



Figure 11.16: Jubilee Campus, Nottingham - University buildings set around a lake and wetlands, which manage surface water run-off and contribute to cooling of the buildings, so playing an important role in the environmental performance of the building as well as creating an attractive setting and outlook for the occupiers



Figure 11.17: Great Bow Yard, Langport - A highly sustainable built development, arranged informally around semi-public communal garden areas, to create an informal 'green' character that is structured by soft landscape

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- k. Avoiding harsh urban features such as steel palisade fencing or barbed wire;
- l. Softening new existing industrial facilities with suitable buffer planting;
- m. Retain and enhance local historical or cultural features to generate interest and variety;
- n. Consider the use of artistic interventions, such as the Panopticon sculptures of Pennine Lancashire. Such publicity-intensive projects can act as catalysts for regeneration and attract investment into a region.

Development or intensive management of existing little used green spaces are not the only choices. Alternatives should be investigated.

The conurbation has large areas of green space within the green settings areas, which do not fulfil a role in the formal hierarchy of parks and open spaces. Much of this is a relic of previous industrial activity.

In some cases, natural regeneration of these sites has resulted in ecologically rich habitats that often provide informal recreation space for local residents.

A basic 'ditch and bank' approach to prevent illegal use of abandoned land should be avoided. More imaginative initiatives should always be considered, including the use of swales. Although maintenance of the vegetation in such schemes is often minimal, it should be ensured that sites do not become subject to tipping or litter.

Where sites may be more ecologically diverse through these techniques, they would be particularly sensitive to even small amounts of refuse accumulation. This will turn local residents off such schemes, lessening the sense of 'ownership' and decreasing the potential for involvement and use of the spaces.

Alternatives could potentially include:

- a. On-going creation and low-level maintenance of bio-diverse habitat areas, similar to Sneyd Hill Park;
- b. Community gardens, developing on the existing allotments;
- c. 'Microfarms' using small neglected spaces, to provide small-scale urban agriculture;
- d. Biomass generation for energy production;
- e. Creation of wetland areas that may link in to a region-wide watercourse management system;
- f. Removal of topsoil and seeding or planting of wildflowers on cleared sites, resulting in exciting urban landscapes; Examples include those created by Landlife in Merseyside or by the University of Sheffield;
- g. Creating green waste composting sites;
- h. Encouraging landowners to allow short-term use of vacant land, although issues of liability and duty of care should be considered.



Figure 11.18: A SUDS feature near Sneyd Green, where the balancing pond, creates a wetland landscape and helps add to the biodiversity of the landscape



Figure 11.19: Good example of the use of beech hedge planting to screen and break down the scale of areas of car parking

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Greenways form a key component of the green space network. They use existing linear features such as former railway lines to connect together centres, neighbourhoods, parks and the outlying countryside. They provide an attractive, signposted traffic-free option for walkers and cyclists, and are integrated into the National Cycle Network. The routes generally run in a north-south direction.

Greenways are a major asset to the area. Not only do they help to promote walking and cycling for both transport and recreation, but they help to create wildlife corridors supporting ecological diversity in built up areas. They bring fingers of landscape into otherwise dense, hard landscaped urban areas.

PR20 New development should reinforce, extend, or provide new access points where these would be of benefit to the greenway network.

Extending the network and increasing access to it will help to promote better awareness and increase activity levels. More use will create a safer environment, so making the use of greenways more attractive, a virtuous circle.

PR21 Where a development site adjoins a Greenway, then development should contribute to supervising the Greenway without compromising its 'green' character.

In new residential areas, some houses should face onto greenway routes or at least avoid blank frontages or high garden boundaries.

Green spaces, parks, play areas and community facilities proposed within new development can be integrated to form new 'nodes' along the Greenway network. These reinforce the concept of a linked system of car-free green corridors and spaces throughout the conurbation.

Proposed routes for Greenways through new development must be clear and unobstructed to allow simple route-finding and onward visibility.

PR22 The design of greenways should adopt an overall, consistent 'look and feel' to offer assurance and confidence to users. This should be balanced with a level of flexibility that allows the landscape character to vary along the greenway route in response to the character of the locality.

Design considerations should reflect the nature of the landscape in which the greenway is located.

Key considerations include:

- At grade crossings and where possible priority to greenway users over vehicular traffic where feasible;
- Strong, legible treatments to start and end points, creating focal 'gateways' where new building is possible.
- Provision of high quality, open, visible cycle and vehicle parking areas on the fringes of the conurbation to encourage 'out-of-town' visitors to use greenway routes for leisure.
- Continued investment to complete a fully connected greenway network throughout the conurbation.
- Consistent signage: good quality signs do exist, but these have begun to display additional clutter from different agencies.
- Implement a regular maintenance regime for signage. Defaced signage is one of the principal visual indicators of an unsafe or under valued asset.
- Use of consistent surface treatment (e.g. buff gravel) to identify onward route, or the use of a single subtle colour as specific route identifier.



Figure 11.20: Local examples of well maintained, high quality Greenways which create safe, attractive environments for walking and cycling

Further information

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre SPD (2009)

North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy (2007)

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A1 Adopted Planning Policy basis

Core Spatial Strategy (October 2009)

Strategic Aim 14 (SA14) To protect and enhance the historic heritage and the unique character of the plan area by ensuring new developments are appropriate in terms of scale, location and their context.

Strategic Aim 16 (SA16) To eliminate poor quality development and establish a culture of excellence in built design by developing design skills and understanding, by requiring good, safe design as a universal baseline and distinctive design excellence in all development proposals, and by promoting procurement methods which facilitate the delivery of good design.

Strategic Aim 17 (SA17) To minimise the adverse impacts of climate change in the move towards zero carbon growth through energy efficiency, promoting the use of renewable energy sources and green construction methods in accordance with best practice.

Policy CSP1 – Design Quality

New development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent's unique townscape and landscape and in particular, the built heritage, its historic environment, its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres.

New development should also:

1. Promote the image and distinctive identity of Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent through the enhancement of strategic and local gateway locations and key transport corridors.
2. Be based on an understanding and respect for Newcastle's and Stoke-on-Trent's built, natural and social heritage.

3. Protect important and longer distance views of historic landmarks and rural vistas.
4. Contribute positively to an areas identity and heritage (both natural and built) in terms of scale, density, layout, use of appropriate vernacular materials for buildings and surfaces and access.
5. Be easy to get to and to move through and around, providing recognisable routes and interchanges and landmarks that are well connected to public transport, community facilities, the services of individual communities and neighbourhoods across the whole plan area.
6. Have public and private spaces that are safe, attractive, easily distinguished, accessible, complement the built form and foster civic pride.
7. Ensure a balanced mix of uses that work together and encourage sustainable living in the use of water, energy and re-use of materials and minimises the impact on climatic change.
8. Provide active ground floor frontages where located in the City Centre, Newcastle Town centre, local or district centres.
10. Be accessible to all users.
11. Be safe, uncluttered, varied, and attractive.
12. Contribute positively to healthy lifestyles.
13. Support and foster innovative management and service delivery.

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Policy CSP2 – Historic Environment

Both Councils will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the historic heritage of the City and the Borough including buildings, monuments, sites and areas of special archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

Policy CSP3 – Sustainability and Climate Change

Development which positively addresses the impacts of climate change and delivers a sustainable approach will be encouraged. The highest standards of energy and natural resource efficiency will be achieved by:

1. Requiring that all new development, as a minimum, complies with on-site or near-site renewable or low carbon energy targets set out in current or future national guidance and the Regional Spatial Strategy and takes positive measures to reduce carbon emissions to the levels set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
2. Ensuring the use of construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and which maximise the use of recycled and locally sourced materials.
3. Requiring all new developments to incorporate the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS).
4. Developing habitat systems which are resilient to climate change in accordance with latest best practice.
5. Supporting local initiatives to address climate change such as the North Staffordshire Warm Zone and other initiatives that may emerge.
6. Requiring best practice standards where supported by future local or regional evidence.

7. All new development shall be located in locations at lowest possible flood risk as identified in the SFRA and all suitable flood mitigation measures shall be investigated and where possible incorporated into the development. Opportunities will be sought to open up culverted watercourses to alleviate flood risk, create and improve habitats and develop green corridors.

Where these requirements are impractical and/or unviable, the onus will be on the developer to demonstrate that this is the case.

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A2 Glossary

AWM: Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the Regional Development Agency.

AAP: Area Action Plan, DPDs that provide a planning framework for areas of change and areas of conservation.

BREEAM: BRE Environmental Assessment Method is the most widely used method for assessing the environmental performance of non-residential buildings.

Biofuel or biomass: plant material that is burned for fuel with less environmental impact than using the national grid.

Brownfield sites: previously developed or worked land.

Building for Life: the national standard for well-designed home and neighbourhoods, run by CABE.

CABE: the Commission for the Built Environment, the government's advisor on design.

Code for Sustainable Homes: the government's national standard to guide industry in the design and construction of new homes.

CHP: Combined Heat and Power, local electricity generation in such a way that the heat generated as a byproduct can be used for domestic or other heating.

Conurbation: the Major Urban Areas as defined by the Core Spatial Strategy.

Core Spatial Strategy: the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy adopted October 2009.

DCLG: Department for Communities and Local Government, the government department responsible for planning.

DPD: Development Plan Document, a spatial planning document prepared by local planning authorities setting out their policies and allocations of sites.

Environmental Assessment: an assessment of the possible impact a project may have on the environment in terms of economic, social and environmental issues.

Evidence base: the background technical studies that support, justify and explain the policies and proposals in the LDF.

Figure ground diagram: a plan showing the relationship between built form and space, with the built form generally shown in black and the space left as white.

Green infrastructure: the natural and managed green areas in urban and rural settings, as an environmental resource.

Ground source heat pump: pipes buried in the ground extract heat from it, warming water which is then used for space or water heating in a property.

Historic environment: as defined in the Core Spatial Strategy as "buildings, monuments, sites and areas of special archaeological, architectural or historic interest".

Inner Urban Core: defined in the Core Spatial Strategy as a key focus for targeted regeneration.

LDF: Local Development Framework, a local planning authority's DPDs and SPDs collectively.

Local Energy Centre: energy generation source that serves a site or neighbourhood, relatively energy efficient because energy losses through transmission are reduced, compared with conventional power stations.

Microclimate: a local area where the climate differs from the surroundings.

Over-mature tree: tree past its mature stage of growth.

PPS1: Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development, the government's national planning policy.

PPS5: Planning Policy Statement 5 - Planning for the Historic Environment, the government's national planning policy.

Ramsar Site: site designated under the intergovernmental Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971), which commits signatories to maintain the ecological character of such sites and to plan for the sustainable use of wetland areas.

Scale: the size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person, also called human scale.

Setting: the environment in which something sits.

Settlement: a place where people live.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): a document providing greater detail on the policies in DPDs.

Sustainability Appraisal: an appraisal of the impacts of policies, proposals and guidance on economic, social and environmental issues.

SUDS: Sustainable Urban Drainage System, drainage features designed to receive and to hold surface water run-off and to reduce the amount or slow down the speed at which it enters the mains drainage system.

Urban heat island: a metropolitan area which is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas, due to the absorption of heat by the hard surfaces associated with urban development.

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