'The Government believes that it is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. It does not accept that different types of housing and tenures make bad neighbours'

PPG3: Housing paragraph 10

Creating mixed communities

The creation of successful residential environments is about much more than visually attractive design. It is also in essence about providing opportunities for homes which respond to people's needs and providing a framework within which communities can become established and grow.

Mixed neighbourhoods of people of different ages and economic status and with different lifestyles and different levels of mobility and independence can provide a number of important community benefits. For example, they can:

- lead to a better balance of demand for community services and facilities such as schools, recreation facilities and care for elderly people;
- provide opportunities for 'lifetime communities' where people can move home without leaving a neighbourhood;
- make neighbourhoods more robust by avoiding large concentrations of housing of the same type;
- enable community self-help such as with arrangements for child care, help with shopping, the garden or during the winter freeze;
- assist community surveillance with people coming and going throughout the day and evening, as compared to the dormitory suburb which becomes deserted during the working day, making the opportunities for crime easier.

The provision of a mix of housing types and uses[1] can also contribute to the creation of more attractive residential environments by enabling a greater diversity of building forms and scales. For example:

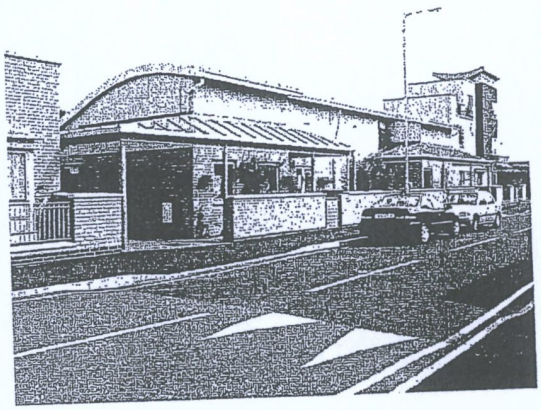
- apartments can give scale to local centres and turn corners elegantly with continuous frontage;
- town houses can contribute to more formal compositions of avenues, circuses and squares and help frame open spaces;
- community buildings such as schools and health centres can be designed to give status to civic spaces and provide a focus for community.

The provision of a range of housing in terms of dwelling size, type and affordability as well as appropriate community facilities and services, such as open spaces, créches, daycare and health services, are all important in creating the framework within which communities can grow.

Providing a range of housing opportunities

A good mix of both housing types and sizes is important in creating a basis for a balanced community. The case studies show that even comparatively small developments can embrace a wide mix of dwelling types.

The Rolls Crescent development at Hulme demonstrates how design flair can deliver a very wide range of dwelling types within a coherent street scene. Within the scheme of 67 dwellings there are 11 different dwelling types ranging from three-storey, 5-bedroom houses to single-storey 2-bedroom units designed to be wheelchair accessible.



A range of different housing opportunities are well integrated to create a balanced community and a coherent street scene. Rolls Crescent, Hulme

Much recent housing has provided a limited range of tenure choices, often focusing on a narrow market segment or particular housing need. Even where affordable housing has been provided as part of a development, it has often been poorly integrated with homes developed for private rent or sale.

At Poundbury, more than 20% of the dwellings provided in the first phase of development are for affordable rent. These are provided mainly in small groups of between two and four dwellings which are scattered throughout the development. A key point is that in terms of building form and external appearance they are indistinguishable from the homes for private sale.

'Good design and layout of new development can help to achieve the Government's objectives of making the best use of previously-developed land and improving the quality and attractiveness of residential areas. In seeking to achieve these objectives, local planning authorities and developers should think imaginatively about designs and layouts which make more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the environment.'

PPG3: Housing paragraph 54

The importance of structure

This chapter is concerned with the structure of the residential environment: the arrangement and inter-relationships of streets, homes, gardens and places for leisure and parking.

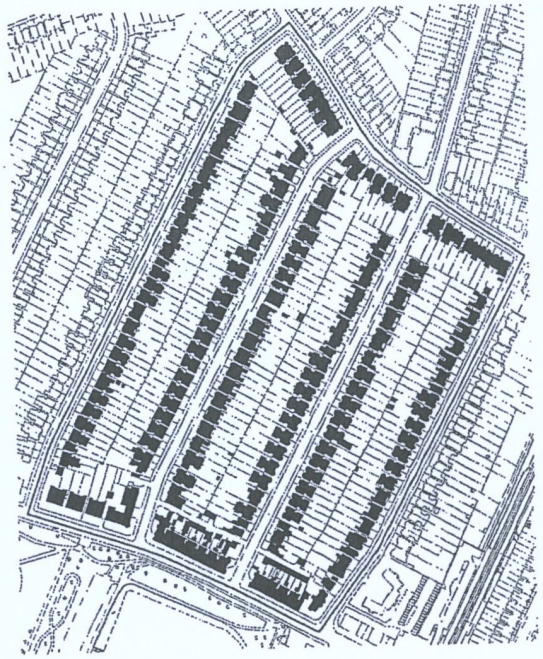
Getting the structure of a residential environment right is fundamental to the success of any area. Many of the best residential environments (in metropolitan, urban, suburban and village settings) display a very clearly defined and coherent urban structure. This is characterised by a framework of inter-connected routes which define 'blocks' of housing, open spaces and other uses. The resulting structure of blocks can be viewed at different levels. For example, large neighbourhood blocks are defined by principal movement routes. These are then divided by a network of local streets to define a series of street blocks.



Movement routes define blocks of housing, open space and other uses. Letchworth Garden Suburb, Hertfordshire

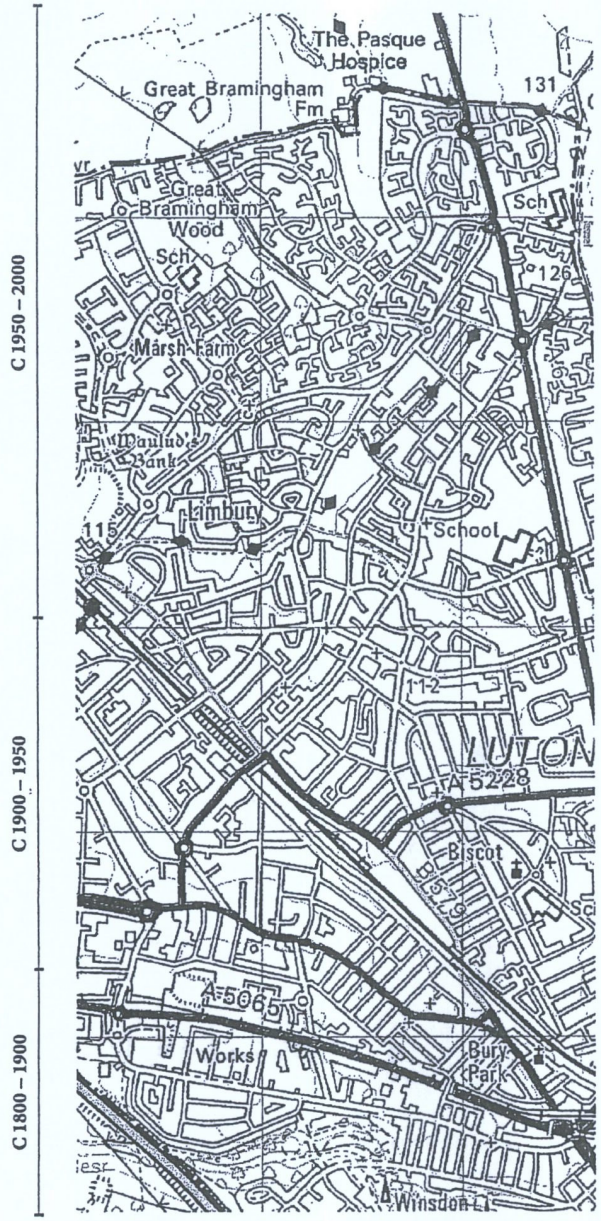
The layout of housing within these street blocks can take a wide variety of forms including, for example, streets, squares, courts, mews, circuses or avenues. The scale is intimate, grand or somewhere in between. The fact that there is a unit which is larger than the individual home but smaller than the district helps to contribute both to a sense of scale and to a sense of belonging and community.

It is important to appreciate that some of our most attractive and enduring residential environments have the simplest of structures and are often nothing more than a regular pattern of rectangular blocks. Their visual quality comes not from the two-dimensional layout, but from the mix of activities and from the quality in detailing of the buildings, the landscape and the interfaces between these elements. The block structure works in terms of providing direct and convenient routes for movement, in making efficient use of land and in providing a tried and tested framework around which a quality place can be crafted.





Some of the most attractive and enduring residential environments have the simplest of structures. In this classic street block structure, houses face the street, gardens run end-to-end and cars are mainly parked on the street. The sense of quality comes from the detailed design of the buildings, the corners and boundary treatments and from the mature landscape. Fox Lane, Enfield



A block structure defined by a network of inter-connected movement routes has been a predominant form of housing layout for centuries. Only relatively recently have structures created primarily for the car resulted in formless residential environments characterised by a dead-end road system of 'loops and lollipops'

Many recently developed areas lack any sense of coherent urban structure. In particular, many suffer from layouts which:

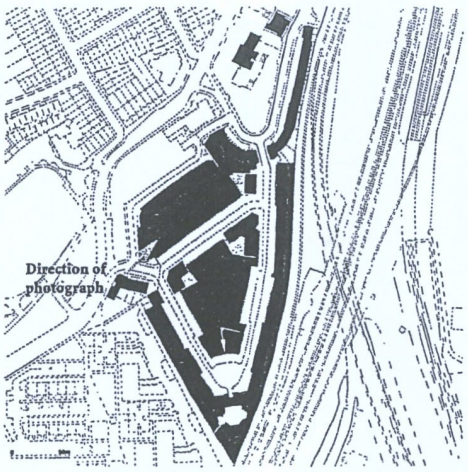
- are difficult to understand and to move around within;
- create left over and ill-defined spaces;
- result in a haphazard arrangement of dwellings, with houses turning their backs and blank facades towards important routes and spaces;
- make walking and cycling inconvenient because of an introverted and dead-end movement framework.

In many cases these shortcomings reflect the rigid application of highway engineering standards in terms of road hierarchies, junction separation distances, sight lines and turning radii for service vehicles. The result is often a sense of sprawl and formlessness and development which contradicts some of the key principles of urban design.

Another characteristic of many residential environments which have failed the test of time is that they have been based on experimental or convoluted layouts. Often this has resulted in a development performing very well in terms of one or two objectives, but very poorly in other important respects.

This does not mean that future housing should simply copy the structure of historic environments. Requirements have changed, not least in terms of accommodating the car, and there are many aspects of historic practice which can be improved upon.

The key point is that the structure of the residential environment needs to be created with a broad range of objectives in mind and in this respect there is much to learn from both contemporary and historic practice. The focus of this chapter is on drawing out these transferable lessons.





A coherent block structure is not just a feature of historic practice. It also forms the basis of a number of recent schemes which have also satisfied the requirements for servicing and road safety. Isledon Village, Islington

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Perimeter blocks

The perimeter block structure has proved to be robust over time. In particular, perimeter blocks can provide for:

- good connections to the surrounding area (see Chapter 3);
- efficient use of land;
- a clear distinction between the public and private realms;
- a legible environment;
- good natural surveillance of the street with windows and doors facing outwards.

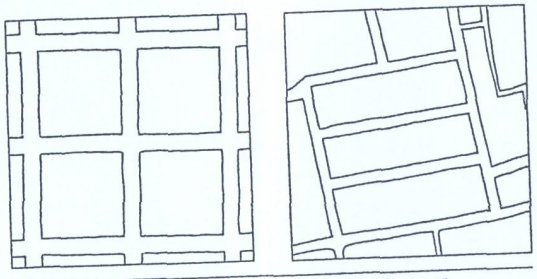
Forms of perimeter blocks

The perimeter block can take a wide variety of forms including:

- regular rectangular or square blocks based on a grid;
- concentric grids designed to promote access to local centres or public transport routes;
- irregular layouts with a more 'organic' character.

The case studies show that these basic forms are not mutually exclusive. Poundbury, for instance, combines an organic character with a concentric grid layout focused on the local centre.

Different forms of perimeter block can impart different characters to the streetscape. Compare, for example, the formal character of Jesmond, Newcastle with its uniform street widths and building heights, with the more intimate character of Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford and its more variable building line. However, despite these differences of character, the underlying benefits of the perimeter block remain.

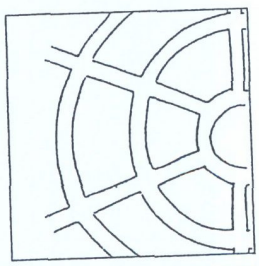


Regular blocks

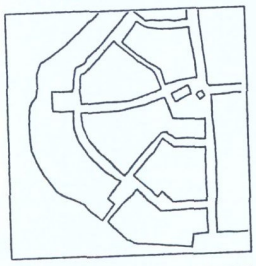
Jesmond, Newcastle



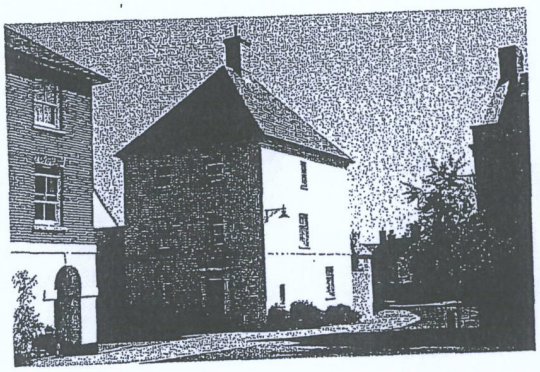
Regular – almost a 'grid iron' – layout of blocks in a suburban context. Jesmond, Newcastle



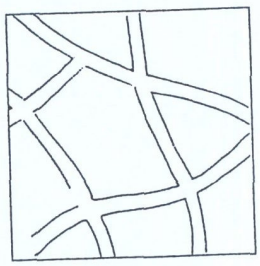
Concentric blocks



Poundbury, Dorchester



Concentric blocks arranged to promote access to a local centre. Poundbury, Dorchester



Irregular blocks



Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford



An irregular block structure providing an 'organic' and intimate character. Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford

The arrangement of dwellings within the block structure

A characteristic of perimeter blocks is that dwellings face outwards towards the edge of the block and the public realm and there is a continuity in the relationships between the fronts and backs of dwellings.

The arrangement of dwellings within the block structure and their relationship to the street and to other building elements are influenced by the plan form of the dwellings themselves (for example, wide frontage/shallow plan; narrow frontage/deep plan; or square plan). The orientation of windows is also an important consideration, particularly in relation to the treatment of block corners.

Shallow and square plan dwellings provide greater opportunities to create varied street layouts and are much better suited to informal 'organic' layouts than deep plan dwellings. Both Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford and Poundbury, Dorchester show how a continuous but varied building line can be created with a mix of dwelling frontages, garden and garage walls.

By contrast, the historic case study areas (Canning Street, Jesmond and Stanstead) show how narrow-frontage, deep plan forms can be utilised in predominantly straight runs of terraces with continuous building frontages to provide a very land-efficient layout in terms of both development density and the ratio of dwellings to street length.

Different dwelling plans

Houses



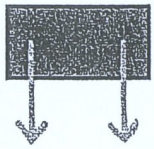
Narrow frontage, deep plan with through aspect



Square plan with through aspect

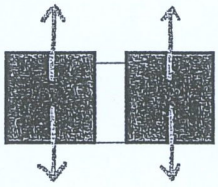


Wide frontage, shallow plan with through aspect

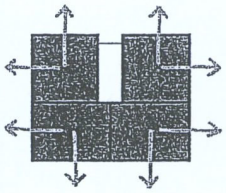


Wide frontage, shallow plan with single aspect

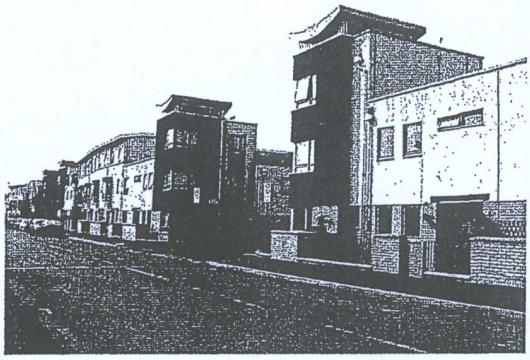
Apartments



Square plan with through aspect



Square plan with corner aspect



A mix of square and shallow plan dwellings provides a continuous street frontage. Rolls Crescent, Manchester

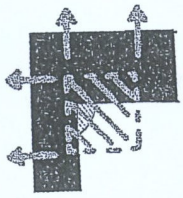


Narrow frontage, deep plan dwellings provide generous internal space and use land efficiently. Stanstead Road, Lewisham

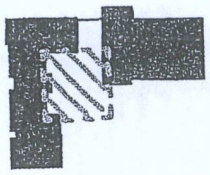
Designing for corners

The treatment of corners requires careful consideration, particularly where perimeter blocks incorporate sharp corners. The key design issues include:

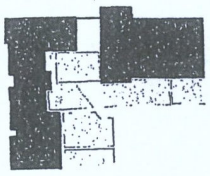
- maintaining a continuity of frontage and visual surveillance;
- securing a direct relationship between habitable rooms and gardens;
- ensuring privacy between habitable rooms within the corner;
- allowing light penetration to garden space and habitable rooms;
- articulating prominent junctions and nodal points.



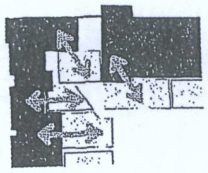
Unusable space in the corner



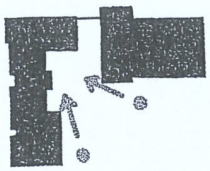
Creating space in the corner



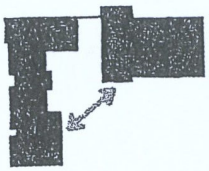
Fitting in the gardens



Relating gardens to habitable rooms

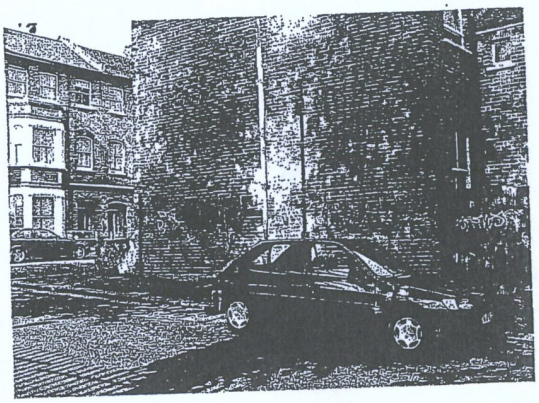


Light penetration to the corner



Ensuring privacy

The case studies illustrate a range of different approaches to these issues with varying levels of success. Stanstead Road, Lewisham and, to a lesser extent, Jesmond, Newcastle highlight a common shortcoming in Victorian housing with limited or no frontage along the short end of the block, thus creating an area that is not overlooked and which can become a focus for nuisance and vandalism.



Blank gable ends can encourage graffiti and nuisance

The more recent case studies show how these issues can be addressed through careful design. At Rolls Crescent, Hulme three-storey houses give prominence to the corners, and the use of both square and shallow plan dwellings allows the corners to be turned with continuous frontage and aspect to the street, as well as allowing light penetration to the windows of habitable rooms within the corner.

Rolls Crescent also succeeds in resolving the relationship between principal habitable rooms and private garden space within the corner. At Greenland Passage, Southwark this issue is addressed by incorporating into the corners single aspect apartments without private gardens.



Family houses with gardens on a corner. Rolls Cresent, Hulme

Block dimensions

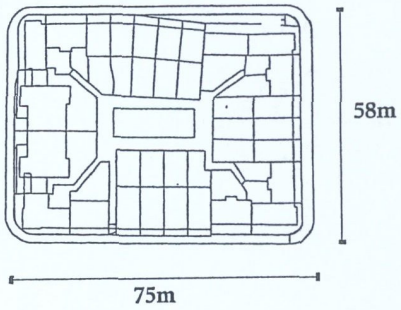
There are no hard and fast rules in terms of the optimum dimensions of a perimeter block; indeed a variety of different block lengths is important in adding richness to a neighbourhood. The case studies highlight a number of key considerations including:

- balancing land efficiency with the need to provide convenient pedestrian routes through an area and to important local facilities;
- traffic management in terms of controlling vehicle speeds and discouraging rat-running (see Chapter 3);
- the spatial needs of activities which are to be accommodated within the block.

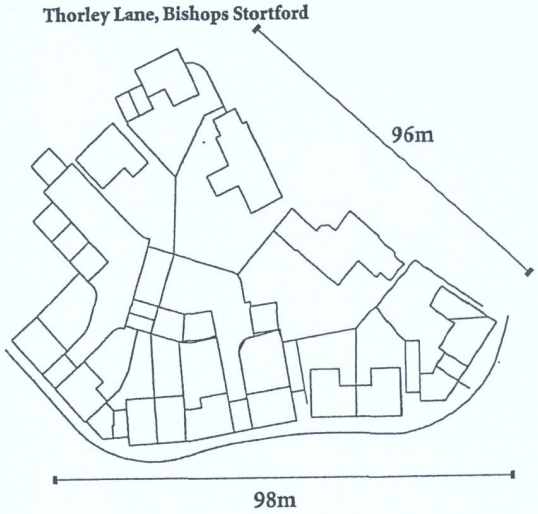
The historic 'long grid' often achieved land efficiency at the expense of convenient pedestrian movement and this explains why long residential blocks were often orientated along the main pedestrian desire lines. The Rolls Crescent scheme at Hulme represents the opposite extreme with very short (70 x 80 metres) square blocks providing a very high degree of pedestrian permeability through the area. Between these two extremes, a block length of between 100 and 150 metres would represent a general rule-of-thumb.

Decisions about the use of space within the block are also a significant factor in determining appropriate block dimensions. At Rolls Crescent, for example, the objective to provide a secure sitting out and play area for use by immediate neighbours has resulted in a small and intimate urban block. By contrast, at Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford and Poundbury, Dorchester the decision to accommodate car parking *within* the block has resulted in much larger blocks.

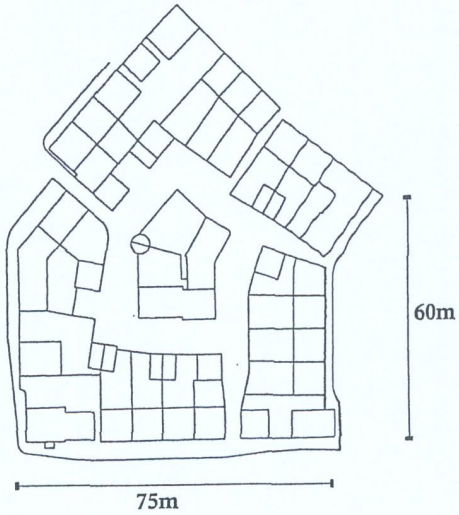
Rolls Crescent, Hulme



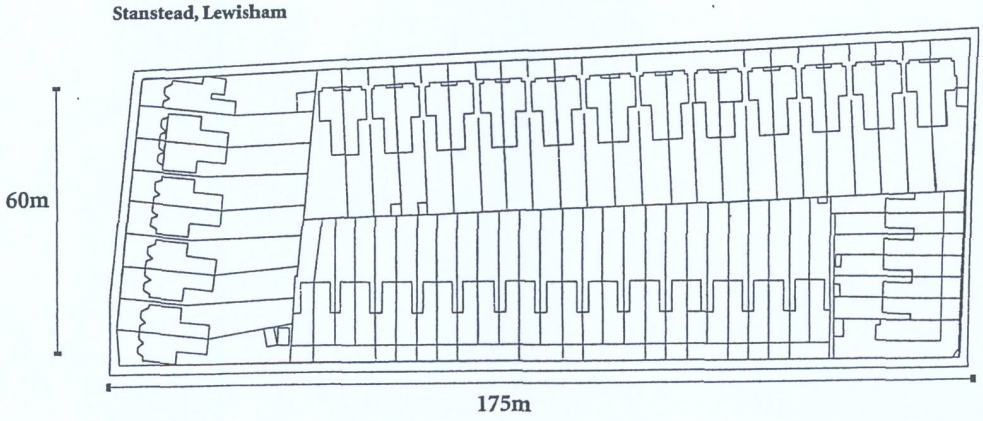
Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford



Poundbury, Dorchester



Stanstead, Lewisham



Access to back of block areas

A key consideration in the design of residential blocks is the degree of public access provided to areas within the block. It is here that some of the significant choices and trade-offs need to be made between competing objectives. Principal among these is the tension between the arrangements for servicing (including car parking) and the security of dwellings and garden areas.

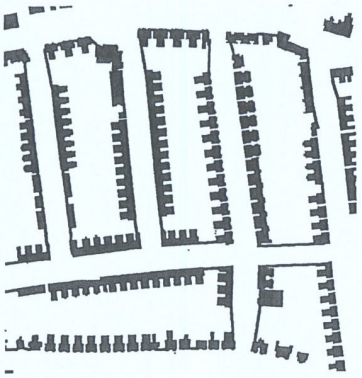
Servicing dwellings from within the block (such as at Jesmond, Poundbury and Thorley Lane) can improve the appearance of the streetscape in terms of car parking and refuse collection and enable residents to have access to the rear of gardens. However, these advantages need to be carefully balanced against other concerns. In particular:

- rear servicing can undermine the security of dwellings by allowing strangers access to the rear of dwellings;
- without very careful attention to detailed design, rear parking courts and alleyways can become unpleasant and even hostile places;
- rear courtyard parking can reduce the area available for back gardens and the coming and going of cars can detract from the tranquility of garden areas.

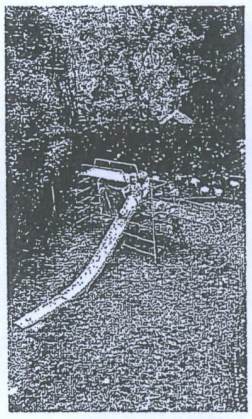
The design of Poundbury successfully overcomes some of these concerns by incorporating dwellings into the rear courtyards to provide surveillance and to create an attractive public space. Yet care needs to be taken in replicating this model, both in ensuring that the design principles are carried through as rigorously as at Poundbury, Dorchester and in taking account of the density of development and the character of the surrounding area.

The Stanstead Road, Lewisham and Rolls Crescent, Hulme case study areas both achieve complete enclosure of the back of block area. This helps to make the rear of dwellings secure and the arrangement of rear garden to rear garden (as at Stanstead) provides the opportunity for substantial landscaped areas within the block. However, it requires dwellings to be serviced from the front and cars to be parked on the street. A particular issue in respect of terraced houses can be the need to carry garden equipment and waste through the house, unless a shared and gated front access to back yards and gardens is provided. The same point applies to building maintenance and to any future building work at the back of the house.

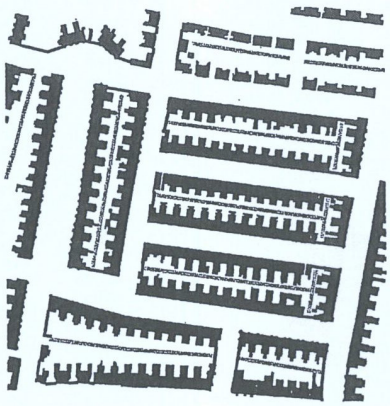
Enclosed backs give security to the rear of dwellings and provide space for more generous gardens, but parking and servicing must be accommodated in the front. Stanstead Road, Lewisham



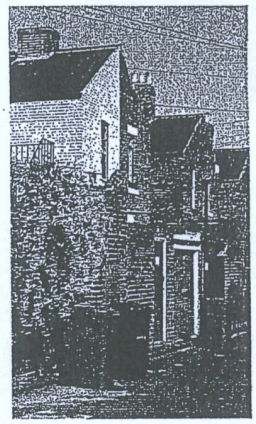




Rear service alleys provide convenient access to rear gardens and can remove bin storage and clutter from the street. However, they raise serious issues in terms of safety and security. Here bins in the alley also provide a platform for burglars to scale the rear wall and gain access to the back of the home. Jesmond, Newcastle

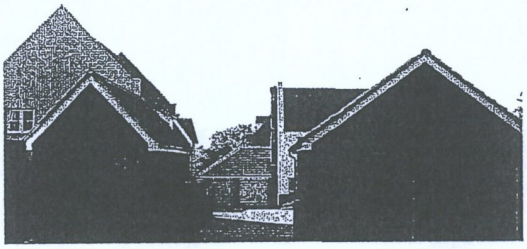






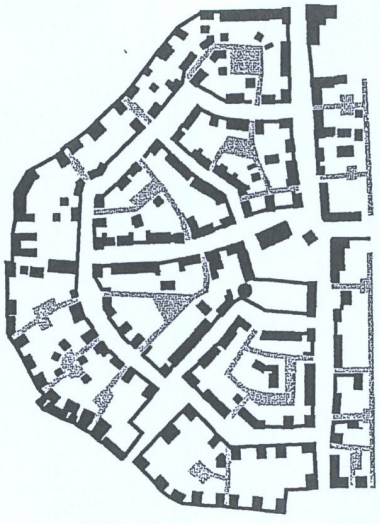
Parking in courts within the block can improve the quality of the street scene, but this can have implications in terms of the size, security and tranquility of gardens. Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford



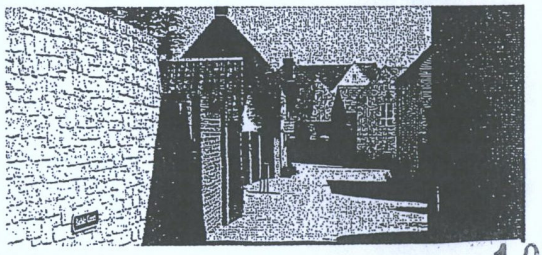




Placing dwellings within the parking courts can help to improve natural surveillance. Here the design creates a public space which has cars parked in it, rather than a car park. Poundbury, Dorchester







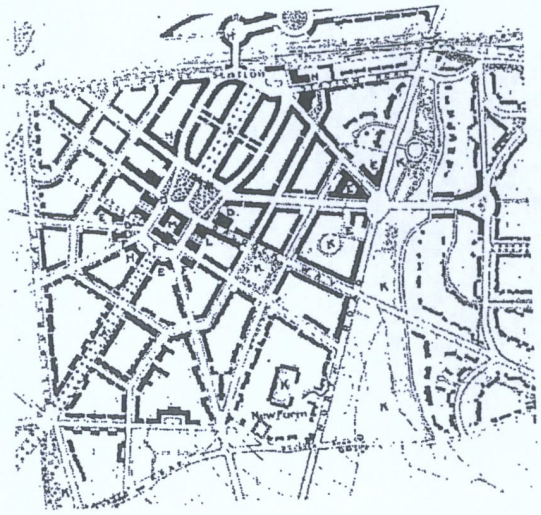
Extent of public access

Other block structures

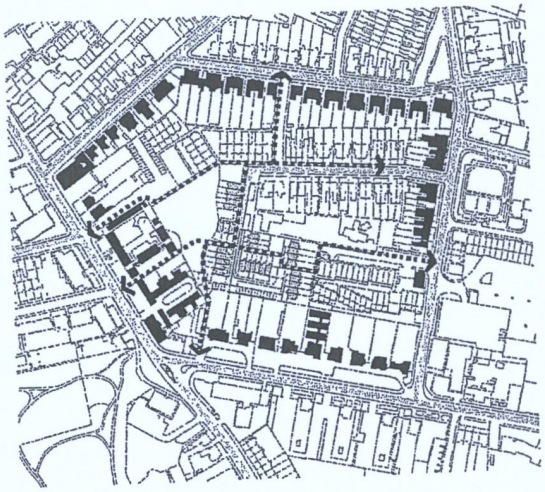
Until recently, perimeter blocks were the most common and robust form of housing layout, but there are situations where a different form of layout is appropriate. These can include constrained sites or those where a 'setpiece' development is required, such as one overlooking an important civic space.

Equally, perimeter blocks can accommodate a variety of layout forms within them. Specifically, cul-de-sac forms can work very well within a wider block structure. This can add interest and diversity as well as making good use of backland areas within large development blocks.

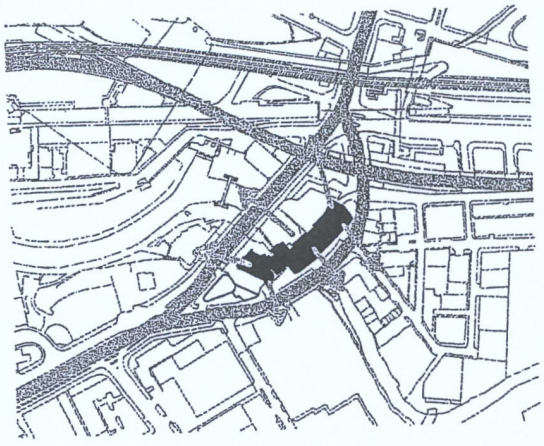
Highsett, Cambridge shows how a secluded and intimate residential area with good pedestrian links into the surrounding area can be created within a larger block. Where such opportunities are taken it is important that the scale and massing of development within the block respect that of the buildings forming the main block and take account of the existing orientation of fronts and backs.



Unwin and Parker's plan for Letchworth (1907), based on a perimeter block structure but with enclosed layouts within larger blocks and buildings on special sites



Enclosed housing layout relying on a wider block structure which maintains continuity of frontage to the principal routes around the block, Highsett, Cambridge



A pavilion building is 'civic' on all sides. Here the attributes of the perimeter block form are condensed into a single building. Deansgate Quay, Manchester

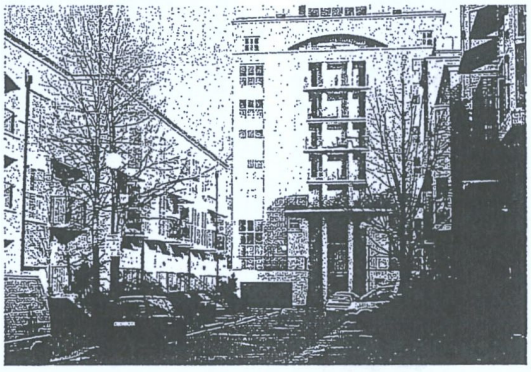
'Local planning authorities should adopt policies which . . . focus on the quality of the places and living environments being created and give priority to the needs of pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles.'

PPG3: Housing paragraph 56

Street widths and enclosure

Designing residential streets around the functional requirements of cars, service vehicles and utilities, with inadequate attention being paid to other important amenity requirements, has been one of the greatest failings of much recent development. In comparison to the best historic residential environments, the consequences have included:

- a loss of local identity through the widespread application of the same standards;
- an incoherent relationship of dwellings to the street and to each other;
- a lack of any sense of enclosure;
- the loss of front garden areas to hardstandings for off–street car parking;
- the loss of boundary treatments, such as walls and well-managed hedges, which define public and private space and articulate the boundaries between dwellings;
- often an absence of street trees.

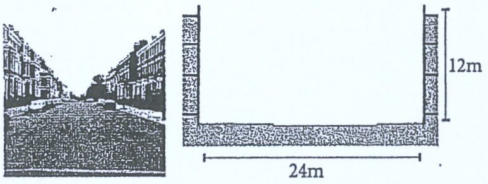


This street has a very good sense of enclosure. Street width and building heights are well related and the tall building at the end of the street terminates the view. Greenland Passage, Southwark

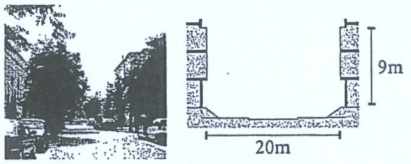
There are no hard and fast rules. Indeed the case studies show that streets can work at widths as varied as nine metres (Rolls Crescent, Hulme) and 24 metres (Canning Street, Liverpool). What is important is that the space between the buildings is considered in relation to the scale of dwellings and the activities taking place in the street. For example, Canning Street works well with a very wide separation because the street is framed by 12 -14 metre high buildings. In other cases landscaping can help create a sense of enclosure where wider spacing is required between dwellings, such as along principal movement routes.

It follows from this that the design of streets needs to be tailored to the particular needs of the place and its physical and social context and considered in three dimensions.

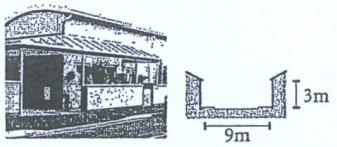
Varying ratios of street width to building height



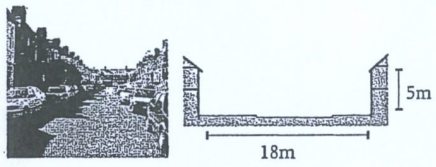
1:2 ratio, Canning Street, Liverpool



1:2.2 ratio, Isledon Village, Islington



1:3 ratio, Halston Street, Hulme



1:3.6 ratio, Cavendish Place, Jesmond

In looking at the degree of enclosure achieved in the case study areas, it is also important to remember that the historic case study areas feature higher floor-to-ceiling heights than would be the norm today. Hence, creating the same sense of enclosure with the same number of building-storeys would require a reduced separation distance between facing dwellings, for example as at Poundbury, Thorley Lane and Rolls Crescent. By contrast, at Isledon Road, monopitch roofs have been used to lend a larger scale to the street elevations.

Setbacks

The setback of dwellings from the street is a key consideration in terms of:

- defining the character of the street;
- determining the degree of privacy given to ground floor rooms;
- accommodating storage and service requirements at the front of the dwelling.

It is no exaggeration to say that the success or failure of a street can often depend on the design of a one or two metre setback between the dwelling and the footway.

Where dwellings are serviced from the rear, such as at Poundbury, Thorley Lane and Friars Quay, dwellings can be pushed forward to the 'back of footway' with no or very little setback to create a very intimate environment without compromising either the storage space for bins and utilities or ease of access by service vehicles. Where this is done, careful consideration needs to be given to the design of front door and threshold areas, particularly in relation to security. At Poundbury the use of recessed porches helps to enhance the threshold to the dwelling.

The other case studies show that even a very modest setback of a metre or so can be sufficient to accommodate bin and cycle storage and provide privacy to front rooms, while a setback of three to five metres can provide for a small front garden. Issues of detailed design in relation to setbacks and thresholds are considered further in Chapter 7.



A zero setback. Poundbury, Dorchester



A minimal (1-2 metre) setback. Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford



A small front garden (within a 3 – 5 metre setback) provides privacy and a buffer to the street. Stanstead Road, Lewisham



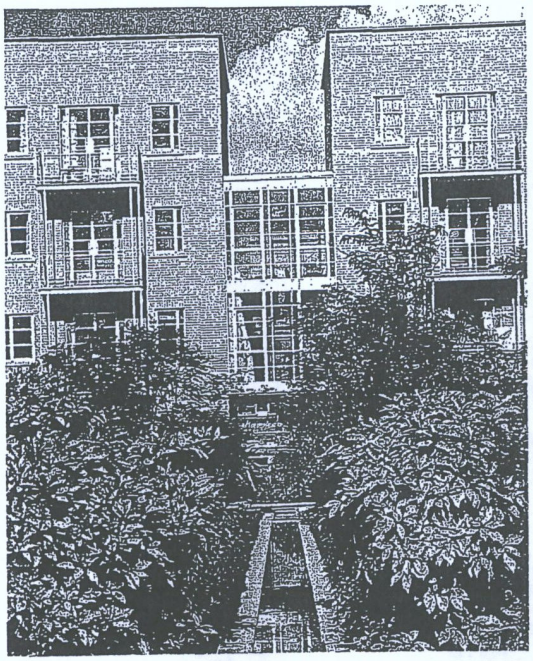
A larger front garden (within a 5 – 7 metre setback) provides a landscape structure and setting for the house. Jesmond, Newcastle

Solar orientation

The orientation of dwellings in relation to the sun is important, not only in relation to the arrangement of gardens and principal habitable rooms (see Chapter 6), but also in influencing the potential to reduce energy requirements within the home. For example, daylighting reduces the need for artificial lighting and passive solar gain reduces the need for internal space heating. Emerging technologies involving the use of photovoltaic cells can convert solar radiation into electricity, while solar panels can provide a source of hot water for washing and heating.

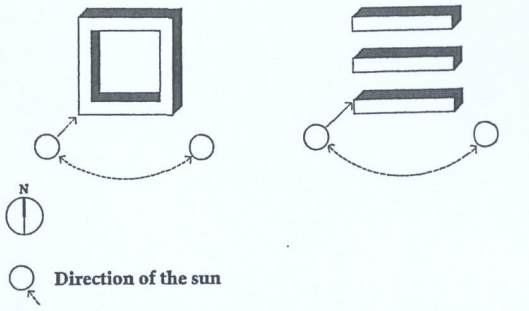
The optimum orientation in terms of maximising solar potential is for dwellings to face southwards, with streets arranged in an east-west pattern and with a generous separation between dwellings to provide for full solar access. However, strict adherence to these principles can result in trade-offs against other planning and urban design objectives. For example:

- the orientation of the street pattern also needs to be considered in relation to pedestrian desire lines and connections to existing places and routes;
- orientating all dwellings towards the south can undermine the relationships between the fronts and backs of dwellings and reduce natural surveillance of the street;
- very wide spacing between dwellings can result in an inefficient use of land and weaken a sense of street enclosure.



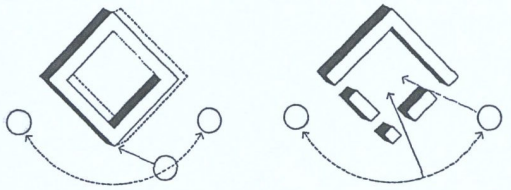
Denser urban apartment blocks require careful consideration to ensure good solar penetration to the interior of the block. Here a break in the building block at the third storey allows good sunlight penetration to an attractive communal space. Narrow Street, Tower Hamlets, London.

In fact, with careful orientation of streets and the arrangement of dwellings within the block structure, it is possible to provide good opportunities for solar gain and daylight penetration to habitable rooms, while at the same time addressing other key principles of good urban design. Once again, design decisions need to be made in the round to reach a considered balance between competing design objectives.



Standard perimeter block creates areas of overshadowing

South-facing terraces maximise solar gain but can compromise other design objectives

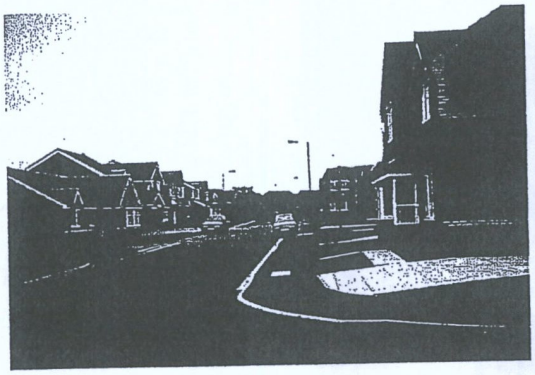


Orientating blocks to the sun's path reduces overshadowed areas within the block

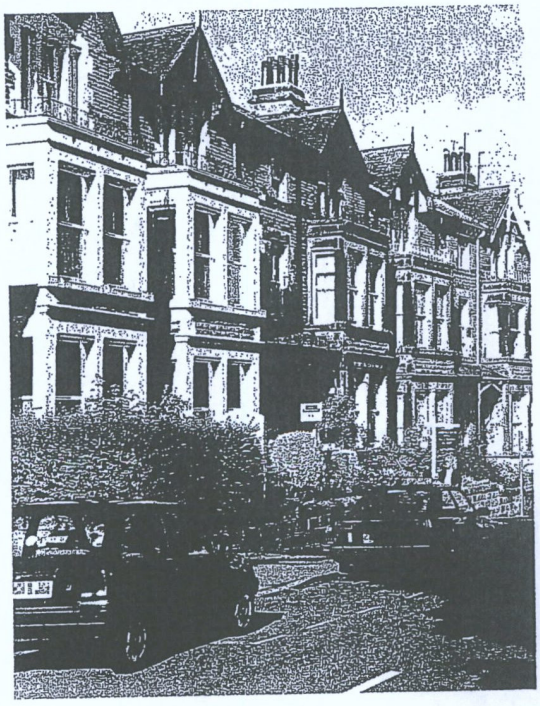
Breaks in the building form or reduced storey heights increase solar penetration of the block

Public, private and communal space

Most residential environments comprise a mix of, public, private and communal spaces. It is important that the role of each space is clear and that the boundaries between different types of space are clearly defined. Left-over space is wasted space which in time is likely to become a source of nuisance.

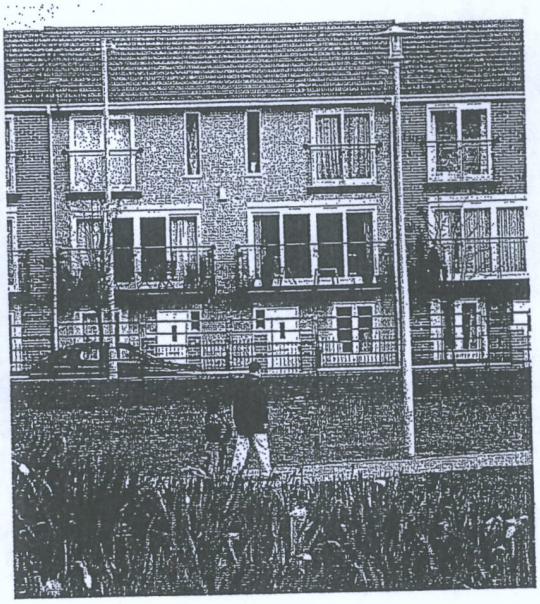


Rigid adherence to highway design standards, in this case sight lines between front driveways and the street, undermines the quality and utility of front gardens and blurs the distinction between the public realm of the street and the private realm of the dwelling. Residents or visitors still find it more convenient to park on the street despite generous off- street parking provision



Here cars are parked on the street and public and private space is clearly defined by walls, hedges and gates. Valley Drive, Harrogate

Public open space is potentially one of a community's greatest assets. The best open spaces are those which not only cater safely for play, exercise and relaxation, but which also provide an area with a sense of identity and community. In many cases this will involve drawing the open space to the heart of the neighbourhood to create an important structural element within the overall urban design strategy (see Chapter 4).



Open space can bring character and quality to a neighbourhood and provide residents with a pleasant outlook. Park Mews, Hulme

Where communal space is provided as internal gardens or courtyards in higher density housing, care needs to be taken to protect privacy and amenity to the rear of ground floor dwellings. This is successfully achieved in parts of Greenland Passage where the ground floor of townhouses and apartments opens into a small patio area, which provides a buffer to the attractive communal garden beyond.



The addition of planting helps to define the boundary between private and communal space and creates a degree of privacy for private patios. Greenland Passage, Southwark.

Designing for privacy

Privacy is an important design objective in ensuring that residents feel at ease within their home. It is also an area where general planning standards prescribing minimum separation distances between habitable rooms can frustrate the creation of attractive residential environments by denying the ability to provide privacy through careful design.

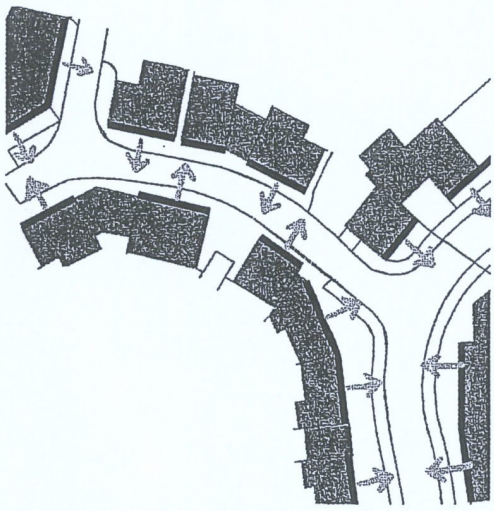
Design can help create privacy in a number of ways:

- street design can influence the relationship between facing dwellings. A varied building line (such as at Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford and Poundbury, Dorchester) can create oblique views, allowing the fronts of dwellings to be brought closer together than where facing views are direct, such as at Jesmond;
- rooms needing less privacy, such as living rooms and kitchens, can face the street with bedrooms and bathrooms located towards more private parts of the home;
- windows can be designed in relation to the function of the room: generous windows for living rooms overlooking the street or a garden; frosted windows for bathrooms; and smaller windows for bedrooms. Bay windows provide oblique views down a street;
- the careful orientation of primary and secondary windows can enable dwellings to be drawn close together while still providing surveillance of the public realm;
- screening and landscaping can limit overlooking between facing rear windows.

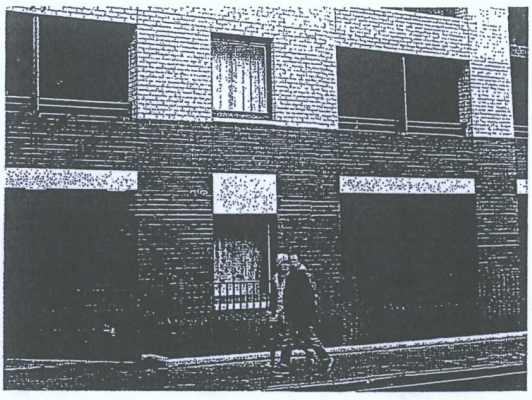
Thus, while there are well established rules of thumb (such as a minimum 'back-to-back' distance of 20 metres), these need to be applied flexibly in relation to the specific context and in the recognition that the objective of privacy can often be better secured through careful design rather than by physical separation alone.



Smaller kitchen windows balance the need for surveillance with privacy. Isledon Road, Islington



A varied building line creates oblique views across the street. Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford



A failure to consider the need for privacy can result in curtains and blinds being permanently drawn

'Local planning authorities should adopt policies which . . . promote design and layouts which are safe and take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety considerations.'

PPG3: Housing paragraph 56

Creating a feeling of safety

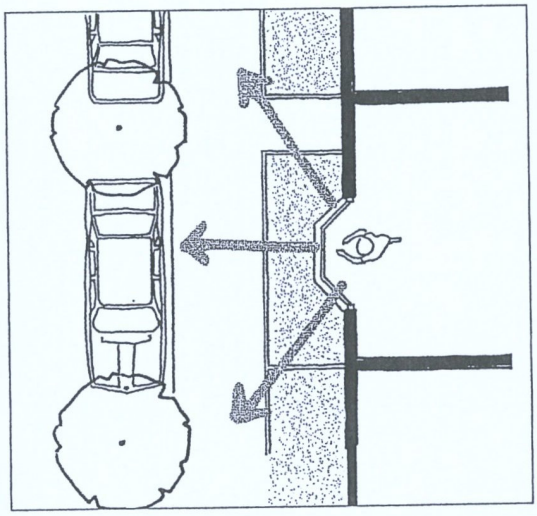
Design has a crucial role to play in delivering and creating a sense of safety and security. A key issue is that of natural surveillance. Streets which are well overlooked and which have activity in them throughout the day and evening benefit from the presence and surveillance of residents and visitors.

Good planning and design can help by ensuring that:

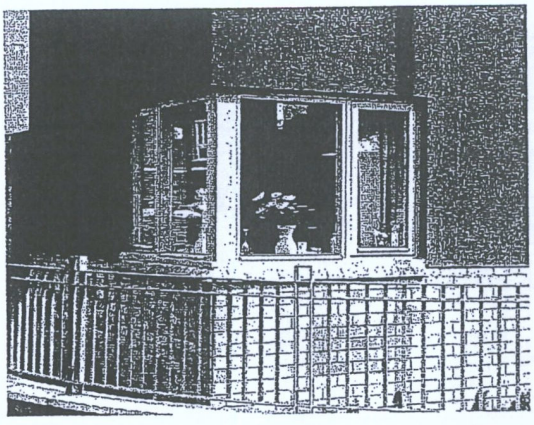
- dwellings fronting the street have their principal entrance on to it;
- windows are designed to maximise overlooking of the street;
- continuity of frontage and aspect is maintained on corners;
- blank facades and areas which are not overlooked are avoided;
- the mix of dwelling types and sizes encourages activity in the street throughout the day and evening (see Chapter 4 on dwelling mix and neighbourhood).

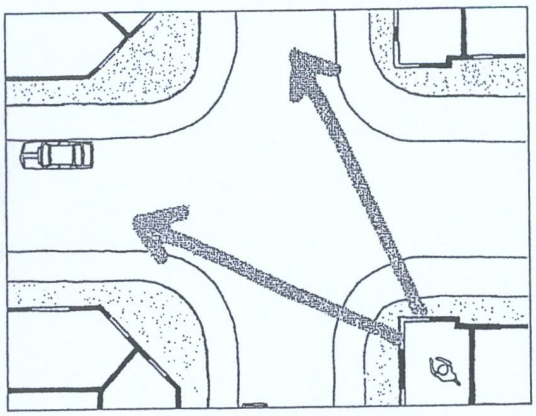
Designing for safety and security should not be separated from consideration of details such as those addressed by *Secured by Design* and issues of long-term management; the latter being particularly important in relation to higher density apartment development. Considerations of the number of dwellings to be served by a common entrance and the introduction of concierge schemes can often prove fundamental to the ultimate success of a place.





The archetypal 'safe street'. Windows overlook it, doors open onto it, enabling people to see and be seen. Ideally, shrubbery would be managed to a height which allows privacy but still provides for natural surveillance. Jesmond, Newcastle





Corner windows can provide views in several directions. Rolls Crescent, Hulme

'Parking policies should be framed with good design in mind, recognising that car ownership varies with income, age, household type, and the type of housing and its location.'

PPG 3 Housing paragraph 60

Accommodating parking

Where and how cars are parked are crucial to the quality of housing development and to the choices people make in how they travel. The level of parking provision and its location are both equally important. Car owners want to be able to park near their home and to be able to see their car. In meeting these aspirations the typical result is a car-dominated environment with 'car platforms' in front of houses or integral garages facing the street.



Cars dominating the housing frontage

This has a number of negative consequences including:

- eliminating front garden space and the opportunities for landscape and planting;
- blurring the distinction between public and private space by preventing traditional boundary treatments;
- removing the opportunity to park on the street;
- introducing potential conflicts between pedestrians and cars which have to cross the footway to park.

In addition, dedicating car parking spaces to individual dwellings does not provide the same flexibility towards variations in car ownership between households as communal arrangements do.

Instead of the dominance of cars parked in front of houses, there are often opportunities to use a combination of dedicated and communal parking, especially in developments where secure communal provision can be made an integral part of the overall site layout. The particular context and requirements of a site can help to furnish an appropriate solution.

As a guide to establishing parking policies that support sustainable development, PPG3 points to an upper threshold of 1.5 spaces per dwelling on average. It is to be expected that, with a sustainable approach to parking, local authorities will revise their parking standards to allow for significantly lower levels of parking than have been the case recently, particularly for developments:

- in locations where services are readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport;
- which provide housing where the demand for parking is likely to be less than for family housing;
- involving conversions where off-street parking is less likely to be successfully designed into the scheme.

Whatever format of parking is chosen, special account needs to be taken of those with restricted mobility, espcially in getting in and out of parked cars and approaching the front door of a house.

On-street parking

Most traditional terraced housing in many towns throughout the country has adjusted well to the advent of the car. Streets in inner suburbs, such as Jesmond, although not designed for the car, show that on-street parking can work. It is convenient, well overlooked from surrounding houses and is extremely efficient, both in terms of the amount of space required for parking and in providing for variations in car ownership between households. On-street parking can also have a traffic-calming effect, helps to separate pedestrians from other traffic and provides the opportunity to include boundary treatment landscaping for dwellings.



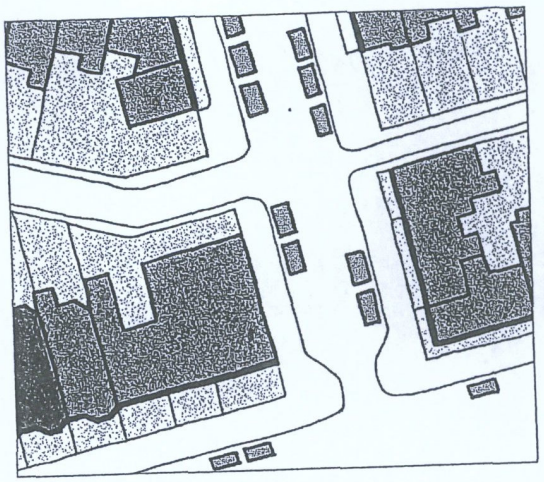
On-street parking in a traditional street. Jesmond, Newcastle

In new developments (or the upgrading of existing areas) there is much to be said for on-street parking, but with the 'line of steel' interrupted at intervals.

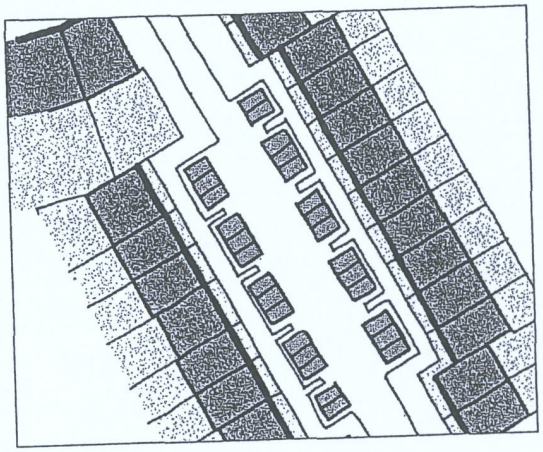
On-street parking bays can be incorporated into the overall width of the street, demarcated by paving, trees and planting. There are two main types:

Parallel parking against the kerb. The example illustrated is of streets with good surveillance from neighbouring houses;

Angled parking bays. These allow a greater parking capacity than parallel parking, but because of the danger from reversing vehicles, they are only suitable for streets with low traffic speeds.



Parallel parking against the curb can have a traffic-calming effect. Canning Street, Liverpool



Right-angled parking bays (see also photograph below). Isledon Village, Islington



Right-angled and parallel parking. In this arrangement there is one space per dwelling and the parking bays are broken up by tree planting. Isledon Village, Islington.

Courtyard parking

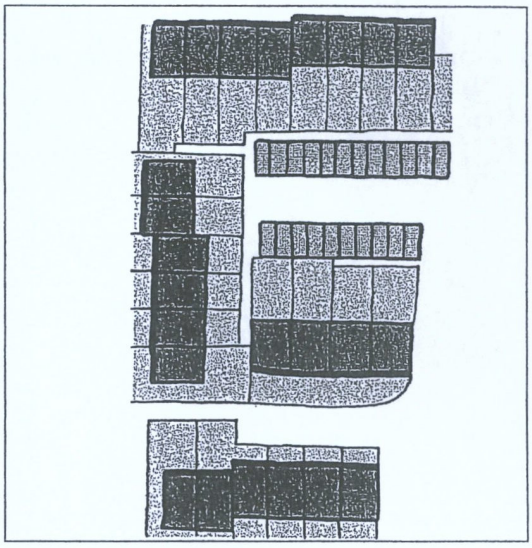
Communal parking in courtyards has gained a bad reputation because of inadequately designed parking courts from the 1960s and 1970s, usually located away from housing and therefore lacking surveillance.

But more recently it has been shown that secure rear courtyards can be a useful addition to dedicated spaces in front of dwellings. Courtyards which work well exhibit three main characteristics:

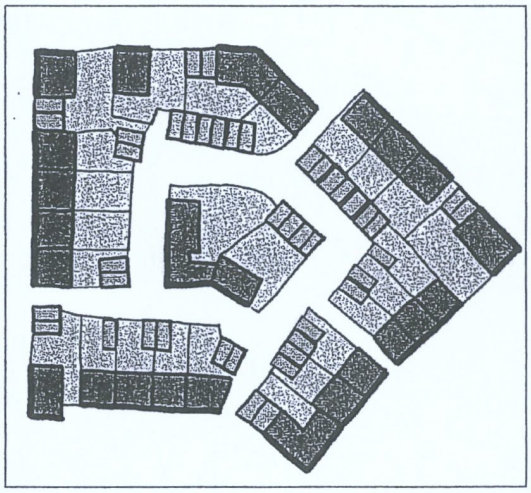
- they are not car parks but places which have parking in them;
- they are overlooked by adjoining houses, or by buildings entered from the parking area;
- they normally include at most ten parking spaces. If there are more spaces the courtyard layout should be broken up.

The courtyard will usually be located at the centre of a street block, designed as an integral part of the development. Ideally, it will have more than one access point, forming a route across the block, although in some locations concerns about security may preclude that arrangement.

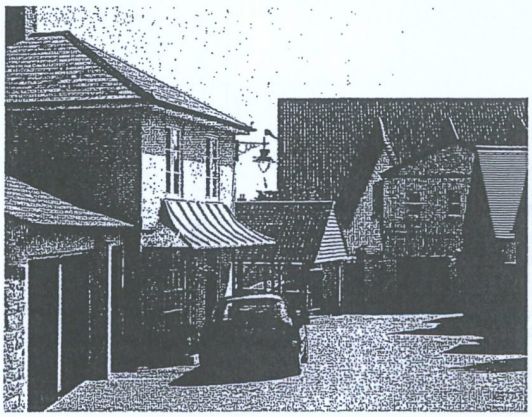
The entrance to a rear courtyard, between buildings or through an archway, needs to respect the street frontage. Over wide openings are unnecessary if serving ten spaces or fewer, and they may damage the continuity of the street.



A typical 1970s development, with parking totally segregated from housing and not overlooked



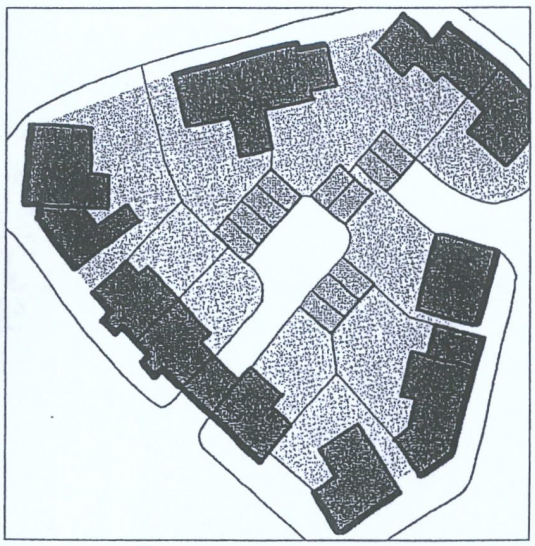
This arrangement of buildings creates a well overlooked space. Through routes increase natural surveillance from passing pedestrians. Poundbury, Dorchester



Houses within the rear courtyard provide natural surveillance. Poundbury, Dorchester



Narrow entrance arch to a rear courtyard. Black Notley, Essex.



A courtyard formed by the arrangement of buildings. Here there is no through route for pedestrians. Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford

In–curtilage parking

Various arrangements can help mitigate the effect of parking within the building curtilage. The simplest of these is to locate the garage or carport alongside the house, set back from the building line. Many parts of Thorley Lane, Bishops Stortford show what can be gained from such a configuration. Alternatively, in some locations, the garage can be concealed as part of a boundary wall.

Basement and undercroft parking

The success of an infill development such as Webster's Yard, Kendal depends upon the use of basement parking, without which the scheme would not have been viable. Apart from the financial equation, the advantage of putting cars underground is that it preserves the street frontage. But, as with courtyard parking, much depends on the location and design of the entrance. Webster's Yard provides a clever example of concealment.

Car parking structures have a rigid geometry based on the dimensions of a parking bay, but this should not be allowed to dictate the shape of the building above.

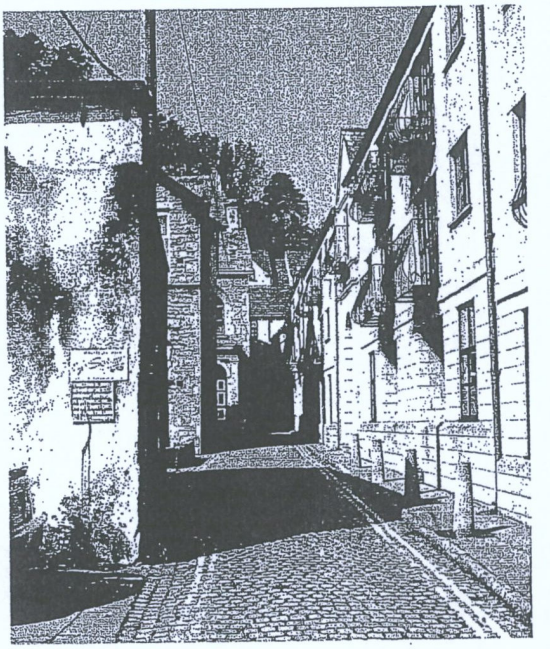
Car clubs

Car clubs eliminate the need to own a car by allowing residents to hire vehicles as and when they need them. People wanting to use the club simply pay a small annual fee. The vehicle is then charged by the time hired and the distance driven, the operator covering insurance and maintenance costs.

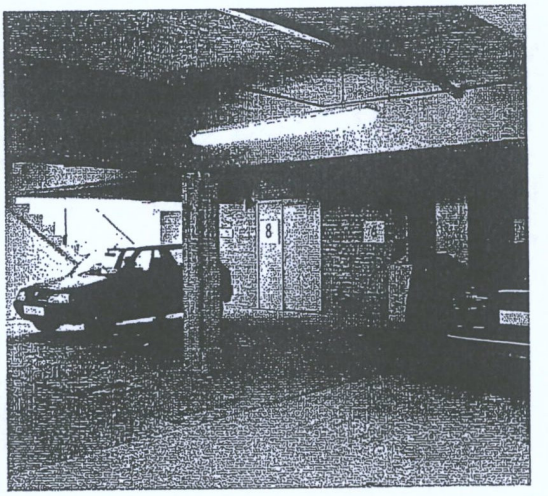
Although car clubs are common in other European countries, none of the case studies had one in operation or proposed. In terms of housing layout, a successful car club offers the prospect of a development with much reduced parking provision and thus, in some cases, significantly higher densities.



Town houses with integral garages. Ingress Park, Greenhithe



View of New Inn Road, leading to basement car park at the end of the street. The treatment of the car park entrance preserves the street frontage. Webster's Yard, Kendal



This underground car park is well lit and has several pedestrian access points. Webster's Yard, Kendal

'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should reject poor design . . . applicants for planning permission for housing development should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good layout and design and how their proposals reflect the guidance set out in this PPG.'

PPG3: Housing paragraph 63

The importance of thoroughness

The richness and sense of quality seen in the best environments are the consequence of careful consideration of the detailed design of the buildings and the spaces and interfaces between them. This is the focus of this Chapter. It is concerned with the architecture, the 'streetscape' - the hard and soft landscape - and the threshold between private and public space. These are the concerns which will ultimately distinguish the quality of place created. However well planned and structured, a disappointing scheme is likely to result if it is not well executed at the level of detail.

This Chapter cannot and does not purport to be a detailed design manual. There is a great deal of relevant material elsewhere on the many aspects involved. The key messages of this Chapter are firstly, that detailed design is a key element in the creation of places of enduring quality and secondly, that regardless of the design guidance provided, high quality design, especially in relation to matters of detail, needs highly skilled designers.

It needs to be emphasised that there is no single appropriate design response. Quality comes in many forms. Indeed, in order to be responsive and fitting to different contexts, it is important to recognise the validity of a diverse range of approaches.

The lesson which is most clearly conveyed by the case studies is the fundamental importance of a coherent and integrated approach to the detailed design of a place.

In a quality place, the components from which it is made are fully resolved. This requires a fusion o all elements; the building, landscape and the interface between them. All components need to have been designed and constructed with the overall scheme, its character and quality, in mind. The best schemes do not appear to comprise buildings, a road and the bits in between, but rather form a place where the elements belong seamlessly to each other.

This is all too often not the case. The architect plans the buildings and general layout; the engineer designs the roads and services and negotiates with the authorities involved; the landscape architect then deals with the spaces in between. On occasion, certain of these design professions are not involved at all. A sense of completeness and cohesion is unlikely to emerge from such an approach, especially where the key visual elements at the interfaces (fences, walls and so on) are 'retro-fitted'. The road, in particular, has to be designed as an element of the urban landscape as well as being fit for purpose. Equally, the landscape design needs to complement the buildings and vice versa.



All details handled in a thoroughgoing way to create a quality place. Upper Brook Hill, Woodstock

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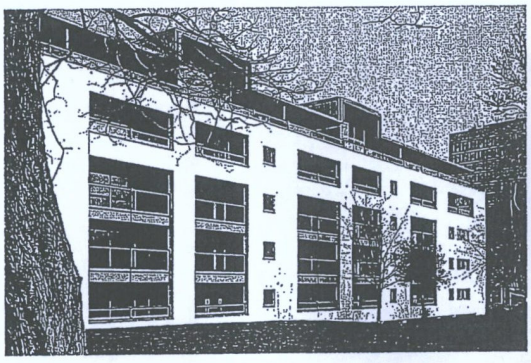
Building elements

The quality of the building can be spoilt by poor attention to detail. The individual elements of which buildings of any kind are composed have a key role in determining their quality. To contribute successfully to the whole they need to be well designed in their own right, and arranged in a coherent and legible way which is consistent with the overall architectural approach. The parts contribute to a whole which has integrity. This is nothing to do with architectural styles, or, necessarily, with tradition. The best domestic architecture of all ages has abounded with invention and even fun.

It is at the level of the individual elements that the viewer makes the connection with the human scale, an important part of achieving places of quality. When the elements are brought together in a coherent way, whether with deliberate uniformity or deliberate variety, they build up to a larger scale - the house, the block, the street - which in turn is comprehensible. For example, the terraced housing at Greenland Passage, Southwark provides a useful illustration of the skillful arrangement of the elements of a facade which makes use of modelling and shadow and sets up a rhythm. The strength of the detailed design is such that it can successfully accommodate garage doors.



Splendid articulation and rhythm of gables, bays, balconies and the facade create a human scale despite the large bulk of the building. Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale



The same success as illustrated above can also be achieved with contemporary forms and materials. Century Court, Cheltenham

Building elements

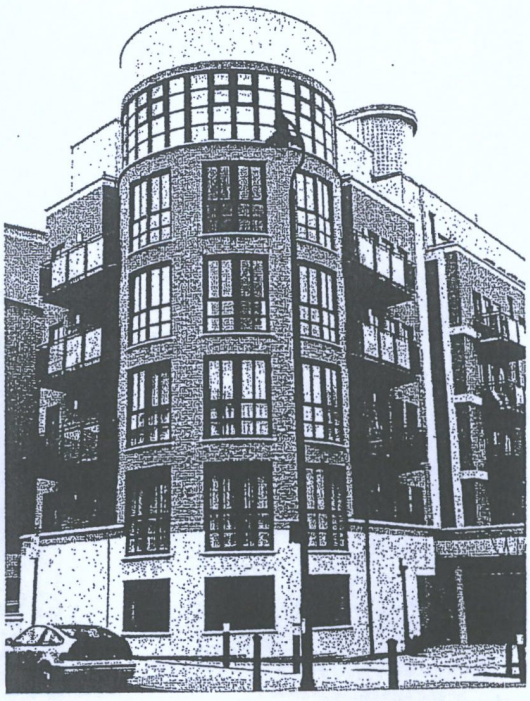
The building elements which require careful attention in detailed design include:

- doors
- windows
- porches
- roof structures
- lighting
- flues and ventilation
- gutters, pipes and other rainwater details
- balconies
- garage doors
- ironmongery and decorative features
- flashings

It is vital not only to view these elements in isolation, but also to consider how they come together to form the whole and to examine carefully the 'joins' between the elements.



Strong design treatment of windows and balconies draws attention away from potentially intrusive garage doors which are also skilfully handled. Greenland Passage, Southwark



A good corner. The ground floor internal planning of schemes of this type is very important to create an acceptable internal living space. Narrow Street, Tower Hamlets

There is also a danger of seeing the detailed design response as either 'traditional' or 'modern'. Such debates about style can get in the way of producing a distinctive quality response to the design challenges involved. Traditional materials and design ideas can be used in a totally modern way. Conversely, new materials and cutting-edge construction technologies can be deployed to create a comfortable human scale architecture and, where appropriate, reflect traditional styles.

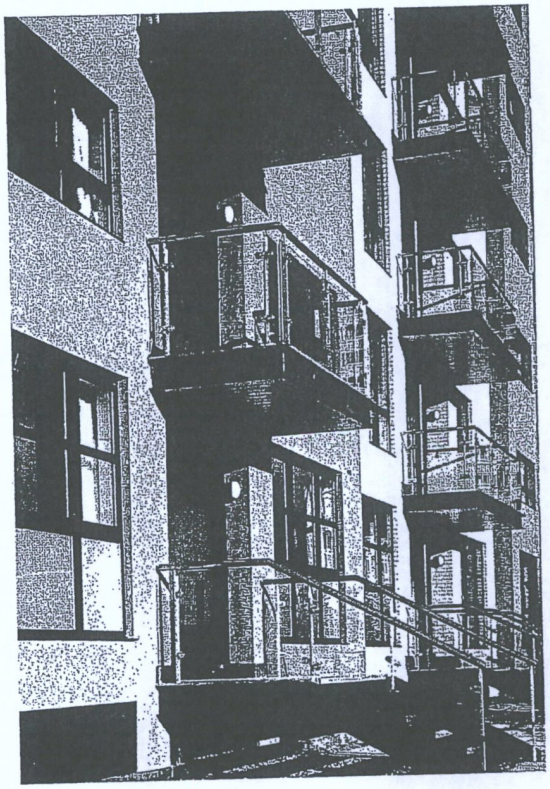
Whatever the language and idioms of the architecture, there is a need to understand their structure and logic as well as appearance. These issues affect design subtly and at different scales. In any design or idiom, the approach needs to involve an iterative process between the massing and form of the building and its detailed components. As with everything else in this guide, there is no substitute for design skill.



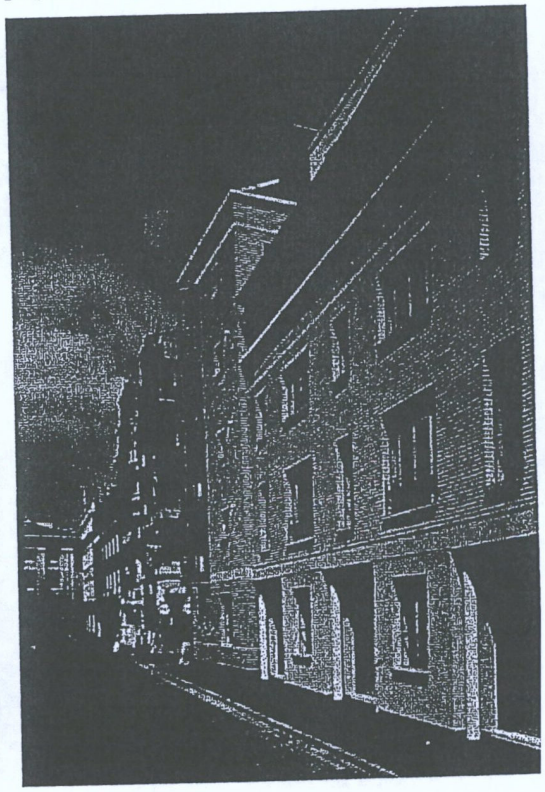
The scale of the terrace is articulated at roof height by the elegantly glazed dormers and the occasional change in plan and height. Jesmond, Newcastle



A well articulated roofline, a strong horizontal parapet and well proportioned fenestration all contribute to the quality of this scheme. Even the guttering and vents are used to punctuate the facade and contribute to the sense of proportion. Brightlingsea Place, Tower Hamlets



Modelling, colour, shadow and clear detailing throughout. Note the frosted glass for privacy in the lower level windows and the discrete venting of the undercroft parking. However, the steps would not meet current requirements for level access. Ocean Wharf, Tower Hamlets



The elevational components are carefully designed to relate to the overall form and mass of the scheme. Coptic Street, Camden

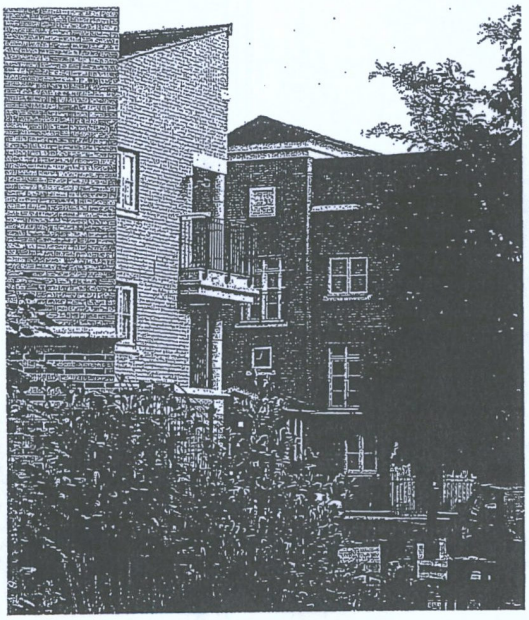
'Landscaping should be an integral part of new development and opportunities should be taken for the retention of existing trees and shrubs, and for new plantings.'

PPG3: Housing paragraph 52

Landscape

Landform, natural features and their ecology are always important. Trees, shrubs, flowers and grass and their containment require particular attention. The retention and use of existing trees and, on occasion, walls, ramps, steps and hedges can give a sense of maturity and distinction. New planting needs careful and specialised consideration according to locale and practicality. Soils, drainage, sunlight and shelter are critical factors as well as the use, where possible, of native species.

Where close to buildings, a strong maintenance regime is essential for hedges, shrubs and grass. All planting elements need well defined edges which can be formed by properly designed walls, kerbs, tree grilles and the like. Using the positioning of the buildings, rather than the road and statutory setbacks, or sight lines remains the most effective way of defining the space. The principle of 'tracking' is useful here (see Chapter 3[1]).



Well planted front gardens perfectly suited to the scale of the buildings. Isledon Village, Islington



The design of sitting-out areas provides a framework for planting in an intimate courtyard. Webster Yard, Kendal

Landscape elements

The landscape elements which require careful consideration in detailed design include:

- trees, flowers, grass and other planting
- the carriageways, footways and floorscape
- cycle–ways
- kerbs
- steps and ramps
- fences, walls, hedges and gates
- inspection boxes and covers
- tree grilles
- street signage
- street lighting
- seats
- bollards
- railings
- public art
- wayleaves and easements

The detailed alignment of carriageways, footpaths and any front garden or threshold space before the building edge involves the consideration of many elements including: pedestrian, cycle and vehicle needs; on-street parking and service requirements; underground services; and landscape features.

The street needs to be considered as an important element of detailed design. A well-designed space will accommodate street furniture, signage and other elements in a calm, unemphatic way. In general, this is often a case of 'less' being 'more'.

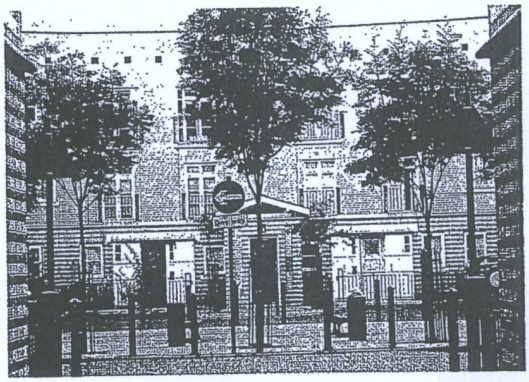
It is always important to avoid clutter. Buildings, walls and fences can in some circumstances be used to mount road signs and lighting upon, but attention to the need for wayleaves and easements to allow for their installation and maintenance will be important. Cables should be undergrounded as far as possible. Inspection boxes should be recessed in the planting and street furniture should not clutter pavements.



Shrubs and trees screen parking areas and soften the 'join' between the buildings and the street. Bedford Court, Doncaster



No signs, no bollards, no road markings and simple lighting. A clutter-free environment. Friars Quay, Norwich



Retro-fitting of bollards and signs rather spoil a well planned local space. Isledon Village, Islington

The floorscape is particularly important. Traffic calming measures need to be designed in as an integral part of the layout and draw from a well chosen palette of materials. There are places where shared surfaces will be appropriate and vehicles can be slowed by such devices as narrow carriageways and surfaces of setts, paviors and slabs. Again, less can be more.

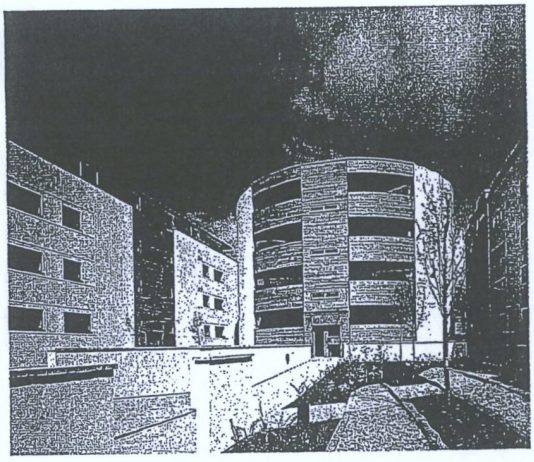
Good quality lighting can make an important contribution to the attractiveness of an area, in terms of the quality of its appearance during both daylight hours and night time, as well as to its safety and public security. There is increasing emphasis on lighting for walking, cycling and amenity as well as driving and upon the reduction of light pollution. It is important that lighting engineers are involved at an early stage in the project design. The design of the columns and luminaires in obviously critical. There are other possibilities – wall mounting, bollards with integral lights, and ground level up-lighters which are appropriate in some circumstances.

Consistency and continuing commitment

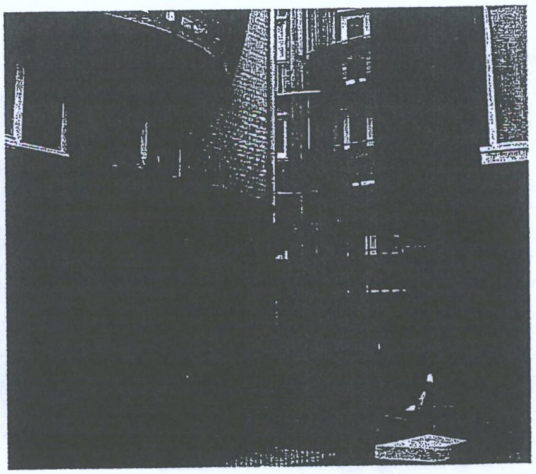
Creating high quality residential environments requires a continuing commitment to quality and detailed design right through to the completion and handover of the scheme. There are a number of areas where attention is important:

- avoiding 'retro-fittings' and 'bolt-ons';
- consulting early with statutory, regulatory and adoption agencies and specialist advisers on such matters as lighting, security and road safety;
- determining the nature of future maintenance, adoption and service regimes and responsibilities. This is particularly important for landscape planning and design.

Attention to these matters can help both to avoid obvious or glaring mistakes and to create a sense of quality through the harmony of all the components. Indeed, ingenious detailed solutions in resolving such matters can enrich a scheme.



Rigorous attention to detail and the integration of landscape and building elements. Century Court, Cheltenham



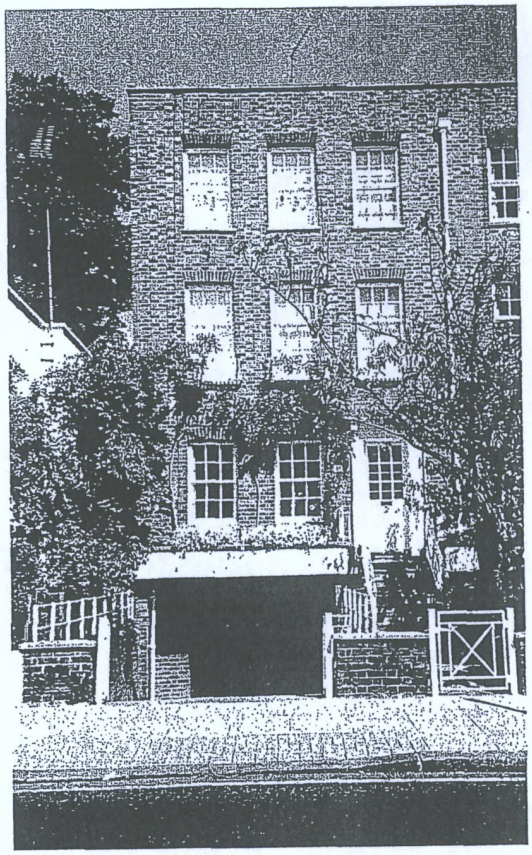
Children's play dictated the need for a gate to this family housing scheme. The gate is celebrated as public art and lifts the whole scheme. Dragon Court, Camden

The quality of the public realm can be undermined through:

- the lack of a full landscape plan and specification as part of the design of the scheme submitted for planning approval;
- inadequate and unrealistic budgets for external works, particularly for hard and soft landscape;
- a tendency for the budgets for these items to be reduced in an attempt to cover over-runs in work undertaken earlier in the construction process;
- the problems of accommodating late additions, especially those required by the adoption agencies.

These issues apply to all forms of housing development, but it is important to appreciate that as the density of development rises and/or the intensity of use increases, so too does the importance of a complete and robust landscape treatment.

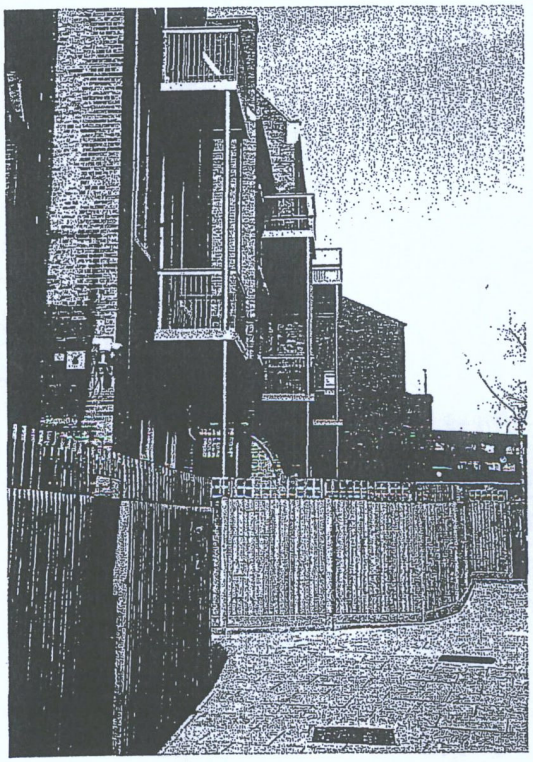
The overriding objective has to be to generate a culture where there is a commitment to the creation of enduring value through investment in the landscape and associated works rather than cost minimisation. The selection of materials for the external works always needs to be subject to the same rigour as has been applied to the buildings themselves.



Here the relationship with the street is maintained with car parking in a semi-basement, set back from the footpath and the boundary wall. Holland Park, Kensington



Integral garages can create a lifeless, dead frontage effect while at the same time not accommodating many cars. Here quality is further eroded by the mismatch between the raised surface and the length of cars on the forecourt as well as by oil stains and painted road markings



Timber fence on indeterminate alignment and without a planting edge lets down this scheme

Advice Produced by The Department for Communities and Local Government

Demonstrating a 5 Year Supply of Deliverable Sites

Background

1. PPS3 requires Local Planning Authorities from 1 April 2007 to assess and demonstrate the extent to which existing plans already fulfil the requirement to identify and maintain a rolling 5-year supply of deliverable land for housing (paragraph 7) as this influences how planning applications are determined (see PPS3 paragraphs 68-73).

2. In particular, PPS3 paragraph 71 states that 'where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up to date 5-year supply of deliverable sites....., they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in paragraph 69'.

3. It follows that where an LPA can demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable sites then they should consider planning applications having regard to PPS3, existing Development Plan policies as well as other material considerations.

Purpose

4. This paper sets out advice to Government Offices and the Planning Inspectorate in considering whether Local Planning Authorities are able to demonstrate a 5-year supply of specific sites which are deliverable in the terms of paragraph 54 of PPS3. This applies both to initial assessments as well as those carried out as the 5-year land supply is regularly reviewed and rolled forward, as required by PPS3.

Approach

5. There are three main stages:

Appeals & Other Casework

Planning Appeals
Enforcement Appeals
Common Land
Highways and Transport
Local Development Frameworks
Regional Spatial Strategy
Rights of Way
All types of Appeal / Casework

General Information

Submitting a Complaint / Comment / Suggestion
Employment
FAQS
Forms
Freedom of Information
Newsletter
Press Releases and Notices
Publications
Related sites
Site Help

i) Identify the level of housing provision to be delivered over the following 5 years which, in the first instance, will be from 1st April 2007 to end March 2012. Local Planning Authorities should use, where available, housing provision figures in adopted Development Plans, adjusted to reflect the level of housing that has already been delivered (within the lifetime of the current plan). Where housing provision figures are not available in the Development Plan for the following 5 years, Local Planning Authorities should make the best available estimate of the level of housing required over the full 5-year period. For example, this may include having regard to the evidence underpinning housing provision policies in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, projecting forward based upon current Development Plan figures or drawing on other relevant and up-to-date information.

ii) Identify sites that have the potential to deliver housing during the following 5 years. Potential sites include those that are allocated for housing in the Development Plan, sites that have planning permission (outline or a full planning permission that has not been implemented) and specific, unallocated brownfield sites that have the potential to make a significant contribution to housing delivery during the 5 year period. Such unallocated brownfield sites would normally have been identified by the Local Planning Authority as being suitable for a housing use and have made sufficient progress through the planning process at the time of the assessment to be able to be considered deliverable in the terms of paragraph 54 of PPS3.

iii) Assess the deliverability of the identified potential sites. Paragraph 54 of PPS3 says that to be deliverable, sites should:

- Be available - the site is available now
- Be suitable - the site offers a suitable location for development now and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities
- Be achievable - there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

Assessing Deliverability

6. Local Planning Authorities will need to assess whether potential sites (see paragraph 5 ii) are deliverable in the terms of paragraph 54 of PPS3, drawing upon up-to-date information and ensuring that their judgements are clearly and transparently set out, noting any assumptions made. It is

Modified: 03-Feb-2010

important that developers and local communities understand the basis on which the assessment is made.

Deliverability Criteria	Assessing Deliverability
Available	Does the information that supports either the allocation of a site in an up-to-date plan (subject to planning permission), or the granting of a planning permission, clearly indicate that site is available now? If existing information is not sufficient, it may be necessary for the Local Planning Authority to gather further, up-to-date evidence by discussing availability of the site with relevant developers/landowners.
Suitable	Can sites that are allocated or have planning permission be regarded as being suitable? This will usually be a reasonable assumption, but it may be necessary to assess whether circumstances have changed (e.g. since a site was allocated) that would alter the suitability of the site for housing.
Achievable	Does the information supporting the site allocation or planning permission clearly demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect of housing being delivered within 5 years? It may be necessary to discuss with relevant developers/ landowners and/or analyse current housing market conditions in order to make an informed judgement about this.

8. Unallocated brownfield sites may be included in the 5 year supply of deliverable sites, but only where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied, having considered the particular circumstances of the specific site, that the site will meet all the tests of deliverability in paragraph 54 of PPS3 and will make a significant contribution to the delivery of housing during the relevant 5 year period. As indicated above, such unallocated brownfield sites would normally have made sufficient progress through the planning process to be able to be considered deliverable in the terms of paragraph 54 of PPS3.

9. Unallocated sites that are not likely to make a significant

contribution to the delivery of housing during the relevant 5-year period should not be taken into account in an assessment of the 5-year supply until a planning permission has been granted and the land supply is being reviewed.

Consequences of the Assessment

- Local Planning Authorities should be advised that:
- Where they cannot demonstrate an up to date 5-year supply of deliverable sites, they should:
- Determine planning applications having regard to paragraph 71 of PPS3 (see paragraph 2 above).
- Consider options for increasing the supply of deliverable sites in the short term, for example, through Area Action Plans and/or taking action to address obstacles to the deliverability of potential sites.
- Consider, as soon as is practicable, the development of Local Development Documents that fully take account of PPS3 policies for developing a flexible and responsive supply of land, in particular, having regard to the level of housing proposed in the relevant emerging Regional Spatial Strategy as set out in paragraph 53 of PPS3.
- Where they can demonstrate an up to date 5-year supply of deliverable sites, they should:
- Consider planning applications having regard to PPS3 (in particular paragraph 69), Development Plan policies and other material considerations. In areas with significant demand and need for housing Local Planning Authorities should not necessarily treat the 5-year housing provision figures as a ceiling which cannot be exceeded.
- Determine planning applications for sites allocated later in the overall 15 year land supply having regard to paragraph 70 of PPS3.
- Ensure their plan-making programme provides for Local Development Documents to reflect PPS3 policies as soon as is practicable.

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