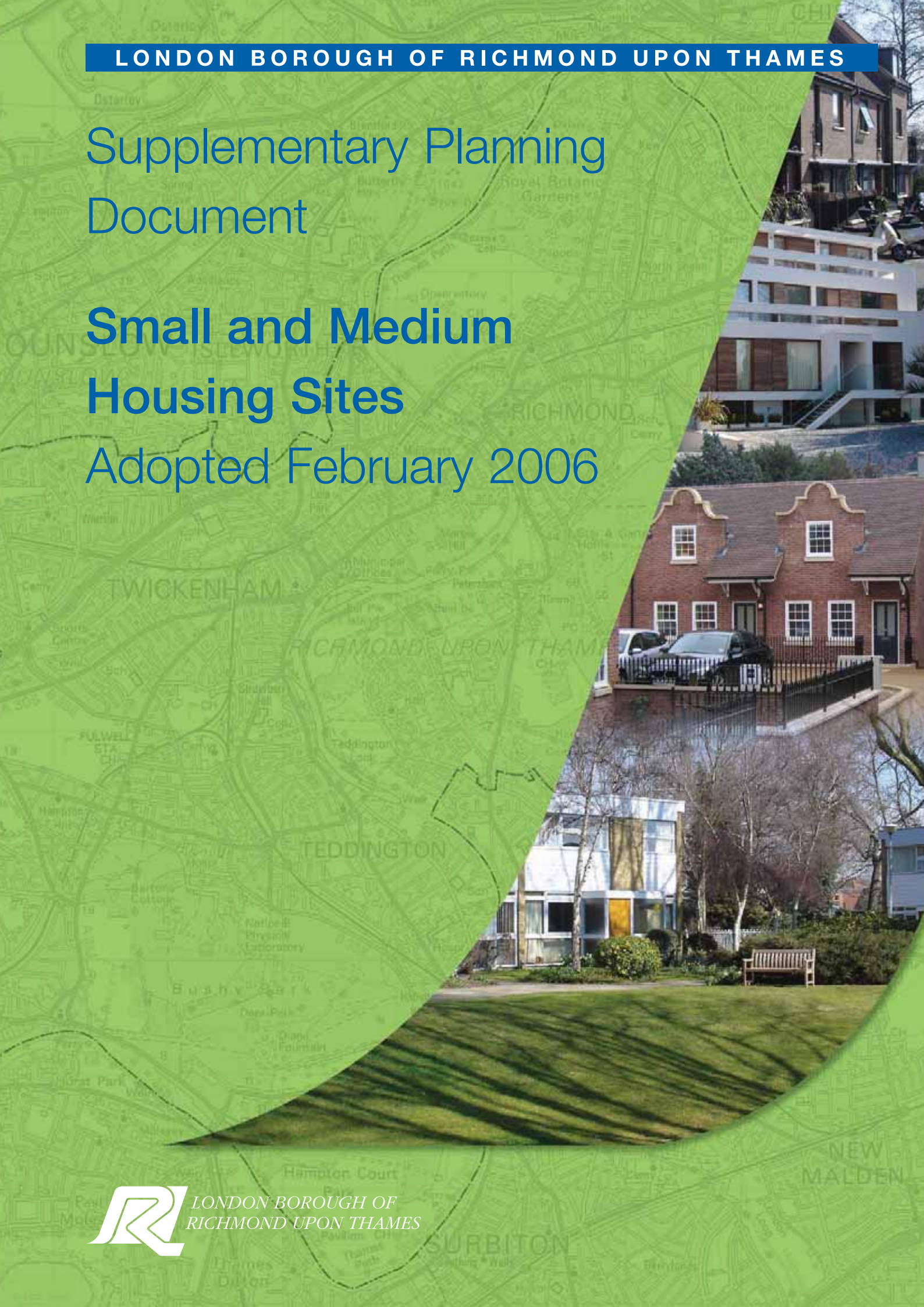


# Supplementary Planning Document

## Small and Medium Housing Sites

Adopted February 2006



If you need this leaflet in Braille, u  
large print, audio tape, 7  
or another language, 7  
please contact us on 7  
020 8891 7322 7  
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Nese keni veshtersi per te kuptuar kete botim, ju lutemi  
ejani ne recepcionin ne adresen e shenuar me poshte ku ne  
mund te organizojme perkthime nepermjet telefonit.

Albanianr

إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في  
العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية  
هاتفية.

Arabic

এই প্রকাশনার অর্থ বুঝতে পারায় যদি আপনার কোন সমস্যা হয়, নিচে দেওয়া  
ঠিকানায় রিসেপশন-এ চলে আসুন যেখানে আমরা আপনাকে টেলিফোনে দোভাষীর  
সেবা প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারবো।

Bengali

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکلی دارید لطفاً به میز پذیرش  
در آدرس قید شده در زیر مراجعه نمایید تا ترتیب ترجمه  
تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود:

Farsi

જો તમને આ પુસ્તિકાની વિગતો સમજવામાં મુશ્કેલી પડતી હોય તો, કૃપયા  
નીચે જણાવેલ સ્થળના રિસેપ્શન પર આવો, જ્યાં અમે ટેલિફોન પર ગુજ  
રાતીમાં ઇન્ટરપ્રિટીંગ સેવાની ગોઠવણ કરી આપીશું.

Gujarati

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ  
ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਓ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ  
ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Punjabi

پہا کو اس اشاعت کو سمجھنے میں کوئی مشکل ہے تو، براہ کرم نیچے دیئے ہوئے ایڈریس کے استقبال پر جا کر ملیئے، جہاں  
پہا کیلئے ٹیلیفون انٹر پریٹنگ سروس (ٹیلیفون پر ترجمانی کی سروس) کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔

Urdu

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was prepared by Taylor Young for the 7  
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The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has historically been, and is still today a desirable place to live. The Borough's natural and built environment is of the highest quality and it is important that new development protects and enhances it. In such a developed and historic place there is considerable pressure for building land and demand to develop sites within established areas. It is therefore important that new development recognises the character of the local area and continues the tradition of quality which has existed within the Borough for centuries.



It is intended that this document will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Adopted London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Unitary Development Plan (2005.) This is to emphasise the importance the planning authority places on securing high standards of design. As an adopted planning document it is a material consideration when determining planning applications and may be used to refuse inappropriate or poorly designed development. This SPD provides a tool for applicants to understand the aspirations of the Council. It has been compiled to be representative of national planning policy and to recognise best practice in design guidance, including advice produced by CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment). This guide offers a description of the individual characteristics and planning policies relevant to the urban design and architectural qualities of residential development in Richmond upon Thames.

This SPD is one of a number commissioned by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and will assist in interpreting local planning policy. It concerns residential development only and applies to small and medium housing sites which includes developments of up to 20 homes in 'infill' and 'backland' locations, as well as one-off houses and the intensification of sites for apartments.

The advice in this document reflects the principle that where we live affects how we live, and emphasises that well designed residential development offers the prospect of a higher quality of life and opportunity for all. It is representative

of changing nationwide perspectives on the ambitions we show for the places we build and replaces the Borough's previous residential design guidance.

SPDs will be used by officers and members of the Borough Council to guide and promote the highest quality of design. The Borough's Design Quality SPD provides the general principles of design quality for all new built development in the Borough and will also need to be taken into account for residential proposals. The Borough is also preparing a 'Sustainable Construction' checklist, which will apply to all major applications and set out the principles the Council would expect all proposals to follow. The Council has a variety of other Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents that may be relevant. A full list can be found on the Council's website.



The following diagram highlights the inter-related policy and guidance linkages which have led to the production of this guide.

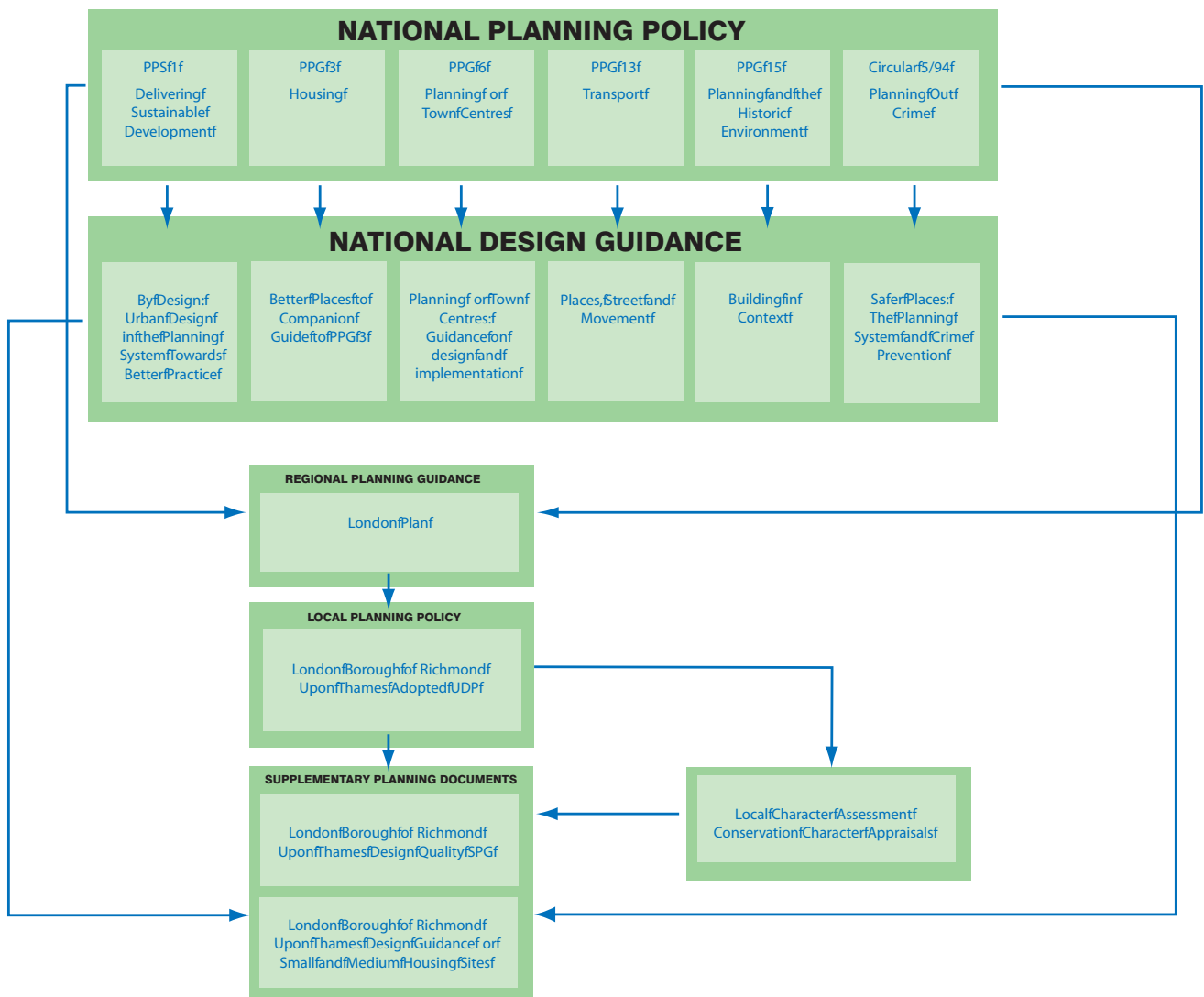


Figure 1 - Inter-related policy & guidance linkages

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Supplementary Planning Document for Small and Medium Housing Sites provides design advice for the majority of residential developments which are likely to be proposed in the Borough. The document contains four chapters:

- Residential Character
- Design Guidance for Infill Development
- Design Guidance for Backland Development
- Home Design

Residential Character introduces the components of character which define the Borough's residential environments. It is followed by an analysis of the Borough's housing using this methodology to identify six common residential character types.

Design Guidance for Infill Development gives advice on building within established street frontages. This guidance is based on the component parts of character established in chapter 1.

Design Guidance for Backland Development deals with the development of back gardens and land behind properties for housing and looks at the key considerations.

Home Design complements the specific advice for both infill and backland development with general guidance for good home design in order to create functional liveable homes.



# Chapter 1: Residential Character

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Since the advice in this SPD concerns the development of new housing in established residential areas it is important that, as a starting point, developers understand the qualities which form the Borough's residential character. Whilst there are many recognisable 'styles' of housing development in the Borough it is difficult to craft an informed design response without an understanding the underlying sense of character of these areas. This chapter considers the components which constitute the character of residential areas and in setting out a common approach, identifies a range of notable residential character types.

## 1.1 The Components of Character

Although the Borough's residential areas show great diversity in terms of architectural style the general elements which together define a place are inherent in all residential streets. To understand the essence of character it is therefore necessary to understand streets in terms of their individual component parts. These are described below.

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**Street Proportion - The ratio of building heights against the width of the street (between opposite building lines).**

The proportions of the street establish a sense of scale (grand, intermediate, intimate) and enclosure including the arrangement of front boundaries.



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**Plot, Layout and Grouping - The arrangement of streets and the relationship between homes and the street.**

Street layouts define the basic structure of the public realm which is given a sense of enclosure by the grouping of homes (terraced, semi-detached, detached) and the rhythm of spaces in between.



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**Building Line - The line formed by the set back of the main frontages from the street.**

A strong building line ties together individual buildings to create a sense of place.





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**Frontage Composition - The arrangement of detailing and fenestration.**

The position and rhythm of doors, windows and decorative elements express the individual character of a home and its relationship with others.



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**Roofline - The design and arrangement of roofs.**

The arrangement of roof pitches and the structure of roofs add to the articulation of the three dimensional mass of a building and characterise the skyline.



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**Materials - The materials used for the construction of all elevations including walls, roofs, fenestration, doors, gutters and associated structures such as boundary treatments.**

The type, colour and texture of materials create a sense of cohesion or distinction between individual buildings.



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**Landscape - The design and nature of the open areas between buildings including private gardens.**

The nature of hard and soft areas of open space defines the feel and quality of the public realm and the uses it can be put to.



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## **1.2 Residential Character Types**

Applying the component parts of character to the range of residential development in the Borough identifies six broad character types. Whilst these do not reflect the full diversity of housing, including 'one-off' architecturally designed or historic homes these 'typologies' represent, for the most part, the patterns of housing in the Borough. It is clear that there are a greater proportion of 'grander' variants of housing within the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames in terms of the formality of frontages, landscape and street design than in many London Boroughs.

These typologies provide a basis for interpreting the residential character of the Borough. They should be used by developers in conjunction with the specific characteristics of a site to act as a prompt as to what is appropriate. Full descriptions of these typologies are to be found on pages 9 - 14.

### **Villas**

The Villas typology encompasses the grandest mansions and semi-detached homes. These homes reflect the highest standards of space and freedom of expression in the form of individual homes within spacious plots, however, commonly there is a strong similarity between homes in terms of proportions and materials. The maturity of trees helps to soften the open landscape and lends a picturesque quality to the street.

### **Mansion Terraces**

Mansion Terraces are substantial homes and apartments arranged in imposing blocks or terraces. They reflect a more 'urban' and formal layout than Villas, creating an impressive scale of development and imposing sense of enclosure. The density of development is high and there is often little open space.

### **Suburban Family Homes**

This typology is characterised by the growth in car use during the twentieth century and the design of housing layouts and homes to accommodate the car. The proportions of streets to building heights are wider and lower than pre-car developments and the density of housing is often low. Homes are regularly spaced and there is a regular curved pattern between streets and building lines.

### **Courts and Parklands**

Like Suburban Family Homes, the Courts and Parklands typology has developed from the introduction of the motor car. Unlike its contemporary, however, more space is allocated for shared spaces within the development in terms of parking and open space, the use of cars does not dominate the public realm. This has allowed for a more intimate and denser scale of development and a more interesting arrangement of open areas.

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## Tight Knit Houses

The Tight Knit Houses typology includes mixed streets of small to medium sized family dwellings. The range of homes varies from rows of terraces, to semi-detached and detached homes and the density of streets is quite high. Despite a variety in housing types, common themes of detailing and materials draw the street together

## Terraced Cottages

Terraced Cottages represent the densest arrangement of housing, with small rear yards and commonly little or no transition space between frontages and the street. The length of terraces, the limited amount of space between terraces and the regularity of streets create a strong sense of enclosure. Whilst there is generally regularity to façade design, the typical age of this typology means that there can be substantial personalisation of dwellings.





**Character Type:**

**Street Proportion**

**Plot Layout and Grouping**

**Building Line**

**Frontage Composition**

**Roofline**

**Materials**

**Landscape**

**Car parking**

**Villas**

Imposing dwellings up to 4 storeys close to the street or lower lying and set back from the street.

Detached or semi-detached long plots in picturesque avenues and streets.

Strong building line despite stylistic diversity.

Mix of flat fronted or more elaborate elevations. Grand designs incorporating a diverse palette of classical or gothic detailing.

Understated pitched roofs sometimes behind a parapet or intricate hipped and gabled forms with eaves detailing.

Mostly brick with stucco, stone or timber detailing. Slate roofs.

Walled front gardens. Leafy setting of established mature street and garden trees. Gaps between buildings and landscape between are an important feature

On-street and forecourt car parking.



|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Character Type</b>           | <b>Mansion Terraces</b>  |
| <b>Street Proportion</b>        | Tall imposing dwellings up to 4 storeys often positioned close to the street.  |
| <b>Plot Layout and Grouping</b> | Narrow to medium fronted 'townhouses' sometimes forming medium length terraces or 'mansion blocks.' Grand Properties.    |
| <b>Building Line</b>            | Strong ordered building line with few protrusions except for bay windows.  |
| <b>Frontage Composition</b>     | Ordered rhythm with vertical emphasis. High percentage of glazing to elevation from tall sash windows. Elegant doorways. |
| <b>Roofline</b>                 | Common roof line not always in view due to uniform parapet or building height.   |
| <b>Materials</b>                | Mostly brick with contrasting brick window or quoin detailing. Sometimes stucco.   |
| <b>Landscape</b>                | Railing or boundary wall frontage, close to the street with hard landscaped area or further back with hedge or planting. |
| <b>Car parking</b>              | On-street car parking.   |



**Character Type**

**Street Proportion**

**Plot Layout and Grouping**

**Building Line**

**Frontage Composition**

**Roofline**

**Materials**

**Landscape**

**Car parking**

**Suburban Family Homes**

Wide regular avenues or cul-de-sacs fronted by 2 storey homes set back with gardens.

Regularly spaced semi-detached houses, some terraces and detached houses.

Clear building line formed by repetitive pattern of bay windows and gables.

Double height bay windows, often with 'Mock Tudor' detailing. Recessed or exposed porch with window above.

Steeply pitched hipped roofs with gable above bay windows and central chimney.

Often brick to ground floor with pebble dash or plaster to upper floor. Timber 'Mock Tudor' detailing and tile hung elevations. Clay tile or Slate roofs.

Low walls or hedges enclosing grassed and planted gardens. Often street trees and grass verges.

Attached garage to side or in-curtilage driveway.



## Character Type

## Street Proportion

## Plot Layout and Grouping

## Building Line

## Frontage Composition

## Roofline

## Materials

## Landscape

## Car parking

## Courts & Parklands

2-3 or 4 storey dwellings with short front gardens.

Narrow fronted 'townhouses' forming short terraces or blocks of flats arranged perpendicular to form intimate courtyards or grander open space (often dead end with no through movement).

Clear building line but not always formal (sometimes staggered).

Late modern: Flat fronted elevations with large glazed areas and simple detailing. Traditional 'style': re-interpretations of traditional design details with strong vertical emphasis.

Common roof arrangements to developments but great diversity across the Borough.

Variation of brick colours across all developments, in addition:  
Late modern: Glazing, tiling and timber cladding.  
Traditional 'style': Stone/Stucco (mostly simulated).

Hard landscaped mews courtyards or large areas of open greenspace and planting enclosed by dwellings.

Courtyard parking or groups of garages. Some integral garages.



**Character Type**

**Street Proportion**

**Plot Layout and Grouping**

**Building Line**

**Frontage Composition**

**Roofline**

**Materials**

**Landscape**

**Car parking**

**Tight Knit Houses**

Strong urban and regular streets fronted by mostly 2 storey dwellings.

Closely grouped mix of terraces, semi-detached and detached and detached houses.

Mix of dwelling types but clear building line.

Repetitive pattern of gables and bay windows lends rhythm to street scene. Great difference across the Borough ranging from simple and flat fronted to elaborate window or doorway detailing.

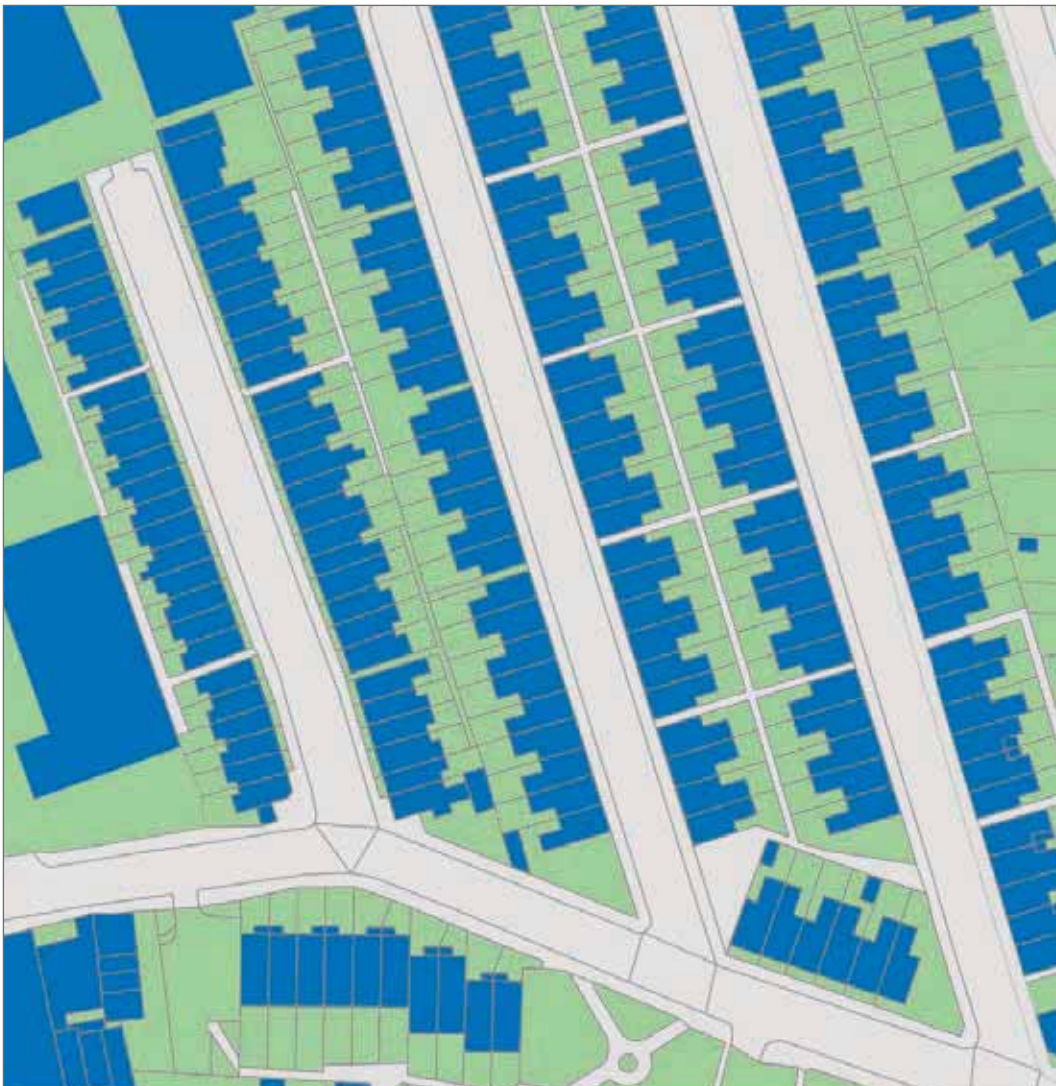
Strong instances of hipped roofs to semi's and detached. Roofs sometimes 'gable' end on to street with elaborate eaves details.

Range of brick types. Use of brick, stone and timber for detailing. Slate or Clay tile roofs.

Short gardens defined by hedge or wall. Some street trees or shrubbery to front gardens.

On-street car parking to terraces and some semi's. Some garages or drives to dwellings.





**Character Type**

**Street Proportion**

**Plot Layout and Grouping**

**Building Line**

**Frontage Composition**

**Roofline**

**Materials**

**Landscape**

**Car parking**

**Terraced Cottages**

Ground hugging 2 storey dwellings, mostly back of footway or with small front gardens.

Narrow groups of terraces fronting short narrow streets and lanes. Sometimes with archway to yard or court behind.

Flat fronted and straight building line influenced by street layout.

1 ground floor and 1 first floor window and doorway. Simple elevations often with no detailing.

Simple pitched roof given vertical emphasis by chimneys. Sometimes hipped roof to corners.

Brick - sometimes with brick or stucco dressings. Slate roofs.

Against the footway landscape character influenced by street surfacing materials or small cottage gardens.

On-street car parking.

The guidance in this chapter refers to residential development in 'infill' locations. Infill development opportunities may arise within established residential plots which form part of an existing frontage.

The suitability of potential sites to accommodate infill development in planning terms is not considered in this document and each site will be judged on its merits. This will include consideration of the loss of gardens of existing houses or flats. In cases where the demolition of an existing building is proposed the council will consider the acceptability of the loss of the property where applicable before evaluating the design of the proposed infill development. In conservation areas this will involve consideration of the value of the property to the character and appearance of the area. In the case of Listed Buildings or Buildings of Townscape Merit there is a general presumption against their demolition.

This guidance advises on a number of design issues common to most sites, giving constructive advice to contextual design.

### 2.1 Understanding Character and Context

Within the built up context of existing residential neighbourhoods a primary concern will be that new housing reflects the character of the local area. To ensure that new development is sympathetic to its surroundings a process of analysis should inspire the design process. The Council's Design Quality SPD introduces the Character and Context Appraisal as a method for understanding the qualities of a site and developers will be expected to undertake such an analysis or study. When designing for infill, analysis should be based on the component parts of character defined in chapter 1 and is likely to investigate the following:

#### Street Proportion-

- The width of the street (carriageway and pavement).
- The height of buildings (number of storeys and floor to ceiling heights).
- The existence and height of front boundaries.

#### Plot, Layout and Grouping-

- & The form of the street (organic, regular).
- & Housing layouts (terraced, semi-detached, detached).
- & The rhythm of solids and voids (width of plots and spaces between buildings).

#### Building Line-

- & The set back of buildings from the street.
- & The line created by the main frontages of houses.
- & Any notable rhythm of set backs or protrusions.

#### Frontage Composition-

- & The height, width, proportions and detailing of doorways and fenestration.
- & The rhythm of detailing (banding, quoins, eaves/window/door details).

#### Roofline-

- & The design and pitch of roofs.
- & Ridge, eaves or parapet heights.
- & The rhythm of chimneys.



### Materials-

- & The dominant construction or facing material (colour, texture and extent).
- & Any complementary detailing materials or features.

### Landscape-

- & The nature and character of front gardens (hard and soft landscape).
- & Dominant species of plants including street trees.
- & Views between and beyond buildings.

## 2.2 Responding to Context

Having undertaken a detailed study of the local streetscene it is important that the notes, sketches and photographs obtained during the site analysis are used to shape the final scheme. Analysis should not be treated as a separate process from design and the appraisal will provide a useful base for an enlightened response. Such an informed approach will realise the basic arrangement of building forms but should not be a straitjacket to creative design; designers will be expected to reinterpret the local vernacular in a manner which is appropriate and of its time. The following design guidance is based on a response to the component parts of an area which together will define its character.



“Designers will be expected to reinterpret the local vernacular in a manner which is appropriate and of its time.”

### 2.3 Street Proportion

Infill development will need to pay particular regard to the proportions of the street; building heights should follow the dominant eaves height. Floor arrangements will need to be customised to reflect this and given the lower floor to ceiling heights of modern dwellings it may be possible to include an extra floor (possibly using some of the roof space). Where this is not possible consideration should be given to how houses can look taller through either the raising of the ground floor, taller floor to ceiling heights or a parapet/eaves detail.

Corner sites may offer more potential to go above the established proportions of the street. The bringing together of two different street characters can create a notable landmark, which can be expressed through height and architectural form. Often corner buildings, however, relate more to each other than the streets they adjoin and the appropriateness of a scheme will depend on such a context as well as the relationship with adjacent properties.

Where infill development is appropriate the character of the street edge should always be continued. Where there is an established front boundary treatment to the street this should be repeated to an appropriate scale and material. The loss of boundary treatments and gardens in order to accommodate forecourt car parking, where this is not already established, is unacceptable.



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## 2.4 Plot, Layout and Grouping

Since most infill development will not require new streets, the key issue with regards to plot layout and grouping will be the existing relationship between houses and the street. The ratio of built frontages to the gaps between buildings should be maintained through similar proportions. In this manner the dominant arrangement of dwellings (terraced, semi-detached, detached) will tend to be replicated.

In some cases an infill site might be created through the amalgamation of smaller vacant or cleared sites. It is important, however, that the frontage of such a developed site adheres to the pattern of narrower plots since the introduction of a wide frontage will overwhelm the established rhythm of the street. The design of wide frontage development should therefore be broken into a series of narrower frontage elements, proportional to the rhythm of the street, even though it may be one building internally.



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## 2.5 Building Line

For infill developments it is especially important that new dwellings reflect the set back of adjoining buildings. Houses should front on to streets as dictated by the dominant building line and not by the desire to create forecourt car parking. Where a street is composed of more elaborate house designs, which include set backs and protrusions from the main frontage, there will in effect be a series of building lines to follow and the appropriate design response will need to demonstrate an understanding through similar proportions. The same principle will apply in mixed streets where the building line may be less formal. In such circumstances the frontage of the development will need to be designed to reflect this and could create a link through the use of protrusions and set backs.

At corners, there may be scope to step forward or back from the building line to create a landmark feature. This will depend on the set backs of the two adjoining streets to the development as well as the relationship of other corner buildings to the building line. Any deviation from the building line will, however, need to complement the proportions of the street.



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## 2.6 Frontage Composition

The horizontal and vertical arrangement of façades should balance with neighbouring elevations and the street scene. Infill façades should not rely on standard 'off the shelf' detailing which is likely to have little relevance to the local context. The proportions and rhythm of windows and doors from surrounding buildings, as well as any characteristic arrangements of materials, form a 'language' which will provide visual cues to the design of frontages. The degree of reproduction or reflection of these elements will depend on the formality of the street. In streets where there is no defined pattern of details there may be little 'context' to comply with and therefore a greater opportunity for a new distinctive design; there will often, however, be underlying vertical or horizontal patterns which should help to shape the design of the façade. Whatever approach is taken the composition of elevations should always be achieved through a site specific, contextual approach that reinterprets existing townscape in a manner appropriate of its time rather than an unconvincing pastiche.



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## 2.7 Roofline

The significance of the roofline will depend on the relative enclosure of the street and other factors such as topography which may mask or accentuate the overall effect of the roof. In order to ensure a suitable roof form in three dimensions the footprint of any house type is a key factor; deeper plans may in turn produce a taller ridge height and any built protrusions will require a more complicated roof structure. Other considerations in terms of the roof design itself include the eaves height, ridge height, pitch or parapet detail and any characteristic gable or hip roof detailing, and the roofs of infill development will need to correspond to any established patterns. The rhythm of any dominant vertical features such as chimneys should also be taken into account.





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## 2.8 Materials

The selection of materials will depend on the diversity or uniqueness of materials within the existing street. Where there is a strong bond between houses through a particular palette of materials new development may need to use similar materials, however, the Borough's Design Quality SPD outlines how more contemporary materials can be successfully used in harmony with established historic settings. The suitability of any materials, however, will depend on their relative colour, texture and unit size. Consideration should also be given to the environmental impact of materials; where they are sourced or their insulation quality, for example.



## 2.9 Landscape

Any hard or soft landscape feature within the site should be retained where it can make a positive contribution to the completed scheme. The retention of existing trees, hedgerows, planting plus any interesting paving materials will help an infill scheme 'fit-in' and lend it a sense of maturity. The design of any additional landscape works will also need to complement the existing street scene so that the urban or suburban character of the street is reflected by the development. Clues to the appropriate scale, colour, texture and plant species of the landscape will be found in neighbouring front gardens. Any new hard landscape should be permeable to limit run off.

Car parking arrangements will also be a significant matter in terms of the open landscape environment. Applicants will be expected to comply with those standards set out in the Borough's UDP. Generally infill development will follow the parking arrangements of the established street, whether it is on-street parking or garages for example, although it is likely that in some cases the intensity of the development or the existing street will require its own solution. Where developments occur within a Controlled Parking Zone, for example, on-street car parking may be prohibited, however, the Council also discourages forecourt car parking where it would have an adverse effect on the street scene. Parking arrangements which reduce the visual impact of parked cars are favoured and the parking of vehicles to the side or rear of properties or forms of undercroft parking may be the most appropriate. Measures which may mitigate the visual





intrusion of parked cars include:

- & The arrangement of buildings to define a 'place' rather than a mere car park.
- Unobtrusive siting so that parking appears 'contained.'
- Small clusters of parking, rather than one large car parking area.
- The use of planting and landscape elements to soften the car park and provide some visual interest. The use of high quality surfacing materials (in a suitable colour and texture) rather than unsightly materials such as tarmac.



Backland development refers to the development of land to the rear of properties or the redevelopment of long back gardens. Extensive back gardens are often seen as a development opportunity, and a single or group of dwellings in a considered layout can form an attractive development when sufficient land is available.

Backland development refers to the development of land to the rear of properties or the redevelopment of long back gardens. Extensive back gardens are often seen as a development opportunity, and a single or group of dwellings in a considered layout can form an attractive development when sufficient land is available. Backland development proposals can be controversial and the size and scale of development is a planning policy issue. The guidance in this chapter deals with some of the general issues found in backland development. The design of backland development is likely to be based on a similar understanding of character to infill development. Invariably it will introduce a new building character to an established area.

### 3.1 Access

The layout of backland development should be defined by the nature of buildings and open spaces rather than roads, however, the availability of access will be a crucial factor. The location of the access point into the development will need to satisfy the Borough's highway standards in terms of turning movements and sight lines and should be informed by surrounding routes and activity. In some cases where the development abuts a number of pedestrian routes the potential to create a new connection should be considered where it would make a meaningful contribution to the pedestrian network.

As well as highways issues the visual impact of access should be considered. In the interests of legibility the entrance to the development should be visible but its effect should not be obtrusive.



The introduction of an access route into the street frontage will create a noticeable gap that may conflict with the scale of the street and the rhythm of frontages and the spaces in between. Locating the entrance in a suitable space so that it is in tune with the rhythm of gaps (whilst satisfying highway standards) should lessen its impact. The route can further be softened by a shared surface treatment in a material other than tarmac which will also reduce the width of the carriageway needed. Further detailing to the entrance should be based on the character of the existing street. In spacious suburban streets, for example, adequate 'breathing space' between adjacent houses and the highway should be softened with planting, whilst in tight urban spaces the route might lie closer to dwellings and be enclosed by a brick wall. In either case, 'gated' developments will not be acceptable.



### 3.2 Layout and Building Form

The character of the housing layout will be informed by the proportions, layouts, groupings and building lines of adjacent properties and the local area, although in most cases the scale of backland development is likely to be more intimate than the existing street frontage. Backland development should be of a scale which harmonises with its surroundings and the height and mass of new houses should be sympathetic, taking into account any changes of level within the site. The height of buildings is a particular concern and building heights of a lower scale may be less conspicuous from the street.

A mews layout is often preferred for backland development and an analysis of local mews courtyards may offer some inspiration. This does not necessarily mean that mews developments should be of a traditional appearance since form and layout can be reinterpreted in a contemporary manner. Such layouts tend to be more urban in quality with little or no setback and a defined sense of enclosure through the juxtaposition of buildings. In general the public realm should be formed by a strong structure of buildings, as opposed to walls and fences, however, this will depend on the tightness of a particular site and the character of the street. Where a backland proposal also involves an element of infill development to the street frontage the development would need to harmonise with adjacent properties in a more ordered fashion. The advice contained in chapter 2 (Design Guidance for Infill Development) offers constructive guidance for infill development which in turn is likely to effect any immediate backland development proposal.

### 3.3 Detailing and Materials

Detailing should be based on a defined language which uses a common palette of materials. This will ensure that the development has a clear character and forms a sense of place. Where a backland development includes an element of infill to the street or can be clearly viewed from the street, materials and detailing will need to sympathise and complement the adjacent buildings. The use of similar colours and textures of materials as well as the reinterpretation of any characteristic detailing will help to create harmony between new and old, although contemporary materials may offer an interesting contrast. Within a backland development there may be more freedom for expression, however, the use of common materials or elements such as roof forms, gables and bay windows can tie the development into its context.



### 3.4 Public Realm and Landscape

The creation of a new access route as well as courtyards for parking and amenity should be designed to constitute a place and should not be dominated by the demands of vehicles. Since roads are unlikely to be of a significant scale to warrant high levels of traffic penetration, the design of carriageways and courts should favour the needs of pedestrians and adopt 'Home Zone' principles. Home Zones put an emphasis on streets as public open space and are designed around very low traffic speeds of 20 mph or less. The dimensions of carriageways promote slower speeds through tight corner radii and limited forward vision and the design of the carriageway as a shared surface also encourages drivers to slow down. To warn incoming drivers to alter their behaviour, entrances to Home Zones should have an appropriate threshold feature, such as a rumble strip.

Off-street car parking must be provided within backland development and its design should aim for limited visual intrusion. The parking of vehicles to the side or behind new properties as well as in garages or car ports may be acceptable depending on the particular development, as may an element of forecourt or courtyard parking. Courtyards should be designed as an interesting public realm feature, and not as a mere car park, with high quality materials and planting.

Additional open space such as private gardens should be proportional to the scale of development. The retention of adequate garden space for existing houses will be an important issue in terms of amenity as is the provision of sufficient amenity space in new schemes.

The relationship between vehicle space and existing vegetation needs careful consideration to avoid damage and loss; any substantial trees or shrubs should be retained wherever possible, supplemented by complementary species and planting schemes.



The preceding chapters have addressed the contribution that housing can make to external space and the creation of 'places,' however, good residential design is equally about the internal arrangement of space, since quality of life can be greatly affected by the function of the home and any private space.

To ensure that new homes meet the needs and aspirations of occupiers it is important that their internal layout relates to external space. The design of new homes should be regarded from the 'inside out' as much as the 'outside in.' This chapter provides guidance on these internal design considerations as well as other design matters associated with the design of homes.

### 4.1 Adaptability

The Borough's Design Quality SPD introduces the importance of adaptability in urban design. In relation to housing, the ability to personalise and change one's living environment as one's requirements change is especially important since it averts the need to move. Much of the Borough's housing stock has shown resilience which is testament to the flexibility of these traditional buildings in terms of internal standards and layouts. Many of these homes demonstrate generous proportions in relation to today's models and not at the expense of density.

To ensure that homes designed today can meet changing needs, house design necessitates an approach which maximises internal space and its utility. Homes are generally sold in terms of number of rooms based on a fixed cellular arrangement of load bearing walls, but open plan layouts provide a larger area of multi-use space which can be tailored to the requirements of the user with more ease. This is made easier by steel or concrete frame construction which allows for the broader spans required for reconfigurable space. Careful planning of 'fixed' spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms, as well as circulation, leaves a



more liberal arrangement of space which can be subdivided according to the needs of the occupier.

Whether an open plan or cellular approach is taken, it is important that the amount of space provided is enough to meet the function of the occupier. This can be supplemented by the use of the building's structure to maximise internal accommodation through the use of loft space and basements if these are characteristic of the neighbourhood. Commonly house layouts are based on rudimentary arrangements of furniture which are less relevant to a contemporary lifestyle. Such requirements which should be considered include:

- *'Lifetime Homes' standards* - enable homes to be adapted for people with reduced mobility and include a level access, space for wheelchair circulation, a downstairs toilet and a downstairs room which could be converted into a bedroom.
- *Internal and external storage space* - which could include, for example, coats and shoes, prams/pushchairs, laundry, recyclable material, bicycles and bin waste.
- *Domestic appliance space* - since even the smallest households may have a washing machine, tumble dryer, fridge-freezer, dishwasher and a range of other smaller appliances.
- *Complementary living space* - such as children's play space, guest bed space, study/computer terminal space, a secondary eating area and 'outdoor living' areas such as a patio.

## 4.2 Residential Amenity

The term 'amenity' in this context refers to the pleasantness and attractiveness of a home and garden in its layout. Design should maximise the quality of these spaces for new housing as well as mitigate the visual intrusion of new development on existing properties. This will include consideration of the amenity of existing homes including overbearing issues and daylight and sunlight matters.

People prefer rooms which have good levels of daylight, natural ventilation and interesting views, however, these demands may compete with each other on a site by site basis. Ideally habitable rooms should face southwards in order to maximise sunlight for lighting and appropriate levels of passive solar gain. In addition, such rooms should be orientated so that interesting views are capitalised in order to make the internal space more pleasant. This may include views on to private garden space or any public open space, including the street, which will also prompt natural surveillance. In this manner unsightly views into service areas or utility infrastructure, for example, are best avoided. Windows in new buildings should be placed so as to avoid overlooking well used adjacent gardens.

Successful private or shared garden space will also need to bear in mind the orientation of the layout and the effect of shade, favouring a southward facing aspect. It should relate to the dwellings it serves with a defined use, to promote a sense of ownership and purpose, with direct access via French windows or patio doors. The retention of any existing planting as well as complementary



landscape works will provide an initial basis for individualisation. Garden space should be planned strategically to meet the needs of the perceived occupiers. For families with young children, for example, the demand for garden space is likely to be highest and necessitate larger gardens. Where balconies are considered they should be designed for use and not purely decoration, with consideration to views, aspect and size.

Homes should provide an appropriate level of retreat and a balance between natural surveillance and privacy needs to be struck. Large windows, whilst providing views and surveillance opportunities, can be inappropriate when, due to their relationship with the public realm, they become cluttered with net curtains or blinds. The proportions of windows should not only consider the local context but also the depth of set back from the street and the height and nature of front boundaries. Housing for older people or those who spend a lot of time sitting should incorporate cills low enough to see over when seated.

In defining a layout it is important that new development does not infringe on the privacy, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties nor that of the intended occupiers. Privacy, daylight and sunlight standards should be used as a check to ensure that a layout is acceptable but should not necessarily dictate the layout. To make sure that the privacy of occupiers is respected the windows of main facing habitable rooms (reception rooms, dining-kitchen and bedrooms) should preferably be no less than 20 metres apart. Where principal windows face a wall that contains no



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windows or those that are occluded (bathrooms for example) separation distances can be reduced to 13.5 metres. In terms of daylight, new buildings sited close to the main windows of existing properties should not cause obstruction or overshadowing.

Despite standards of separation distances, some of the Borough's more historic places are characterised by intimate pedestrian lanes and courtyards of less than 20 or indeed 13.5 metres between frontages. Development would not necessarily be precluded here and would need to be considered on a site by site basis. The staggering of facing windows to prevent direct views as well as the considered placing of bathroom or cloakroom windows in the most appropriate elevation could mitigate some privacy concerns.

### 4.3 Security

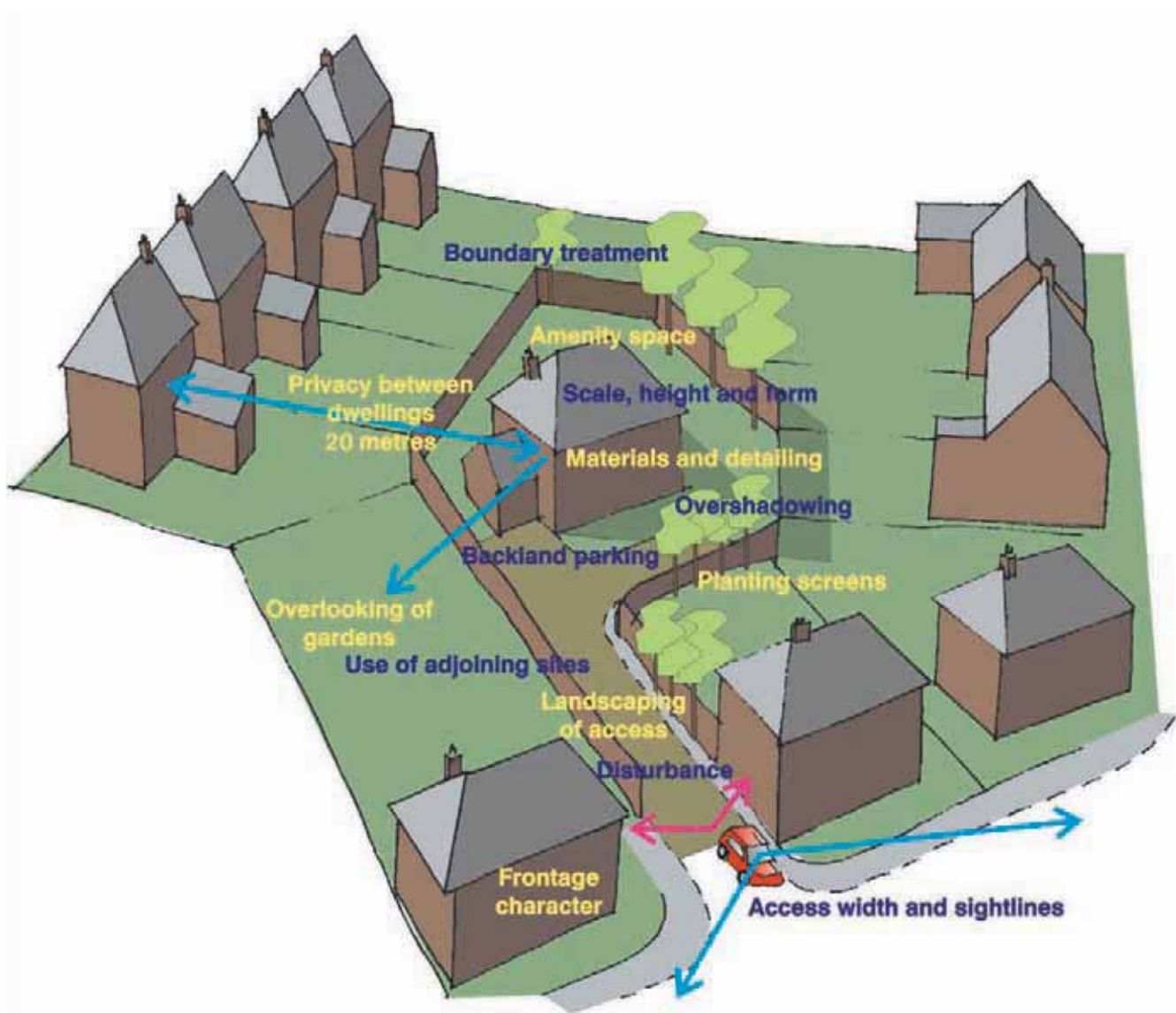
The Borough's Design Quality SPD underlines the importance of activity and natural surveillance in creating a safe environment and this should be supplemented by individual home security measures to make crimes less easy to commit and homes feel safer. To define territory and 'defensible space' there should be a clearly defined boundary to front gardens or a symbolic barrier, a change in surface treatment for example. Often the Borough's housing areas are defined by a low wall or hedge and the continuation of such arrangements will be especially important in infill developments. Additional measures which can make houses and apartment blocks more secure include:

- Entrances which face on to well used areas, most often 'streets,'
- The careful consideration of elements which could provide a platform or access to upper floors, such as flat roof porches and extensions, ledges and downpipes, street furniture, boundary walls and poorly designed balconies,
- Good entrance lighting to the property (including any communal areas or car parking),
- Good locks, viewscopes and chains,
- Outside meter reading, and
- Secure, hard to climb fences and lockable gates.

### 4.4 Diversity

New homes create the opportunity to diversify the supply of homes in the Borough and provide for the needs of wider society. The Borough is committed to a policy of affordable housing provision. To ensure that new affordable units make a worthwhile contribution to the street and the occupier there should be a consistency in quality between affordable and open market housing. Developments of a mixed tenure will need to be of a uniform specification and appearance to avoid any marginalisation of affordable units. An increase in supply of small units can also provide cheaper housing for those unable to afford larger homes and developments should provide a mix of dwelling sizes where the size and character of the site allows.





## Key Issues for Backland Sites

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