



context

identity

connection

place



Planning Advice Note

# housing

quality



housing quality how we design housing will play a large part in shaping our cities, towns, villages and rural places for decades to come



# Housing

is the largest single urban

# land use

## Planning series:

- › Scottish Planning Policies (SPPs) provide statements of Scottish Executive policy on nationally important land use and other planning matters, supported where appropriate by a locational framework.
- › Circulars, which also provide statements of Scottish Executive policy, contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change.
- › Planning Advice Notes (PANs) provide advice on good practice and other relevant information.

Statements of Scottish Executive policy contained in SPPs and Circulars may be material considerations to be taken into account in development plan preparation and development control.

Existing National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) have continued relevance to decision making, until such time as they are replaced by a SPP. The term SPP should be interpreted as including NPPGs.

Statements of Scottish Executive location-specific planning policy, for example the West Edinburgh Planning Framework, have the same status in decision making as SPPs.

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## Our aspirations for Scotland's housing

**Designing Places**, published November 2001, sets out the Scottish Executive's aspirations for design and the role of the planning system in delivering them. This Planning Advice Note (PAN) explains how **Designing Places** should be applied to new housing.



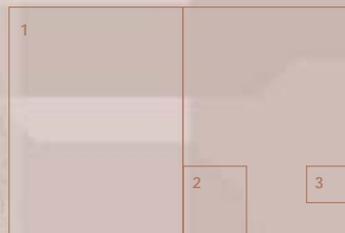
Some of Scotland's recent new housing has been acclaimed for its high standard of design. Talented architects have complemented the streets and spaces of existing cities, towns and villages with designs that express a contemporary vision. At the same time, though, concerns have been expressed about the low design standards of much of the new (particularly volume) housing that has been built in recent years.

There is no single market for housing. Some buyers of new homes are enthusiasts for modern design and committed to urban living. Others are looking for a suburban lifestyle, in a house that looks reassuringly traditional, and they enjoy the mobility that one or more cars provide. Every type of buyer gives life to a part of the housing market. The challenge is to use the planning system to work with the market in producing results that are more likely to be admired in years to come. Planning cannot prescribe good architecture or guarantee successful places, but it can create conditions that make them more likely.

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connection

place



- 1: Homes for the Future, Glasgow
- 2: Moffat Gardens, Glasgow
- 3: Dalgety Bay, Fife

## Role of the planning process

The planning process has an essential role to play in ensuring that:

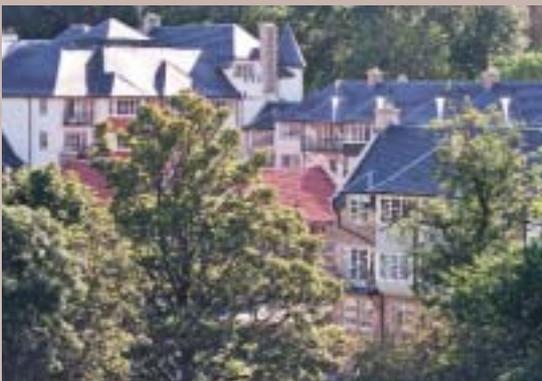
- ▶ the design of new housing reflects a full understanding of its context – in terms of both its physical location and market conditions
- ▶ the design of new housing reinforces local and Scottish identity
- ▶ new housing is integrated into the movement and settlement patterns of the wider area.



## Context

### Oatlands, Glasgow

This aerial shot shows how Oatlands has been master planned to fit into Glasgow's wider context and surrounding area. Glasgow has a tradition of grand curved buildings edging the green spaces of the city.



## Identity

### West Mill, Edinburgh

This housing development has been designed to reflect traditional Scottish housing design. This gives the scheme a strong identity.



## Connection

### Adam Brae Parks, West Lothian

From the early master planning stages, the developers were keen to place an emphasis on maximising connection and accessibility through the housing development. All routes now make people feel safe when moving through the layout.

## The goals of the planning system

The planning system has three goals: social justice, economic competitiveness and environmental quality. The planning process seeks to ensure that development is planned and designed so that it contributes to achieving them. The current emphasis on sustainability underlies how important this is, not just for us, but for future generations.

The concepts of social justice, economic competitiveness and environmental quality sound abstract, but they impact directly on the quality of our lives. The planning and design of development – and of housing in particular – is one of the many factors

that determine how far these qualities will be attained in a particular place. Housing is the largest single urban land use. The design, quality and character of what is built will play a large part in shaping our cities, towns, villages and rural places for decades to come.

The Scottish Executive is committed to using the planning system to create stability and certainty of land supply for housing. This is an important factor for the housebuilding industry in raising design standards. Creating high-quality residential environments is also a key Scottish Executive policy objective set out in SPP 3: Planning for Housing.

social  
justice

economic  
competitiveness

environmental  
quality

## Successful places

The contribution of urban design to city and town centre regeneration is widely recognised. In such settings the intensity of urban life is seen as a positive quality, and maintaining a robust urban fabric is accepted as a way of supporting that intensity. But a great deal of new housing is in suburban settings; on the edge of settlements; or in rural areas. These places need high standards of design just as much as town and city centres.

Designing Places identifies the qualities that we find in places that are socially, economically and environmentally successful. Those qualities should be the concern of everyone who is planning or developing housing. More immediately, they are also close to the heart of anyone who is looking for somewhere to live.

Certainly location, size and price are among the first things we look for in a new home. But many people also want to live in a place that has a distinct identity, rather than one that could be anywhere. They want personal comfort, security and peace of mind. They may want their home to be accessible without having always to use a car. They may want a home that will prove adaptable as their household and other

circumstances change. For example, people increasingly want to have the option of working from home, and they want a home that makes good use of resources, even if only because they pay the heating bills. Some aspects of the resource use in housing development are planning matters – such as layout. Others are matters for the building standards.

Every development should be part of a place with a mix of uses. This does not mean that housing should always be peppered with other uses, or even that every development proposal should have more than one use. But every development should be planned and designed as a part of a place that does more than just house people.

The variety will help the neighbourhood support different types of activity at different times of the day, and to adapt to changing circumstances without having to be completely rebuilt. The conditions for a successful mix of uses are likely to include a range of factors, only some of which are subject to planning control. They include diversity of ownership; appropriate tenure; location on streets that are sufficiently busy; sufficient density; buildings with a flexible form, and a mix of uses that are compatible.

### Housing quality

#### Successful places are:

- ▶ Distinctive
- ▶ Safe and pleasant
- ▶ Easy to get to and move around
- ▶ Welcoming
- ▶ Adaptable
- ▶ Resource efficient

# place

every development should be planned as part of a place that does more than just house people

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## Distinctive

### Whiteinch Cross, Glasgow

Eaves level lighting installations provide a distinctive landmark for the area at night.



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## Safe & pleasant

### Crookfur House, East Renfrewshire

Well thought out sheltered housing which provides security, as well as being modern and attractive.



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## Easy to get around

### Ardler, Dundee

New road principles have been established to ensure the development is accessible and easy to get around.



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## Welcoming

### Glenoaks, Glasgow

Family housing designed on a scale to create a welcoming and pleasant environment.



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## Adaptable

### Craigash Quadrant, East Dunbartonshire

Housing which can be adapted to suit the occupants as they age. Extra wide doors and level thresholds make the houses more accessible.



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## Resource efficient

### BedZed, Borough of Sutton

Large scale carbon neutral development incorporating a range of environmental features. All homes are south facing and insulated photovoltaic panels on the roof produce clean electricity.



## Poor design: defining the problem

All development has the potential to contribute to a sense of neighbourhood and what are thought of as urban qualities, such as public spaces that are welcoming. A local authority should not abandon any expectation of achieving such qualities just because a site is classified as suburban. It is in suburban settings that opportunities for good design are most likely to be missed. Planning authorities should be proactive in relation to both urban and suburban sites.

The principles set out in *Designing Places* are relevant from the largest to the smallest scale. Yet housing is too rarely built in the light of them. Many suburban areas lack character, identity or variety. Too many new homes look as if they could be anywhere. Thoughtlessly chosen standard house types and inappropriate materials look disconcertingly out of place.

New developments too often fail to create successful streets. The accessibility of many new developments depends too much on the car, and the car is often too dominant in the streetscape. Inadequate attention is given to separate and attractive pedestrian routes and links. The relationship of new housing to the wider landscape is not fully considered, and little useable open space is created. The piecemeal redevelopment of some urban sites can result in over development, town cramming and an increase in parking problems in surrounding streets.

Increasingly our cities, towns and villages consist of series of enclaves. Shopping centres, leisure centres, business parks and housing developments are all too often concentrations of single uses, separated by roads. Few developments create real places that have the potential to be the conservation areas of tomorrow.

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### Houses that could be anywhere

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### Standard house types

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### Inappropriate materials

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### Unsuccessful streets

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### Dependency on the car

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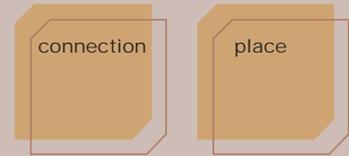
### Single use separated by roads

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For every development opportunity there is a set of conditions that will shape the scheme in the absence of any positive alternative. There may be planning standards (on the distance between buildings, for example) influencing the layout; highway standards (on corner radiuses, road widths, visibility splays, and so on) determining the form of the roads; a builder with standard house designs; professionals with standard ways of doing things; and any number of regulations. Matters such as how much land is available, who owns and controls it and how expensive it is will also be influential.

Achieving good design depends on identifying each of those constraints and showing how something better is possible.



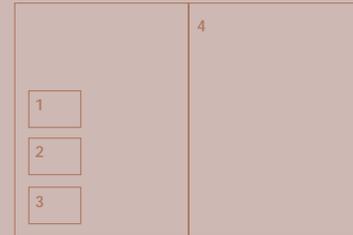
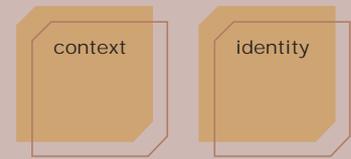
## Roundabout as it is...

## how it could have looked with landscaping



## Contemporary design

Some people wonder why housing sometimes seems to be better designed elsewhere in Europe than in Scotland. Part of the answer may be that house buyers have not been presented with a sufficiently wide choice of house types and housing environments. It is also partly a matter of planning authorities not having spelled out clearly in development plans or briefs their aspirations for the area. There is evidence to suggest that the house building industry will respond positively to a well thought out brief, where the standards of layout and design being sought are based on a good understanding of the planning and market context.



1, 2, 3: Modern infill housing in an historic centre, Ingolstadt, Bavaria

4: Contemporary crescent shaped development, Loretto Housing Association, Paisley, Renfrewshire

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## Modern housing design next to traditional



## Safe access to all on every level



## Integrated open space



## Implementation

Those involved in planning and providing housing should start by asking: what sort of place do we want this to be? What sort of place does it have the potential to be? How can we create a framework for providing what we want? How can we deliver what we want?

The answers will be rooted in an understanding of the physical location, but also what people value about it. The answers will be based on a sound knowledge of the local economy and the particular characteristics of the local housing market. They will reflect an appreciation of the context - what is distinctive about both the locality and the region, and how the design of the buildings can subtly reflect the local as well as the Scottish identity.

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The design of a successful place will begin with understanding how new housing can be connected to the movement patterns (street and routes) and settlement patterns (street blocks and layouts) of an area. The combination of layout of buildings, streets and spaces should create local identity, and contribute positively to the character of Scotland's cities, towns and villages.

Five aspects of the built form will help this - layout, landscape, scale and mix, details and materials and maintenance. These factors should inform a development plan's design policies, urban design guidance, design statements and discussions between developers and planners.

For each factor, there are a number of issues to consider. No development will have all the characteristics listed. The planning and design process will determine which of them are appropriate, and in what way, for the specific development on the particular site. This is a list, not of requirements, but of possibilities. The art of planning and design is to make the most of the opportunities that every proposed development provides, taking into account the different perspectives of the various interests involved.

Anyone planning or designing housing should consider in relation to each item on the checklist

a) how it is to be achieved in a particular development?

or

b) why it is not appropriate?

It is not possible to be prescriptive on design: good design will not be produced by slavishly following rules, irrespective of place or context. The benefit derived from going through this process – in a development brief, in a design statement, in negotiations between developers and planners, or in any other form – will depend on the skill of the planners, architects, house builders, developers or housing associations involved, and their commitment to working together.

identity

place

layout

landscape

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scale & mix

details  
& materials

maintenance

# 1. Layout

The creation of good places requires careful attention to detailed aspects of layout and movement. Developers should think about the qualities and characteristics of places and not consider sites in isolation. New housing should take account of the wider context and be integrated into its wider neighbourhood. Vehicle and pedestrian routes should connect the housing with facilities and spaces within the development, to the local area and more widely.

The layout of a housing development determines the character of streets and public spaces, and influences patterns of movement. It is also the key to other important issues such as security and privacy. Modest differences in the layout of buildings,

pedestrian routes, street and junction design, open spaces and play facilities can have an impact on the quality of new development. For example, buildings (particularly the position of windows and doors) can contribute to making interesting, active and safe streets and public places.

Meeting the road engineering requirements can, at times, result in wasted space, and a failure to create any sense of place or identity. Residents, parking can also be visually intrusive.

## Issues to consider

### Context

- ▶ The topography of the site and its relationship to adjacent sites
- ▶ Natural and built features including landmark buildings and other landscape features
- ▶ Respect for its surroundings, for example, in terms of views in and out of the site
- ▶ Site drainage and potential flood risk
- ▶ Established building heights and lines
- ▶ Orientation of buildings that are adjacent to the site
- ▶ Relationship with established housing and other development, including ease of pedestrian and vehicular movement



New development which respects its surroundings, King's Park, Stirling

### Streets and spaces

- ▶ Boundaries between public and private space that are clearly defined by walls, fences, planting or other means
- ▶ Streets whose existing building lines are reinforced by new development, creating continuous street frontages
- ▶ Setbacks to the building line to create useable pedestrian spaces, not forgotten scraps of land
- ▶ Relatively dense urban development may be developed in the form of perimeter blocks, whose frontages face public space, creating more or less continuous building frontages along the streets, making any back gardens less accessible to intruders.
- ▶ Streets and other public spaces whose sense of enclosure is created by buildings of a size that relates to the scale of the space



Streets and spaces which relate to the scale of the buildings, Dunkeld, Perth and Kinross

## Accessibility and managing traffic

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- ▶ Buildings whose access is from the street
- ▶ Routes connected to existing routes and patterns of movement
- ▶ Well connected or have the potential to be well connected to public transport
- ▶ Pedestrian and cycle routes, which may be streets with vehicular traffic, that are continuous and connected, with no dead ends
- ▶ Routes which are safe and convenient for people with limited mobility
- ▶ Parking provision that does not overwhelm the development's visual appearance
- ▶ Traffic managed so that the road requirements do not detract from the quality of the development, and with roads designed to control traffic speeds without the need for traffic-calming devices such as speed humps and chicanes



Safety for pedestrians, cyclists and cars, Craigmillar, Edinburgh

## Safety and security

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- ▶ Best practice in designing out crime, including 'Secure by Design' and PAN 46: Planning for Crime Prevention should be reflected
- ▶ Rear gardens should generally back on to other gardens, not on to publicly accessible space such as streets or footpaths
- ▶ Back gardens or inner courtyards of private or communally shared space should be enclosed by the backs of buildings
- ▶ Streets, routes and other public spaces should be overlooked by buildings
- ▶ Good quality lighting should contribute to environmental quality as well as safety and security
- ▶ Every effort should be made to ensure privacy

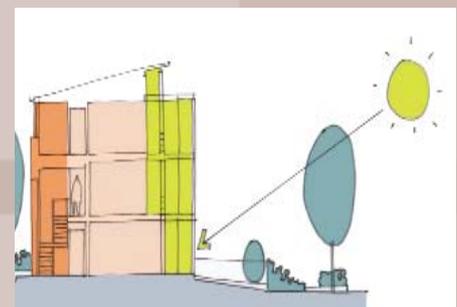


Secure family housing with fencing and curtilage, Camlachie Burn, Glasgow

## Energy efficiency

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- ▶ Energy efficient forms of housing such as tenements and terraces, where appropriate to the local context, should be favoured
- ▶ Houses shelter one another and should generally be positioned to take account of the prevailing wind direction
- ▶ Service spaces should generally be on the north side and habitable rooms on the south
- ▶ Design of public spaces should take account of the local micro-climate



All habitable rooms located on the south side

## 2. Landscape

Landscape - the character and appearance of the land including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, and the way they combine - is a key to designing housing that makes the most of its setting. It can contribute to the distinctive character of a new housing development and provides insulation and shelter. Retaining existing trees and new planting should contribute a sense of place and identity to the development. Restrictions may be placed on the height of planting.

Hard landscaping such as the treatment of paved surfaces, street furniture and boundaries help in creating distinctive spaces.

Public, private and communal spaces require careful attention so that the boundaries between the different types are clearly defined. Open space can provide a development with a sense of identity as well as provide the community with a valuable local facility. As part of the communal space, the layout and treatment of roads will also influence the appearance of the development. Left over space is wasted space and a wasted opportunity.

Landscape design can make a significant contribution to environmental quality, particularly when planting begins to mature, but it cannot compensate for poor layout and design. Developers should consider landscape as a part of the design and layout from the outset of the development process.

**SPP 3: Planning for Housing**

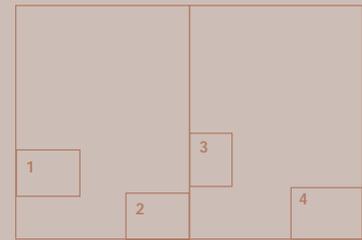
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place



## Issues to consider

- ▶ Resource use should be minimised through siting and design in response to the shape of the landscape
- ▶ Natural features should generally be conserved and emphasised
- ▶ New tree and shrub planting should complement the area's natural features
- ▶ Species that grow well locally and easy to maintain should be used
- ▶ Landscaping proposals should promote bio-diversity
- ▶ Where a SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) scheme is required, it should be an integral part of the landscape and open space framework
- ▶ Open space and play facilities should be integrated into the layout and wider network of routes, rather than tucked away on undevelopable sites at the edge of the development or as an afterthought
- ▶ Public spaces should link to a network of pedestrian routes
- ▶ Streets should be designed as public spaces, not just traffic routes, with appropriate surfaces and street furniture
- ▶ Opportunities should be taken to enhance local views and creates landmarks
- ▶ Gateway features should mark significant area entrances



1: Care has been taken to conserve the natural landscape, Colinton, Edinburgh  
2: SUDS is an integral part of the open space framework, Adam Brae Parks, West Lothian  
3: Bold gateway features, Irvine, South Ayrshire  
4: Well designed landscape with attractive water feature, Mains Estate, East Dunbartonshire

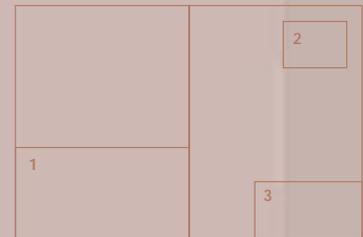


### 3. Scale and mix

Too many recent developments have a rigid and standard layout. A development's mix of housing types and uses and its three-dimensional physical form are important in determining what sort of place is to be created.

The density of the development should support the intended intensity of uses. Developments should provide for a mix of uses, and housing types and sizes that will contribute to the place's intended qualities. This variety and mix will help the neighbourhood support different types of activity at different times of the day, and adapt to changing circumstances without having to be completely rebuilt. A successful mix of uses is influenced by a range of factors, only some of which are subject to

planning control. They include a fine-grain scale of development; diversity of ownership; appropriate tenure; location on streets that are sufficiently busy; appropriate density; buildings with a flexible form; an interface between two types of building or activity; a compatible mix of uses; and positive attitudes towards urban living.



1: Sensitive scale set in landscape setting, Crookfur Cottages, East Renfrewshire

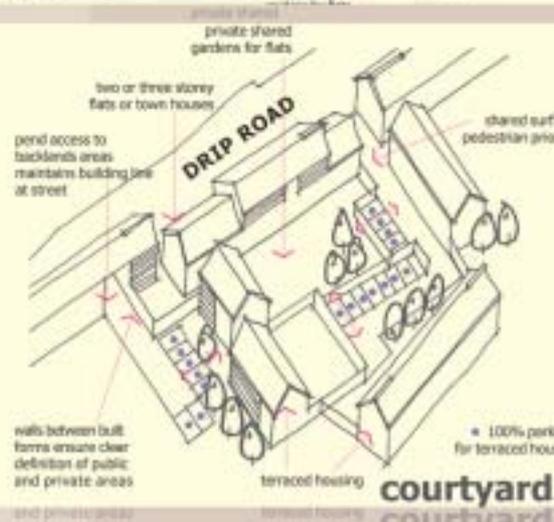
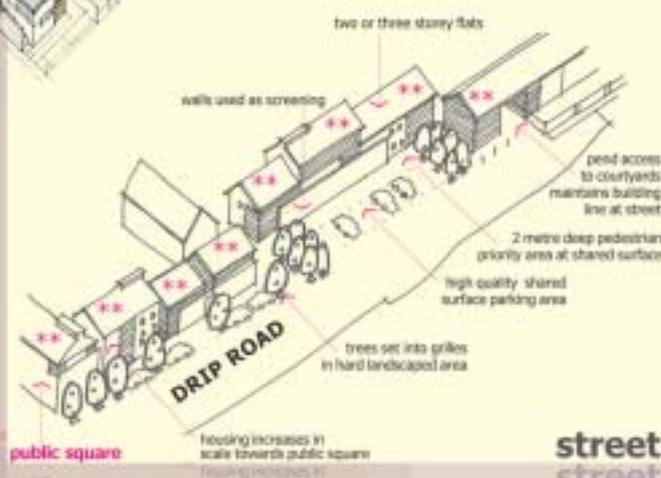
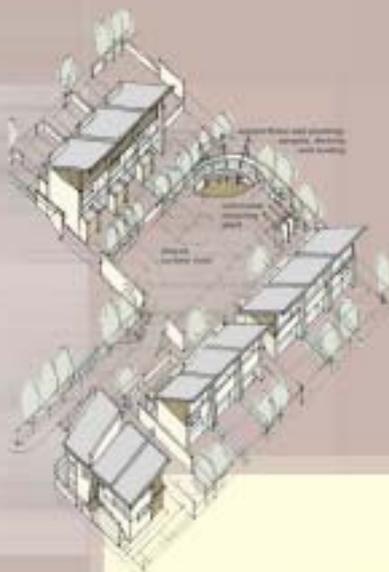
2: Variety in scale and mix of housing types, Valleyfield, Midlothian

3: Creation of places, streets and courtyards, Raploch, Stirling



## Issues to consider

- ▶ A mix of dwelling sizes and types (feasible in the light of market conditions) and land uses (at least at the scale of the wider neighbourhood) should be sought
- ▶ The scale and form of housing development will be influenced in part by the internal layout of the dwellings. For example, developers should aim to maximise the potential for daylight penetration
- ▶ The scheme should be developed to appropriate densities to allow sufficient pedestrian use to support the viability of non-housing uses



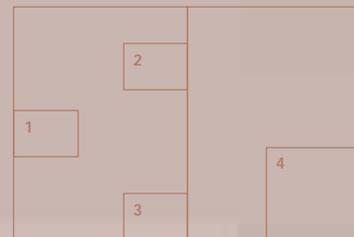
street street

courtyard courtyard

## 4. Details and materials

The quality of development can be spoiled by poor attention to detail. The development of a quality place requires careful consideration not only to setting and layout and its setting, but also to detailed design, including finishes and materials.

Important aspects include building styles, the detailed design of features such as doors, windows and porches; and the texture, colour, pattern, durability and ease of maintenance of materials.



- 1: Mixture of details and materials, Dalgety Bay, Fife
- 2: Attractive street furniture, Adam Brae Parks, West Lothian
- 3: Integrated bollards and canopies designed by an artist, with braille and the phonetic alphabet etched into the glass, Cube Housing Association, Berkley Street, Glasgow
- 4: Balcony details, Abbey Road, Stirling



identity

context

## Issues to consider

- ▶ The development should reflect its setting, reflecting local forms of building and materials
- ▶ The aim should be to have houses looking different without detracting from any sense of unity and coherence for the development or the wider neighbourhood
- ▶ Street furniture should be designed and sited with individual and community safety and convenience in mind
- ▶ Main entrances should open on to the streets that they front
- ▶ The development should be easily accessed by people with limited mobility
- ▶ The neighbourhood should generally be designed without the need for detailed signage

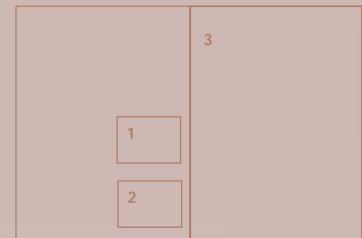


## 5. Maintenance

When preparing new housing proposals, the planning process needs to address how the quality of the development will be maintained in the longer term. Pavements and street lighting should be to adoptable standards. The nature of future maintenance, adoption and responsibilities for services such as open space and communal parking areas therefore needs to be addressed. Elements such as bin and bike storage should be an integral part of the design.

## Issues to consider

- ▶ Common areas and facilities - walls, fences, open spaces - should be designed to be well managed and maintained
- ▶ Materials should be robust and wear well
- ▶ Management arrangements should secure effective maintenance



1 & 2: Gartloch Road, Glasgow  
3: Continued maintenance enhances the environment, Crown Street, Glasgow

The Gartloch Road development integrates mainstream housing with housing for those who have disabilities - the landscaping has been carefully considered to create a sense of place - but at the same time it is robust and easy to maintain.





## Urban design toolkit

A key element in achieving improved quality in new housing is through greater use of the urban design toolkit. The toolkit consists of a range of guidance or documents which can be used by local authorities and developers, to help improve the process by which to achieve good quality urban design.

### Urban design frameworks

These should be prepared for any area where the likelihood of significant change calls for co-ordinated action. It often covers an area only part of which is likely to be developed in the near future. Urban design frameworks are used to co-ordinate more detailed development briefs and master plans. They can be used for areas such as or areas such as urban quarters, regeneration areas, town centres, urban edges, conservation areas, villages and new settlements.

### Development briefs

A development brief is a document providing guidance on how a specific site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies. It is for sites on which development is likely to have a significant impact; where development or design requirements need to be made explicit, or on particularly sensitive sites. For example, in a conservation area, next to listed buildings, or part of a prominent view.

### Master plans

A master plan is a document that charts the master planning process and explains how a site or series of sites will be developed. It will describe how the proposal will be implemented, and set out the costs, phasing and timing of development. A master plan will usually be prepared by or on behalf of an organisation that owns the site or controls the development process. Master plans will be required for small sensitive sites, such as those in or close to conservation areas, and larger sites within or on the edge of settlements.

### Design guides

A design guide provides guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the development plan, or sometimes with the planning and design policies of some other organisation. A local authority design guide will often relate to a specific topic such as conservation areas, shop fronts or house extensions.

### Design statements

A design statement should explain and illustrate the design principles and design concept in the terms of the proposed layout; landscape; scale and mix; details and materials; and maintenance. It should show, as briefly as necessary, how these will help to achieve the qualities identified in Designing Places.

### Design competitions

Design competitions have a role in encouraging inspirational design and can be used for particularly important or sensitive sites.

## Roles in the planning process

This section highlights the roles of local authorities, planning applicants, road engineers and other interests who play a part in the planning and design process.

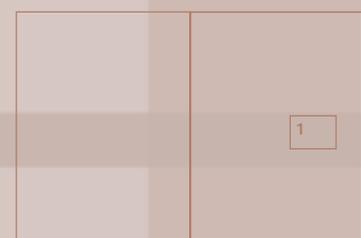
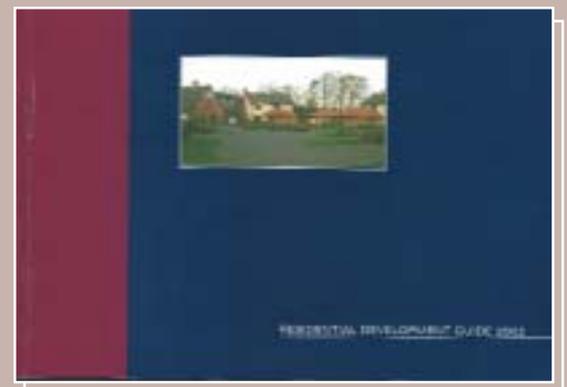
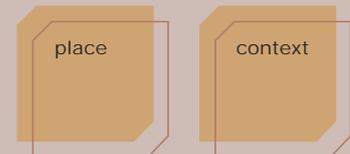
### 1. Local authorities

In general, the less urban a place is, the less likely it is that the local authority planning department will have design skills; that the planners will be experienced in preparing urban design frameworks and development briefs, or conducting pre-application discussions and negotiating on design issues; or that design statements will be asked for. This was shown by the Urban Design Questionnaire conducted by the SSDP (Scottish Society for the Directors of Planning). Yet every development in a suburban and non-urban setting contributes in some small way – or fails to contribute – to making the neighbourhoods of tomorrow.

Getting the balance right in a particular situation is partly the job of the architect or urban designer. But the ground usually has to be prepared earlier by the local authorities. This can be achieved by using the urban design toolkit, the local authority will usually take the lead in preparing guidance. This will provide the basis for constructive discussions and negotiations with developers. But developers can share in the work, or help to pay for it, in circumstances where the council does not have the necessary skilled staff or resources. Their reward should be greater certainty in the planning process.

The local authority's development plan should set out a clear, robust planning policy framework which, in addition to much else, describes how the principles of design should shape development. The plan should also be a convincing statement of the council's commitment to high standards of housing design.

The local authority has to decide how best to use its limited resources. For example, development plans may identify those housing sites most in need of a development brief. How much work is involved in preparing guidance will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the area or site, and of any likely development – and of the resources available.



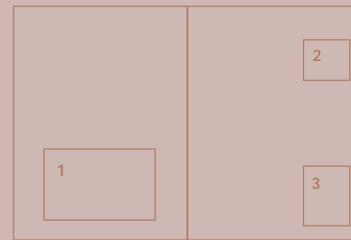
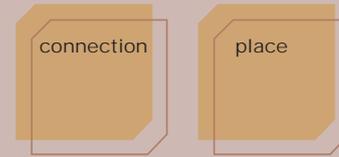
1: Residential Development Guide, West Lothian Council

## Timing

The timing of the guidance is vitally important. Prepared too late, it will have no influence on what sort of housing landowners and prospective developers will be willing to build, especially if land has already been bought on the basis of different expectations. Councils should encourage landowners, developers and housing associations to prepare design guidance (in partnership with itself if possible) at the time they are beginning to think about how sites might be developed – with the incentive of a quicker and more certain planning process. Councils should be one step ahead in knowing for which areas and sites, guidance will be needed and, where appropriate, prepare (or commission) the guidance itself.

## Informal guidance

Even when formal guidance is not being prepared, the local authority needs to think about what sort of informal guidance its officers are giving. It is not unusual for developers to receive different answers to questions asked of different officers in the same department, when seeking information about council policy relating to a particular site.



- 1: Development Advice Note: The Layout and design of new housing development, Stirling Council
- 2: Good practice master planning for a major brownfield site, Munich-Riem, Bavaria
- 3: An example of a design statement, Calton Road, Edinburgh



## 2. Applicants

Applicants have a role to play when planning their developments and preparing documents, which form part of the toolkit, to accompany planning applications. They should base all development proposals on thorough appraisals of the local area and site.

### Preparing master plans

Applicants can produce a master plan to explain how a site or a series of sites will be developed.

It should describe how the proposal will be implemented, set out the phasing and timing of development. It will also set out the costs (subject to commercial confidentiality). The planning authority needs to know that the development's basic economic assumptions are soundly conceived, though it does not need to see the detailed development appraisal.

### Preparing design statements

A design statement prepared by the developer can be an effective means of making the planning process quicker and more certain, and of raising standards of housing design. It is a document explaining the design principles, and how they have been developed in response to the site and its wider context. The statement will show how the housing will be designed to create successful homes in a successful neighbourhood.

Submitted with the planning application, the design statement will help the council to understand how the design has been developed from those principles. This can provide a clear basis for discussion and negotiation.

The statement will explain how the proposed development has been shaped by an appraisal of the site and the wider area, and how the proposal responds to local and national policy and guidance.



### 3. Road engineers

The design of housing layouts is too often determined by the requirements of road engineers, and road layouts have often been designed by road engineers working in relative isolation. Road standards can limit the scope for creating successful residential environments. As a result, planners and architects have found themselves with little scope for achieving high standards of urban design.

It is all too easy for movement to seem an end in itself, shaping a development to the exclusion of others. Instead the housing layout should be the basis for discussing the design details of the roads. Issues such as street lighting and signage should also be considered as a means of achieving the housing design objectives.

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By way of good practice, engineers, planners, urban designers and others should all work together in multi-disciplinary teams, each offering their own perspective and helping to come to a balanced view.

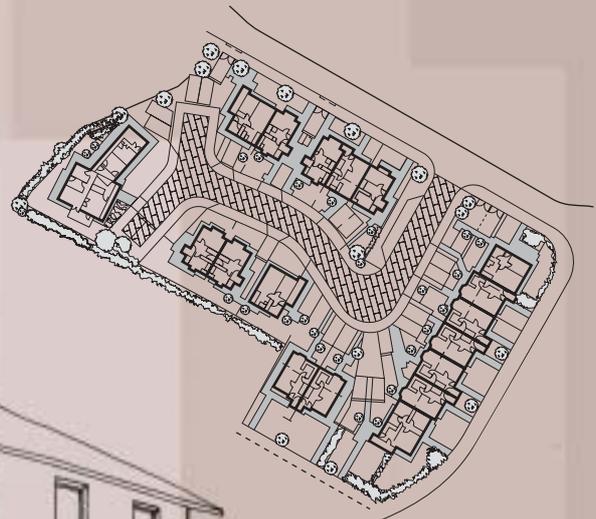
#### Culs-de-sac

Perhaps the most basic question to ask of a housing development proposed for a suburban site is whether or not it should be a cul-de-sac. Culs-de-sac need to be used with care in housing layouts, as they can put pressure on the local network of streets without making any positive contribution to it.

Whether that impact is acceptable may depend on the cumulative impact of local culs-de-sac on the connected streets that lead to them, in terms both of the amount of traffic and the experience of pedestrians. The culs-de-sac may be served by excessively long distributor roads – often lined with blank walls or close-boarded fencing, and unattractive to anyone on foot – on which houses turn their backs.

place

connection

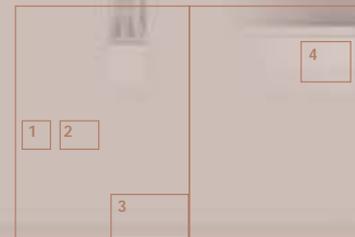


## Home zones

Similarly important issues about the basic housing layouts are raised by current discussions about home zones. The logic of home zones is simple. Traditional residential streets were once places where people on foot felt safe. Today, by contrast, the speed and volume of traffic makes living beside them less pleasant.

A home zone is a small area or part of a street that has been designed (or redesigned) to civilise it, without wholly excluding motorised traffic. In most cases vehicles can still drive along the street and through the area, but the design of the roadway and the features on it cause vehicles to drive very slowly – perhaps even so slowly and carefully as to make it safe for children to play in the street.

A home zone will almost certainly make a particular street, or part of a street, more pleasant for the people who live in it. But creating a zone in isolation may make some parts of the wider area less pleasant to live in, due to traffic that would have driven through the zone diverting to less obstructed routes. Street layouts for new housing must be designed from the start with traffic-calming in mind. The local authority should ensure that it is done in the context of a strategic approach to taming traffic over a wider area.



- 1: Cluttered traffic signs, Stirling
- 2: Excessive signage, Fife
- 3: Well designed cul de sac, Pineview Phase 7, Pineview Housing Co-operative, Glasgow
- 4: Low rise suburban housing with thoughtful integration of cars and buildings, Grangemouth, Falkirk

# home zone

is a small area or part of a street that has been designed (or redesigned) to civilise it

## 4. Councillors

Councillors have an important part to play in the planning of housing, setting out principles rather than becoming involved in design details. Officials should ensure that they are familiar with and committed to the council's design policies and to its design guidance. They should also visit schemes that the council has approved to see the built results. To help encourage best practice in design, Councils should enter projects in their area for housing awards schemes, such as the Saltire Awards.

Overall, councillors should take part in training courses to ensure that they have a basic knowledge of the principles of urban design, and that they keep their knowledge up to date.

## 5. Education, training and continuous professional development

Higher standards of housing design depend on the attitudes, knowledge, confidence and skills of everyone involved in the planning, design and development process. This includes councillors, planners and developers.

Some will need basic training in understanding design issues. Others need their knowledge to be brought – and kept – up to date, as a commitment to lifelong learning. Some need to acquire specific design skills. The process of monitoring what has been built, and the role of the planning process in shaping it, can itself be a good basis for training programmes.

Planning schools have an important role in providing training and continuous professional development.

## 6. The public

The public can be influential in improving the quality of housing design we expect and by insisting on thoughtful design and higher standards everywhere. Where opportunities arise, they can take part in preparing urban design guidance, discuss issues of planning and housing design with local councillors, encouraging them to insist on high standards.

They can also help to initiate village (and other local) design statements as a way of identifying the important features of the place's character, and suggest how they can be reflected in any new development. One way to help broaden experience and understanding of design is through organisations such as the Lighthouse, Scotland's centre for architecture and design.

Higher standards of housing design depend on the

# attitudes, knowledge, confidence and skills

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of everyone involved in the planning,  
design and development process





## Building standards and planning: making better use of resources

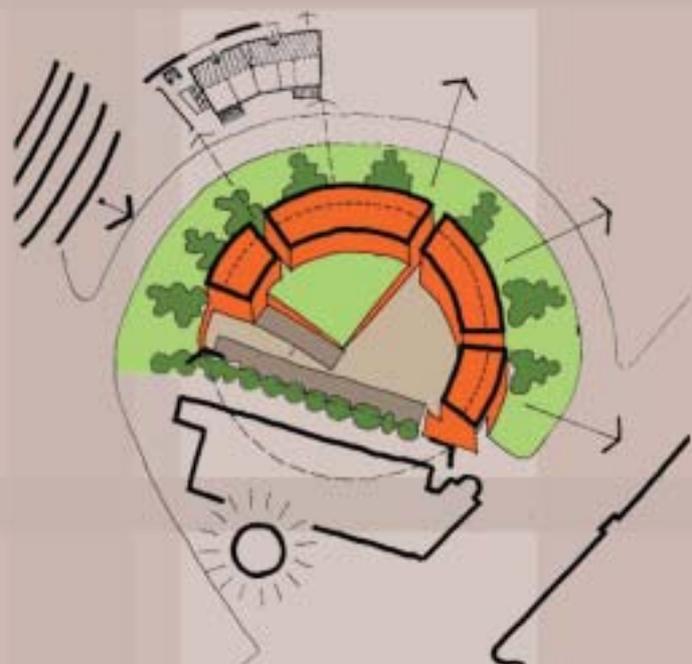
Other aspects of a development's design and its use of resources, though they may not be planning issues, are also matters of Scottish Executive policy or guidance. In particular contexts some of these will already be covered by building standards. These include ensuring that the proposed housing:

- ▶ is accessible by people with disabilities
- ▶ is well insulated and free of draughts
- ▶ has sufficient thermal mass to absorb heat from the sun
- ▶ has a well insulated roof, walls and floors, and double glazed windows
- ▶ is well lit by daylight
- ▶ is built without materials suspected of being toxic
- ▶ re-uses building materials and is built of materials which themselves can be re-used later
- ▶ uses water-conserving sanitary fittings
- ▶ recycles surface and grey water
- ▶ has a water meter to reduce water use
- ▶ has facilities for composting organic waste and recycling inorganic waste
- ▶ uses a type of heating system that makes good use of resources (perhaps a neighbourhood system, district heating, or combined heat and power)
- ▶ is built in a form (and/or with mechanical systems) designed to capture solar energy
- ▶ recycles its waste
- ▶ can accommodate well positioned satellite dishes and aerials.

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context

identity



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2

1: Whinhill Phase 4, Cloch Housing Association, Greenock, Inverclyde  
2: Flats designed on a semi-circular site to a high building standard at minimum cost, CASPAR, Leeds

# Case Study 1 - The Drum – Phase 2 and 3, Falkirk



**Type 1 streetscape:** courtyard house groups remove car parking from the public realm and create streets with a sense of enclosure. Walls give privacy to the gardens beyond.



**Type 2 streetscape:** terraced housing responding to the topography defines a shared public greenspace.



**Type 3 streetscape:** the general access road passing through all phases has a common character of paving, planting and semi mature street trees.



**Boundaries:** earth formation, perimeter hedges and structure planting will reinforce site enclosure whilst giving an attractive public face to the whole development.



**Park:** the street trees continue through the park.

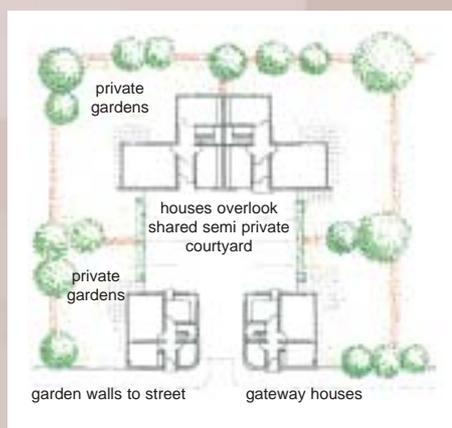
An adopted strategic master plan gave certain constraints for each phase such as density, road layout and drainage.

Working for the landowner Grange Estate, Cadell<sup>2</sup> along with a valuer, a civil engineer and a planner evolved a potential layout and specification reflecting both the landowner's aspiration for design quality and anticipating constraints on developers wishing to ensure commercial viability.

This led to an illustrated Urban Design Framework document which covered the design of roads, houses, hard and soft landscape and park. The document included notes and diagrams describing design rationale as well as streetscape sketches and an accurate layout setting out houses and garden walls, identifying different house groupings, and parking arrangements. (Courtyard houses for flat sites, terraces for slopes and a circus around an old mine shaft – all making the best of views, orientation, topography and site history).

The framework acted as a brief for the developer/architect teams competing in a design and bid competition for each phase. The purpose of including a design proposal was to demonstrate the design standards expected with a model solution addressing the constraints and demonstrating the opportunities of the site. However, the model solution was not intended as a prescription for the site nor has it turned out to be.

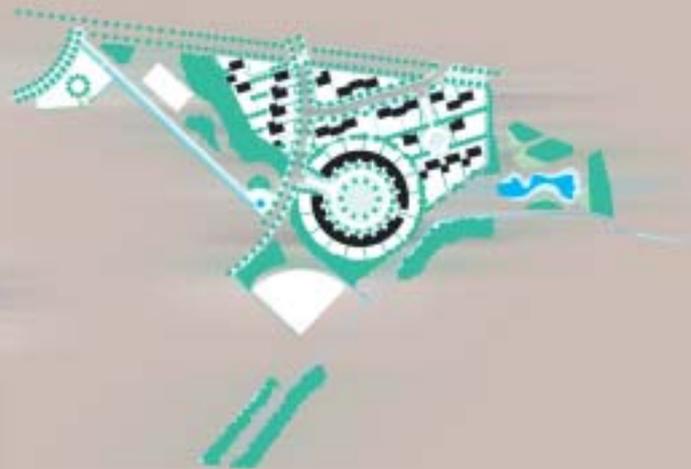
In the event the successful developers were able to address the aspirations of the framework whilst also making the most competitive offers. As a result innovative proposals have now been built and successfully marketed at phase 2 and are starting on site at phase 3.



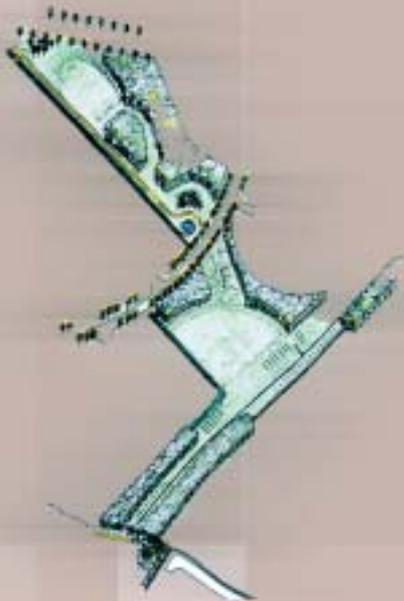
**Courtyard groupings:** the simple grouping of houses around a shared courtyard creates semi private spaces which are secure due to overlooking and intimate scale.



**Coordinated master plan:** a comprehensive plan allows integration between all phases and infrastructure.



**Phase 3 framework plan:** an example of a model plan used as part of the briefing package for this development phase.



**Linear park:** a band of new parkland links the open countryside to the south and east with Kinnegars Park to the north.



**Phase 3 competition proposals:** the successful development proposals for Stewart Milne Homes by Malcolm Fraser Architects, with Horner + MacLennan Landscape Architects.



**Phase 2 work in progress:** the successful development by Ogilvie Homes with Vernon Monaghan Architects, under construction.

## Case Study 2 - Whittle Hall, Warrington

English Partnerships produced a General Development Brief for Whittle Hall. This set out a range of design principles and key criteria. Following on from that was a more detailed document which listed site specific written requirements. This built on the principles already established by the brief.

English Partnerships was keen to set out a complete list of key criteria which had to be addressed on both sites. From the developers perspective, this meant that everybody was tendering with the same information.

However, if any tender failed to meet the criteria - it was automatically judged invalid. These strict bid conditions required urban designers to adhere to a strict interpretation of the brief.

Whilst the proactive approach and clarity of vision adopted by English Partnerships has been demanding on developers, with a lot of forward planning required, the overall process has meant that individuality and variation in the standard house types has been vastly increased. Everything had to be considered down to the last detail. For example, detailed traffic management plans and scaffold designs.

The sketches illustrate the designs of Bett Homes who won the competition.



## Case Study 3 - Staiths South Bank, Tyneside

Staiths South Bank is a 688 home development by George Wimpey City on the Banks of the River Tyne in Gateshead.

Designed in partnership with George Wimpey City, Hemingwaydesign and architects Ian Darby Partnership, the development offers the design conscious majority a new choice in housing. If you want open plan living then you will be able to choose a house with fewer internal walls. But if you want a more traditional layout, then that can be achieved too. If the purchaser would rather live upstairs to take advantage of the river view, then the bedrooms can be built downstairs. Overall, it will include 2 and 3 storey houses and one, two and three bedroom apartments.

Staiths South Bank has been designed to bring the streets to life. A place for people to meet and children to play; not an extended car park or rat run of high-speed roads. As part of the Home Zone Challenge, announced by the Prime Minister in 2001, its aim is to boost the quality of life for residents and create a harmonious relationship between people and cars.



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Apartment Living

Courtyard Living

Semi-detached Living

Townhouse Living

### The Concept

Staiths South Bank aims to combine contemporary design with community values and facilities.

## Case Study 4 - Fürstlicher Rennplatz, Regensburg, Bavaria

This is an example of a high quality development on a former racecourse. The residential area has been developed with an adjoining business development. A shopping precinct has also been designed into the site layout, and this serves surrounding areas, as well as being located to public transport links to other parts of the city. The development is a particularly striking example of how the planning authority's specification is translated into reality.

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The specification for the site, established by an architectural competition, set out the quantity of dwellings, site layout including open space and services such as shops but it also gave more detailed parameters such as the height and type of buildings, fenestration and roof pitch. For example, precise roof pitch and tiles were specified. On the other hand, more freedom was given in relation to features such as the general form of the buildings, window styles and colour schemes. Guidelines were issued on these features and the architects who produced development proposals were then able to use their own interpretation of the criteria. This process has resulted in a development which consists of a variety of building types, that are by no means uniform, but create a harmonious whole.





## Looking ahead

Housing development is changing the face of urban and rural Scotland. What we build today will constitute an enduring legacy. Nothing is more valuable than a successful place in creating the setting for social and economic success. Nothing is more wasteful of resources and opportunities than a place that fails.

Local authorities, house builders, central government and local communities all face the challenge of using the planning system to raise standards of housing design. The starting point must be much higher expectations of what is possible. The best examples illustrated in this Planning Advice Note show what can be achieved, often in unpromising circumstances. To the people who live in it, every place is special. Building places that could be anywhere should not be an option.

The housing market understands well what many people look for in a home. We must complement that knowledge by looking around and ahead. The long term success of new housing will be measured

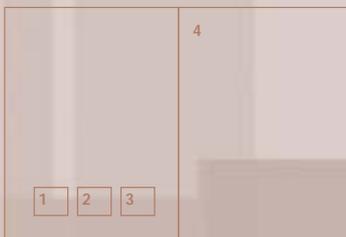
long after most of the first residents have moved away. The buildings and their surroundings will have proved to be robust in the face of wear and tear. Householders will have adapted their homes to their own needs and tastes. Patterns of life will have responded to social, economic and technological change. What was once a new development will have become part of a living neighbourhood.

These days success rarely happens by chance. The planning process provides the framework for taking the initiative: for implementing national and local policy, for developing constructive guidance, for exercising a high level of planning and design skills, and for identifying common interests among developers, local government and communities.

Each plan, each development and each site represents an opportunity. Our determination comes from knowing that, if we dare to raise our expectations, we can make a difference.

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# Raise standards of housing design



- 1: Dalgety Bay, Fife
- 2: Oatlands, Glasgow
- 3: West Mill, Edinburgh
- 4: Adam Brae Parks, West Lothian

## Context



## Identity



## Connection





## Acknowledgements

Anderson Bell + Christie  
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