

# **SUPPLEMENTARY DESIGN GUIDANCE**

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## Foreword

This document was adopted as a Statement of Council Policy on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2005 and as such is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications.

The first version of the guidance was incorporated into Appendices 1 and 2 of the deposit version of the District Plan Review, which was published in January 2001. The District Plan Review including the Appendices was the subject of a sustainability appraisal that was published alongside the Deposit version of the Plan. Following the receipt of objections to the deposit version, Appendix 2 Design Standards was amended and republished at the revised deposit stage, in June 2002, as the Supplementary Design Guidance.

All duly made objections to the design guidance were considered through a process of independent examination at the Local Plan Inquiry along with the objections to the District Plan Review. In his report the Inspector recommended minor alterations to the Supplementary Design Guidance prior to its adoption as supplementary planning guidance. He also recommended that Appendix 1 of the Plan, the Sustainability Checklist, should form part of the Supplementary Design Guidance. These recommendations were considered by the Council and have been incorporated into the final version of the Supplementary Design Guidance.

The Design Guidance has therefore been subjected to a greater level of scrutiny and consultation than is required in PPG12 Development Plans (1999) for the adoption of supplementary planning guidance. However the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 made no provisions for adopting supplementary planning guidance post commencement of the Act. The Council has therefore adopted the supplementary design guidance as a Statement of Council Policy until such time as it is replaced by a supplementary planning document on design guidance.

The Council's Local Development Scheme identifies Design Guidance as an early supplementary planning document. The new legislation allows work that was carried out prior to commencement of the Act to count in the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents. It is the Council's intention to use this Supplementary Design Guidance as the basis of the new supplementary planning document.

## **Supplementary Design Guidance**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This design guidance has been written to provide guidance on the design and layout of all new development in the District to supplement the policies contained in the District Plan and should be read in conjunction with the District Plan. In particular, it provides more detailed guidance on the design issues affecting listed buildings and Conservation Areas, and detailed guidance on implementing the policies relating to energy efficiency contained in Chapter 5 Resources of the Plan; on the principles of design contained in Chapter 7 of the Plan; and also on specific types of design e.g. residential extensions and shopfronts etc. Policy SD1 Sustainable Development in Chapter 3 Sustainable Development, sets out the requirement for applicants to submit a statement showing how the application addresses the sustainability criteria in the checklist. This checklist is incorporated within this document. Whilst not all the information in this design guidance will be relevant to all types of planning application, the Council will expect applicants to have regard to all appropriate guidance in the design of their proposals.
  
- 1.2 This supplementary design guidance will be updated from time to time to take account of new information and guidance. In addition to this guidance the Council has published further detailed guidance on specific topics e.g. car parking standards published and adopted in January 2004.



## 2. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### Quality of Design

#### Policy D1 Quality of Design

**The Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.**

(Policy D1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

The Council has adopted a design-led approach to new development, in which it will seek to apply the following design principles:

- *Character*
- *Continuity and Enclosure*
- *Quality of the Public Realm*
- *Ease of Movement*
- *Legibility*
- *Adaptability*
- *Diversity*

### Character and Context

#### Policy D2 Character and Context

**The Council will require all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, should enhance or improve the character of the existing area.**

(Policy D2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 2.1 The positive features of a place and its people, contribute to the special character and sense of identity of that place. The best places are those that have a character people can appreciate easily and which are memorable.
- 2.2 The context of a site is crucial, and a clear appreciation of this in the design of new development is the starting point for creating distinctive and attractive places. The design and layout of the development should

be informed by the wider context, i.e. with regard not just to the neighbouring buildings, but also to the townscape and landscape in the wider locality; this will help create a place that is valued and pleasing to the eye. New development should not be viewed in isolation from its location and surroundings. If local character and distinctiveness are ignored, new development may reflect only the marketing policies or corporate identities of national and international companies, or it may just be a standard product of the building industry or the latest 'fashion' development. Often in the past, the unimaginative use of standard layouts, plot sizes and building designs have led to 'anywhere' places, which relate poorly to their surroundings and could be anywhere in the country.

2.3 Therefore developers will be expected to look at the wider context and use this in their reasons for justifying a development. This is not to say that new development must mirror the local character, rather that it must be sensitive to it and not detrimentally affect the townscape and landscape. It should seek to enhance key characteristics which contribute to landscape and architectural quality. New developments may create their own distinctive identity whilst respecting and enhancing local character. Character and innovation can exist together with old and new buildings fitting together provided they are carefully designed. Where there are no significant local traditions or where there is no overriding character, the challenge to create a place of distinctiveness will be greater. The other point that should be taken into account is that some of the existing development may not be in keeping with the local area and therefore this should not be replicated. It is probable that for new build development to be in keeping, the scale and massing should be replicated rather than a particular architectural style. The Countryside Agency has produced national guidance on how to assess, evaluate and accord with character.

2.4 The main issues to be taken into account in considering how a development may affect the character of an area should be:

- the geography and geology of the area, the site's land form and character when the new development is being laid out i.e. the development should take note of the shape of the landscape, preserve natural features and take account of the local ecology;
- an attempt to integrate the new development into the landscape to reduce its impact on nature and reinforce local distinctiveness i.e. using structure planting, shelter belts, green wedges, green corridors, common local species;
- the historic and cultural heritage of an area and any local architectural features and styling;
- the existing layouts of buildings, streets and spaces to ensure that adjacent buildings relate to one another, streets are connected and spaces complement each other;
- that the new development responds to building forms and patterns of the existing buildings in the detailed layout and design to reinforce a sense of place;

- the use of local materials and building methods/details to enhance local distinctiveness;
- the scale, height, massing, and space around the new development in relation to the adjoining buildings, topography, general heights in the area, views, vistas and landmarks;
- the historic, architectural and landscape features which exist in the area and how these will be affected;

#### Character Description of the District

2.5 Within the District, there are a number of different and yet identifiable character areas. The District has a varied urban/rural character, which reflects the historical development and pattern of settlement of the area. Its urban areas consist of a number of small and medium-sized settlements of differing size, age and character, situated along the main road and railway routes radiating northwards from London. The rural areas are largely agricultural, with a number of historic parks or estates, areas of ancient woodland and small villages, hamlets and sporadic ribbon developments, again of varied age and character.

The following provides a brief summary of some of the different areas. It is important that all developers look at and take note of the character and context of the area in which their development is proposed before submitting an application. Whilst there are certain specific characteristics within settlements that are special to them, defining one of these, such as large detached dwellings in large gardens, could infer that this is the distinctive character of the settlement, whereas in reality each settlement is made up of a number of different areas, which may or may not have local distinctiveness. Development should therefore be assessed in terms of its impact on the local area and surroundings. For example, whilst a settlement may be characterised by large detached dwellings on large plots, there may be some streets containing smaller units on smaller plots; development in this area should take account of the street context, rather than the character of the settlement as a whole.

2.6 The main urban areas in the district are:

*Welwyn Garden City* - one of two garden cities in the UK, a planned town, designed with a vision to combine town and country. Its principal characteristics are the formality of its layout and architecture and the complete integration of its landscape with the built form. Careful and varied use of spaces, grouping of buildings, building lines and architectural details, such as windows, porches and materials have given the town a unique balance of formality and variety. This applies not only to the residential areas but also to the commercial and industrial areas of the town.

*Hatfield* - one of the first generation of post-war British new towns, Hatfield is also a planned town with a clear identity, but possesses greater variety in its design and layout than Welwyn Garden City. Built to a relatively high density, it is characterised by terraced housing and cul-de-sac groupings. The careful use of public landscaping, including open frontages and mature trees and hedgerows, create a feeling of space.

*Brookmans Park, Cuffley and Digswell* - large villages in the north and south of the district, which grew mainly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as commuter settlements based around railway stations. They are generally characterised by detached housing on large plots, albeit within a variety of different settings.

*Welwyn* - a large village to the north of Welwyn Garden City, which has grown up around a historic core dating back to the Roman period. It has a varied character, with a Conservation area at its core and more modern developments on its outskirts.

*Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welham Green and Little Heath* - these settlements have varied characters which do not fall into specific categories. However, they have particular merits which should be taken into account in any new development such as scale, massing, landscaping or building materials.

- 2.7 The rural landscape can be defined as being largely agricultural, comprising arable and grazing land, broken up by areas of woodland, river valleys and small villages and hamlets. The lower areas are along the river valleys of the Lea and Mimram, whilst the higher points in the district are to the south and south east. The landscape has been altered in places from its natural form. In particular to the west mineral extraction has occurred and will continue to occur and in other areas golf courses have been created. There are two large estates in the district, one at Hatfield House and one at Brocket Hall. Because the rural areas are covered by Green Belt designation there is little opportunity for new development and that which does take place should reflect the nature of its rural surroundings and setting. New development should be located adjacent to or in proximity to existing buildings to lessen the impact on the rural character of the area.
- 2.8 The rural settlements include historic villages and hamlets such as the Ayots, Essendon, Northaw and Newgate Street, with distinct architectural characters, large parts of which are covered by Conservation Area designations. There are other hamlets and small clusters of development, such as Harmer Green, Woodside, Wildhill, Bell Bar, Swanley Bar, North Mymms, Lemsford, Stanborough and Bullens Green, which vary in character, and have developed around the estates and agriculture. Whilst some of these may not have a distinct overriding character, they have particular merits which should be taken into account in any new development such as scale, massing or building materials. Whilst they are subject to Green Belt restrictions on development, where development is appropriate, it is important that it reflects the rural nature of these settlements and does not introduce urban dimensions and forms which are clearly unsuitable.

## Continuity and Enclosure

### Policy D3 Continuity and Enclosure

**The Council will expect all new development to incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces.**

(Policy D3 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 2.9 This helps distinguish between public and private spaces. All developments should promote the continuity of street frontages, with buildings that clearly define public and private spaces and give enclosure to the public realm whilst promoting safety and security.
- 2.10 For open space to be successful rather than left over space, it needs to be defined and enclosed by buildings, structures and landscape. The key to this is the relationship between buildings on a street and between buildings and the street. Buildings which have a continuous building line along a street frontage with private space within backyards or courtyards are often more successful than those that stand in the middle of a site. Buildings which have an active street frontage, i.e. shopfronts, doors opening on to the street or residential upper floors, allow people to keep an eye on public space which makes the space safer for the user.
- 2.11 Parking areas, whether courtyard parking areas or parking bays, should be overlooked and enclosed by buildings; vast expanses of parking bays neither add to the street scene nor aid the aims of continuity and enclosure. Whilst there are differing opinions nationally on the desirability and advantages and disadvantages of culs-de-sac, one of the principles of the two new towns is culs-de-sac. Therefore, whilst within Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield the use of culs-de-sac may be appropriate, the use of streets is preferred in the rest of the District.
- 2.12 Continuity and enclosure can help with natural surveillance which makes residents feel safer and can help reduce crime. Streets need to be designed to be more than traffic routes.
- 2.13 Open spaces, whether they are streets, parks or footpaths should be fronted by buildings with doors and windows overlooking each space, good design should result in planned open spaces only and not areas that have simply been left over. Open spaces which are secure, overlooked and well maintained will be safer, more secure and help create stronger communities. Care must be taken that whilst these spaces are enclosed and overlooked, there is no conflict between the users of the open space and the local/adjoining residents.
- 2.14 The main issues to be taken into account in considering how a development can positively contribute to the continuity and enclosure of an area should be:
  - that the frontage of the buildings relate to the frontage of the existing buildings in the area, so further defining the street; the distinction between public and private spaces will be clearer where the

development follows the boundary. A continuous active street frontage will help to avoid blank walls and gaps (which lead to less overlooking) and therefore less chance of graffiti. However, it should be remembered that continuous street frontages may not be appropriate for example in some rural and areas where the layout is more informal. The principle of continuity need not be undermined by the inclusion of projections e.g. bays or by setbacks, such as entrances. Setback buildings may allow the creation of usable public space and setbacks can also soften the impact of buildings;

- that the primary access is from the street, i.e. building entrances should be clear, obvious and understandable. Well-used entrances will create activity on the street; entrances should be direct rather than communal. If the primary access is by an internal courtyard this reduces street activity; any access to communal or private courtyards e.g. for parking, should be controlled by means of gates or by overlooking;
- to ensure that the design of the building can reflect the front and backs of buildings and their different uses; more public rooms such as living rooms should overlook the front and the more private rooms which contribute little or nothing to a street frontage should be situated at the rear. Buildings which present their backs to roads often present high fences and walls to the street which reduces overlooking. One way of allowing buildings to front main roads where access is restricted is to use a boulevard-type slip road;
- the clear definition and enclosure of private space to the rear of buildings, allowing better security and greater privacy; back yards, inner courtyards or communal open spaces are best enclosed by the backs of buildings. Rear gardens should back on to other gardens rather than service roads and footpaths. Where shared (not public) space is provided in internal courtyards of high density developments, the privacy of ground floor rear rooms can be protected by private yards or gardens;
- that development should help define streets and public spaces; parks, squares, streets and other open spaces can be defined by appropriately scaled buildings and trees. The height of buildings should relate to the width and importance of the space or street they enclose and the massing and height of a building should pay attention to any overlooking or overshadowing that it may cause. Buildings should turn and close corners. Where relaxing standards for garden sizes and back to back distances can reduce or eliminate gaps and blank walls this is acceptable. Upper floors may be setback to reduce the risk of over development or a change to the sense of scale but allowing increased density;
- the clear definition of the relationship between the fronts of buildings and the street which can benefit their respective uses, i.e. clearly indicating the boundary between public and private space by the use of walls, hedges fences, railings, arches, gates, signage and paving etc; where ambiguous spaces exist such as forecourts, malls and

arcades, detailed design should be used to articulate private and public space.

### Means of Enclosure

- 2.15 It is expected that all new developments will have adequate means of enclosure. The means of enclosure should have regard to the character of the area, i.e. in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, hedges are the dominant form of enclosure and this should be respected in new development. The enclosure should provide privacy and security.
- 2.16 In residential developments, enclosure should relate to the development as a whole, i.e. house frontages, boundaries between houses and rear boundaries. The Council expect reasonable and appropriate means of enclosure to ensure adequate screening and to maintain the amenities of adjoining properties and properties within the development. The means of enclosure should reflect the character of the area, for example the type of boundary, the type of materials, the species of hedges and the height of existing boundaries. Means of enclosure which would result in an adverse environmental impact will be refused.
- 2.17 For commercial properties, an adequate means of enclosure will be needed to provide security for the activities on a site. However, care should be taken that the form of enclosure is not the dominant visual feature of the site and is designed to form a minor part of the development.
- 2.18 The enclosure should relate to the design of development as a whole and to the surrounding forms of enclosure. Enclosure for security purposes should be well designed and not detract from the overall design of the buildings.
- 2.19 Large expanses of solid forms of enclosure which dominate the street scene and prevent natural surveillance will not be acceptable.

### Quality of Public Areas and the Public Realm

#### **Policy D4 Quality of the Public Realm**

**The Council will expect new development where appropriate to either create or enhance the public realm.**

(Policy D4 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 2.20 This relates to places with attractive and successful outdoor areas. It includes those parts of the urban area that are available for use by everyone without special charge, whether at home at work or at play. It may be informal often-used space or more formal space, which is used only for civic occasions. It encompasses the landscaping of an area, its planting, boundaries, street furniture and surfaces, but also the space itself, its form and function.
- 2.21 The main issues to be taken into account in the quality of public areas and the public realm are:

- that successful places are accessible and have a system of open and green spaces that respect natural features. Public spaces may be paths, streets, squares, plazas, greens and parks. They may be informal, civic, recreational or commercial and they should not simply be spaces which have not been developed; they should relate to pedestrian routes and be accessible by all. Streets and street junctions should be convenient for most users and should not just be traffic routes; trees and lighting and the use of natural features such as water, riverside, slopes, trees and other planting help create more attractive spaces and encourage biodiversity;
- that ground floor occupants should have a business relating to passing pedestrians to create activity and interest i.e. shops and restaurants. Entrances and windows facilitate overlooking. Ground floor residential properties on busy streets can maintain privacy by being raised above floor level. Entrances should occur at frequent intervals, busy street corners should be home to shops and restaurants to contribute to local identity and activity;
- that the public space should relate well to the buildings around it and should be well designed, not left over space with no real function, which in time may become vandalised and abused leading to diminished safety and security;
- that if they are overlooked, allowing natural surveillance, they will both feel and generally be safer i.e. buildings fronting on to streets show their public face. With pedestrian and cycleways, the routes should be as direct as possible and well overlooked; play and car parking areas should also be overlooked. Living over the shop encourages natural supervision and evening activity; however, care should be taken with the design of planting and lighting as it can either help or hinder surveillance and perceptions of safety;
- that the design takes into account the micro climate (i.e. the daylight and sunlight, the wind, the temperature and frost pockets), as this will influence both the orientation and design of buildings and the degree of enclosure; all public spaces should be protected from draughts from buildings. Deciduous trees and climbers can filter heat and pollution in summer and allow winter sunlight;
- that the integration into the design of open spaces of works of art and well-designed street furniture can give a place an identity and enhance its sense of place. The design of the streetscape should be co-ordinated to avoid clutter and confusion; this includes signage, lighting, railings, litter bins, paving, seating, bus shelters, bollards, kiosks, cycle racks, sculptures and fountains. It is best if works of art are integrated into the design process as early as possible. Account should be taken of maintenance needs, resistance to vandalism, the siting of street furniture and the safety of.

## **Design and Ease of Movement**

### **Policy D5 Design For Movement**

**The Council will require all new development to take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns. New development will be required to make provision for the following: pedestrian, cyclist and passenger transport facilities. Parking and traffic management provision must be included in new development.**

(Policy D5 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 2.22 It is important that all new development helps create places which are both easy to get to and move through. It should be remembered that streets are more than just channels for vehicles; they should offer a safe and attractive environment for all users to help make going outside a safe and pleasant experience and should be integrated into the built form as part of the design.
- 2.23 The Council wishes to see developments which encourage use by pedestrians. Measures should include providing well defined and connected footpaths that are overlooked and have dropped kerbs at crossing points or raised crossings which can avoid the less mobile. Footpaths should be direct and buildings should be located to help orientate and guide the pedestrian.
- 2.24 "In larger residential schemes, the design of the development should facilitate the provision of passenger transport services, including the provision of bus services, where appropriate, in accordance with Policy M9."
- 2.25 It is recognised that cycling is a good form of transport for shorter journeys. It can help reduce car use and can have positive health benefits, the Council wish to see cyclepaths incorporated and provided in new developments. Cyclepaths and routes should where possible be direct, continuous, overlooked, well lit and suitable for use by adults and unaccompanied children. Routes should ideally be segregated from the road but where this is not possible, clear definition should be given to cycle space and to vehicle space. New commercial developments should provide adequate cycle storage for employees and visitors, and new residential developments, including flatted developments, should provide safe cycle storage.
- 2.26 The Council expects to see the design of new estates incorporating measures for reducing traffic speeds from the start. Natural traffic calming features should be included, such as the use of corners and sharp bends, more frequent junctions, smaller corner radii, some on street parking provision, crossroads and using tracking widths to determine road layouts (as in 'Places, Street and Movements: A

Companion Guide to DB32'). The Council will support the designation of 20mph zones.

2.27 Where and how cars are parked can be critical in the finished form of a development. Whilst the car parking standards are set out in Policy M14 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Parking, it is important that developers give careful consideration to the positioning and design of parking spaces and areas, in order that the visual impact of the car is minimised. The Council acknowledges that people want car parking space within or adjacent to their property boundary, however this may not always be appropriate and another form of parking layout may be required. Parking within the curtilage will be acceptable provided the parking does not dominate the development and break up the street frontage. Walls or some means of enclosure should be used to break up parking in the front of dwellings. Parking spaces should be provided to the side of dwellings where possible and curtilage parking to the rear of a property can be advantageous in that those with no car can have enlarged amenity or garden space. Where car parking is planned en bloc, parking areas should be arranged as squares or parking courts which are overlooked and with no more than 10 parking spaces in any one parking area. The Council recognises that on-street parking can aid the reduction of traffic speeds, but it can also create a hazard for pedestrians trying to cross. Therefore, on-street parking will not be acceptable in meeting the parking requirements for the whole of a new development. However, limited on-street parking may be acceptable in well-designed and designated parking bays, where parking is part of the adopted roadspace.

2.28 Therefore, in summary, the main issues to be taken into account in allowing for design and ease of movement are:

- a well-designed urban structure with a network of routes and spaces allowing for use by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, with that order of priority. All new routes should connect to existing routes and movement patterns and where possible follow established short cuts; the design of a street layout should where possible include passenger transport facilities; walking distances between major land uses and public transport stops should be minimised to encourage the use of public transport and make it more popular;
- to ensure that transport routes reflect urban design qualities and not just traffic considerations, i.e. a street should be a public space not just an engineering requirement; boulevards can be used to allow a high level of traffic capacity with continuous street frontages; an effective way of combining shopping and economic activity along a street is to have a traditional form of High Street allowing for stopping, parking and slow traffic;
- that the development is not in isolation, it should contribute to a fine-grain network of routes both within and beyond the site to encourage movement, activity, walking and cycling. However care should be taken to avoid undermining the defensible space of particular neighbourhoods;

- the layout of development can affect traffic speeds, i.e. traffic speeds can be managed by the layout of buildings and spaces, by the use of varied materials, 'gateways' at the entrances to low speed areas, changes in direction and small corner radii, planting and the use of bollards; these measures can affect a driver's perception of road width and hence affect speed;
- higher density development should be located close to areas of higher public transport accessibility and it can help support public transport.

## Legibility

### Policy D6 Legibility

**The Council will require all new development to enhance and contribute to the legibility of the development itself and of the area in which it is located.**

(Policy D6 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 2.29 A legible place is one which has a clear identity and which is easy to understand i.e. the ability to recognise where you are and where you can go in a development. This can be achieved by creating interesting places and views between the most important parts of the site. Traditional urban design features, such as landmark buildings, good views and a variety of roads radiating from one point will help people recognise where they are at all times and to distinguish one place from another. Roads and footpaths, and areas of public and private open space will need to be clearly identified to encourage confidence, legibility and safety. However, it should be remembered that some places draw charm from a lack of clear routes and that different people interpret and enjoy places in different ways.
- 2.30 The main issues to be taken into account in designing legibility into new developments are:
- site the new development so that it enhances existing views and vistas and creates new ones to help people find their way around; if people can see important routes and landmarks, finding their way around is easier and helps reinforce a sense of place. Views should focus on something, such as important buildings or landscaping features. It may be that the design of the public realm can contribute to an area's identity by including the use of distinctive street furniture;
  - the identity and character of a space can be reinforced by the design location and function of buildings around it, i.e. if more active uses are located on main routes and at focal points these will contribute to the vitality of a place; new civic and community buildings should be located around public spaces to provide community identity and a focus for civic life; it should be clear from outside what the function of a building is;

- that corners can play a key part in enhancing legibility and creating visual interest and a distinctive identity (i.e. corners provide places of identity and orientation), and careful design, such as using landmark or higher buildings, can emphasise their importance;
- the detailing and quality of materials; these can affect legibility in that users will be able to identify with a building by its material (i.e. colour and type) or by a specific detail on the building, such as the signage (for example people can identify shopfronts and building entrances). Ground floor detailing will affect people's perceptions of buildings. Works of art and lighting schemes should be used where they positively help an area.

## Adaptability

2.31 Adaptability of development is allowing for change relatively easily, i.e. the most successful places are those that have prospered in changing circumstances. Developments should promote flexible and versatile buildings and open spaces that can respond to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions; this avoids large scale blight and dereliction and the need for comprehensive redevelopment serving only a narrow range of purposes. Towns need to be able to adapt and respond to changes in economic climates resulting in the rise and decline of industries and changes in demand for housing, workspace, infrastructure and buildings.

2.32 The main issues to be taken into account in designing adaptability into new developments are:

- the ability of buildings to change through time, i.e. the use of simple robust building forms which are not designed for a particular use will allow for the greatest variety of future uses to be accommodated (e.g. floor to ceiling heights and building depths should be carefully considered in the light of future flexibility needs). Adaptable ground floors on busy streets will allow for different uses through time. Housing should be well designed to be adaptable for the changing needs of its occupants e.g. from single person accommodation to family housing, to housing for disabled or for those temporarily disabled etc. Residential developments could include 'lifetime homes' and dwellings which provide facilities/space for working at home with increased development in IT facilities;
- that the development should be capable of use for a range of activities i.e. well designed public spaces could also be used for events, markets, festivals etc, the flexible use of buildings and spaces should be encouraged allowing different accesses and uses at different times;
- allowing for flexible layouts and design, i.e. fine grain developments can be more easily adapted than large scale structures such as warehouses and retail 'sheds'; the layout of infrastructure servicing development should take account of foreseeable changes in demand. Thought should be given to buildings to last and the future needs and

uses of a building e.g. the access could affect the future use as could the position of a building on its site and its orientation.

## Diversity

2.33 Developments should promote a fine-grained mix of uses, users and forms that serve to create important, sustainable places which create variety and provide a choice. How well used a place is, can be affected by the mix of uses (within a building, street or area) and what economic and social activities the place supports. Mixed uses can occur and be appropriate at a variety of scales: within a building, a street, neighbourhood, village or town. In town centres residential use provides customers for shops, makes use of space above shops and generates activity when shops are closed, whilst in residential areas, workplaces and other commercial uses can create activity within otherwise predominantly dormitory areas. Mixed-use development can be particularly good in higher density and more accessible locations.

2.34 The main issues to be taken into account in the incorporation of diversity into new developments are:

- the creation of mixed uses allows people to live, work and 'play' in the same area i.e. different people may use the same parts of a building, street or neighbourhood at different times. Also, different uses may happen in different parts of a building at the same time;
- getting the right mix of uses i.e. the uses need to be compatible and interact with each other positively and they need to help create a balanced community with a range of services without increasing reliance on the car;
- that its inclusion in the built form, layout and/or tenure can contribute to the success of a living and/or working environment i.e. different sizes and types of building allow for different uses over time. The incorporation of different tenures without discernible differences in design or location can aid social inclusion within a development, to aid the creation of more balanced communities.

### **3. GENERAL DESIGN GUIDANCE**

#### **Energy Efficiency**

##### **Policy R3 - Energy Efficiency**

**The Council will expect all development to:**

**(i) Include measures to maximise energy conservation through the design of buildings, site layout and provision of landscaping; and**

**(ii) Incorporate the Best Practical Environmental Option (BPEO) for energy supply.**

(Policy R3 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 3.1 With the increasing importance of protecting the environment and natural resources and reducing waste and pollution, it is important that new development within the District is able to conserve energy. This includes ensuring that development has the minimum impact on the environment and that energy efficiency measures are included as an integral part of design.
- 3.2 There are a number of ways in which energy efficiency can be incorporated into development. The Council expects developers to have looked at including energy efficiency measures in proposals before the submission of a planning application.

#### **Passive Solar Design (PSD)**

- 3.3 This is the design of buildings to make the most of the energy available freely from the sun in the form of solar heat, daylight and wind, so minimising the need for artificial means of heating, lighting, ventilation and cooling. The following information is a brief resume of how this may be done. Further details can be found in 'Planning for Passive Solar Design' which is published and distributed on behalf of the DTI and the DETR by the BRE.
- 3.4 The key principles of passive solar design are:
- Using efficient and responsive heating appliances and controls;
  - Using natural ventilation to avoid the need for air conditioning;
  - Making provision for solar gains, principally in housing;
  - Providing adequate access to daylight.
- 3.5 Some of these principles are covered by Building Regulations, and planning legislation should not try to secure objectives which are covered by other legislation. However, aspects of Passive Solar Design such as site layout, built form, fenestration and landscaping are key considerations in the Development Control process and it is these that the Council wish to see considered by developers.

## Siting of Buildings to Achieve PSD

- 3.6 Siting of development is an important determinant of the ability of a building to incorporate PSD measures. If a development is planned on a site with large trees to the south then it will be difficult to avoid overshadowing. Likewise if development takes place on a north-facing slope, the buildings on the southern side of the slope will be more likely to overshadow development to the North unless the buildings are spaced very widely. The problem increases in the winter when the sun is low. Development on a south-facing slope will lead to less overshadowing and will be protected from northerly winds. Spacing is an important component of PSD; units should be spaced so as to prevent overshadowing. Taller units should be positioned to the north of a site will lower units to the south.
- 3.7 In considering the layout of estates, residential roads should ideally run east-west to maximise the potential for dwellings to have either their fronts or backs within  $30^{\circ}$  of due south, and this will result in main distributor roads running north-south. Requiring dwellings to have a principal elevation within  $30^{\circ}$  of due south does not mean endless rows of dwellings on a strictly east-west grid as there is a  $60^{\circ}$  range for variation and houses can be staggered or stepped to give variation.
- 3.8 PSD and the need for surveillance need not conflict. For example, a predominantly east-west development may result in kitchens overlooking the street on one side of the road and lounges overlooking the street on the other side of the road, which can provide overlooking at different times of the day. Whilst this is concerned with residential layouts, the principles of siting and layout apply to other forms of development.

## Built Form and PSD

- 3.9 The form of a building can affect PSD. A building with large or poorly positioned wings, eaves or overly wide eaves, may overshadow itself, reduce solar gain and daylighting. However, well-proportioned eaves can provide welcome shade in the summer. Roof form is not critical to PSD, however, pitched roofs can increase the overshadowing of adjacent buildings whereas the use of hipped roofs can help offset this.
- 3.10 Whilst tall buildings such as office blocks can receive daylight for most of the day, they can cast long shadows over nearby properties. Buildings with a deep floor plan, whilst having a smaller external envelope are only able to achieve natural daylight close to the windows and natural ventilation can be difficult to achieve. One way of overcoming this can be to incorporate a central atrium into the development to bring in daylight, natural ventilation and to improve amenity.

## Landscaping and PSD

- 3.11 It is important that when considering PSD developers do not just look at the design of their development but also that they consider the effects of both existing and proposed landscaping on their proposals. A well-designed development to maximise energy efficiency may be less effective if the landscaping scheme is not designed with the PSD elements of the building in mind.

- 3.12 The key to landscaping and its relationship to PSD is to avoid overshadowing of development by earthworks, vegetation, walls or a combination of all three. Whilst the shadows cast by hard features are predictable, those formed by vegetation are less so, as it depends on growth rates, potential spread and height of the species, the permeability of the canopy at different times and the management of the landscaping. Therefore, more attention should be paid to the spacing and positioning of the planting in relation to the building and the path of the sun at different times of day and through the year. In some situations, vegetation can reduce excessive solar gain in summer, this is usually by the use of deciduous vegetation which provides shading in summer and allows sunlight to filter through the bare branches in winter.
- 3.13 Landscaping can also provide a windbreak, but thought should be given to the type of species. Whilst a screen of fir and pine trees may provide dense and bushy screening in their early years, through time the canopy is confined to the top of the tree, leaving the wind to pass through the trunks closer to ground level. A mix of species is therefore usually the most effective windbreak and is often the most effective visual solution.

## **Noise**

### **Policy R19 - Noise and Vibration Pollution**

**Proposals will be refused if the development is likely:**

**(i) To generate unacceptable noise or vibration for other land uses;**  
**or**

**(ii) To be affected by unacceptable noise or vibration from other land uses.**

**Planning permission will be granted where appropriate conditions may be imposed to ensure either:**

**(iii) An adequate level of protection against noise or vibration; or**

**(iv) That the level of noise emitted can be controlled.**

**Proposals should be in accordance with the Supplementary Design Guidance.**

(Policy R19 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 3.14 Noise can have a serious effect on the quality of people's lives as well as on wildlife. PPG24 on Planning and Noise recognises that whilst the planning system cannot control existing sources of noise pollution, it can ensure that new noise-sensitive development, such as schools and housing, are not located close to existing sources of noise that would lead to nuisance. It can also ensure that potentially noise-creating uses, such as factories and some recreational activities, are not located where they would be likely to cause nuisance to existing occupiers.
- 3.15 Careful siting of development and the use of design features such as insulation and screening can reduce the impact of noise. In assessing

the effects of noise, PPG24 defines four noise exposure categories (NECs) which attempt to quantify the effects of noise sources on new development. The PPG provides a recommended range of noise levels for each of these NECs for dwellings exposed to noise from road, rail, air and 'mixed sources'. The NEC procedure only applies where residential development is to be introduced into an area with an existing noise source, and not where new noise sources are to be introduced into an existing residential area. Furthermore, the NEC noise levels should not be used for assessing the impact of industrial noise on proposed residential development, because these sites may need individual assessment under existing procedures.

- 3.16 The Council will use the guidance in PPG24: Planning and Noise for methods of assessing the impact of noise on new development proposals. The Council will expect noise-sensitive developments to be located away from existing or proposed (programmed development such as new roads) sources of significant noise and conversely will expect noisy developments to be situated where the impact of the noise is not such an important consideration or where its impact can be minimised.
- 3.17 Where it is important for development to take place to meet strategic development requirements in the District (i.e. residential development to meet the housing allocation), the Council will expect adequate amelioration measures to be put in place to enable the development to go ahead.

### **Sunlight and Daylight**

- 3.18 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. All new developments should be designed and built to ensure that there is a satisfactory level of sunlight and daylight to both the new development and surrounding developments and/or open spaces.. Access to sunlight and daylight not only improves the interior and exterior appearance of a building, it also improves the standard of living or workspace for the residents or users of a building. Access to sunlight can help to make a building more energy efficient, whilst daylight reduces the need for electric lighting and winter solar gain can meet some of the heating requirements. Advice on site layout planning to achieve good sunlight and daylight within buildings and the open spaces between them is set out in the Building Research Establishment's document entitled, 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice', 1991.

### **Servicing and Access**

- 3.19 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. All new developments should incorporate adequate provision for access and servicing which meet the requirements of the local highway authority. Whilst refuse collection is an important consideration in the design of a development, it should not be allowed to dominate the shaping and layout of an area. Refuse collection points should be easy to reach for collectors, with suitable carrying distances. Adequate access

and egress for refuse and service vehicles should be allowed, including space for turning and reversing and room for vehicles to pass when a refuse lorry or service vehicle is stationary.

- 3.20 Emergency vehicles must be provided with adequate access provided in consultation with the Local Highway Authority, it is essential that the emergency services are consulted where necessary. Traffic calming must not hinder the movement of emergency vehicles. Emergency routes do not necessarily have to follow vehicular routes as pedestrian routes can be designed to allow access for emergency vehicles along their whole length, for example with the use of removable posts whilst excluding use by other vehicles.

## 4. SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST

- 4.1 The overall aim of the Plan is to secure sustainable development in the district. Therefore, Policy SD1 of the District Plan expects all applicants to demonstrate that their development will be consistent with the principles of sustainable development and the objectives and policies of the Plan, by submitting a statement with their application assessing the proposals against a checklist of sustainability criteria. This Guidance contains that checklist.
- 4.2 The checklist identifies the factors that should be addressed in making development sustainable. It is split into three sections, with criteria dealing with:
- (a) the siting of the proposal and the existing land use;
  - (b) the impact and use of the development once it is built;
  - (c) the operation of the site during the construction period.
- 4.3 Whilst a number of the criteria relate to the way development is designed or laid out, the checklist does not address aesthetic design issues. Applicants are required to submit a separate statement on urban design, showing how their development satisfies the design principles and standards in the Plan.
- 4.4 Not all the criteria are applicable to all forms of development. Larger scale development will be expected to address most of the criteria within their statement, smaller scale development only some of them. The capital letters in bold alongside each criterion indicate the types of development to which the criterion applies, according to the key below. Householder developments, namely extensions or alterations to dwellings, have a more limited impact on sustainability and hence only a few of the criteria apply. To make the completion of the statement more straightforward for this type of application, a separate 'Householder Checklist' is set out at the end.

### SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST

#### Key to Types of Development

- A**    *Large scale* - residential - more than 5 houses  
         commercial - more than 235 sq. metres of floorspace
- B**    *Small Scale* - residential - 5 houses or less  
         commercial - 235 sq. metres of floorspace or less
- C**    *Householder development*

- D**     *Change of use of land or of buildings, or conversions*
- E**     *Non building, such as car parking, landscaping, engineering operations*
- F**     *Advertisements and Telecommunications*

**(a)     SITING AND LAND USE**

*How will the development satisfy the following criteria?*

1. Use previously developed land as opposed to a green field site.  
**(A,B,D,E)**
2. Avoid the loss of urban open spaces and, designated sites for nature conservation, and damage to the Historic Environment. **(A,B,D,E,)**
3. Make use of any derelict, under-used, or vacant land or buildings.  
**(A,B,D,E)**
4. Encourage a maximum lifespan for the development with the use of durable construction unless there are extenuating circumstances requiring more flexibility. **(A,B,D)**
5. Avoid areas of high quality agricultural land and floodplains. **(A,B,D,E)**
- 5a Avoid the possible sterilisation of mineral resources identified in the Adopted Minerals Local Plan. **(A,B,D,E)**

**(b) IMPACT AND FUTURE USE OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

*How will the development satisfy the following criteria?*

**Minimisation of Pollution**

1. Minimise noise, e.g. building design, use of quieter technology, operating hours and traffic reduction. **(A,B,D,E,F)**
2. Minimise light pollution, e.g. design of buildings, and lighting schemes, avoiding use of floodlighting. **(A,B,D,E,F)**
3. Minimise odours from buildings and plant. **(A,B,D,E)**

**Management of Water Resources**

4. Use local sources for the water supply and disposal of waste if possible.  
**(A,B,E)**
5. Prevent pollution of ground and surface water and enhance water quality

where possible e.g. renew sewers, waterway maintenance, reed beds for waste water treatment. **(A,B,D,E)**

6. Protect the hydrology of the site and the surrounding areas e.g. use permeable surfaces for car parks, provide swells, and open water areas, minimise road length, avoid water run-off into water courses.

**(A,B,D,E)**

7. Minimise water consumption through the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings, reed bed systems, ponds, rainwater storage and recovery and grey water re-use. **(A,B,C,D,E)**

### **Energy Efficiency**

8. Maximise passive solar gain by considering the siting and microclimate of the individual buildings e.g. making best use of the sun, avoiding overshadowing, size and orientation of windows, use of earth sheltering.

**(A,B,C)**

9. Minimise heat loss and maximise energy efficiency through building design e.g. using sources of renewable energy, solar panels, insulation, using lobbies and conservatories as buffer zones, draught proofing, localised temperature controls, weather-breaking planting. **(A,B)**

10. Reduce green house gas emissions through building design, e.g. use of condensing boilers. **(A,B,C,D)**

11. Generate power efficiently from a local source e.g. combined heat and power plant, heat/methane recovery from waste and other forms of renewable energy. **(A)**

12. Encourage energy efficient modes of transport e.g. cycling walking and buses. **(A,B,D)**

### **Waste Management**

12a Follow the Waste Strategy Hierarchy of Minimisation, Re-use, recovery, and disposal as a last resort. **(A,B,D,E)**

13. Maximise facilities on site to help with recycling, including home composting. **(A,B)**

14. Include facilities for separation and storage of different types of waste for collection. **(A,B,D)**

15. Include public facilities for recycling of waste and consider the need for access by various disposal contractors. **(A,B)**

### **Habitats and Species**

16. Ensure that there will be no overall net loss of biodiversity i.e. the quantity

and variety of species. **(A,B,D,E)**

16a. Contribute to the priorities and targets set out in the Local BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan). **(A,B,D,E)**

17. Protect designated sites and other sites/features of nature conservation importance, including SSSIs, and County Wildlife Sites. **(A,B,D,E)**

18. Conserve protected species where found.  
**(A,B,D,E)**

19. Make positive provision to nature conservation e.g. nature reserves, naturally shaped watercourses, native planting to encourage wildlife, or other wildlife- friendly landscape features. **(A,B,D,E)**

20. Provide for the ongoing management of habitats where applicable.  
**(A,D,E)**

21. Ensure that waste products do not harm wildlife. **(A,B,D)**

22. Encourage use of timber from sustainably managed sources. **(A,B,D,E,F)**

### **Community Provision and Equity**

23. Involve the local community in the development of proposals.  
**(A,B)**

23a Contribute to the provision of education facilities where appropriate.  
**(A)**

24. Provide affordable housing, or commuted payment for affordable/ social housing where appropriate. **(A)**

25. Provide appropriate health and childcare facilities where appropriate to satisfy local demand. **(A)**

26. Improve leisure and recreational facilities e.g. recreation grounds, playing fields, children's play areas. **(A)**

27. Make positive provision for open spaces e.g. provide parks, village greens,  
and commuted sums for future maintenance. **(A)**

28. Improve and maintain access to existing open space. **(A,B)**

29. Improve community, cultural and social facilities e.g. community centres, public art. **(A)**

## **Accessibility**

30. Improve or enable convenient access to employment centres, shops, recreation and community facilities and schools. **(A,B)**
31. Maximise access for the pedestrian and cyclist to and within the development and give priority to footpaths and cycleways over private transport modes. **(A,B,D)**
32. Improve access to buildings for everyone (wheelchair users, people with young children and disabled people). **(A,B,D)**
33. Give public transport priority over private transport modes. **(A,B)**
34. Improve facilities and conditions for cycling especially safety aspects e.g. secure covered cycle storage, cycle paths, signals and lanes. **(A,B,D,E)**
35. Meet the requirements for the preparation and implementation of a Green Transport Plan. **(A)**
36. Minimise car parking e.g. appropriate levels/standards of parking, car free neighbourhoods, park and ride. **(A,B,D,E)**

## **Contribution to the Economy**

37. Increase job opportunities for local people e.g. training courses, inward investment, and small business units. **(A,B,D)**
38. Demonstrate how the proposal will add to the generation of income in the local area. **(A,B,D)**
39. Promote socially and environmentally responsible business practice e.g. waste minimisation, office recycling, energy saving schemes, and noise reduction. **(A,B,D)**
40. Add to diversity of the local economy. **(A,B,D)**

## **Health and Safety**

41. Minimise opportunities for crime through the layout of buildings and spaces  
e.g. natural surveillance of paths overlooking of paths, appropriate landscaping and mixed uses. **(A,B,D)**
42. Segregate vehicles from all other modes of transport wherever possible. **(A,B,E)**
43. Store potentially hazardous materials safely. **(A,B,D)**

## **(c) CONSTRUCTION PERIOD**

*How will the development satisfy the following criteria?*

### **Energy Efficiency**

1. Demonstrate how the energy costs of developing the site will be minimised in terms of extraction, manufacture, transport, use and disposal in construction e.g. minimise changes in site levels during construction, avoid use of aluminium. **(A)**

### **Minimisation of Pollution**

2. Include a site investigation to identify areas of soil contamination and take correct measures for decontamination. **(A,B,D,E)**

3. Minimise noise levels and light pollution during the building processes e.g. use of quieter technology, restriction of operating hours and traffic reduction. **(A,B,D,E)**

4. Minimise air and dust pollution during construction. **(A,B,D,E)**

5. Prevent pollution of ground and surface water. **(A,B,D,E)**

6. Minimise odours from buildings and plant. **(A,B,D,E)**

### **Waste Management**

7. Identify the volumes and type of waste generated during development through construction and occupation and take measures to minimise, reuse and recycle waste. **(A,B)**

8. Encourage the use of renewable recycled, recyclable and durable products e.g. building materials, salvage material for re-use/ recycling, use demolition materials for hardcore and aggregate. **(A,B,D,E)**

8a. Promote the use of local materials first, followed by low embodied energy materials, and finally high embodied energy imported materials. **(A,B,C,D,E)**

### **Habitats and Species**

9. Ensure the protection of trees, hedgerows and other plants during construction. **(A,B,D,E)**

10. Preserve wildlife habitats on site during construction either in situ or by translocation. **(A,B,D,E)**

### **Health and Safety**

11. Use clean hazard-free technologies for plant and building operation and

maintenance. **(A,B,D,E)**

12. Store potentially hazardous materials safely. **(A,B,D,E)**

13. Avoid unsafe building materials e.g. asbestos, lead paints, organochlorides.

**(A,B,D)**

14. Encourage liaison with the local community as part of a 'Considerate Contractor' approach to the construction phase. **(A,B,D,E)**

## **SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST FOR HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATIONS**

The overall aim of the District Plan for Welwyn Hatfield is to make development more sustainable in order to improve people's quality of life. This checklist has been drawn up to identify the things that could make householder development more sustainable. The intention is that this should be completed and returned with your planning application form. It will then be used by the Council in assessing whether your proposal is acceptable.

However, this checklist only covers sustainability issues. There will be other matters which the Council will need to consider, such as design, which are set out in the District Plan and in this document. In designing your extensions, buildings or alterations you should refer to the relevant policies and standards.

Applicants should be aware that if their house is a listed building or in a Conservation Area, some or all of the criteria may not be appropriate to their application. In such cases you should contact a Planning Officer at the Council to discuss the checklist.

### **Please state how your proposal addresses the following criteria:**

1. Minimise any impact on the daylight, sunlight and privacy enjoyed by any neighbouring property.
2. Make best use of the sun's energy to reduce energy costs e.g. south facing living room windows.
3. Maximise other opportunities for energy saving, such as cavity wall insulation, double-glazing or loft insulation.
4. Use other sources of energy e.g. solar panels.
5. Use renewable recycled or second-hand materials during construction.
6. Design the building/extension so it is accessible for people with all levels of mobility, in particular people with disabilities, prams.
7. Use permeable materials for hardstandings or parking areas to reduce surface water run-off and evaporation.
8. Install water-efficient fixtures and appliances to conserve water (e.g. special showers, taps, cisterns) and equipment to recycle water (e.g. rainwater butts).
9. Preserve existing trees, hedges and other natural features.

10. Use landscaping and natural features externally which will increase biodiversity e.g. planting native species, or species attracting wildlife and including water features.
11. Use hedges rather than brick and concrete walls or fences as a means of enclosure, or soften the look of existing walls/fences with climbing plants.
12. Design the extension or building to include crime prevention measures e.g. avoid accessible flat roofs, avoid situating extensions/buildings close to footpaths,  
avoid solid fences giving easy access for burglars.
13. Minimise noise levels, and light and dust pollution during construction.
14. Considers the need for adequate storage for cycles and domestic recycling facilities.

## 5. RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDANCE

### Residential Extensions

5.1 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design of the District Plan. Residential applications for extensions and alterations form a majority of the applications received by the Council. These applications often generate the most interest locally, and both on their own and cumulatively can have a major impact on the street scene. Extensions to dwellings may take the form of new development to add space to the existing dwelling for the current occupiers, of loft conversions or, of development to add space to the existing dwelling for use by a dependent relative, such as a 'Granny' annexe. Whilst the general design principles in the design chapter, set out the principles each development is expected to meet, there are some specific details which should be met in relation to extensions.

5.2 The Council require that:

- i) extensions should be designed to complement and reflect the design and character of the dwelling and be subordinate in scale;
- ii) the extension must not reduce the space around the dwelling to such an extent that the dwelling looks cramped on its site. The spacing of buildings adjacent to and in the locality of the site should be reflected;
- iii) the extension should not cause loss of light or be unduly dominant from adjoining properties, as a result of either the length of projection, the height or the proximity of the extension;
- iv) the materials of the extension should match those of the existing dwelling;
- v) for all multi-storey, two-storey and first floor side extensions, a minimum distance of 1m between the extension and the adjoining flank boundary must be maintained; it is important that existing spacing in the street scene is reflected which may result in larger distances being required. This spacing is to prevent over development across plot widths and a terracing effect within areas of detached and semi-detached properties, to ensure that the extension of a dwelling does not prejudice the ability of an adjacent occupier to extend without destroying any separation spaces that exist and to preserve the amenity of adjoining dwellings including those whose rear gardens adjoin the proposed extension;
- vi) dormer windows should be contained within the roofslope, be subservient to the roof of the property and be in proportion to the existing fenestration of the property. They must not extend above the ridge height of the existing dwelling and the dormer cheeks should be at least 1 metre from the flank wall of the property or of the party wall with the adjoining property.

## **Gardens and Communal Amenity Areas**

- 5.3 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. All residential development (houses or flats) should incorporate private open space for the use of residents. With houses the open space should be in the form of private gardens, whereas in flats the private open space is likely to be in the form of communal amenity areas. It is most usual for this private open space to be positioned to the rear of developments, therefore clearly defining this private space from publicly landscaped areas positioned in the public view which provide a different function.
- 5.4 Whilst it is important for residential developments to provide adequate amenity space for residents, the Council do not wish to apply rigid standard sizes for gardens, as it is felt that the design and layout of the garden in relation to the built environment should ensure that the garden is functional and usable in terms of its orientation, width, depth and shape. The Council will also look at the amount of open space in the local area. For example, for new development that backs onto open countryside, public amenity space or a river etc, the physical depth of the back garden will not be as important to protect privacy and amenity of residents, or to prevent overlooking as a development which backs onto existing residential properties. The Council will look at the size of the unit proposed in relation to the size of garden. With large family or executive style homes there will be an expectation for greater garden space than with small starter homes, i.e. the garden must be large enough to be usable and meet the needs of the residents for which the housing is designed.
- 5.5 Residential development comprising of elderly persons dwellings must include private rear gardens, however, it may be acceptable to have smaller rear gardens.
- 5.6 The communal amenity space required for flats or other accommodation in multiple occupation must be available both for the use of and large enough to accommodate the needs of all residents. The areas should be located to the rear of the building. Drying areas and bin stores should be in addition to and separate from the communal open area.

## **Overlooking and Privacy**

- 5.7 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. The Council expect all new residential development, whether extensions or new units to be designed, orientated and positioned in such a way to minimise overlooking between dwellings, which would affect their internal living areas and their private rear gardens or amenity areas. A reasonable degree of privacy should be afforded to the back and sides of existing and proposed units, however the same degree of privacy should not be expected at the front.
- 5.8 The Council does not have quantitative standards for separation distances, rather the orientation and design of buildings in line with the

guidance and standards in this guidance e.g. controlled aspect development, should maintain privacy and prevent overlooking, especially of internal living areas, private rear gardens and amenity areas. On sloping sites more care may need to be taken with the positioning of dwellings to prevent overlooking.

- 5.9 Where new residential development backs onto existing residential development, larger gardens may be required for the new properties adjoining existing properties than for those properties wholly contained within the new development to protect the amenity of existing residents.

## **6. ADVERTISEMENTS**

### **General Guidelines for Design of Advertisements**

- 6.1 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. Many advertisements have 'deemed' consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. For those advertisements that need consent, the Council as Local Planning Authority, can only exercise its powers of control in the interest of protecting amenity and public safety. A threat to public safety will usually be obvious, such as a sign obstructing the highway or with an excessive level of luminance which could dazzle or distract road users. The design criteria below are more concerned with amenity.
- 6.2 Advertisements which are well designed and sensitively positioned can enhance the attractiveness of a building and the street scene, whilst inappropriate signs and advertisements will have a detrimental effect and can cause significant harm to the visual amenity of an area. Careful attention to the good design of signs and advertisements, in relation to their size, appearance, position and type of illumination, can contribute to the attractive appearance of a building and the street scene of which it forms a part.
- 6.3 Within residential and Conservation Areas, because of their more sensitive character and visual amenity, it may be necessary to impose more exacting standards of advertisement control. In the shopping and town centres, it is recognised that there is a need to achieve a reasonable balance between commercial and design considerations.
- 6.4 In the rural parts of the District, sufficient information needs to be provided to properly name a farm or other rural business premises, and to identify institutions and amenities which attract visitors. Large or garish signs in rural areas can intrude into the rural scene, detracting from the character and visual amenity of the countryside and distracting road users, to the possible detriment of highway safety.
- 6.5 All advertisements requiring express consent must accord with the following criteria:
  - (i) proposals should be well-designed and sensitively positioned and should relate to the character, scale and design of the building on which they will be displayed; they must not detract from the character of the building, the street scene, or in the case of rural areas, from the rural character of the area. Consent will not be granted for proposals that would have a detrimental impact on amenity and public safety.
  - (ii) the size and position of signs should respect the architectural features of the buildings on which they are displayed, such as pilasters and fascias on shopfronts or the spacing between windows;
  - (iii) consent will not be granted for proposals that would create visual clutter, thereby breaking up the visual rhythm of the street scene.

Where adverts are displayed in large numbers or in a haphazard, uncoordinated manner, a cluttered appearance is the likely result;

- (iv) projecting box signs may not always be appropriate, such as on Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas, but where they are, they should be located at fascia level on a shopfront, where their size and position should harmonise with the fascia depth;
- (v) advertisements on street furniture will not be permitted where they would be out of scale with the structure to which they would be attached and/or detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. This applies particularly in Conservation Areas, or positions adjacent to Listed Buildings, or other sensitive locations such as the Green Belt;
- (vi) illumination will be carefully controlled, particularly in sensitive locations such as Conservation Areas, in the Green Belt and within and adjacent to residential areas, and will only be permitted where it would not be visually intrusive and is provided by discreet means;
- (vii) letting or for sale boards will be limited to one board per property, and must comply with the other advertisement criteria;
- (viii) consent will not be granted for any sign that would be a danger to public safety.

### **Advertisements in Conservation Areas**

6.6 This section supplements Policy R22 Development in Conservation Areas and Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. The Conservation Areas of Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn and Old Hatfield contain significant retail and commercial establishments which need to advertise their location and the services that they provide. Within these Conservation Areas the overriding aim is to preserve and enhance the uniqueness of each area and this is considered more important than competitive advertising or the promotion of corporate images.

6.7 Attention should be given to the design, size and location of signs so that they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The sensitive positioning of signs and the use of appropriate materials is vital to good design.

6.8 All advertisements requiring express consent must comply with the following criteria:

- (i) advertisements and signs will only be granted consent where they do not harm the character and visual amenities of the Conservation Area or the building on which they are displayed, in terms of design, materials, scale, detail, and method of illumination. Consent will not be granted for any proposal that would detract from the special architectural or historical character of any building in the Conservation Area or the Conservation Area as a whole;
- (ii) within the Welwyn Garden City town centre, as defined on the inset plan, all proposals for signs and advertisements must accord with the detailed design guidance set out below.

## Advertisements in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre

6.9 This section supplements Policy R22 Development in Conservation Areas and Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. The architecture for the town centre has a number of variations, but with a neo-Georgian theme predominating, as elsewhere in Welwyn Garden City.. The types of shopfront design can be divided into four groups, and each of these four types of shopfront has specific design guidance in relation to the display of advertisements: -

### 1. Shopfronts with designed entablatures

The following premises have designed entablatures:

John Lewis Department Store, Bridge Road, Parkway and Wigmores North frontages.

Nos. 36-42 (even) and 21-53 (odd) Wigmores North

Nos. 26-36 (even), 7-13 (odd) and 21-33 (odd) Stonehills

Nos. 30-66 (even) and 51-61 (odd) Howardsgate

Nos. 2-4 (even) Church Road and

2-4 (even) and 37-51 (odd) Fretherne Road

This is the predominant type of shopfront design in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, and comprises of a designed entablature, incorporating a cornice, fascia and sub-fascia, (or blind box) running along the length of the façade, positioned on top of strong pilasters with capitals and plinths. These shopfronts are normally constructed in timber, painted gloss white. In the case of these shopfronts, it is essential to ensure that the continuity and appearance of the design of the entablature is not disrupted by inappropriate advertisements. Therefore, the following design criteria will be applied to these properties:

- (i) the preferred form of advertisement is individual lettering fixed directly to the white painted fascia;
- (ii) no signage should exceed the depth of the fascia;
- (iii) a box sign with a white or opal coloured background is acceptable;
- (iv) a box sign with a coloured background which is less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the length of the fascia, centrally positioned to show a white background on either side, will also be acceptable;
- (v) any sign contained on a sub-fascia, contained within the framework of the main fascia and pilasters may have a coloured background.

### 2. Shopfronts with stonework surrounds

The following shop units have stonework surrounds, with the stonework detailing at a high level above the shopfront:

O'Neill's Public House, Parkway

Nos.16-22 (even) and 1-7 (odd) Howardsgate

On these properties signs should be incorporated within the existing shopfront design, in order to be subservient to the overall design of the building and to ensure that they do not impinge on the stonework surround.

### 3. Shopfronts with canopied or colonnaded facades

The following premises are set under a cantilevered canopy or colonnaded facades:-

Nos. 6-38 (even) Church Road

Nos. 32-44 (even) Fretherne Road

Nos. 12-16 (even) and 13-17 (odd) Wigmores South

These shopfronts are not linked by a fascia, but are separated by pilasters and are subservient to the predominant structure above. As such, signs must be designed to stop at each pilaster in order that the architectural features of the shopfront are not masked.

### 4. Other individually designed shopfronts

The premises in this category include: -

The Post Office, No. 9 and 31-49 (odd) Howardsgate

Nos. 2-6 (even) and 7-9 (odd) Howardsgate

Nos. 6-10 (even) and 7-9 (odd) Wigmores South

J. Sainsburys Church Road/Parkway

Charter House, Parkway

The Howard Centre

Lloyds/TSB bank, Howardsgate

Many of the buildings in Welwyn Garden City town centre are individually designed and do not fall into any of the above categories. These buildings are predominately finished in facing brickwork and stonework, and exhibit strong detailing in their overall design. In the case of these premises, design criteria for advertisements and advertisements in Conservation Areas will apply.

## **7. SHOPFRONTS**

### **Shopfront Design**

- 7.1 This section supplements Policy D1 Quality of Design in the District Plan. Shopfronts that are well designed can contribute significantly to the attractiveness and character of shopping areas. However, poorly designed shopfronts can have the opposite effect, detracting from the appearance of a building and the street scene as a whole. The Council is therefore concerned to ensure a high quality of design in shopping streets in its town and local centres.
- 7.2 Most shopping streets and parades exhibit an essential visual rhythm created by common architectural characteristics within individually different buildings. It is desirable that shopfronts reinforce this rhythm rather than disrupt it and this can be achieved by designing shopfronts which reflect the existing architectural features of the building.
- 7.3 Contemporary designs and the use of modern materials of a high standard will usually be most appropriate in contemporary buildings, but may sometimes relate well to an older building, provided that the visual unity of the building is not undermined and it does not detract from the street scene as a whole.
- 7.4 New shopfronts should be designed to secure easy access to and circulation in the shop for disabled people.
- 7.5 Proposals for new shopfronts or for alterations to existing shopfronts will be required to meet the following criteria:
  - (i) New shopfronts should harmonise with and where possible enhance the character of the existing building and street scene, by being designed to reflect the existing features of the building façade;
  - (ii) The shopfront should always be considered as part of the whole building design, and should be sympathetic to the existing architecture and materials. New shopfronts should complement and not dominate their setting. To this end, they should respect the scale, proportions, character and appearance of the upper part of the building and where relevant, adjacent buildings and shopfronts and the overall street scene;
  - (iii) The shopfront should complement and not ignore the existing elevations of the building in terms of materials used and colour; strident colours, deep fascias and overlarge lettering and logos should be avoided;
  - (iv) Shopfronts should respect the character of adjacent properties, but should not aim to unite buildings of different architectural styles. A new shopfront should not be uniformly carried across the frontage of two or more buildings, as this leads to a conflict between the horizontal emphasis of the ground floor and the vertical emphasis of the first floor. Where two or more adjacent units are combined into one, the division between the original shopfronts should be

retained. The visual continuity of ownership can be achieved by the careful use of the same fascia and signage details;

- (v) In Conservation Areas, where evidence of original shopfront detail exists, for example, in a terrace or groups of buildings of similar design, proposals for new shopfronts will be expected to recreate the original design. In addition, new shopfronts in Conservation Areas will be expected to harmonise with the existing fascia depth, length and position and stall riser heights, frames and glazing bar profiles, materials and colours; wherever a framework of pilasters or columns remains, these should be retained and the new shopfront inserted into this;
- (vi) New shopfronts should make provision for the housing for the installation of internal security grilles/shutters;
- (vii) New shopfronts must be designed to afford easy, dignified access to disabled people and others who are mobility impaired.
- (viii) Proposals for the alteration of shop fronts or other ground floor areas will be required to retain any existing independent ground floor access to upper floors, except where a new alternative safe and suitable access is proposed.

## **Security Shutters and Grilles**

### **Policy D7 Safety by Design**

**The Council requires the design of new development to contribute to safer communities, to help with the reduction of the fear of crime.**

(Policy D7 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 7.6 Whilst it is acknowledged that retailers must take adequate measures to secure their premises, it is apparent that some solutions, in particular the use of solid security roller shutters and their associated box housing are unsightly and will not be acceptable in any of the District's Conservation Areas. In exceptional circumstances, where it can be proved that it is not physically possible to provide internal shutters, or any other effective security measures, such as alarms or camera surveillance systems, consideration will be given to external lattice grill type shutters or portcullis roller grilles, which can be fitted with polycarbonate panels for additional security.
- 7.7 The Council wants to promote safe, inviting and attractive shopping areas and the use of external security roller shutters does not assist this. The use of solid security shutters has a detrimental, deadening effect on the appearance of shopping areas, attracts graffiti and prevents passing surveillance of the shop interior.
- 7.8 In designing new shopfronts, security measures should be an integral part of the design, not something that is literally 'bolted on' as an after

thought. Good shopfront design can incorporate security features that remove the need for external security shutters. One of the most important features of any shopfront that can contribute to security is the stall riser. A substantial stall riser, possibly with concrete or some other form of reinforcement behind it, can be particularly effective. Laminated glass is another effective security measure, which hinders illegal entry because the time taken to break it and noise involved is a deterrent.

7.9 Where a new shopfront is proposed, the District Council will expect the provision of housing for internal grilles/shutters to be provided, to obviate the need for external shutters.

7.10 Within Conservation Areas, planning permission will not be granted for the installation of external security roller shutters, except in very exceptional circumstances.

All proposals for the installation of security shutters will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Whether the shop/premises is in a non-sensitive location. This will apply where the site is not:
  - (a) in a shopping centre as defined in the District Plan;
  - (b) a listed building;
  - (c) within a Conservation Area.
2. Whether a shop/building is in an exceptionally high-risk area. This will be identified through considering:
  - (a) evidence submitted with respect to previous claims submitted to insurers;
  - (b) the independent views of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, who will be consulted by the Planning Department on all applications for security shutters;
  - (c) whether the types of good sold are particularly attractive to thieves, e.g. jewellery, electrical goods.

Where there is documentary evidence from insurers that certain types of shutter would not be acceptable for insurance purposes, this will be considered, taking into account:

- (a) Any statements of support from the police;
- (b) Evidence that no alternative security methods, e.g. laminated glass, internal grilles, alarms, camera surveillance systems, are feasible;
- (c) Details of other security measures installed at the premises.

In the light of the above information, preference will be given to the installation of security measures that are the least visually intrusive. In order of preference these are:

1. Demountable grilles and bars;
2. Grilles or shutters of an open design - open 'brick-bond' type grille, with polycarbonate inserts if required or polycarbonate panel shutter;
3. Punched lath shutter;
4. Perforated lath shutter.

Planning permission will only be granted for punched or perforated lath shutters, subject to a condition requiring the shop to be illuminated during the hours of darkness. The use of plain metal shutters should be avoided; anodised or powder coated matt finishes are preferred. The housing and runners for security shutters/grilles can be very unattractive features in themselves. They should not stand proud of the shopfront fascia nor hide any architectural features. They should be fully incorporated into the fascia and runners should be incorporated into the pilasters.

#### Blinds, Awnings and Canopies

7.11 The traditional shop blind in this country is the straight awning type, mounted on a roller, which was originally used by shops selling perishable goods. When not in use it was virtually invisible, concealed in a blind box on the fascia. Dutch blinds and balloon canopies are not traditional features on shopfronts in the District and their use will be discouraged. Their purpose is normally to increase advertising space, but they tend to be a discordant feature to the façade which obscures the fascia and details of a shopfront and clutters the appearance of the street scene. They are rarely in keeping with the character of any of the District's Conservation Areas.

7.12 The installation of blinds or canopies of a non-traditional form or materials on buildings within Conservation Areas will not be permitted.

Blinds, awnings or canopies will only be permitted where they are well-related to the architectural design of the building on which they are fitted, and where they would not harm the architectural integrity of the building, disrupt the symmetry of the building or harm the street scene and the visual amenity of the area.

## **8. DESIGN STATEMENTS**

### **Policy D11 Design Statements**

**Applicants will be required to submit a design statement with all applications for business, commercial or residential developments.**

**The statement should justify how the development meets the design principles, policies and guidance set out in the Plan and the Supplementary Design Guidance.**

**Householder applications will be considered against a design checklist.**

(Policy D11 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

- 8.1 The Council believes that all developers should be held responsible for design of their developments. The Council expects developers to take account of the design principles and policies in the District Plan and the guidance in this document, when drawing up their proposals. This responsibility is reinforced by PPG1 which states that applicants for planning permission should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their proposals and that they have had regard to relevant development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance.
- 8.2 To aid good design, the Council will require developers to submit a design statement with planning applications for residential developments or for business and commercial developments. The level of detail will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the development. The design statement should:
  - explain the design concept and justify the approach used in the proposed development;
  - explain how it accords with the design principles and guidance set out in the Plan;
  - explain how the design responds to the local character and distinctiveness of the area in which the site is located.
  - Outline how the principles and concept are reflected in the developments layout, density, scale, visual appearance and landscape
- 8.3 The written statement should be illustrated as appropriate by plans and elevations, photographs of the site and its surroundings and other illustrations such as perspectives. The design of extensions or alterations to houses is also important. To aid good design, the Council will consider householder applications using a design checklist.
- 8.4 This is in accordance with DETR's publication 'By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice' (May 2000) which provides an initial guide on the content of design statements.

## **9. DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS**

### **Policy D12 Development Briefs**

**The Council will require development briefs for sites proposed for major residential, commercial, business, or mixed use schemes and for any other sites for which it is felt to be appropriate.**

(Policy D12 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005)

#### **When should a Development Brief be Prepared?**

9.1 Development briefs are normally required for large and/or complex sites or where there are sensitive issues on a site. Development Briefs can be prepared for any size of site, as there are no threshold values. The Council will identify sites where a development brief will be required. Development briefs should not be used to establish the land use for a site.

#### **Who can prepare a Brief?**

9.2 The majority of development briefs are prepared by the Local Planning Authority in liaison with the main interested parties involved in the development of the site. However, briefs may be initiated by those with an interest on the site, such as the landowner or developer. If this is the case, the Local Planning Authority should be informed before the brief is prepared. All Briefs must be subject to public consultation and adoption, which means that close working with the Local Planning Authority is essential. The Local Planning Authority will also lead on the consultation and adoption procedures, although assistance will often be given by the developer/landowner.

#### **Form and Content of Development Brief**

9.3 Development briefs are not expected to follow a rigid formula. The content of the brief should reflect its purpose. Briefs should be short and easy to read with illustrations and maps. Any long and complex briefs should be accompanied by an executive summary to highlight the key aspects.

9.4 Development briefs should include the following:

1. Objectives for the Brief

This should explain why the Brief is being prepared and what the key objectives are for the development of the site. This is likely to include the Local Authority's wider expectations for the site.

2. General information on the briefing process

A Brief should explain how and where it fits in the development process including information on:

- who prepared the brief and how they can be contacted;

- the stage which the development process has reached;
- how consultation has or will be carried out;
- the status of the Brief i.e. Draft or Adopted.

### 3. Detailed Site and Context Appraisal

The best development solutions should follow from a good understanding of the site and its context. Therefore the site appraisal is a critical part of a brief. The site and context appraisal should include:

**Site Information:** the following information could be included in a brief, although not all of it may be required

- **Physical Context:** descriptive information on: topography, adjacent uses and townscapes, local diversity, development patterns, building heights, key vegetation, facilities and services including public transport, footpaths, cycleways and the road network, any key views into and out of the site, landmarks, pollution sources (smell, dust, noise etc) and sensitive neighbouring relationships. (This information is often useful if it is mapped.)
- **Site Description:** a physical description including information on: topography, vegetation and wildlife, buildings, access by foot/cycle/road, links to adjacent areas, uses, physical barriers, areas affected by pollution, smell, dust, noise etc., boundary treatments, overshadowing and views within the site. (This information is often useful if it is mapped.)
- **Public Utilities:** Information on sewers, electricity, gas pipelines, overhead powerlines, telecommunications including capacity information if it is available.
- **Ownership:** any related information on ownership, including covenants etc, the information need only be shown for the site itself unless there is an access point or other adjacent land which is part of the development site.
- **Formal designations:** including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Metropolitan Green Belt, Community Forest, Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Wildlife Sites, Urban Wildlife Sites, Floodplains or Areas of Archaeological Significance etc.

**Site Constraints:** Each site will have its unique set of constraints; these should be identified in the brief, usually in map form. The significance of each should be explained and details of how they could be overcome. These constraints could include:

- **Areas to be protected from development:** i.e. areas of nature conservation value, floodplains, areas of archaeological interest, protected trees and hedges, wayleaves for utilities;
- **Ground conditions:** including landslip, gas migration, settlement, hydrological difficulties and soils;

- Known and possible contamination, including previous uses where contamination may have occurred;
- Access limitations: junctions with limited capacity, limited visibility etc;
- Sensitive Uses/Buildings adjacent to the Site: amenity/pollution issues.

#### 4. Policy Context

The Brief should identify the main policy considerations including any relevant national Planning Policy Guidance, Structure and Local Plan Policy, Supplementary Planning Guidance/Document, area-based initiatives, other Local Authority policies relevant to the site and any existing consent or current proposals for the site and/or the surrounding area.

#### 5. Appropriate Development Solutions

The production of a development brief should not be seen as a blueprint or the imposition of a design solution. However, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that any development solutions they propose are physically capable of implementation and financially viable. The simplest way to record appropriate development responses is diagrammatically on a site plan, supported by text to explain certain elements in more detail.

Guidance included in the brief on appropriate development contributions should cover the following:

- Acceptable Uses for the Site: including proportions of mixed uses and any acceptable uses (normally confirmed already in policy or by outline planning consent);
- Possible Development Solution(s): including any buildings to be retained, direction of development i.e. frontages, scale massing and height of buildings, amount of development expressed in a number of ways - perhaps floorspace, unit numbers, density or percentage coverage, means of circulation, main areas of planting and landscaping, appropriate detailing and materials, key features to be retained, land adjacent to the site that requires protection. Development solutions may be shown as a number of acceptable options or key principles (these are best shown diagrammatically);
- Infrastructure Requirements: state the amount and type of facilities required, including appropriate levels of contributions and off-site requirements.

In describing appropriate development solutions for the site, the Brief should also include what is not likely to be acceptable, what is expected as part of any subsequent planning application and a consideration of how the Local Planning Authority will treat any applications that fall outside the requirements of the brief. It should be clear from the brief what needs to be rigidly adhered to and which

areas are subject to flexibility in their interpretation. The Brief will set out the design principles and the standards to be applied.

#### 6. Planning Obligations

The brief should identify the planning obligations which the Council will seek to offset the social, environmental and infrastructure costs of the proposed development on the community.

### **Consultation**

- 9.5 All Briefs will be subject to public consultation with members, the public (in particular immediate neighbours of the site), local amenity groups and residents associations, statutory consultees, landowners and developers with an interest in the site and any site occupiers. Consultation should take place early in the briefing process and should reflect the requirements of an individual brief. The weight afforded to the brief will increase if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and has been through the committee process. The usual procedure will be for the council to issue a Draft Development Brief for comment and then revise the Brief as appropriate to reflect local concerns.
- 9.6 Consultation responses should be acknowledged and, where possible, taken into account in revising the Brief. The consultation exercise is likely to raise concerns about the nature of development that may be acceptable and concerns of the local community; these responses can be helpful to the developer in gauging how the development can be planned to overcome the objections. A statement outlining the consultation process i.e. how it was carried out, the responses and changes that were made to the Brief should be included within the Brief.

### **Adoption of the Brief**

- 9.7 In order that weight is added to the Brief in determining planning applications, Briefs should be adopted. Where a Brief is initiated by the developer/landowner or other outside interest, the Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate any differences or omissions which are needed in order to agree the Brief before a recommendation is made for adoption.

### **Status/Duration of Adopted Development Brief**

- 9.8 Once the Brief has been approved, having been subject to public consultation, it becomes a 'material consideration' in determining any subsequent planning applications. If the proposals reflect the Brief, the applicants should not have their applications refused on matters of principle contained in the Brief. However, the full details of the development proposal need to be assessed, and if other material considerations are not dealt with satisfactorily in the application, the Council may refuse permission, notwithstanding the provisions of the adopted Brief.
- 9.9 The Brief should be reviewed or brought up to date, if it is clear that it is stifling development on the site or if circumstances have changed. The Development Brief having been subject to further public consultation

should still be in line with the Development Plan and any changes in land use designations must be made through the District Plan process.