

# Raising the quality of housing design in East Lindsey



# Why improve design?

- The importance of good design has been recognised and is being actively promoted through Planning Policy.
- The government is encouraging local authorities to reject bad design in all types of development.
- From 10 August 2006, all nearly all applications must be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement outlining how they they have incorporated principles of urban design, community consultation and access for all members of society.
- **Local authorities need to take a stand against adopting poorly designed streets and public spaces. They can do much to reduce risk by demanding good design and rejecting bad.**



# The bigger picture

- Sustainable Communities agenda – mixed uses, access to services, high quality development.
- Draft PPS3 identifies the importance of good housing design:  
*“Developments should be attractive, safe and designed and built to a high quality” and “.. the key test should be whether a development positively improves the character of an area and the way it functions.”*
- Highways agenda. Using the guidance to support good design rather than hinder it. Flexible interpretation of standards. Importance of the public realm. Safety and accessibility of new developments.

# A Corporate Priority

Why is good design important to East Lindsey District Council?

Current review of aims and priorities:

- Sustainable Communities
- Improving health and social wellbeing
- Quality area to live and work
- Delivering partnership working
- Develop the role of leadership

# The cost of poor design

- Potential risk that poor design will increase long term costs:
- A 1970s housing estate at Holly Street in Dalston, east London, was so badly designed that it had to be demolished and **rebuilt only 20 years into its intended 60-year design life, at a cost of £92 million.**
- George's Park in Lozells, Birmingham was laid out in the 1970s in a design that encouraged crime and anti-social behaviour and made it into a place actively avoided by local residents. **It was redeveloped at a cost of £1.2 million.**



# What is good design?

Good design in housing can:

- help improve people's wellbeing and quality of life
- benefit public health
- increase property values
- cut crime

**Building for Life** identifies 4 key elements for new housing schemes:

- 1.Character
- 2.Roads, parking and pedestrianisation
- 3.Design and construction
- 4.Environment and community





# What is good design?

## Character

1. Distinctive character
2. Architectural quality – durable, well built and attractive
3. Well structured building layout
4. Easy to navigate – focal points, landmarks and views
5. Consideration of existing buildings and landscape



# What is good design?

## Roads, parking and pedestrianisation

- Building layout should be a priority to ensure that roads and car parking do not dominate
- Streets should be pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly
- Well integrated car parking that supports the streetscene
- Integration with existing roads, paths and development
- Overlooked public spaces and paths to increase feeling of safety





# What is good design?

## Design and construction

- Each scheme should have its own specific design
- Well-designed public spaces with management plan
- Aiming for high standards in energy efficiency – aiming for more than the minimum
- Technological innovation
- Internal spaces that are flexible and adaptable



# What is good design?

## Environment and community

- Access to public transport
- Reduction of environmental impact
- Mix of tenure
- Accommodation mix
- Community facilities on or near to the site



# What is good design?

## National Case Study Pepys Estate, Deptford

169 dwellings:                      45 shared ownership,  
   124 social rent



**Planning authority:** London Borough of Lewisham

**Funding body:** Housing Corporation (Phase 1) Housing Corporation/ODPM Thames Gateway Funding (Phase 2)

**Contract value:** £16.5m

# What is good design?

## National Case Study, Pepys Estate, Deptford, London



Public footpaths are overlooked by buildings



Pedestrian links through the site. Visual link to historic building terminating the view



Shared surfaces for all users also form public spaces



New buildings reflect shape and massing of historic in a modern way

# What is good design?

## National Case Study Gun Wharf, Plymouth



- Mixed use, mixed tenure
- 99 Total:
  - 35 Private Sale
  - 46 Rented Affordable Housing (Devon and Cornwall Housing Association), and
  - 18 Shared Ownership Affordable Housing
- **Planning authority:** Plymouth City Council
- **Funding body:** RDA, Devon and Cornwall HA, with land donation from Plymouth County Council
- **Contract value:** £7m



# What is good design?

## National Case Study, Gun Wharf, Plymouth



Public space is overlooked by buildings



Integrated parking solutions



Distinctive architecture and materials



# What is good design?

## Local Case Study, Spilsby



Sustainable design of buildings – to maximise solar gain. Distinctive building design creates a sense of place and identity

# What is good design?

## Local Case Study, St James, Spilsby



New development considers existing scale, form, style and materials of local buildings and results in a development that blends into the local landscape. The detailing includes clear definition of boundaries which amongst other benefits contributes to perceptions of public and private space.

# What is good design?

## Local Case Study, Louth



Good design creates a strong frontage to the road and reflects local style and materials resulting in a development that is in keeping with the character of Louth. Clever design solutions mean that parking is provided to the rear of the dwellings and accessed periodically along the road, ensuring that the development is not unnecessarily dominated by cars.

# Changes to the Planning System

*“A design and access statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.”*

*DCLG Circular 01/2006, Guidance on the changes to the development control system*



# Changes to the Planning System

- **Design and Access Statements** are now compulsory and are an important tool in enabling planners to make well-informed and balanced decisions.
- They should explain the design approach behind a particular scheme and how issues of access for all members of society have been addressed.
- DAS are required on all applications both **full and outline**
  - Exceptions are material change of use, householder applications and engineering/mining works





# Design and access statements

The process of preparation of a design and access statement should include the following stages:

**Assessment**  
**Involvement**  
**Evaluation**  
**Design**

## KEY ISSUES

Use: What will buildings and spaces be used for?

Amount: How much will be built on the site?

Layout: How the buildings, public and private spaces will be arranged on the site, and the relationship between them and the buildings and spaces around the site.

Scale: How big the buildings and spaces would be (height, width and length).

Landscaping: how open spaces will be treated to enhance and protect the local character

Appearance: What the building and spaces will look like ie building materials and architectural details.

Process:

Assessment

Involvement

Evaluation

Design

As outlined in 'Design and Access Statements. How to write, read and use them' published by Cabe 2006



# Design and access statements

Process: **assessment-involvement-evaluation-design**

## *Assessment*

- Site context and surroundings – physical, social and economic characteristics.
- Relationship to existing planning policy context.

## *Involvement*

- Groups, people and specialists that have been/will be involved in discussions about the scheme.



# Design and access statements

Process: **assessment-involvement-evaluation-design**

## *Evaluation*

- Demonstration that the information gathered in the assessment and involvement stages has been used to help identify opportunities and constraints that will inform the later development of the scheme.

## *Design*

- An opportunity to 'tell the story' of the scheme up until the application stage, including initial ideas that have been changed, dropped or amended to form a final scheme.
- An opportunity to 'sell' the concept behind the scheme.



# Design and access statements

What to examine:

**Use:** *How the use/s will fit into local area and support local aims.*

**Amount:** *How much development is being applied for and why this is appropriate.*

**Layout:** *The proposed site layout (or indicative layout for outline applications) and explanation about why this layout has been chosen.*

**Scale:** *The size and scale of buildings and spaces and why these are appropriate for the site.*

**Landscaping:** *Principles used to draw up landscape details.*

**Appearance:** *What the place will look like and why.*



# Design and access statements

## Access

- Will the place be safe and easy for everyone to move around?
- Will it make the most of the surrounding transport/movement network?
- Explanation of the policy approach and consultation



# Design and access statements

## Summary

- Explanation of the relationship between context and design
- Enables stakeholders to become more involved in the Planning process
- Communication tool
- Explain and justify proposals within an application through the identification of principles and concepts
- May include – plans and elevations, photos of site and surroundings – should be in addition to not in replace of planning application drawings
- How the development will be accessible to all groups of people through a variety of modes of travel





# Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

## 2.0 SITE

### 2.1 context

The site sits opposite the English Golf Union HQ, the buildings of which are set back some 120 m from The Broadway leaving a well established landscaped area facing the site.

The Broadway is one of the principle roads in Woodhall Spa and forms an important part of its character. It has a strong, layered quality, with a series of grass verges, footpaths, mature deciduous trees, fence lines and hedges.

The predominant building line along the Broadway is set by the Victorian and Edwardian villa buildings, which sit back approximately 14m from the kerb edge. To the west of the site the buildings are of a later date, a collection of semis and bungalows that sit further back, approximately 30m, and have far less presence.

It is the Victorian and Edwardian villa buildings that set the local scale. These are large imposing residential buildings planned and built in the Arts & Craft tradition with strong architectural features such as large bay windows, expressed chimney structures and steep roofs with dormers and strong gables.

These buildings are planned to respond to their own particular locations with wings, additions and focal features, they each share a strong relationship to their immediate landscape and The Broadway.

They also share a common palette of materials including: red brick, render, large timber windows porches and bays, clay tiles and slate roof coverings.

These qualities of presence and planning, their relationship to the landscape and the shared palette of materials are absent from the later 20c buildings to the west and south of the site.

On the east side of the site, a two storey detached house abuts the boundary. On the west side the boundary passes through the party wall of a pair of semi detached houses, one of which is included within the site.

The site is generally flat and includes a series of existing buildings associated with its former use as a hatchery. The buildings range in size and height, from a two-storey office building to a large single storey industrial shed. These buildings seem to have been built over a period of time with some fairly recent additions. None seem to be of any architectural or contextual value.

## The Broadway: Woodhall Spa





# Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

## 5.0 DEVELOPMENT SITE

### 5.1 constraints

Based on the demolition of all the existing buildings, an assessment of the empty site as the starting point for the redevelopment was carried out, and the following constraints identified:

#### access

- vehicle access into the site is limited to the single existing point of entry off The Broadway
- an additional point of access would involve the felling of trees at the front of the site
- the relocation of the existing access would also involve the felling of trees at the front of the site

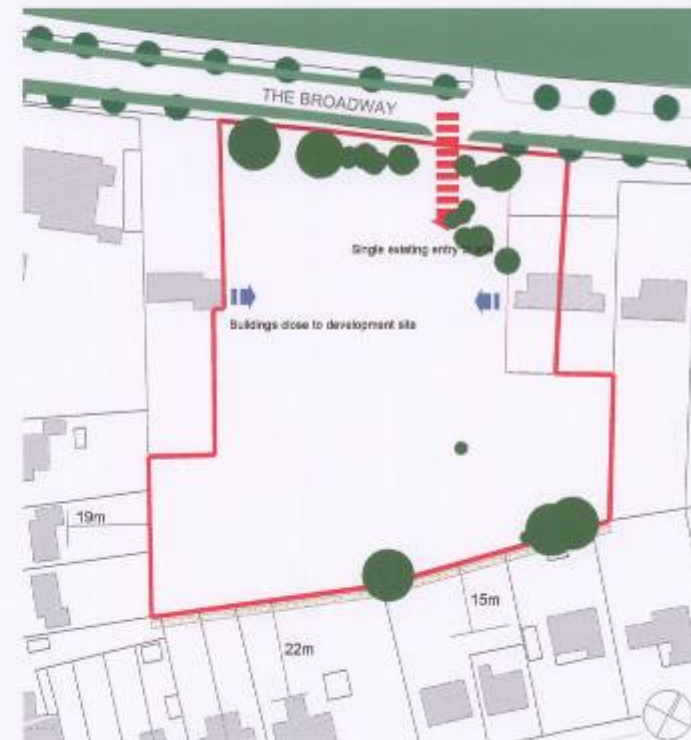
#### environment

- although there is some variety in the scale of the surrounding buildings, they are all of a domestic scale which will have to be respected by any proposals
- the overall character of The Broadway will need to be maintained and reflected by any proposals, particularly for the front part of the site
- the uses of all the surrounding buildings are predominantly residential

#### views + features

- the front part of the site is within the Woodhall Spa Conservation Area
- the two groups of existing mature conifer trees on the front of the site are within the Conservation Area and will have to be retained
- the site is contained on three sides by back gardens, ranging in length from a minimum of 15m to 20m plus
- the relationship to these gardens and any issues of privacy and overlooking will have to be considered
- there are houses on both sides of the site, on the west side a garage addition abuts the site boundary, on the east side the site boundary runs through the centre of a pair of semis

## The Broadway: Woodhall Spa



# Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

## 5.0 DEVELOPMENT SITE

### 5.2 qualities

An assessment of the site to identify its qualities was then carried out, again based on the demolition of all the existing buildings as the starting point for the redevelopment, and the following qualities were identified:

#### access

- the existing vehicle access into the site is of sufficient width for two way traffic and service vehicles
- the lack of further connections will limit through traffic and vehicle numbers on the site
- the site is close to the town centre and its facilities
- The Broadway is pedestrian friendly, with footpaths separated from the road by generous verges

#### environment

- The Broadway is one of the principle routes through Woodhall Spa and it has retained its strong identity and landscape qualities
- the traffic levels along The Broadway are relatively low, contributing to its pedestrian appeal and reinforcing links with the town centre
- the site is flat and enjoys relatively uninterrupted solar access
- the existing landscape features on the site, the trees to the front and the hedge/tree screen to the rear, create a strong sense of containment helping establish the form of the site.

#### views

- the site is opposite and looks onto the entrance to the English Golf Union HQ, which is a strong naturalistic open space offering good views
- the existing screen of conifer trees are a strong vertical feature and provide a focal point along the Broadway
- the existing hedge and tree line on the southern boundary provides a screen to the adjacent houses and gardens
- opportunities to create landscape features and views as a focus within the site

Apart from the points above, no other features or site qualities have been identified for inclusion in the development of the site.

## The Broadway: Woodhall Spa



# Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

## The Broadway: Woodhall Spa

### 5.0 DEVELOPMENT SITE

#### 5.3 access + plots

The development of the site will be in part determined by the available vehicle access routes, the points of entry and the road layout on the site to achieve developable plots.

##### access

This proposal is based on a single point of entry from the Broadway in the position of the existing road into the site, with minor alterations as required to meet Highways standards, and to fit with the building proposal. It should be noted that this will involve the removal of five existing trees, and that the condition of these trees warrants removal and replacement locally on the site as described in Appendix A: Tree Survey.

As the previous use of the site would have involved the movement of commercial vehicles, servicing and staff parking, it has been assumed that the change to residential use will not place any greater demand on the existing access or the surrounding road network.

Connecting the site to the existing footpaths to maximise its pedestrian potential and safety will be explored in more detail later.

##### circulation

The proposed circulation within the site is based on combined routes for vehicular and pedestrian use:

- The main vehicular routes, shown in red, are for two-way traffic, and give access to the full depth of the site, dividing it into two plots. This route will also provide for servicing access
- Pedestrian routes, shown in pink, are interlinked with these vehicular routes, giving access to parking areas, entrances and front doors.

It is proposed that these two types of route are developed to reflect a clear hierarchy of pedestrian and vehicular uses on the site. This will include traffic calming measures with an emphasis on pedestrian safety and reducing traffic speeds. Connections to the existing footpaths will be considered with an emphasis on material and detailing that encourages pedestrian use. Designing these as Home Zones will be explored at the next stage. The measures mentioned above, to make this a pedestrian friendly development, will also support and encourage cycle use.

##### plots

The proposed access and circulation network results in two distinct development plots.





# Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

## 6.0 PROPOSED LAYOUT

### 6.2 massing + building types

To reinforce the plot development strategy and respond to their context, the following building types and massing are proposed:

#### plot A

The design of this building has been developed to reflect the scale of the Victorian and Edwardian villas, and to create a corner that responds to existing landscape features and forms a natural route into the site. To achieve this, the following are proposed:

- A building plan with a predominant front block and a secondary wing
- The front block will be three storeys to match the scale of the villas
- A corner feature will be created with the addition of penthouses
- The secondary return wing will step down to two principle storeys containing four duplex apartments
- The secondary wing will also have a third 'attic' storey of two apartments, treated in a similar way to the penthouses
- The main entrance hall will be located between the two wings, giving access through to the courtyard garden

#### plot B

This building has been developed to provide a composition with the front building that creates a distinct sense of place within the site. It will be of a smaller scale in response to its internal location on the site.

To achieve this, the following are proposed:

- A building height of 1 + 2 storey on the south face to avoid overlooking
- Use of the roof space to provide internal modelling and reduce building height
- A building height of 3 storeys on the north, facing into the site to 'contain' the courtyard
- The third storey will be treated as an attic to model the roofline and reduce building height

#### a common palette of materials

Both buildings will share a common palette of materials reflecting the local vernacular and to reinforced a shared identity. They will also share features that reflect the local idiom including:

- Strong vertical elements such as chimneys will be reflected in the treatment of stair enclosures
- The buildings will both incorporate bays providing scale and articulation.
- Roofspaces will be inhabited to enrich the building, whilst keeping its form and scale domestic.
- The landscape will be supplemented with garden wall elements, free-standing, and as extensions of building elements, these will be used to define enclosure and provide screening

## The Broadway: Woodhall Spa



# Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

## 6.0 PROPOSED LAYOUT

### 6.3 landscape

Landscape will play an important role in creating the character of this development and has been approached as an intrinsic part of the overall design philosophy. The front part of the site, along with the two groups of trees, will be retained in its existing form, providing a naturalistic setting for the building.

Three new landscape elements are proposed:

#### courtyard

The two wings of the front building enclose a courtyard garden that will be a shared amenity and focus within the site. The building will open onto this space with balconies, and to give ground level access. This will be designed as a formal garden in contrast with the front part of the site.

The third side will be defined by a single storey structure to contain the garden and provide covered parking.

The fourth side, adjacent to the boundary will be defined by a planted screen wall providing a further level of privacy to the adjacent house.

#### mews

The parking structure will form a gateway into the inner part of the site and frame the building entrance. To help establish a separate identity, the roadway has been taken across the full frontage of the building and will be treated as a mews; a pedestrian friendly space with its own landscape treatment, furniture and lighting.

#### garden

The remaining open space surrounding the building on Plot A will be treated as a naturalistic landscape. This will be a shared amenity for the building with ground level access from the main entrance hall.

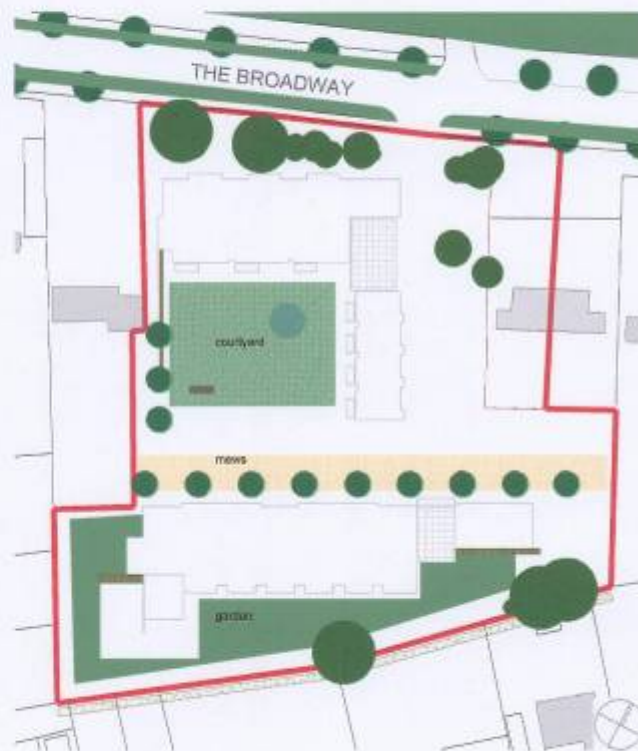
The existing hedge line on the rear boundary, along with the existing trees will provide screening, privacy and interest.

A terraced area could also be provided for the garden room at ground level. This would open onto the secluded southern corner of the site.

These proposals will provide a significant increase in the landscape area of the site compared to the existing, which is predominantly roofs and hardstanding.

The landscape proposals will be developed to integrate with local species and habitat, increase diversity and reduce the environmental impact of the development.

## The Broadway: Woodhall Spa

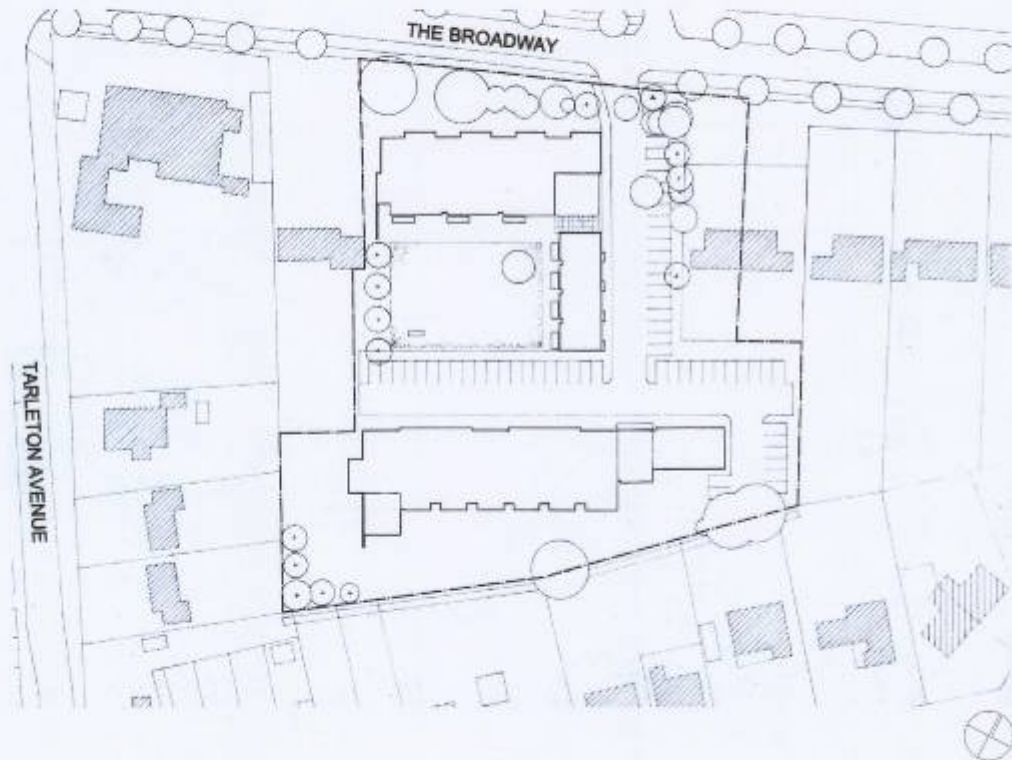


## Case Study Woodhall Spa Development Appraisal

### The Broadway: Woodhall Spa

#### 7.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

##### 7.1 masterplan





# Conclusions

- The quality and design of housing are high on the Government's agenda and East Lindsey.
- Planners can and will no longer accept poorly designed housing developments.
- Design and Access Statements are mandatory for planning applications

# Useful links

- [www.buildingforlife.org](http://www.buildingforlife.org)
- [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)
- [www.englishpartnerships.co.uk](http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk)