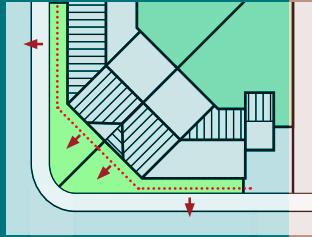


April

2007

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

@ sandwell metropolitan borough council



residential intensification paper

... raising the quality of residential development and living environments in Sandwell

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It is proposed that policies contained in this Adopted Supplementary Planning Document should be read in conjunction with Sandwell's Adopted Residential Design Guide which is available at www.sandwell.gov.uk



A Guide to Intensification

Sandwell, as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), is giving careful consideration to housing density ranges in view of the approach being advocated in national policy, particularly with regard to density being translated into specific types of housing and the effect this will have on places within the borough.

Household projections released by the Government indicate a higher than expected increase in the required number of dwellings over the next 25 years. This has placed considerable pressure on LPAs to accept increases in housing densities in what it considers to be unsustainable and inappropriate locations. A particular trend is for the development of apartments that are out of context with surrounding neighbourhoods and development that fails to respect the individual quality of places.

There are three major areas of concern:

- Firstly, that the individuality of places will be lost, particularly in parts of the borough where the character of mature suburbs and low density plot ratios and gardens set the local context and sense of place for the area.
- Secondly, that development does not offer the breadth, range or quality of accommodation that is needed to attract and retain more affluent social groups, which support the local economy in regeneration areas and provide a long-term commitment to the area.
- Thirdly, development proposals which seek to provide minimal spatial standards and residential quality for residents.

Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing (2006)(PPS3) offers LPAs the opportunity to maintain the character of particular residential areas and environments. PPS3 also encourages LPAs to develop a shared vision, with their local communities, of the type of residential environment they would wish to see, particularly with regard to places which are attractive, have a distinctive identity and positively improve local character. Detailed design guidance such as this will help to safeguard the quality and value of such areas.

There is also a concern that policies for the conversion or redevelopment of existing houses and gardens are developed as part of a strategy for improving the overall character and quality of the area. Technically, residential gardens fall within the definition of brownfield land. However, this does not mean that they are all suitable for development. LPAs are urged to “have regard to the positive contribution that intensification can make” (PPS3) to a borough’s housing capacity, while at the same time ensuring that new development is not detrimental to local character.

Density Ranges

Areas within Sandwell will generally be considered as urban or suburban although some areas around Sandwell Valley and the Green Belt edges will be considered rural in character. Urban locations will be those sites within town centres or those that are well connected to regular public transport links and convenient walking distance to local facilities as defined in PPS3 and UDP Policy T3.

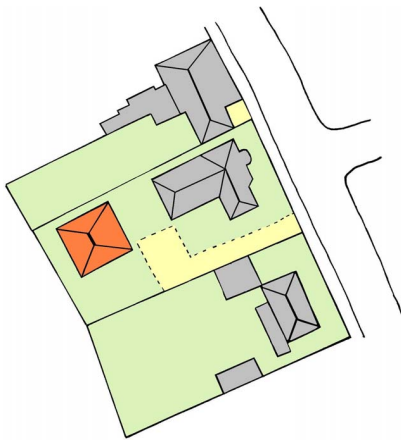
This Supplementary Planning Document will be appended to Sandwell's adopted Residential Design Guide and will seek to further develop policies relating to housing density. The aim of the document will be to support the development of a range of density solutions that relate to their surroundings. It will discourage the rigid application of higher density solutions that deliver development that has an adverse impact on the character of areas and where concerns exist about the quality of resulting living environments.

Defining Development

For the purposes of clarity and assisting with the determination of planning applications the LPA have categorised the following types of development.

Tandem Development - Generally Unacceptable

- Tandem Development ... can be defined as one or more houses directly behind an existing building on a road frontage and sharing the same plot and access as the original building. This form of development will generally be resisted.



Backland Development

- Backland Development ... is where a new access is created between existing dwellings on a road frontage and where no new built form addresses the existing primary road frontage. Access is usually achieved through the removal of one or two existing properties. Concerns usually relate to the fact that new built form has little or no visual connection to the existing street network, achieving pedestrian linkage and vehicle access is also often spatially challenged. Often resulting in the gables of existing housing having a poor relationship with the access arrangement for new development and visibility splays/left over spaces that are difficult to pass on ownership for, so that ongoing management and maintenance is secured. Proposals will be considered on their individual merit but must respect local context.



Infill Development

- Infill Development ... is where new housing is proposed between, and usually to the rear, of established residential frontages. This is normally achieved through the removal of existing dwellings and therefore the scheme is no longer considered backland development. This is usually considered a better form of development, as new development layouts are better able to integrate with their surroundings and existing street frontage. Proposals will be considered on their individual merit but must respect local context.



- **Major Development**, ten or more dwellings.
- **Minor Development** less than ten dwellings.

Policies contained in this paper will relate to three key areas.

1. Respecting the Individuality of Places.
2. Achieving Good Quality High Density Design Solutions
3. Over Intensification of Individual Dwellings

1. Respecting the Individuality of Places.

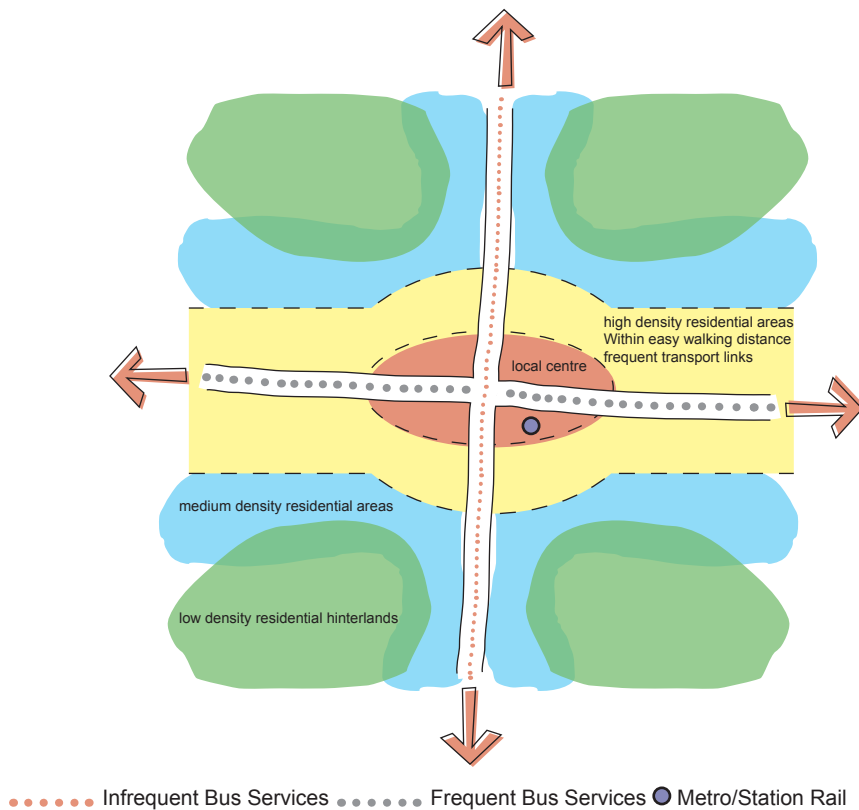
Within the borough, certain areas are considered to have special character and appeal. These tend to be concentrated in more affluent and popular areas of the borough, and the Authority is keen to protect the special character of these low density mature suburbs. Primarily, but not exclusively these areas are located in Great Barr and areas of West Bromwich and Cradley Heath.

1. Development will be resisted within suburbs where block and plot structures are intact and where it is considered that the character of the area will be unacceptably eroded, through the demolition of existing dwellings and compromised by new development layouts that are uncomplimentary or inferior to the overall spacious ambience of the area.
2. The loss of healthy mature areas of established planting, including trees and hedgerows, will be resisted where it is considered that these form an intrinsic part of the areas character and appeal.
3. Proposals to develop at a scale and massing that is considered to be out of character with the surrounding context will be resisted. Character will be measured against existing densities and density ranges considered appropriate to the area whilst having particular regard to PPS3. Density ranges in excess of 75 d.p.h. are only likely to be considered acceptable in town centre locations, or where it can be demonstrated that access to local facilities and location and levels of public transport links are highly accessible.



4. New development proposals when considered acceptable in principle will need to blend in with existing suburbs in terms of density, appearance, proportion, scale, and massing and established design codes.

Design solutions must fit into the context of places



2. Achieving Good Quality High Density Design Solutions

Achieving a good quality living environment is key to the success of higher density design solutions. Buildings that are well designed and built will be highly valued and are more likely to stand the test of time. Primarily development should be designed so that street patterns and public spaces are coherent and permeable for safe and convenient access to facilities. Development should aim to accommodate personalisation and respect privacy but at the same time promote safety and security as a priority.

How space operates and is allocated within development proposals is the key design consideration, which has already been addressed within the Residential Design Guide. However, given the amount of development pressure for achieving higher density layouts, a further supporting policy is considered relevant.

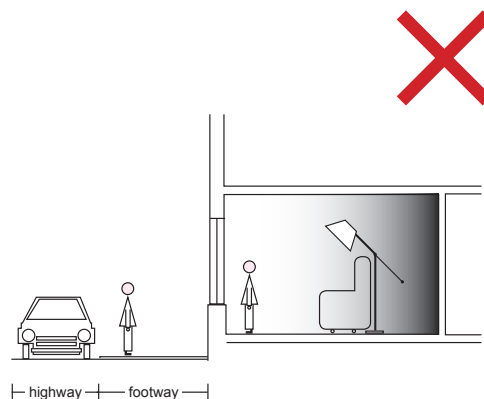
1. The Council's recommended spatial standards for internal and external layouts will not normally be relaxed, except in exceptional circumstances where it is clearly demonstrated that schemes provide high quality living environments. This will be evident in the choice of materials, landscaping, management and the sustainable design considerations demonstrated in the overall design of the scheme.

2. Major development proposals will be expected to offer a range of family houses, which include two-bedroom dwelling house designs.
3. Where terraced and town house designs are included care should be taken to avoid continual runs of housing. Roof heights can be adjusted to add interest but generally continual runs should include no more than six dwellings.
4. Within terraced designs care must be taken to ensure that rear access for residents is practical, where access to car parking courts and access for waste disposal is required.
5. Care should be taken when designing the set back of housing. In existing settings established building lines should be respected. Within new developments set backs of at least 1 metre will be expected for two storey dwellings and 1.5 metres for 3 storey dwellings. This may increase, depending on building heights and the need to consider height to width ratios (refer to appendix 3 in the Residential SPG). Notwithstanding this the comfort of the internal living environment must be considered when designing defensible space and fenestration detailing at the front of buildings.

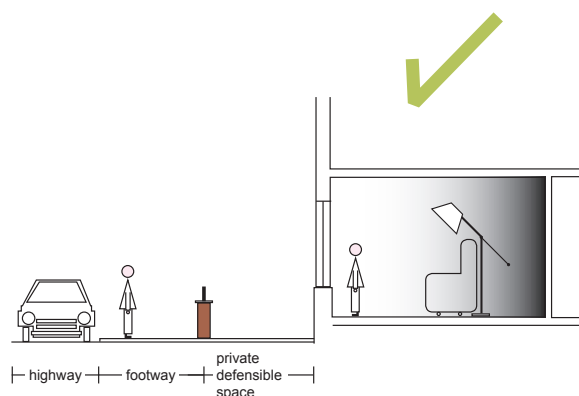


Upper Church Lane, Tipton

Poor consideration of the demarcation of public and private space and the quality of defensible space leads to poor quality living environments.



Ross, Rowley Regis



6. Introduce increased building heights with care. Consideration must be given to context and the scale of buildings must define the public realm comfortably in terms of height to width ratios (refer to appendix 3 in the Residential SPG).
7. Apartment designs will be resisted in locations where they are considered to be out of scale and context with the surrounding area. They will also be resisted where the site's location is considered to be unsustainable in terms of convenient, easy and safe pedestrian links to local facilities and public transport links (refer to UDP policy T3).
8. Apartment designs will be expected to provide appropriate levels of private usable amenity space for residents. As a rule of thumb no less than 10 sq.m. per unit will be acceptable. The provision and type of private amenity space provided must be well designed, meaningful and useable for residents. It must not be made up of left over space or landscaped buffer areas within the site. In certain locations the creative use of space will be considered, such as balcony, decked and roof garden areas. The requirement for private amenity space will be in addition to policy requirements for community open space referred to in UDP policies H7, OS5, OS8 and DC9.
9. External layouts for apartment and house designs must clearly define public and private space around buildings. Adequate defensible space must be provided at ground floor level between built form, road frontages, car parking layouts and amenity space.
10. Pedestrian entrance points into apartment designs must be legible from primary street frontages and pedestrian connections into the building designed so that they are safe and convenient.
11. Internal layouts and circulation spaces within apartment blocks must be designed to foster neighbourliness and design out the opportunity for crime. Large lengths of corridor runs and entrance arrangements that serve too many units will be resisted.
12. Normally servicing arrangements for apartments must be designed so that delivery vehicles are able to enter and leave the site in a forward gear unless otherwise advised by the Highways Authority (see page 12 for contact details in the Residential SPG).
13. As a general rule apartment designs and family homes should not have combined servicing arrangements off shared private driveways or have shared car parking areas.
14. Car parking spaces serving apartment designs must be clearly allocated and an ongoing management and maintenance plan demonstrated for all communal areas.
15. The internal layout of apartments must include the opportunity for internal storage in preference to external storage areas for residents' cycle storage where at all possible.
16. External storage areas must be provided for waste management and visitor cycle storage, which satisfy the Council's standards for storage and collection (see page 12 for contact details in the Residential SPG).
17. Consideration must be made for the need to make space for water generated by increased surface water run off and impacts of climate change.

3. Over Intensification of Individual Dwellings and Plots

The opportunity for individual householders to personalise their dwellings is an important design consideration. However, proposals need to be realistic in terms of their extent and impact on neighbouring properties and the public realm. The following policies are in addition to those found on page 35 under Personalisation in the Residential SPG.

1. The over development of individual plots where private amenity space is reduced below the Councils requirement for private amenity space for family homes will be resisted.
2. Where it is proposed to increase the internal capacity of dwellings to provide additional bedroom spaces, there must be scope within the plot to cater for increased off street car parking demand without diminishing the quality of front garden areas by increasing hard surfaces to unreasonable levels (more than 70%) and impacting on safe pedestrian movement on public footways and increasing surface water run off.
3. The subdivision of plots for the development of separate dwellings will only be considered acceptable where the Council's adopted spatial standards for internal and external living space and access can be achieved, without compromising the quality of new and existing living environments or the character of plot structures and existing street scenes.
4. Proposals for domestic extensions that are considered to have a detrimental affect on the character of existing streets in terms of, building lines, roof design, proportion and established architectural coding will be resisted. For example:
 - Alterations to existing roof designs particularly where it is proposed to change hipped designs to full gables to enable the unsympathetic development of roof space, particularly where proposals have an impact on the symmetrical relationship to neighbouring semi-detached house styles.



- Two storey side extensions and first floor extensions over garages that have a significant effect on the street scene and result in a terracing effect by closing the gap between properties. Roof heights must be designed to step down from the main ridgeline and built frontages set back so that the extension looks less important than the existing dwelling.



- New extensions must fit in with the character of the area and appearance of the existing dwelling house. The size of proposed extensions should be smaller than the existing dwelling to avoid an over dominating effect. The appearance and size of windows and doors and architectural detailing must be respected.
- Proposals for rear extensions must not impact on neighbouring properties in terms of their size, potential overlooking or reduce access to daylight (see appendix 3 in the Residential SPG).

