creating successful places

section three

3. Creating Successful Places

'Most people want to live somewhere distinctive and with character, which can be provided if housing is well designed' Better Neighbourhoods' (Making Higher Densities Work, CABE 2005)

Policy Link - Core Strategy Policy KP2:
Development Principles - 9

50.   Southend has its own individual character and each development site in the Borough is unique. Off the shelf standard designs and standard house types create soulless places with no local distinctiveness and will be considered inappropriate unless it can be demonstrated that they make a positive response to local character.

A Design Statement that demonstrates how the proposal fits into the wider townscape should accompany all major development schemes. See Section 15 Making an Application

3.1   Connectivity, Permeability and Integration

'Planning should promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.' (By Design. CABE 2000)

This route to the cricket pitch at Shoebury Garrison is restricted to pedestrians & cyclists only and acts as a traffic calming measure to prevent 'rat running' through the development.

51.   The spatial arrangement of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area is key to success of any scheme. First and foremost new places should be designed for people; they should be vibrant, attractive and easy to move around and through. New development provides an opportunity to make new connections and improve pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access by creating new convenient links to the surrounding street network and local facilities. Lighting views and desire lines can help reinforce links.

3.1.1 New Streets

'Place and movement are the most important in determining the character of streets. Streets should no longer be designed by assuming 'place' to be automatically subservient to 'movement'. Both should be considered in combination, with their relative importance depending on the street's function within a network. It is only by considering both aspects that the right balance will be achieved. It is seldom appropriate to focus solely on one to the exclusion of the other, even in streets carrying heavier volumes of traffic, such as high streets.' Manual for Streets DFT 2007

52.   It is imperative that all new streets cater for the needs of all users not just vehicle movement. The objective for all streets is that they are safe, convenient, attractive, and support the needs of all including pedestrians, cyclists, emergency and service vehicles and utility companies. The type of street chosen should be appropriate for the location and could range from a main road to a homezone.

Layouts for Larger Sites
53.   The layout of roads in larger developments will be key to their overall character. The aim of all new development is to ensure a positive integration into the wider context it is therefore important that this element of the design is informed by local character. Natural features, topography and the historic street pattern should also be used to shape the layout and give local distinctiveness to the scheme. Connectivity with neighbouring development, including matching in with the local grain and maintaining views and vistas, will be key to its success. The thinking behind the layout should be explained in the Design and Access Statement.

54.   All streets must be functional for cars and service vehicles but the focus, especially those in residential areas, should be on making them attractive environments. In residential areas in particular they should be designed to discourage speeding traffic without impeding the access for larger vehicles. High Quality traffic calming measures, such as junction treatments, landscaping and landscaped build outs, which restrict speeds, will be encouraged, where appropriate, in residential areas. All proposed traffic calming measures should be integral to the overall design and not an afterthought. The detailed design of new streets and junctions will be assessed on a site by site basis to ensure that the most appropriate solution is found for all road users.

Shared Surfaces

55.   Shared surfaces can represent an economical use of space and lead to attractive areas for driving, walking and play. These only work well if sufficient space is allocated. Developments that incorporate shared use surfaces as a means to solely increase density at the expense of practical amenity will not be approved. Where shared surfaces are considered appropriate, providing play space and, where appropriate, structures, equipment or public art to enhance the play experience for children is essential.

Section 4.6.1 Landscaping and Section 3.5 Public Realm - For further information see the Southend-on-Sea Local Transport Plan 2 which is available on the Council's website www.southend.gov.uk and Manual for Streets which can be found at www. manualforstreets.org.uk

Adoption

56.   The Council wishes to encourage imaginative design incorporating high quality materials in pursuit of the best possible highway designs. The Council will work with the developer to find the best solution for each site. Roads for adoption will need to be capable of being maintained economically and not represent a burden on public maintenance budgets.

57.   The Council may be prepared to adopt new roads as public highway where there is a benefit to the public at large to allow for the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic. However, highways, which provide access to only a small number of dwellings, are unlikely to be adopted. Where it is intended that a new highway be adopted the

A new shared surface street at Lifstans Way.

Council should be consulted at the initial design stage. Commuted sums for maintenance may be secured through an appropriate legal agreement.

3.1.2 Detailed Highway Design

For detailed technical guidance on specific highway requirements and specifications see Appendix.16

3.1.3 Pedestrian Permeability

58.   It is all too common for even short journeys to be made by car and this trend is leading to unhealthy communities and environments. Larger developments will be encouraged to include public rights of way which connect to the surrounding built fabric and are attractive, safe and convenient. Routes through the development and to parking areas must have natural surveillance and be well lit. Hidden and dark corners should be avoided.

3.1.4 Cycling Permeability

59.   Well-connected and linked places encourage more sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling. New pedestrian and cycle routes should be designed for the ease of walking and cycling. This includes minimal barriers, pollution and noise, high quality surfacing and landscaping and well-located crossing points. Given how flat the Borough is, it is considered that significant advances can be made in this area. The Council is also now a cycling demonstration town and developers will be expected to contribute to this physically or financially. Southend offers considerable potential for encouraging cycling either as a means of travelling to work, school and community facilities,

or as a leisure/tourist activity and the Council's aim is to see a significant increase in the level of cycling in the town over the next few years.

60. New developments can often provide opportunities to extend the local cycle network and cycle facilities will be expected to assist with this aspiration by being cycle friendly and contributing to the wider cycle network. These types of movements are best accommodated within a well-connected street layout that caters for a range of travel choices. A financial contribution to cycling initiatives will be secured through an appropriate legal agreement.

See also Section 7.2 Secured by Design, the Southend Cycling Strategy and the Southend-on-Sea Local Transport Plan 2 which is available on the Council's website www.southend.gov.uk. For further information on developer contributions for cycling see Planning Obligations DPD.

See also Section 8 Sustainable Development and Design

3.2 Focal Points, Gateways, Views and Vistas

61. Corner plots, sites that terminate vistas and those in prominent locations offer an opportunity for landmark buildings and gateways. A particularly high standard of design and detailing that reflects its status and importance, will be required on these sites.

62. Whenever possible existing historic landmark buildings should be protected and enhanced and strategic views preserved. Near and distant views both contribute to an areas character and should be respected where they occur. New development may also offer the possibility to open up views and
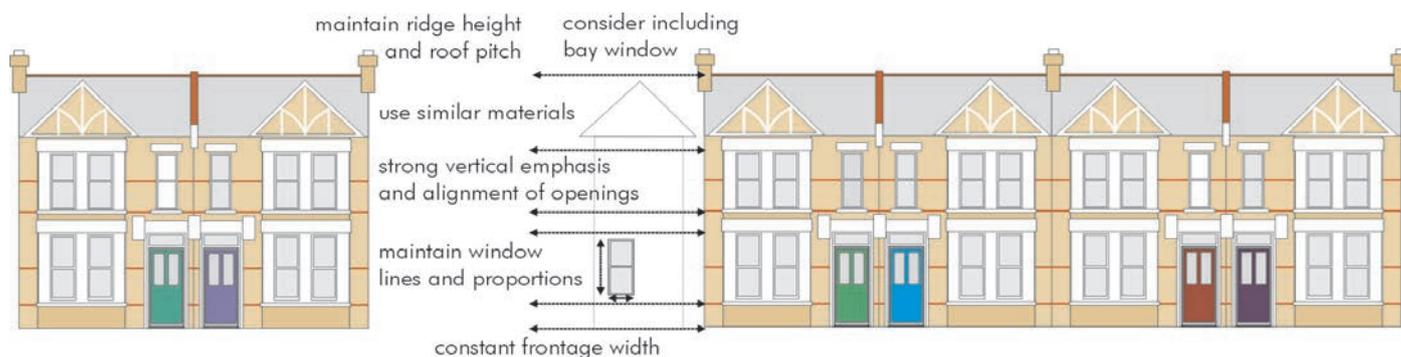

The buildings and street at North Camp Shoebury Garrison have been aligned with the Old Hospital building which has created a new visa through this part of the development.

vistas, which may add an extra dimension to the scheme and help integrate with the surroundings.

63. When planning development on a corner site, the issue of two public frontages needs to be addressed. The context of the adjoining streets including scale, rhythm and form requires a single design solution, and development will be required to present a well designed and appropriately scaled elevations to both frontages. In some areas of the Borough the openness of road junctions is part of the local character and where this occurs it must be respected in the design of new development. This can mean setting the footprint back from the road to open the corner at ground level and ensuring the height of the proposal is appropriate and does not create a 'canyon effect'.

3.3 Proportions and Visual Cues

64. When designing a new building or an extension it is important that the development integrates with existing buildings. This is best done by identifying the positive characteristics

maintain ridge height and roof pitch

consider including bay window

use similar materials

strong vertical emphasis and alignment of openings

maintain window lines and proportions

constant frontage width

Visual cues such as rhythm, proportions and alignments taken from the adjacent buildings should, to some extent, be used to inform the design of infill development.

New development at Shoebury Garrison has responded to the existing historic cricket pitch by creating a formal grand frontage which completes the enclosure of the open space.

and relationships formed by the existing buildings e.g. frontage lines, heights of ridges and eaves, proportions, materials etc. and respecting them in the design of the new development.

65.   In some cases it may be desirable to contrast with the existing character. Whilst this can lead to more exciting possibilities, it generally requires greater design skill to achieve a successful scheme.

66.   Larger sites in particular offer more of an opportunity to create a new area of distinct character especially where existing character is weak, although the wider context will still be an important consideration. In a similar vein, key buildings designed as landmarks, may also afford a unique style.

See Section 2.2 Character and Context

3.4   Continuity and Enclosure

'Planning should promote continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space by development which clearly identifies private and public areas.' (By Design. CABE, 2000)

67.   New development should continue established street patterns where they are an integral part of local character, particularly building frontage lines which determine the proportions of the street. Buildings that are uncharacteristically set back or set forward from their neighbours often look out

of place and create negative spaces that are often neglected.

68.   Wide open spaces and streets in urban areas can be desolate, unwelcoming and windswept. When creating a new place or development within the urban fabric the need for strong continuity and enclosure is key to creating places and spaces that are comfortable, have identity and provide community safety. On main transport routes where street widths have to be generous, trees and landscaping can be used to create secondary enclosure to give a more pedestrian scale. The enclosure of site boundaries is also important to provide a clear distinction between public and private areas, but such means of enclosure must complement the design of the development and not be unduly prominent or imposing.

3.5   Public Realm

'New open spaces should improve the quality of the public realm through good design.' (PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation)
'Local networks of high quality and well managed open space help create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe and can play a major part in improving people's sense of wellbeing' (PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation)

The Meridian Point in Southchurch Road development terminates the view from the railway bridge & provides enclosure to the streetscene.

The Environmental Enhancement scheme at Hamlet Court Road has improved the public realm & regenerated the local area.

Development at Lifstans Way overlooks the newly created public open space which forms a focus for the development.

Policy Link - Core Strategy Policy CP4: The Environment and Urban Renaissance – 8, 10
Core Strategy Policy CP7 - Sport, Recreation and Green Space – 2
Saved BLP Policy C15 - Retention of Open Spaces
Saved BLP Policy C13 - Street Furniture
Saved BLP Policy H5 - Residential Design and Layout Considerations

69.	High quality, attractive, usable and well-maintained public open space can improve the quality of life for all, add value to a development and promote investment and tourism.

70.	Larger developments for residential and mixed use schemes will normally be expected to include a meaningful area of public open space that can be used by the wider community. Where they are proposed, public spaces should be one of the key focuses of the overall development. They should be attractive, useable and serve the needs of the community, conveniently located and integral to the overall design and layout of the wider townscape.

71.	The key to successful public open space is ownership, identity, a clear function for the community and management. A well designed open space can play a significant role in the creation of sustainable communities. Any provision for public space must be designed to ensure the area is overlooked by adjoining development, not positioned against rear boundaries with limited natural surveillance. Wherever possible, children's play areas and public art should be provided. In all cases they must be high quality, durable and an integral part of the design.

72.	There is a general presumption against development which leads to the loss of existing open space.

73.	New public open spaces will be expected to make a positive contribution to local biodiversity (e.g. where possible including native plant species and features such as ponds and hedgerows). Retaining existing trees and landscaping adds instant maturity to the space and has considerable benefits for local wildlife. New public open spaces and landscaped areas should also seek to link in with the Borough's existing greenways and habitat links. Larger developments should also investigate the opportunities for including sustainable development (e.g. sustainable urban drainage systems or underground heating systems) as part of the public open space.

For Further information see Section 8 Sustainable Development and Design and Section 4.6.1 Landscaping

Even subtle interventions of public art such as the war memorial on the cliff top make a significant contribution to local distinctiveness.

Public Art as a response to the Disability Discrimination Act requirments at the travel centre.

3.6   Public Art

'Works of art … give identity and enhance the sense of place … and should be integrated into the design process at the earliest possible stage' (By Design, CABE, 2000)

Policy Link - Core Strategy Policy CP4: The Environment and Urban Renaissance - 4

74.   High quality public art adds richness and identity to a place, can provide a landmark or gateway for the town and promotes regeneration and tourism. Southend is committed to becoming the cultural hub of the Thames Gateway South Essex, and this includes developing public art for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

75.   On larger sites in particular, there is often the opportunity to use sculpture and light to create a focal point and in such cases developments will be required to contribute to public art in some way, either by commissioning a whole piece or by contributing a percentage of the development value to public art within the Borough. The requirement will be assessed on a site by site basis and where applicable, will be secured through a legal agreement. Some form of commitment for care and maintenance is usually required.

76.   Where an installation is proposed, the design must be agreed by the Council and it should either be located on the development site, or nearby where it can be readily seen and experienced by the public (e.g. in a public open space)

77.   If the site or development is not considered to be suitable for public art or there is no convenient publically accessible location nearby, a financial contribution to public art can be made as an alternative. The Council will then commission the art as and when funds allow. Typically, a contribution of 1% of the development costs will be required for public art unless otherwise agreed with the Council.

Further Information can be found in Appendix 9 Provision of Public Art as Part of New Development – Developer Guidelines and Southend's Public Art Strategy which sets out the procedures, maintenance

The public art element of the new college accommodation block is three clock faces that show the hours, minutes & seconds independently.

KeyMeds architecture reflects the precision & quality of the manufacturing that takes place inside.

and management for public art in the Borough. The requirement for public art in new development is set out in the Planning Obligations DPD.

3.7 Legibility and Building Language

'Planning should promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.' (By Design. CABE, 2000).

78. New development and public space should be easy to understand to enable the users to find their way around. In particular both pedestrian and vehicular entrances must be easily identified and visible from the public highway. Buildings and landscaping should be used to make the routes attractive, recognisable and distinctive to assist orientation.

Flats should have a different language to houses. This historic flatted development in Westcliff has its own style and is not just a reflection of the domestic language at the time.

79. The use of the building should be reflected within the architectural language. The old adage 'form follows function' is still relevant. The application of a style that is inappropriate and does not reflect the use will be discouraged. Developers should be clear that a building designed to look like a detached bungalow should be just that and not a disguise for flats, as there are significant impacts for the streetscene from doing this.