



# Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton

## Design Part 1: Key design principles and designing in context

December 2003

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## 1. Introduction

**a)** Good design is important in order to improve the physical environment of an area while also preserving and enhancing its natural beauty and amenity. Sefton is committed to delivering high standards of design in development to ensure its positive contribution to the local environment and a better quality of life of all those living, working in or visiting the area.

**b)** This guidance note explains how you should apply the draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy DQ1 on the design of development. It sets out the key principles on which we will assess the quality of your proposed development.

**c)** **Part 1** gives key principles on design before setting out those principles that are most relevant to the design of development in Sefton. This part of the supplementary planning guidance is accompanied by Settlement Character Plans that set out the unique character<sup>•</sup> of each settlement in the Borough. This will help you develop a design that is in context<sup>•</sup> with the surrounding area.

**Part 2** sets out the principles on which the site design, layout and access will be assessed.

**Part 3** sets out the principles on which the design of individual buildings and structures will be assessed.

**d)** All of this guidance note should be taken into account in the design of your proposed development. The guidance should be used to carry out a site appraisal on the existing conditions and features of the site, and to prepare a site layout and landscape plan for your development. Where you are proposing a major development, or a development in a sensitive location, these should be submitted in a design statement along with the planning application.

**e)** Some of the technical terms in this guidance are explained in a glossary at the back of the Design SPG. These terms are indicated by a '•', the first time they appear in each section of the SPG.

## 2. Definition of design

**a)** For the purpose of the UDP draft DQ1, 'design' refers to both the physical appearance of buildings or spaces and their use. The relationship between how a place looks and how it works is called 'urban design', (although its principles apply to all developments whether in the town or countryside).

## 3. The importance of good design

Good design creates attractive places that have a distinctive character, and are safe and accessible to all. This can help to achieve sustainable development<sup>•</sup>, which is development that helps to achieve a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come (See Part.4: Sustainability and EcoHomes).

In considering sustainable development we need to think about promoting greener lifestyles, for example, using energy efficiently, catering for a mix of uses and providing a choice of transport. These considerations can add environmental, social and economic value to proposals.

## 4. The principles of good design

**a)** Well-designed places tend to have a number of characteristics in common from which we can draw general principles. These principles are that any new development should:

- **Reinforce and enhance the character of the local area;**
- **be accessible to pedestrians by fitting in with and improving existing patterns of movement and circulation;**
- **use clear and easily understood layouts by providing recognisable routes, landmarks and junctions;**
- **improve the quality, character, definition and safety of streets and public spaces;**
- **included mixed-use (i.e. a number of different land-uses e.g. shops, homes)**
- **be adaptable so it can change as peoples needs change.**

**b)** In your development you should consider all these principles, although some will be more important than others depending on the individual circumstances of your site and the type of development you are proposing.

The following general guidance, and guidance in the rest of this guidance note, is based on the general principles shown above.



## 5. General design guidance for development in Sefton

**a)** The following urban design criteria will apply to all development proposals in Sefton, including landscaping works. These are based on our findings from a borough-wide urban design survey.

**b)** We expect your development to:

- **follow established building lines or boundaries to define and enclose routes and spaces;**
- **be of an appropriate size, proportion, form<sup>o</sup> and use for their location;**
- **create positive landmark features and protect or improve existing views to reinforce the legibility of town centres. This means the degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.**
- **fit in with and reinforce local patterns of development, movement and architectural and landscape character to improve the appearance and identity of local centres; and**
- **maintain and enhance landscaping quality along main routes.**

## 6. Settlement character plans

**a)** Sefton is made up of individual settlements. Within each settlement there are areas with different characters to reflect different land-uses, types of buildings and different landscapes or periods of development.

**b)** The settlement character plans (which you can get from us) describe the main elements that make up the character and physical structure of each settlement. They also set out the design features that you need to address so your development reinforces and enhances the character of the area, and creates good urban design.

**c)** Use the character plans as the starting point for carrying out a detailed appraisal of your site and its context.

**d)** Understanding the environment your site is in, including the appearance of surrounding buildings and landscapes as well as how land is used and its accessibility, will help you to produce a high quality design, which is specific to your

site .

**e)** Use the relevant character plan and supporting guidance to make sure your proposed development is appropriate for the local area.

**f)** If, in the relevant character plan, there is a lack of positive features to influence the design of your development, you should apply the basic urban design principles and create a development with its own character. Equally, if the appraisal of your site and its context identifies negative features, the design you choose must try to overcome these problems.

## 7. Design statements

**a)** According to Section 3 of the draft UDP Policy DQ1, certain developments such as major developments on significant sites or sites in sensitive locations, require a design statement in addition to a planning application. In general, we need design statements for:

- **major development sites identified in the Unitary Development Plan;**
- **housing developments with more than five homes;**
- **sites next to main routes or junctions, or within town centres or 'areas of local distinctiveness', as shown on the settlement character plans;**
- **sites within or next to a conservation area, a listed building or an ancient monument;**
- **sites within or next to the green belt, the coast or important green spaces; and**
- **sites where a development brief has been prepared.**

**b)** Your design statement should set out a clear and concise analysis of the site and its surroundings. It must explain the principles behind your design and how this relates to and enhances the character of the area, and contributes to sustainable development.

**c)** Your design statement should include the site appraisal referred to in draft policy DQ1, and explained in Part 2: Site design, layout and access. Further advice on the preparation of a design statement and any additional information you will need is given in the separate design advice note on design statements.



d) We may refer applications that are significant to the whole borough or region to the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) for comment. We will do this with your co-operation wherever possible.

## Glossary

**Character: See Local Character.**

### Context:

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

### Form:

The layout (urban grain), scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and detail) and landscape of the development, its individual parts and their relationship with neighbouring buildings, adjacent open areas and the local context.

### Layout:

How a development or area is set out, as seen from above. There are many different ways development can be laid out (just as there are many ways of laying a table!). So 'road layout' is the way roads look, as seen from above, 'building layout' is the way buildings are set out within a site or along roads, and 'site layout' is where things like buildings, parking area and paths are within a site, for example.

### Legibility:

The extent to which people know what a place or area is for, what it does, and where they can and cannot (or should not) go – through clues from the way it has been designed. . Development that is legible i.e. easily understood, is to be encouraged.

### Local Character:

The overall atmosphere and 'feel' of a place or area, the things which give it an identity, make it different from (or similar to) anywhere else and make it what it is.

### Scale:

The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, including its height and massing, or the size of parts of a building or its details. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is simply used instead of size.

### Sustainability:

See Sustainable development.

### Sustainable development:

Development that helps to ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. A sustainable development:

- means everyone has the opportunity to use it
- is easy and safe to use
- looks nice/attractive
- encourages investment in the area
- (means jobs are gained not lost)
- reduces the need to use up natural resources
- (including petrol, stone and energy)
- protects trees, other plants, animals & where they live
- improves the environment
- generally makes things better!

**Urban grain:** The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

## Further advice and guidance

### National design guidance:

'Better Places to Live - A Companion Guide to PPG3', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'Building In Context' , available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'Design Review', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'PPG1: General Policy and Principles', available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.



'The Urban Design Compendium', available from English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation.

'The Value of Urban Design', available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.

'Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention', available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or the Home Office.

### **Other relevant supplementary planning guidance we have produced:**

Archaeology  
Providing a choice of travel  
House extensions  
Landscape character  
Landscape design guidance sheets  
New housing residential development  
Sustainable drainage systems  
Trees and development

### **Sefton MBC information notes:**

Renewable energy information note  
Landscape design guidance sheets

## **Useful contacts**

### **Planning & Economic Regeneration Department**

**(For Bootle, Waterloo, Crosby, Hightown, Maghull and Melling)**

Planning Department,  
Development Control South,  
Balliol House,  
Balliol Rd,  
Bootle,  
L20 3RY  
Tel: (0151) 934 3572  
Fax: (0151) 934 3587  
E-mail: [planning.department@planning.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@planning.sefton.gov.uk)

**(For Southport, Formby, and Ince Blundell)**

Planning Department,  
Development Control North,  
9/11 Eastbank Street,  
Southport,

PR8 1DL  
Tel: (0151) 934 2206  
Fax: (0151) 934 2212  
E-mail: [planning.dcnorth@planning.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.dcnorth@planning.sefton.gov.uk)

### **Community Safety Section**

Chief Executives Department,  
Connolly House  
47, Balliol Road,  
Bootle  
L20 3AA  
Tel: (0151) 934 4466  
Email: [David.Fenney@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:David.Fenney@chief-executives.sefton.gov.uk)

### **Environmental Advisory Service**

Bryant House,  
Liverpool Rd North,  
Maghull,  
Merseyside,  
L31 2PA  
Tel: (0151) 934 4950  
Fax: (0151) 934 4955  
E-mail: [Alan.Jemmett@eas.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.Jemmett@eas.sefton.gov.uk)

### **ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd**

7th Floor  
25 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EX  
Phone: 0207 227 3423  
Fax: 0207 227 3400/01  
E-mail: [acpocpi@acpo.pnn.police.uk](mailto:acpocpi@acpo.pnn.police.uk)  
Website: [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

### **Building Research Establishment**

Garston  
Watford  
WD25 9XX  
Phone: 01923 664462  
Fax: 01923 664103  
E-mail: [ecohomes@bre.co.uk](mailto:ecohomes@bre.co.uk)  
Website: [www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk)



### **Commission for Architecture and The Built Environment (CABE)**

Tower Building  
11 York Road  
London SE1 7NX  
Phone: 020 7960 2400  
Website: [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

### **English Heritage (North West)**

Suites 3.3 and 3.4  
Canada House  
3 Chepstow Street  
Manchester  
M1 5FW  
Phone: 0161 242 1400  
Fax: 0161 242 1401  
Website: [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

### **English Partnerships (North West)**

Arpley House  
110 Birchwood Boulevard  
Birchwood  
Warrington  
WA3 7QH  
Phone: 01925 651144  
Fax: 01925 411493  
Website: [www.englishpartnerships.co.uk](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk)

### **Housing Corporation**

Maple House  
149 Tottenham Court Road  
London  
W1T 7BN  
Phone: 020 7393 2000  
Fax: 020 7393 2111  
Email: [enquiries@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.housingcorp.gov.uk](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk)

### **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**

Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU  
Phone: 020 7944 3000  
Website: [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)



## APPENDIX 1

### Statement of public consultation

**a)** The Planning Committee approved a draft 'Design' planning guidance note for feedback and to help it make decisions about planning applications on 5 June 2002. It was placed on our website later that year.

**b)** The guidance was discussed at the meeting of the Sefton Agents' Forum which was held in April 2003. Few comments or questions were raised during the meeting.

**c)** We consulted interested organisations in July 2003. In total, we sent over 600 letters to local agents, developers, housebuilders and other interested groups (such as parish councils). We then consulted with the general public in September and October 2003. We placed adverts in the local press and the guidance was available in the two planning offices and at four main public libraries (the main library at Bootle was closed for repair in 2003).

**d)** Our consultation procedure is in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 'Development Plans' (PPG12) which stresses the importance of consulting widely if we and the Secretary of State are to rely on Supplementary planning guidance notes to help make decisions about planning applications.

**e)** We received a number of comments about the guidance from Formby Civic Society, Merseyside Civic Society, Government Office North West, Hitchcock and Wright and United Utilities. The table over the page summarises the comments we received, and our responses.

**f)** We consulted Plain English Campaign on the guidance to help make its wording clearer.

**g)** We revised the guidance to take account of the comments received during the consultation process, changes proposed to the draft plan, to correct mistakes in the guidance and to make the wording clearer in line with Plain English Campaign's suggestions.

**h)** We reported the results of the consultation process to the Planning Committee on 17 December 2003. The 'Design' guidance note, including a new Sustainability checklist in Part 4, was adopted on 17 December 2003.





**Table – summarising comments received about the Design Supplementary planning guidance note and our responses**

Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
<b>General comments about all Supplementary planning guidance notes</b>		
Garden History Society	No comments	Response is noted.
Formby Civic Society	Write to support all of the SPGs.	Support is noted.
<b>Design Supplementary planning guidance note</b>		
Merseyside Civic Society	Supportive of comprehensive assessment of character	Support is noted
Formby Civic Society	The section that identified Freshfield Road and Ryeground Lane as characteristic areas is excellent.	Support is noted
Government Office North West	Expand introduction to document to include overall vision for Sefton’s urban environment.	Wording will be added to do this
Government Office North West	Document could make useful links to Community Strategy and the major plans for neighbourhood renewal in the Borough	It is more appropriate for these documents to refer to other Supplementary planning guidance notes.
Government Office North West	Suggest highlighting design relating to public realm and inclusion of public art/ street furniture as Borough has some good examples to promote as good practice e.g. improvements at Southport	Southport Seafront Supplementary planning guidance note includes appropriate references. The Design Supplementary planning guidance note is aimed at developers and we considered that it is not the appropriate place to refer to street furniture. There is no policy in the draft Plan on public art and so it would not be appropriate to make reference to this in guidance note.
Government Office North West	<p>Specific points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• useful to mention need for buildings to face streets, squares or parks and avoid inward-facing development</li> <li>• welcome emphasis placed on sustainable drainage systems</li> <li>• section on access could be expanded to take into account public transport considerations</li> <li>• Settlement Character Plans – useful to have the conservation areas marked on the plans as well.</li> </ul>	<p>- This first point will be included.</p> <p>- The second point is noted.</p> <p>- Access issues are dealt with in the ‘Providing a Choice of Travel’ guidance note but cross reference will be added.</p> <p>- Conservation areas will be added.</p>





