2. Suburbs

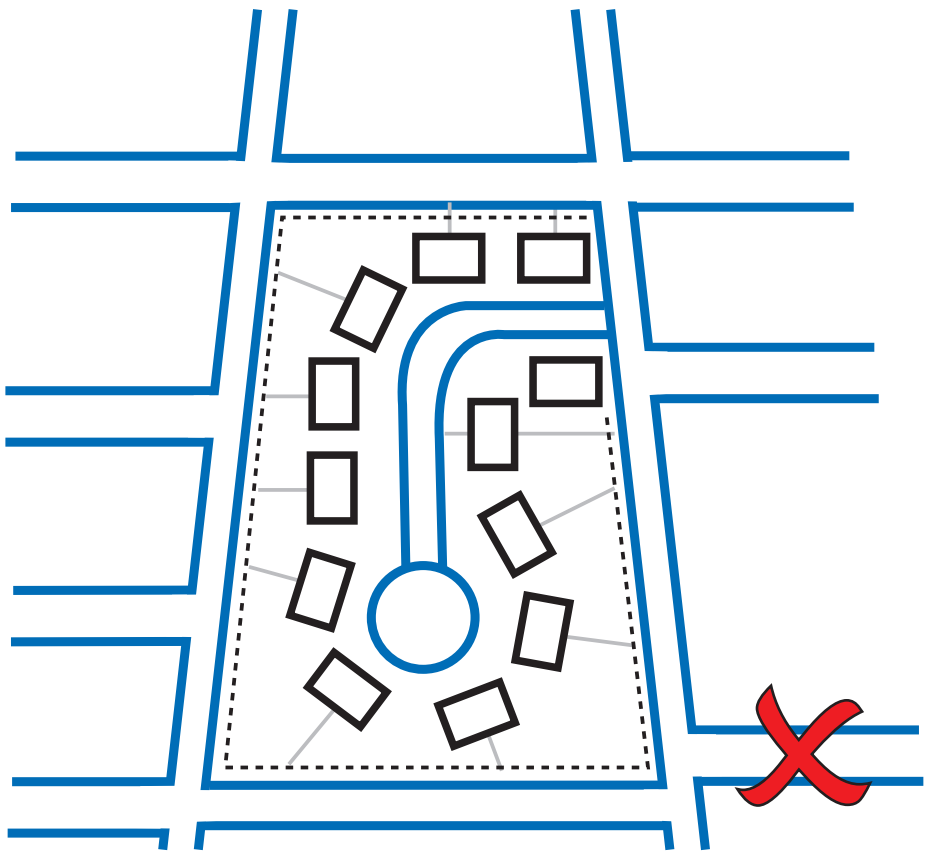
- Urban Form
- Density
- Scale & Enclosure
- Safety
- Suburban Centres
- Permeability
- Character
- Orientation
- Views
- Vehicle Dominance
- Services

"Reinforcing communities and creating better places to live"

Suburbs - Urban Design Principles

Urban Form

Developments should be designed around the concept of urban blocks, where new buildings face out onto a defined street pattern, and have gardens/parking and service yards to the rear. This form provides an efficient land use, a clear distinction between the public and private realm, a legible street pattern and provides good natural surveillance onto the street. These urban blocks can be formed through regular blocks and grid street pattern, concentric blocks or irregular blocks. Dead-end 'cul de sacs' should be avoided, unless there is a compelling local precedent set, that means a block development would be totally at odds with local character. In this case, pedestrian permeability should be provided by well over-looked paths.

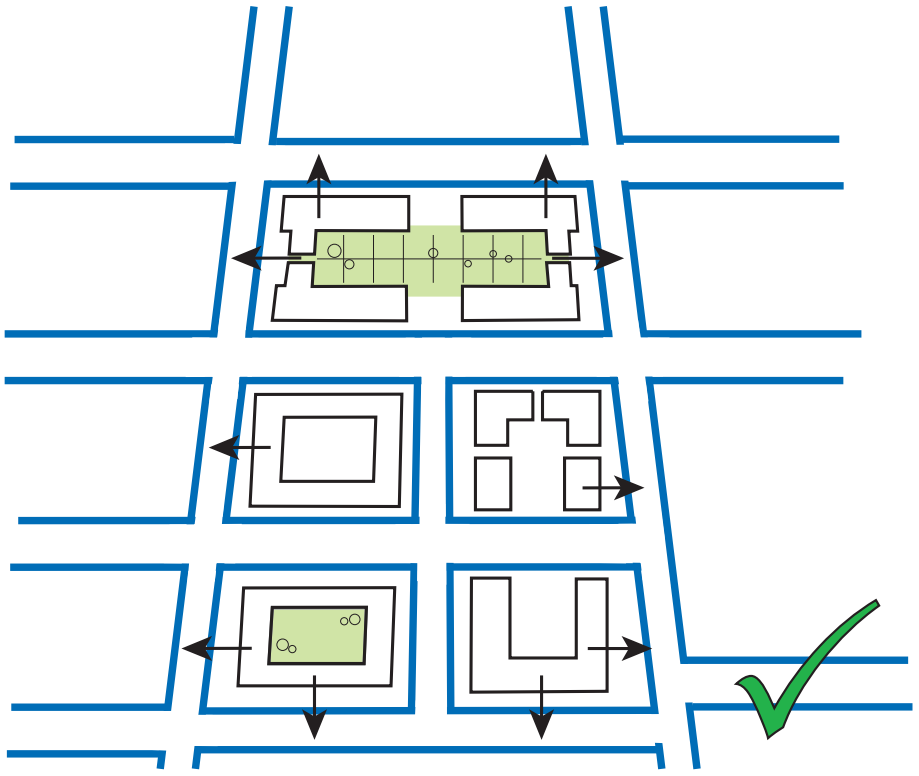


New developments should look to provide a range of housing sizes and types to provide choices and variety within a neighbourhood that will lead to a more diverse range of people living within a community.

A suburb should aim to create or maintain a strong attractive edge to the surrounding countryside by resisting scattered piecemeal developments that weaken the suburban boundary.

Density

In principle this framework proposes a retention of the established intensity of development. However in some areas a higher density will be appropriate in accordance with national and local policy. In fill development will be more appropriate within more urban areas where there is currently a higher density of buildings. Lower density developments will be more appropriate on the edges of a suburban area where there is more of a rural influence.
The set back of a development is a key consideration for defining the character of the suburb. Where buildings can be serviced from the rear and a denser layout is preferred, the developments should sit at the back of the footway, or have a small buffer zone of 1-2m between back of kerb and building line. Where lower density of housing and a greener urban environment is preferred then small gardens should be provided to the front of buildings. In this scenario low boundary wall/fences/hedges should be used to delineate public from private space but still allow open views. The amount of set back and hence the amount of private space that is designated at the front of a property and 'on show' should therefore be dictated by local context.



Scale and Enclosure

In general terms the scale, height and massing of a development should respond to its surroundings so that it sits comfortably within an area. Exceptions to this may exist at focal points where a landmark building may be appropriate to signify the heart of a community or a gateway into one. Where land uses that require larger units are proposed away from the suburban centre (such as supermarkets/commercial offices), care should be

taken to ensure that these developments fit in with the residential character of a residential suburb, by articulating the mass of units into smaller forms, reducing building heights, considering the development as an extension of the existing urban grain in terms of orientation and footprint and through careful detailing.

Space/Urban Realm

The width of the space between the buildings is vitally important to create a sense of enclosure and cohesion within the suburb. Wide open spaces and low density developments can feel wind swept, exposed and lack identity. The width of streets and spaces between should be considered in relation to the scale of the adjacent dwellings. There are no hard and fast rules but an enclosure ratio of between 1:2 and 1:3.5 is appropriate for most dense suburban areas. Where there are streets that have a lower enclosure ratio avenues of trees should be considered to provide verticality to reinforce the street pattern.

It is vital that public open space and greenery is provided within any neighbourhood for the community and health benefit that it promotes. A clear hierarchy should be developed for the type and amount of space within a suburb. Public, private and communal spaces should be clearly defined and given a clear role and function. Public open space is best located at the heart of a neighbourhood where it can contribute to the sense of identity and provide a community focus and is within easy walking distance from public transport and local facilities. Public space should always be overlooked by development and be well-framed by adjacent buildings to create a good sense of enclosure.

Spaces should be considered in terms of how they interact and link with other spaces within a neighbourhood. Streets and spaces should be designed as an interconnected network where there are safe and easy to use pedestrian and cycle links between them.

Left-over space, or ill designed/poorly located space within a development can have a negative impact on a suburb and should be avoided. Such spaces are likely to be poorly used and in time will become a maintenance burden and potential social nuisance.

Surface materials should consist of tarmac footways and road with wide concrete or granite kerbs to reduce the maintenance implications within the suburbs. Feature materials such as concrete setts may be appropriate at local shopping/community centres to promote a more shared surface approach to the street, encourage pedestrian activity and provide localised environmental improvement at the heart of a suburb.

Verges should consist of simple grass treatment and tree planting. Trees should be planted at every opportunity through strong avenues to green up suburban streets and consideration given to preventing car parking on the grass verges.

Safety

Public spaces and routes should always be over looked by a development at ground and first floor level to ensure passive surveillance of the public domain. Spaces should be well lit and avoid blind spots/dark corners to reinforce the perceptions of safety.

Suburban Centres

Aim to reinforce the community centres within a suburb to provide a focus a sense of community to an area. Encourage the consolidation of public amenities into this community centre and upgrade the local environment in these areas to create a pleasing high quality townscape. The architecture at these centres should look to be of a high quality and distinctive style to create a local landmark.

Permeability

New developments should tie in with existing road layouts to create continuity, within and between other suburbs - allowing an area to be easily accessible and reducing travel distances. Traditional cul de sacs generally

create dead ends and undesirable routes between adjacent suburbs. New developments should therefore use more traditional 'street' patterns where each street leads to somewhere and forms part of a wider network of streets.

New development should maintain existing, and establish new links to the countryside where possible.

Where possible existing footways should be widened to provide safer pedestrian routes, and narrower road ways to promote slower traffic speeds

Character

All development should respond positively and contribute to the existing character and features of an area such as parks, topography, landscape attributes, key views and historic features.

Development should respond to and complement the local area's vernacular in terms of detailing and materials, but not necessarily replicate it. If there is a very distinctive style and materials palette within an area then it would be appropriate to have elements of this design style and materials within a new development. It may also be appropriate to create new landmarks within an area that lacks a strong identity, providing a new focus and distinctiveness to an area.

Orientation

New buildings should align with existing properties where possible so as to sit comfortably within the surrounding setting. Buildings should align and face onto the road to reinforce the street pattern and promote passive surveillance. Developments should avoid having high fenced garden areas to the front which create blank facades and an un-welcoming street environment.

The nature of our climate means that it is desirable to maximise the amount of sunlight that penetrates ours homes and public spaces. The orientation, height and form of buildings can also be designed to ensure optimum solar gain. In general terms dwellings facing southwards with streets arranged in an east west pattern provide opportunities for reducing energy requirements within the home. If these developments are designed with regular breaks in the urban form they can also allow sunlight penetration into the spaces between. Public spaces should ensure that they have good sunlight penetration into part or all of the space.

However orientating developments for solar gain should be considered carefully in relation to all the other guidance set out in this chapter, to ensure that a measured and balanced approach is achieved between what are sometimes competing design objectives.

Views

Development should not unduly hinder views of key features or block attractive views of the surrounding countryside, sea or estuary, but should aim to frame views. Conversely development can help screen unsightly views and should be focused in these areas if this is the case.

Waltham

Habrough

Home Zone, Scunthorpe

Vehicle Dominance

All developments should look to reduce the impact of vehicles and be designed with greater consideration for people. New developments should consider car parking 'off street' to the side or rear of a development within courtyards. Examine and implement local solutions to car parking provision at community centres, and if necessary provide innovative solutions to reduce congestion at the heart of a community. The plethora of traffic signage and road markings that are presently installed to encourage slower traffic speeds should be avoided. Alternative solutions such as narrowing of the road and changes of surface materials should be explored too. In many new developments it should be possible to implement more of a Homezone approach to a suburb through the use of shared surfaces, reduced traffic speeds, play areas and seating areas incorporated into a street scenario. Many of these principles are now enshrined in the Government 'Manual for Streets' (DFT 2007) which provides the guidance framework for a radically different approach to design.

Services

An increasing issue for suburban areas is where to store wheely bins. It is an issue that is becoming increasingly problematic as more bins are provided for recycling. Poor consideration as to where bins are located results in bins cluttering up and dominating the local environment. All new developments should consider where bins are stored and look to provide dedicated bin stores either per dwelling or as a communal facility. These stores should be aesthetically pleasing and be practical to ensure they are well used and maintained. They should also be future-proofed to ensure that they can cater for refuse and recycling arrangements.

3. Villages

- Form
- Size & Density
- Character
- Orientation
- Village Centres
- Views
- Access
- Vehicle Use
- Urban Realm

"Ensuring sensitive development, and conservation of, rural life"

Villages - Urban Design Principles

Form
All development should respect and retain the existing village settlement pattern i.e. nucleated, dispersed or linear patterns especially where the patterns form a defining and positive characteristic of the village but aim to strengthen it. New development should not adversely alter the existing form of the village. New developments should tie in with existing road layouts to create continuity within a village

Size and Density
New developments should make a positive contribution to the local environment in terms of quality and aesthetics.

In general, large new developments in small villages should be avoided where it will swamp the existing character. The existing intensity of development should be retained. In fill should be avoided if the village is characterised by low density. In larger villages, new development is desirable where local character would be strengthened, affordable homes delivered and where a larger community will support existing facilities.

New developments that spread into the countryside should be avoided unless it forms a logical completion of the settlement pattern and creates a stronger, more attractive edge to the village (and does not conflict with prevailing planning policy).

Character
It is particularly important in villages that development should respond to the local vernacular in terms of form, massing, height, detailing and materials. Developments should complement the existing character, not necessarily always replicate it. However if there is a very distinctive style and materials palette within an area then it would be appropriate to replicate this within a new development. All development should respond positively to existing features such as village greens, old street patterns and historic features.

Existing buildings of character or heritage value should be conserved and maintained. Any refurbishments should be done in a sensitive manner that respects and complements the original features and style.

Orientation
New buildings should align with existing properties and the adjacent road, so as to sit comfortably within a village setting to reinforce the street pattern and promote passive surveillance. Developments should avoid having high fenced garden areas to the front which create blank facades and un-welcoming street environment.

Village Centres
New developments should be within easy walking distance of the village centre to promote walking and cycling and strengthen local facilities. Development should consolidate and reinforce the village centre location and character, and should avoid creating a shift in the village focus unless this is desirable. Where there is no existing village centre, new development should contribute to or create a new community hub for the village of local facilities and/or greenspace.

Views
Development should not unduly hinder views of key features or attractive block views of the surrounding countryside, sea or estuary. Conversely development can help screen unsightly views, and should be focused on these areas if this is the case.

Access
New development should maintain existing links and establish new links to the countryside and village centres wherever possible. Schemes should ensure that new developments maintain permeability within the village and where possible existing footways should be widened to provide safer pedestrian routes, and narrower roadways to promote slower traffic speeds.

Vehicle Use
The need for cars within villages and more remote locations is recognised, however reducing the impact of vehicles within narrow streets and village scenarios should be promoted where possible. New developments should consider car parking 'off street' to the side or rear of a development. Examine and implement local solutions to car parking provision at community centres, and if necessary provide innovative solutions to reduce congestion at the heart of a community. The plethora of traffic signage and road markings that has started to appear at the start of a village to encourage slower traffic speeds should be avoided. Explore alternative solutions such as narrowing of the road and changes of surface materials.

Public Realm
Surface materials should consist of footways with a tar spray and chip or resin-bound surface and tarmac road with wide concrete or granite kerbs. Feature materials such as natural stone or resin bound gravels may appropriate in the community centres to promote a more shared surface approach to the street, encourage pedestrian activity and provide localised environmental improvement at the heart of the village. Grass verges and green spaces should consist of simple grass areas and tree planting. Trees should be planted at every opportunity to green up the villages and reinforce the rural character. Any ornamental planting should be isolated to community hubs or gateways into the village to minimise maintenance burdens.

To enhance the setting and built edge of the village, front and rear gardens should generally be defined by deciduous hedges unless the local vernacular dictates a picket fence or wall.

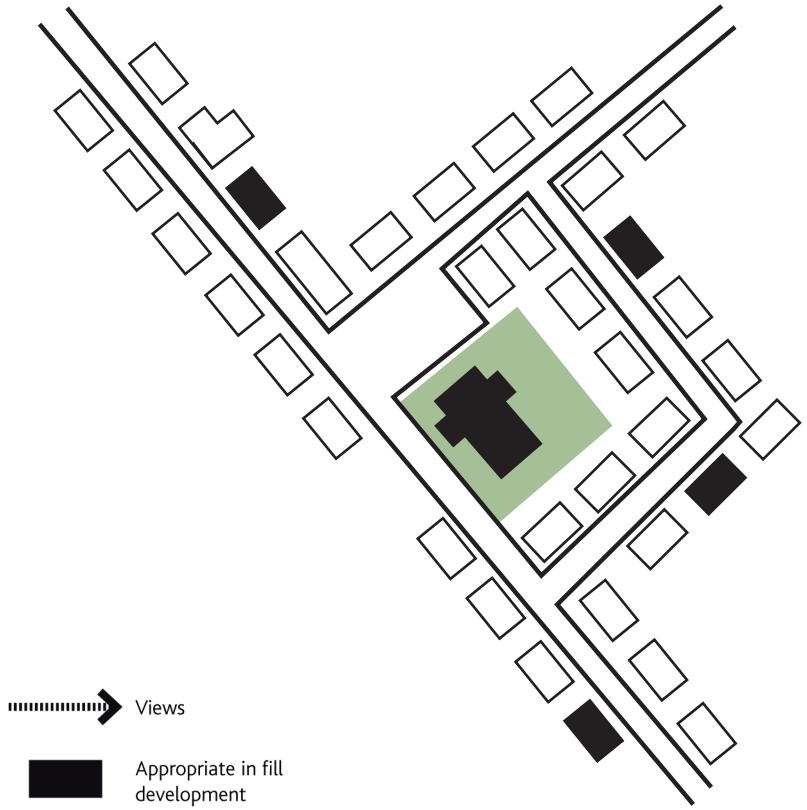


Diagram shows pattern of in fill development

Ashby-cum-Fenby

Stallingbrough

Boundary hedge, Wold Newton

4. Industrial & Port

- Legibility
- Positive Contribution to Place
- Scale & Massing
- Access
- Urban Realm
- Buildings and Structures

"Creation of a positive landmark for North East Lincolnshire"

Industry Urban Design Principles

Legibility

Industrial areas are commonly difficult places to orientate yourself around and are often disjointed in terms of the urban form. It is therefore important that all new development in industrial and port areas improve their legibility.

- All commercial and industrial office units should be orientated to face onto the street, to reinforce the street pattern and create a strong urban grain and improve safety through passive surveillance. In town centre areas this may mean locating the commercial units at the back of the footpath, whilst in more suburban locations, units should have a grass, shrub or tree buffer between the units and the footpath.

- Less attractive industrial, warehouse and port units and compounds should be set back from roads to allow bold landscape screening of trees and planting and if necessary mounding.

- Industrial areas should be laid out to a strong grid formation so that they are easier to navigate around.

- At key junctions features such as building or landscape landmarks should be created to further enhance navigation.

- Car parking and service yards should be located to the rear of the industrial units to create a tighter urban grain, and to reduce the impact of vehicles within the urban realm.

Positive contribution to Place

Industrial units should look to contribute positively to the urban area and landscape. By definition industrial sheds are usually of an economical construction with a basic form and material specification. This does not mean though that they should be exempt from quality or character. Industrial units have just as important role to play within our urban area in terms of promoting a high quality environment as any other land use.

- Industrial units should have at least one high quality facade. This should always be on the frontage facing onto the street. The facade should form an active frontage to the street and avoid blank elevations.

- Corner units or units at the gateway to an industrial area should have more emphasis on making an architectural statement.

- A range of materials may be appropriate for industrial units depending on their location. Modern materials such as profiled metal, steel and glazing systems are all suitable. However in areas where there is a strong vernacular more traditional materials such as brick, timber and stone should be incorporated into at least the front facade to tie the industrial unit in with its surroundings.

- Because of the often remote location and temporary nature of industrial and port units there is an opportunity for innovative, bold and above all imaginative responses that can create 'place', distinctiveness and help promote the region by putting an area 'on the map'.

- Explore opportunity to incorporate more sustainable building techniques into the construction of industrial units such as collection of rain water of large areas of roof, solar panels, wind turbines and SUDS drainage systems for the large expanses of service yards.

Scale and Massing

Industrial units are generally of a larger scale than other land uses. It is therefore important to consider the massing and fenestration of the units so that they fit more comfortably within the surrounding environment. This is particularly important where industrial areas adjoin other land uses areas or are integrated within other land uses.

- The use of different materials, articulating the form of the elevations and roof profiles, inclusion of glazed areas, defined entrance vestibules, signage and architectural detailing can all help to breakdown the massing of industrial units to a more 'urban' scale.

- The scale of the industrial units should be in proportion to its immediate surroundings. Eg, in residential areas, small 1-2 storey incubator/workshop style units may be more appropriate rather than large manufacturing 'sheds'.

Access

Industrial areas are often dominated by, and designed for large vehicles which creates vast expanses of tarmac, huge junctions and windswept road corridors that create uninviting spaces for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Therefore design public spaces and streets with pedestrians and cyclists in mind, with possible segregated cycle ways and footpaths on wider streets.

- Create good shelter for public transport users in what can often be exposed marine environments.

- Create safe, well lit and overlooked routes to public transport corridors and neighbouring areas to provide travel choice for employees.

- Ensure that cycle ways link up with the wider cycle network and pedestrian routes link up with wider footpath network.

- Incorporate signage at key junctions to allow pedestrians/cyclists to orientate themselves.

Urban Realm

The urban realm should have a simple, but bold treatment to have an impact on the large urban grain and often open landscape. The urban realm should be seen as an important element that acts as the framework for the industrial units.

- Simple, wide grass verges, belts of screen planting, mounding and avenues of trees should be incorporated to soften and 'green up' the industrial areas.

- Avenues of lighting columns should used on one or both sides of the road to create a strong statement and reinforce the street scene. The urban realm should be well lit to improve the perception of safety in such areas.

- Industrial areas should look to provide a focal outdoor space within close walking distance for use by employees at lunch breaks for relaxing and informal sports.

- Where appropriate industrial areas should look to incorporate and safeguard habitat corridors and biodiversity. Large swathes of tree planting that act as a screen to industrial areas can also have good wildlife value.

- Security fencing should be used sparingly and palisade fencing should be avoided in favour of other less intrusive fencing options such as welded mesh systems (eg. Jacksons 'Euroguard' fencing system for example). The location of industrial units to back of footway means that fencing should only be necessary between each unit to create the necessary secure rear yard area- thus reducing fencing to a minimum.

Buildings and Structures

The large industrial port buildings are of a huge scale and require a different design philosophy.

- Tall chimney stacks, large building masses and industrial complexes could be made into a feature both at night through architectural lighting and also by day by screening the often more unsightly ground level.

- The Freshney Forest concept should be pursued to provide screen planting to the industrial building at a lower level. The development of belts of tree planting along the A180 will help to reduce the impact of the port and improve perceptions of the area on arrival into North East Lincolnshire where swathes of woodland are not achievable.

- All new industrial buildings/structures should be in light grey colours to reduce their impact if viewed against the backdrop of the sky and darker earth tones if viewed against the back drop of the landscape.

Emscher Park, Germany

Immingham Port at night