WANSBECK

Wansbeck District Council
Supplementary
Planning Document

Residential Development Design Guidance
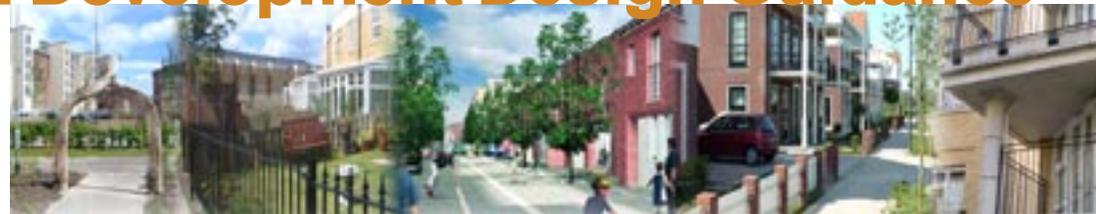
Residential Development Design Guidance

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Contents

1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document has been produced to provide practical advice and design guidance to all those involved in the design, planning and delivery of new residential development in Wansbeck. It is aimed at assisting all professionals, developers, designers, landowners and their agents in preparing development proposals.

The document has been prepared as part of the Wansbeck District Council's commitment to achieving high standards of design quality in all new development. It seeks to promote good design practice, and particularly a design-led approach to development. The guide should help everyone involved in residential (and mixed use) development achieve high quality attractive and sustainable places to live.

1.2 Status of this guidance document

This guidance document forms part of the Wansbeck Design Guide. The Design Guide sets out some broad design guidance regarding all new development in Wansbeck. Some of that guidance is carried forward into this document, but reference should be made to key sections of the Design Guide when preparing development proposals. All of those documents forming part of the Wansbeck Design Guide has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD). The contents of this guidance document therefore represent an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications for new residential development. These design guidelines within it will help the Council to assess the design implications of planning applications for residential developments. Whilst all proposals should be judged on their own merits, proposals that follow the spirit of the guidance set out here, will be received positively. Conversely, poor quality proposals that ignore the guidance, issues and requirements set out in this document, will be unlikely to receive planning permission. After adoption, this guidance document replaces the Supplementary Planning Guidance: New Residential Development (April 1997). It supplements key design policies and standards contained within Wansbeck Local Plan and should therefore be read in conjunction with those policies.

1.3 How to use this guidance

This guidance relates to all proposals for residential development in Wansbeck. It identifies key objectives, criteria and issues for consideration in the design of new residential developments. The guide aims to be as objective as possible, dealing with basic design issues and principles, rather than impose personal taste, with examples used to illustrate general points or good design practice. The guidance is applicable across a broad range of scenarios, from town centre developments to more suburban sites in established residential areas. It is not possible, nor is it the intention of this guidance document, to provide design solutions for all manner of likely development opportunities/types within Wansbeck.

The aim is to focus on qualitative, rather than simply quantitative issues when designing schemes. That is to say, that whilst the Council's development control standards should clearly be considered when designing a residential scheme (they are material considerations), these should not act as the basis for scheme designs. Likewise, the highway standards adopted by the Council at the current time, must also be considered when addressing scheme design, but overall design solutions should not be based around such standards. Standards should not be interpreted inflexibly, but should act as useful guidelines in the design process. The focus should be on achieving the objectives behind those standards, such as ensuring no serious loss of privacy, creating safe places, or ensuring that adequate car parking provision is provided in a way that avoids car parking problems being created on street or the visual dominance of the car. The strict application alone of any standards will not guarantee planning permission, and applicants and designers are encouraged to adopt a design-led approach to avoid standardised spaces and visual monotony.

1: Introduction

Section 2 of this guidance document sets out some of the key issues relevant to the design of residential developments in Wansbeck.

Section 3 of this guidance document provides an overview of the Building For Life standards upon which this guidance is based.

Section 4 sets out some guidance on the processes involved in designing a scheme, and the way in which the Council would prefer to see planning applications evolve and be submitted to them, as well as identifying what material should be submitted with planning applications.

Section 5 onwards, sets out the key issues, objectives, principles and criteria to be considered and responded to in designing a residential scheme.

2: Key issues

2.1 The Importance of good design

In line with national and regional guidance and initiatives, the quality of design now plays an integral role in the control of development. Wansbeck District Council, through the production of the Wansbeck Design Guide and its development control powers, seeks to raise the standard and quality of design in relation to all types of development within the district.

All residential schemes should be of high quality design. All schemes will be assessed against the advice, guidance and criteria set out in this document. In addition, applicants should also have due regard to the urban design best practice principles set out in the Design Guide.

2.2 The design-led approach

As referred to in the Introduction, this guidance document emphasises (and builds upon) the requirement that all residential developments should be design-led. Some key principles upon which scheme design must be based are set out below.

2.3 Responding to the sites context

When considering new housing development projects, no matter how large or small, it is important to understand the context into which they will be set. New development must enhance and never detract from its local environment. Developers must consider the context and exploit and strengthen the characteristics that make an area special. Developments must respect and take a lead from the existing character wherever possible. Advice on how to understand and respond to the context within which development

sites are set, are discussed in this guidance document.

2.4 Building places for people

Successful developments must address wider issues than simply building houses, and should create distinctive places that offer a choice of housing types and tenures and complimentary activities nearby.

2.5 Making connections

Places should be linked up with short, direct public routes overlooked by frontages. People should be able to move around easily within any scheme. Development proposals must be integrated into neighbouring developments; accessibility and local permeability must be a priority.

2.6 Creating attractive public spaces and safer places

Places must be safe and attractive, with clear division between public and private space. Public spaces and routes should be stimulating, overlooked uncluttered and work effectively.

2.7 Design for change

New buildings and spaces should be adaptable to enhance their long-term viability and built so they do not harm the environment. Developments should be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, life style and demography.

2.8 Creating sustainable communities

Residential schemes should be designed to create communities for both present and future generations. Best use should be made of our natural resources.

Successful developments should create distinctive places that offer a choice of housing types and tenures

Developments must respect the context and take a lead from site characteristics as well as the existing built environment

Pedestrians must take priority to cars, and public spaces and routes should be safe and overlooked
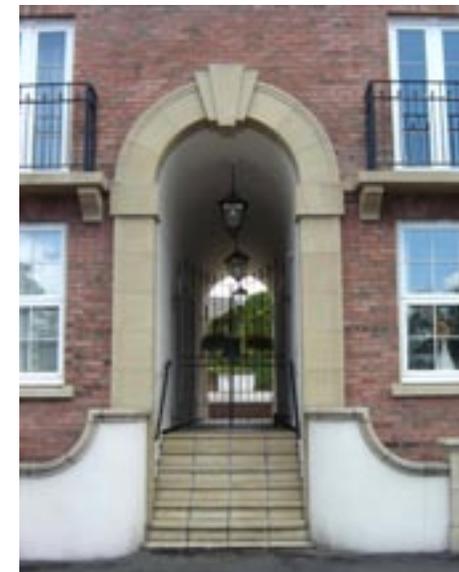
Using the natural slope of a site to create interesting architectural detailing

3: Building for life

3.1 Introduction

'Delivering Great Places to Live' is a guide to the Building for Life standard explaining the 20 criteria and the policy guidance which has shaped them. The guide is designed to be used by developers as a basis for writing development briefs, and by local authorities to demand high standards of design and assess design quality.

Building for Life is a scheme led by CABE and the Home Builders Federation. It is supported by the Civic Trust, Design for Homes, English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation.

The Home Builders Federation (HBF) represents private housebuilders in England and Wales. The HBF is committed to promoting best practice within the house building industry. It is working in partnership with others to deliver sustainable and commercially realistic solutions to meet Britain's housing needs.

CABE is the Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. CABE help local planners apply national design policy and advise developers and architects, persuading them to put people's needs first. CABE seek to inspire the public to demand more from their buildings and spaces. Advising, influencing and inspiring, CABE work to create well-designed, welcoming places.

The Building for Life criteria are a measure by which to assess design quality in new housing and award the Building for Life standard. Their value goes far beyond the standard awards. The 20 criteria are an invaluable tool for developers, planners, local authorities, architects and the public – anyone committed to improving housing and neighbourhood design.

It is for this reason that the Council are using them as the basis for guidance relating to new residential developments in Wansbeck.

3.2 Overview

The criteria embody Building for Life's vision of what housing should be: functional, attractive, and sustainable. The criteria cover four main themes:

- Character
- Roads, parking and pedestrianisation
- Design and construction
- Environment and community

The Building for Life document can be downloaded at:

www.buildingforlife.org

The 20 questions that make up the Building for Life standard are supported by the Government as the standard for the design quality of new homes.

Schemes that meet 14 of the 20 questions are eligible to apply for a silver standard, and schemes that meet 16 or more will be considered for a gold standard.

In launching their North of England Housing Audit, CABE set the target for local authorities to ensure that all new housing developments granted planning permission are capable, at least, of meeting the Silver standard.

Accordingly, the Council are looking for all residential schemes to be designed in terms of the Building For Life Criteria. All new schemes developed in Wansbeck must meet at least 14 of the 20 criteria set out below. This will make schemes eligible for a Building For Life Silver Standard. Achieving all 20 criteria will make schemes eligible for a Gold Standard.

3.3 The Criteria

The criteria embody Building for Life's vision of what housing should be functional, attractive, and sustainable. The Criteria are summarised below and form the basis of the remainder of this guidance.

Character	
1	Does the scheme feel like a place with a distinctive character?
2	Do buildings exhibit architectural quality?
3	Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout?
4	Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?
5	Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape or topography?

Roads, parking and pedestrianisation	
6	Does the building layout take priority over the roads and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?
7	Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?
8	Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene?
9	Does the scheme integrate with existing roads, paths and surrounding development?

10 Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?

Design and construction

11 Is the design specific to the scheme?

12 Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?

13 Do buildings or spaces out perform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?

14 Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhances its performance, quality and attractiveness?

15 Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?

Environment and communicty

16 Does the development have easy access to public transport?

17 Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impacts?

18 Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?

19 Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?

20 Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?

4: The planning design process

Pre-application discussions with the local Planning Authority and the local community are strongly advised on any large scale or complex residential development schemes or proposals on sensitive sites. Such discussions can benefit both developers and the Council in:

- Ensuring a better mutual understanding of objectives and constraints that exist, and clarifying key design issues that effect a site and should be addressed within any proposal/application submission;
- Identifying and defining the level of information, assessments, scope and detail of reports and drawings required to be submitted with any application;
- Enable the consideration of design options or solutions and lead to (it is hoped) the identification of an agreed preferred design solution to be submitted as part of any planning application(s).
- Enable identification of a public consultation strategy and therefore early engagement with the community in the design process; enabling an understanding of issues raised by the community and identifying solutions to those issues where appropriate.
- Enable the early engagement of other consultees e.g. infrastructure or utility providers, other Council departments etc to help identify other potential constraints and issues which may effect design solutions for the site.

Site analysis

Design solutions / optons

Pre-application consultation with the LPA and others where appropriate

Possilbe public consultation

Necessary changes and development of the preferred option

Pre-application consultation with the LPA

Possilbe public consultation

Preparation of necessary drawings and report

Pre-application consultation with the LPA to check reports and drawings

Submit application

The above flow chart identifies a possible pre application discussions process approach

- Provide the developer with a greater degree of comfort that their application is more likely to be supported by the Local Planning Authority and therefore is likely to be decided upon, within the relevant determination period.
- The Council's Statement of Community Involvement also emphasises the importance of pre application discussions.

In order to set up a pre-application consultation meeting; you are advised to phone:

- 01670 843434

or e-mail:

- PlanningEnquiriesMailbox@Wansbeck.gov.uk

It is advisable to contact one of the Council's Planning Officers at a very early stage in the design process to discuss whether or not a proposal is considered to be large or complex enough that pre-application discussions/meetings are required. It is, in any case, advisable that any development proposal is discussed with a planning officer prior to the submission of a planning application, to ensure the application submission is complete, has no errors, and to seek informal officer opinion as to whether a scheme is likely to be supported or not.

Pre-application discussions will also enable a developer to ascertain if any other permissions are required for their proposal; for example; consent to do work to protected trees (Tree Preservation Order), Listed Building or Conservation Area Consent, consent to undertake work to a public highway or divert/close a public footpath etc. Pre-application discussions may enable Officers to give informal opinions on whether such consents are likely to be obtained or not.

Other Council Contacts

As well as direct consultation with Planning Officers at Wansbeck District Council regarding the design and development of a residential scheme, Officers from other Council departments many also need to be contacted and consulted to inform the design of schemes.

4.2   Employing a reliable agent and skilled design team

It is essential, certainly for complex or large scale development schemes, that a design specialist is employed to identify the best design solutions for each particular context and to ensure that a holistic approach to development is taken, considering design at an early stage.

4.3   Information Required with Planning Applications

Applicants are required to submit 6 copies of the completed planning application forms and supporting information. Copies of the relevant application forms can be obtained directly from the Council officers or printed off our website:

www.wansbeck.gov.uk

Applicants should check the appropriate planning application fee with the Planning Department. The fees required are set out in Regulations which are revised from time to time. A list of the current Planning Fees are contained on our website. The relevant certificate of ownership and notices need to be completed, signed and submitted with the application (and notices served where applicable).

A variety of plans will need to be submitted with planning applications. Those plans required with all applications are:

- A site location plan, showing the application site in its wider context (usually 1:1250 scale Ordnance Survey map, with the boundaries of the application site outlined in red, and boundaries of any other land owed by the applicant outlined in blue);
- A site layout plan, or Block Plan (usually 1:200 or 1:500 scale giving details of the proposed site/development layout, and including the precise location/siting of existing development adjacent or near to the application site);
- Existing and proposed Floor Plans and Elevations (for all buildings proposed or affected by development).
- Design and Access Statements : a report to illustrate the process that has led to a development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way. Unless a Design and Access Statement is submitted with a planning application the Council will be prohibited from determining the application. Statements are required for both outline and full planning applications.

Specific guidance on the information to be provided within a Design Statement is set out in the Wansbeck Design Guide.
For more complex, or large scale planning

applications (or those on more sensitive sites e.g. within conservation areas), more detailed information may be required. For clarity on what information is appropriate, as stated above, applicants are advised to have discussions with the Planning Department at an early stage of the design process.

Depending on the scale and complexity the following information is likely to be required:

- Sections and street elevations
- A topographical survey
- A tree survey
- A proposed landscape scheme/public realm masterplan and management plans (includes tree retention, protection and management)
- 3D illustrations/photomontages/ perspective or axonometric drawings
- A sustainability statement
- Transport Impact Assessment and Green Travel Plans
- Public consultation strategy

Depending upon the site characteristics and development impacts, further appraisals/information may be required, including for example:

- Noise impact
- Ground condition/land remediation surveys/land quality assessments.
- Air Quality Assessments
- Drainage Reports
- Flood Protection Reports/Sea Defence Reports
- PPG15 Analysis (for applications affecting listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)

The need for such reports should be identified in pre-application discussions. There may also be a need for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). The Council should be consulted in this regard at an early stage in the design process. A screening opinion and/or scoping opinion may be required to determine the need for an EIA and scope of matters to be covered within it.

5: Understanding the context

In Wansbeck the Council will be looking for developers to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the site and its surroundings.

As part of a planning application the Council will require a context statement to assess the site and its surroundings. The nature of the site will indicate how extensive this needs to be. This should be a factual account in the form of a written description, drawings (to scale) and photographs etc. Typically a site appraisal and survey will involve two key stages.

Desktop Study
A desktop study will include the collection of data such as plans showing the site and its surrounding area, aerial photographs and other relevant information e.g. the identification of utilities and services, land contamination, public transport, listed buildings, sites of archaeological importance and sites of nature conservation interest etc.

Site Survey
A site survey will involve the collection of data, such as townscape character, context, views and vistas, and patterns of movement. The survey will include a comprehensive photographic record of the site and its context.

The following sets out what should be considered in this respect for new residential developments.

5.1   Existing Community
The success of a project depends on an understanding of the local community, its assets and its failings. For schemes of more than just a few houses there is a need to consider more than just the housing type and mix. Applicants will need to demonstrate knowledge of the social dynamics of the neighbourhood, available facilities and services, issues of safety, security and community identity.

The following offers a checklist of considerations. (It should be noted that not all would be relevant for all schemes)

- What is the socio-economic mix and cultural background of the existing population?
- Are there any prevailing problems and what are the positive aspects in the area?
- What is the demographic mix?
- Are there any particular local cultural preferences (for example, housing size or design for specific ethnic groups)?
- What community needs will evolve over the planning of the project and in the long-term?
- Can we involve the local community in the planning and development process?

5.2   Character and Setting
The best design for any site should evolve from its setting taking best advantage of any existing features of note and where appropriate taking its lead in terms of character from the surrounding area. It is important to understand what this is from the outset.

The following offers a checklist of considerations. (It should be noted that not all would be relevant for all schemes)

Land Use and Facilities
- What land use does the development site have?
- What are the adjacent land uses?
- What are the local land use policies on the site and the surrounding area?
- What is the development site area in hectares?
- What type of infrastructure exists on and around the site?
- What is the capacity of existing services available such as gas, electricity, water etc.
- What facilities are within close proximity of the site such as schools, shops, public transport etc?

Landscape Character
- What are the physical characteristics of the site e.g. topography, orientation, existing buildings and structures, watercourses and boundary etc?
- What is the ecology of the site and the surrounding area?
- What is the microclimate of the site?
- What boundaries and barriers are there at the edge of (or within) the area or site?

Built Form
- How did the site and the surrounding area develop? What are the ages of buildings and structures?
- What sort of street layout does the area have?
- Is the site of archaeological interest? Is an archaeological assessment or survey required?
- What is the distinctive character of

and the surrounding area?
- What distinctive architectural features and building techniques contribute to the character of the area?
- Is any part of the site in a Conservation Area?
- Are any buildings or structures listed for their architectural or historic value?

Views and Vistas
- What is visible from particular points within or around the site?
- Are there any notable views or landmarks?
- What buildings or structures (on or visible from the site) stand out from the background buildings?
- Are there places or features within or at the edge of the site, which are seen (or could potentially be seen) as gateways to it?

5.3 Movement Networks and Destinations

Good design enables people to get into, around and through a development.

It is important to understand how existing movement networks work, where people from a development will be going to on a regular basis and how they will travel there – on foot, by cycle, by public or private transport?

Local facilities bring residents together and a new development in a neighbourhood should benefit from existing facilities allowing new residents to become part of the local community, if they wish. Therefore, it is important to understand what is within a 5 minute (400m) and 10

minute (800m) walk of a development site in terms of facilities, services and local transport routes (bus stops, train stations etc).

The following offers a checklist of considerations. (It should be noted that not all would be relevant for all schemes)

- What is the area's road network?
- Where do / will people want to go and what means can they use to get there?
- Where are the local facilities - shops, jobs, parks and schools – and how would you get there?
- Where are the public transport routes and how good is the service?
- How convenient are the pedestrian/ cycling routes in accessing local facilities and amenities?
- What is the pattern of pedestrian movement in and around the site?
- What current proposals for roads, footpaths or public transport might be relevant to future development?

5.4 Environmental Conditions

It is important to consider the influence previous uses of the site will have on a development and any constraints or opportunities this may offer.

The following offers a checklist of considerations. (It should be noted that not all would be relevant for all schemes)

- What are the soils and geology of the area? Is a geological survey required?
- Is the ground contaminated or has the site had a previous use that may have resulted in ground contamination? Is a ground contamination survey required?

- Is there a history of mining in the area?
- Is the proposed development in an area where there are unacceptable levels of air or water pollution?
- Do any parts of the area or site suffer from noise? Is a noise survey required?

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT
TASK CHECKLIST

An understanding of these contextual elements will give an understanding of where a site sits in terms of its local area. This should inform subsequent design decisions.

The following offers a Task Checklist for a context statement which should, depending on the nature of a site, address the following:

- How the site fits into settlement patterns of the wider neighbourhood.
- How the site relates to the neighbourhood.
- The movement pattern to, within and across the site.
- The physical characteristics of the site, including topography, site edges, physical features such as existing buildings and mature landscape, service routes and rights of way.
- Views to and from the site.
- Local planning policies.
- The history of the site and potential for using these themes in the proposed development.
- Demand for housing and associated facilities now and in the future.
- The potential for local people to be involved in the design and development process and how they would do so.
- The needs and aspirations of the people who will live in the area.
- The concerns and hopes of the existing neighbouring community in respect of the site.
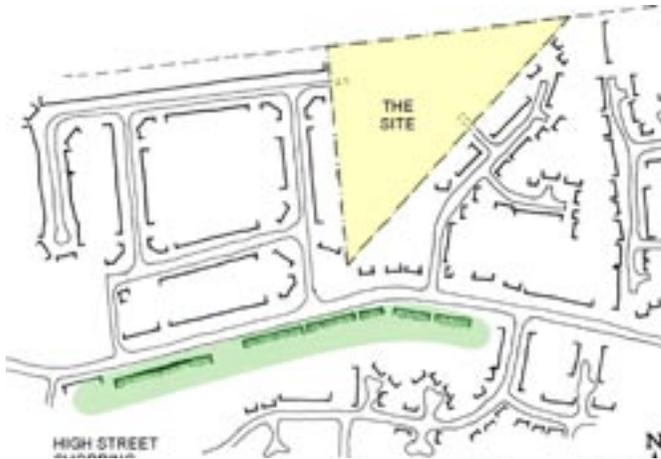
Assess the location of the site; relations to surrounding housing and services

History of the site and local community; the potential for using these themes in future proposed developments

The physical characteristics of the site and surroundings; including topography, site edges and nearby mature landscapes

Views to and from the site; existing local landmark and features

How the site relates to the existing community and local services

Transport links and movement patterns

6: Responding to the context

An understanding of the context within which the development will sit should now have been understood. This should form the basis for a design solution. It is important that schemes positively respond to this context and certainly does not detract from it.

Here the Council set out a number of considerations that are important to address if a scheme it to truly respond to its context. The Council expect due consideration to be given to these factors and this presented in support of a planning application. This will include a written statement and illustrations in sketch form to demonstrate how the project brief, policy review and the site appraisal have informed the principle design concepts of the development.

The following sets out what should be considered in this respect.

6.1   Working with the Existing

Development proposals need to positively contribute to not detract from their surrounding environment and in particular, the type, height and massing of surrounding buildings. However it should be recognised that in some locations, fitting in with neighbouring developments will merely repeat their shortcomings and in such cases, imaginative new designs should be adopted that will lift the area.

The way new development relates to old in terms of size and height is crucial for small infill sites and on the edges of larger developments. A deliberate choice should be made to either blend in with the existing streetscape or to create a

dramatic contrast. The latter will be more appropriate on corner sites, on larger sites, or where the surrounding townscape is of poor quality.

On a more detailed level, designers must consider plot and building width, design of facade and features – for example the size and proportion of windows. This doesn't mean replicating existing neighbouring buildings; rather, the principles found within the surrounding buildings must be understood and related to the new development. Different kinds of style must not be mixed within one building; but a degree of mixed style in a development may be part of the richness of the local area.

The visual effect of the development must be considered by looking at it from the surrounding area. This is a particularly important for sloping sites and in hilly areas. New development must not unduly diminish the quality of existing views. The landscape setting of the development should also be considered and worked with rather than against. This will lead to a design response that feels right and which will inevitably place less demand on the environment in the long term. Landscape assets such as mature trees, watercourses, striking topographical changes or natural meadows and hedgerows should be identified and used to inform the development layout. Undamaged natural areas should be retained and respected wherever possible.

Every site has a unique history. Its former use, ownership, old buildings, social history and any significant events over

the years all play a part. Reviving historic natural or man-made features provides opportunities to enrich outdoor space or even development structure.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

1   Does the scheme feel like a place with a distinctive character?
5   Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, landscape or topography?

6.2   Movement Networks

A site should be successfully integrated into its surroundings. It should take advantage of existing points of access and linkages. This includes all routes that can be used by pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and private cars. The key is to create a layout that is permeable. Access points to the site, together with "desire lines" to facilities and shops should define the framework for movement.

Where possible new development should aim to improve the existing movement framework - new pedestrian and cycle routes for example. Dead ends should generally be avoided.

All routes but particularly those for pedestrians and cyclists should be designed to be attractive but more than that they need to be convenient, direct, well overlooked and safe. In addition routes need to be both accessible for the less mobile and for those with prams and pushchairs.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

9   Does the scheme integrate with

existing roads, paths and surrounding developments?

16 Does the development have easy access to public transport?

6.3 Housing Choice and Mixing uses

The choice of housing in a development will of course relate closely to housing markets in an area. Nevertheless, it is preferable that a range of different housing choices will be provided in every large development and if at all possible in smaller ones too. This allows for a diverse community, large and small families, young singles, couples, older people, black and minority ethnic communities and individuals with special needs.

Indeed consideration should be given not only to developing a mix of housing types but also a mix of tenures. This should be indistinguishable in style or detailing and should be mixed within the street and block rather than concentrating different types in predetermined areas.

Consideration should also be given to the lifecycle of the houses being built and the changing demands placed on them as their resident's circumstances change -children come and go, couples form and separate, people age or become ill. The ability for new homes to adapt to these changes should be considered.

The mixing of different uses within a development needs to be considered. The appropriateness of this will be evidenced by the context within which the development is taking place and the size of the development. If appropriate and achievable additional uses and facilities can

benefit residents of the new development as well as improve provision for those already living in the wider neighbourhood. Development activity can then benefit the whole community, increasing the supply of facilities, shops and even jobs.

Mixing uses is a vital element in the creation of new neighbourhoods to enable them to become effective communities in themselves. However, not every development has to provide a mixture of uses in itself but, every development should relate to a small, mixed-use centre which can be easily accessed, preferably on foot.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

15 Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?

18 Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?

19 Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?

20 Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?

6.4 Facilities and Services

Facilitating easy access to existing facilities through the design of the layout of a scheme can often mean there is no need to provide new facilities on site. However it is important to provide social spaces within a development. The design of a neighbourhood must cater for casual meeting and social exchange and this should be integrated into the design and layout of the new development. These

spaces should encourage informal meetings in well-overlooked public areas (such as benches on sunny street corners, seating in play areas) and encourage "space to chat" around front doors. This should not be at the expense of the privacy of homes though.

Play areas are a vital element of a development as they form a focus for children's play as well as for social contact for their parents and carers. Children (especially younger ones) also spend time in informal play close to their homes but not in specific play areas. They need to "see and be seen". Larger, formal play areas can become a source of nuisance if older children take them over. Local provision for older children (13+) needs to be researched to predict whether there are local amenities for them. If family housing is provided in an area where no such amenities exist, the chances of problems increase unless they are created.

If new facilities and amenities are to be created then future management and maintenance arrangements must be considered including ease of maintenance and future costs.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

10 Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?

12 Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?

20 Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?

RESPONDING TO THE CONTEXT
TASK CHECKLIST

An understanding of the place being developed – a place that fits with and compliments its context – should now have been developed.

The following offers a Task Checklist for consideration:

- Ensure that a range of housing types and sizes are provided within developments of significant size.
- Aim for a wide range of housing opportunities, tenures and choices.
- Apply the principles of a "walkable community" when laying out the site and setting densities.
- Understand the existing level of community facilities and which ones could add to the provision. Pay particular attention to the formal and informal facilities for children.

Making sure the proposed development respond to the context

Cater for the needs of the local community; relating to and / or improving existing facilities and services

New developments must not unduly diminish existing views and vistas

Creating schemes that feels like a place with a distinctive character

There should be a variety of accommodation offered; successful housing allow for individual conversions and adaptations

Small infill sites must relate to existing housing in scale and character

7: Building a place

An understanding of the place being developed – a place that fits with and compliments its context – should now have been gained.

In Wansbeck the Council are looking for developers to build places recognisable for their quality. Working with the local setting, both natural and built, sets a mood for the development and helps to define a neighbourhood. Relating buildings to the street; ensuring adequate privacy to homes; and catering for people and their needs are all vital considerations in making a place work.

The follow section is all about the detail of the place. It aims to ensure that the places built in Wansbeck are places of quality and places that meet our aspirations for best practice in terms of urban design and place making.

7.1   Character of the Place

A place is defined and characterised by its public spaces and how the buildings relate to those spaces while mix gives identity and character.

By mixing uses and providing housing for diverse communities distinctive area identities and characters can develop. On the other hand, sameness of housing perpetuates sprawl and the feeling of being in no distinct area.

There is always room for distinctive buildings but housing design must cater primarily to meet the needs and aspirations of people who are going to live in the houses. The architecture of the place will determine whether or not it is memorable but this should not be at the expense of good layouts which will determine whether or not a place works.

There are many examples of good housing design, traditional and modern. The key for new housing is that it needs to be robust and keep to the principles in this document, rather than following particular styles or fashions.

Variety is good and is welcomed. Variety makes places recognisable and special. Sameness, repetition or blandness can, by definition, become monotonous. Using sensitive variations in roof heights, colours, setbacks, rooflines, dwelling types and sizes, windows and balconies all produce variety. This need not necessarily mean that bespoke architecture is always required. Standard house types can achieve this when used imaginatively by varying layout and facade treatment.

Architecture is a vital element to translate design principles into a three-dimensional, usable form. However, the ultimate character of the place will be determined once the development has been completed and residents have begun to personalise their properties. It is important to design to allow for this. While it may be desirable to keep a unifying design language within the development, thresholds, corners, balconies and facades must be capable of sustaining some degree of personalisation. This can occur with planting, colour, paving, ornaments or small extensions to the building.

Finally, the character of the place will be defined by its density. The appropriate density of development should reflect the surrounding built environment, the degree of access to local facilities and the public transport network. In general, densities should increase the closer the development is to public transport, shops and facilities. This ensures that more people are within easy reach of local facilities and transport. So, across a large development, there will be a range of different densities, from higher-density apartments in and around the local centre and along the main public transport routes, to lower-density family housing on the fringe of the development.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions
1   Does the scheme feel like a place with a distinctive character?
2   Do buildings exhibit architectural quality?
11 Is the design specific to the scheme?

7.2   Environmental Performance

The best design for the site should evolve from its setting. Climatic exposure, the shape of the landscape, vegetation, views and microclimate are some of the basics to be considered.

The environmental performance of a development touches on every stage of design, construction, use and maintenance. To ensure good environmental performance, it's best to specify for it at an early stage.

Responding to the natural context can bring environmental benefits with the layout influencing microclimatic conditions between buildings. Buildings must be grouped and orientated to produce the best

microclimate available in the area. Warm sun pockets can be formed to make public spaces more pleasant.

The orientation of buildings, together with their design and configuration, can take advantage of solar gain by arranging rooms to benefit from the course of the sun. Daylight orientation can reduce the need for artificial lighting and passive solar gain can reduce the need for heating, particularly important in terms of reducing fuel costs. Currently the use of photovoltaic (PV) cells is not viable due to their high cost. But circumstances may arise in the relatively near future where retrofitting PV cells is an option. Therefore, in orientating buildings this would be worth consideration.

The highest solar gain can be achieved when buildings are oriented within 30 degrees either side of due south, as the facade will be sunlit all day. Adequate solar gain, coupled with good insulation, can also be achieved with buildings oriented east-west, improving light penetration into homes in the morning and evening.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

13 Do buildings or spaces out perform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?

14 Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhances its performance, quality and attractiveness?

17 Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impacts?

7.3 Public Areas and Streets for People

The public areas determine a person's first impression of an area, the spaces between the buildings and the relationships the buildings have to these spaces. This determines the "feel" of the place. When designing new places, designers need to consider how different people will use the space. For example, does the seating in public places give access to pleasant views? Is it on well-used pedestrian routes?

Communal and public spaces are an essential item if limited private outdoor space is allocated to individual homes. It is essential that these public spaces are "owned" by the buildings that surround them. This provides natural surveillance of these spaces and discourages antisocial behaviour. People feel more responsible for the spaces they can see from their homes. This also applies to location of footpaths. People feel more unsafe using pedestrian routes that are not overlooked.

A simple way of ensuring that streets are clearly regarded as public spaces is by orienting buildings to face the street with their most public side. Main access points into buildings must come straight off the street. This also ensures that the backs of houses retain their privacy.

Buildings on corners need to be designed with their visibility in mind, facing two ways with windows overlooking both sides. Corners are best emphasised by adding height to the building and incorporating prominent entrances or windows at the apex.

The relationship between the height of the buildings and the width of the street or space they overlook creates enclosure. Spaces that feel sufficiently enclosed and contained feel complete. Spaces that are too open lack a sense of place. Generally, the height-to-width ratio (measured not as number of storeys but as height of elevation to eaves line and distance between opposing facades) should not drop below 1:1 (where it becomes claustrophobic) and shouldn't exceed 1:6 for squares and small open spaces. The appropriate enclosure ratio for residential streets is between 1:1.5 and 1:3. The width of the street relates to the type of development to create appropriate enclosure, so, for example, it may be possible to create a tighter ratio in urban situations than in suburban or rural.

The street cross-section is the space between opposing buildings. When setting out a new development, the full width of the cross-section (not just the publicly owned road and pavement corridor) is vital. The size of front gardens, the amount and location of parking, landscape and the treatment of the pavement all influence the quality of the space.

The setback of buildings from the pavement depends on the nature and function of the street and the ground-floor uses that could occur. A setback from the pavement increases privacy. It's also the place where private and public activities meet. Looking for keys, talking to neighbours and storing rubbish bins are typical activities that take place close to this threshold. Homes with direct access must be set back from the pavement by 0.5 - 3.5 metres.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

3   Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout?
4   Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?
6   Does the building layout take priority over the roads and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?
7   Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?

7.4   Accommodating the car

Residential streets must be designed for all users and should work successfully as places of social interaction, as well as accommodating motor vehicles. Residential streets should have their design speeds reduced. This benefits cyclists and pedestrians but also encourages neighbours to socialise making it's nicer to stop and chat in the street and safer for children to play.

As a principle, residential streets should be designed first for pedestrians and then for cyclists, public transport and private vehicles, in that order. Due consideration must be given to access for emergency vehicles and refuse collection.

A traffic-calmed street won't just slow the traffic, it will also give direct benefits to pedestrians and cyclists. More space can be devoted to their needs. Rumble strips and shared surface treatment can help to reduce car speeds without having to resort to the use of humps, bumps or cushions. However, rumble strips must not be so designed as to be unsafe for pedestrians.
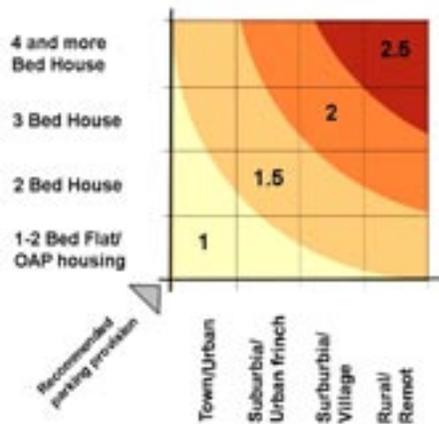
Recommended parking provision for new housing

The most successful ways of reducing traffic speeds, while giving residents direct benefit, are:

- Varying the width of the carriageway, for example, by using pinch points.
- Planting street trees close to the edge of the carriageway.
- Reducing the turning radii of street corners (within adoptable limits), so car speed is reduced.
- Raising those intersections or pedestrian crossings that are a direct continuation of a pavement.
- Reducing the distance between junctions so that speeding is less likely.

Parking is a key issue, strongly affecting the quality of the public space. It is advisable to provide parking spaces that reflect the proven needs of the community. This should of course be in line with the levels set out in current national guidance (PPG3 points to an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling max.). Blanket parking standards can be harmful, making it easier to provide too much or too little. If sites have good links to local services and public transport, a reduction from "normal" parking provision may be sensible.

The Council supports a flexible approach to car parking provision based on the principle of encouraging a reduction in car use and increasing levels of walking, cycling and use of public transport. The graph below illustrates the Council's car parking standards which are responsive to the location of the development and type of residential unit. For example a 2 bed house in a town centre location should have a 1 car parking space, whilst

a rural location 2 spaces are likely to be acceptable.

There are essentially four ways in which parking can be provided:

On-street parking

On street parking is the most commonly used parking form for traditional streets and roads. It is extremely efficient in terms of the amount of space required to house it and in providing for variations in car ownership between households.

On-street parking can also have a traffic calming effect as well as being visible from the home.

On-street parking is most successful when designed in from the outset – where bays are incorporated into the overall width of the street demarked by paving, trees and planting and with breaks to allow the safe passage of pedestrians between the cars. This can be achieved either by using parallel or angled bays.

Communal parking

Communal parking courts of up to eight cars can provide successful parking areas but larger communal court parking is rarely successful.

The court must be placed in front of the homes where it can be overlooked by all of them. An attractive close can be formed around this type of parking. This is often appropriate for small urban and suburban developments, as well as rural locations. If larger communal car parks cannot be avoided, they must be well landscaped with integrated tree planting.

Groups of parking bays need to separated out by planting, minimising their visual impact.

Designers must consider the management of these spaces from the outset.

On-plot parking

Many prefer this as the car remains visible from the home but unless enough space is left to create a landscape buffer, it can have detrimental effects on the quality of the streetscape.

This might be the right response for a detached or semi-detached housing development, if plot sizes are sufficiently generous to move cars to the side of the dwelling. It's certainly more appropriate for suburban and some rural developments (possibly not in village centres, though).

Integral garages are a variation of on-plot parking. It sometimes works well in urban locations where the garage is set lower than the paving level. Garages or garage spaces to the rear of semi-detached properties can help in reducing the land take to the side to 3 metres wide, rather than the 4-5m for a side garage.

Underground parking

Underground or undercroft parking will be viable only rarely, for example in town centres where land values are high and for higher value shared ownership/sales schemes.

Underground car parks need to be secure and accessible only to residents. The cost of general management and mechanical ventilation system may add large service charges.

A street classification is provided which can help to shape the site layout and movement network. The street classification is devised in relation to:

- Street functions and design speed, not just volumes of motor traffic.
- The requirement for streets to lead to other streets, and to connect with adjoining areas.
- The requirement for all categories to have a built frontage.

COLLECTOR STREETS

These are the main routes within a residential area for all modes of movement, including buses. To achieve good design, collector streets should be lined with active built frontage (i.e. front doors and windows to the street), with direct access to individual dwellings. Tree planting is also encouraged to help create an attractive residential area and positively influence driver behaviour.

Speed	Typical Number of Dwellings	Typical Carriageway
20mph	Up to 750	Single 5.5-6.5m plus cycle lanes (min 2x1.5m)

Footways	Parking	Bus Route
2m min on both sides	In bays on or off street On plot	Yes

The examples below show some possible designs for Collector Streets.

LOCAL STREETS

Most streets within a development are likely to be Local Streets which are the link to the Collector Streets or to the wider network.

Local Streets are not bus routes and designs should emphasise the human scale promoting pedestrian priority. Positive driver behaviour can be encouraged with tree planting, pinch points in the street and by varying building setbacks. Variety in the design along the length of the street should be employed to create interest and character.

The selection of an appropriate design should always take full account of the local context. For instance, in a rural location the footpath width may be varied to match existing layouts.

Speed	Typical Number of Dwellings	Typical Carriageway
20mph	Up to 300	Single 4.8-5.5m narrowing to 3.25-3.7m for constrictions

Footways	Parking	Bus Route
2m min on both sides	In bays on or off street On plot	On demand / special service only

The examples below show possible designs for local streets are provided.

SQUARES, MEWS AND COURTYARDS

Squares, mews and courtyards are small residential areas fronted by dwellings and accessed by streets at two or more points. Paving, posts, trees or other features, mark the vehicle path through a square not by kerbs, changes of level or railings. Parking is within marked bays. Squares can be located along the length of a Local Street, where two or more streets meet, between old and new development or at the edge of a site. This development form offers a

great opportunity for a designer to create character and identity in a development.

There are endless design solutions, best results being achieved by responding to the landscape, orientation, shape of street pattern, built form and the traditional place design in the area.

Speed	Typical Number of Dwellings	Typical Carriageway
10-15mph	Max 50 if through movement is possible or 25 where not	Shared Surface 4.8m. Turning needed if over 20m. Max length 60m if no through movement

Footways	Parking	Bus Route
N/A	In bays within street design	No

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

7　Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?

8　Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene?

7.5　The Public/Private Threshold

The transition from public to private space should generally be through a semi-private space between the street and the home – the front garden. This need not be a huge space and even the smallest amount of space and buffer planting will act as a transition. This is an important space in the streetscape and should not be dominated by either parked cars or wheelie bins, it should be designed and fit for purpose.

These spaces also have an important role to play in allowing personalisation and providing for privacy.

Front gardens must be sufficiently deep to provide privacy without affecting their strong relationship with the street. The depth could ideally vary between 0.5 - 3.5 metres. Larger front gardens can become maintenance burdens or unofficial parking spaces, reducing the visual quality of the street. In particular, larger front gardens must not be provided at the expense of a usable, well-proportioned private back garden. Front gardens should not be restricted to single dwellings alone. Apartment blocks can benefit greatly if ground-floor homes have their own front door off the street and control over the adjacent buffer space which acts as their front garden.

Planting in this transition area is very important. Even a small amount of planting can soften hard edges and make a street more pleasant. A narrow planting bed of only half a metre has a large effect on the quality of the street. Placed within the property boundary, it creates an attractive area and enables residents to plant creatively. Care must be taken to ensure that narrow planting beds are not so sheltered by eaves so they do not receive enough water to be sustainable.

The entranceway itself forms the physical link between private and public domain. Shelter and security are the most vital aspects to be considered. A roof or awning should be integrated into the design of the entrance and facade to provide shelter at the door. Alternatively the front door can be

set into the facade but care must be taken to ensure that this does not compromise natural surveillance. The front door must be placed where it can be seen directly from the street - ideally facing it – and good levels of lighting should be provided.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

1　Does the scheme feel like a place with a distinctive character?

BUILDING A PLACE
TASK CHECKLIST

The following offers a Task Checklist for considerations in terms of the public aspects of a scheme:

- Ensure that any new development relates well to its surrounding and does not detract from its image.
- Use natural site features to set the mood for the development and reinforce its character and quality.
- Find a balance between local character and optimising solar orientation when laying out streets and positioning and designing buildings.
- Buildings must always relate to the street.
- Use buildings to frame and enhance public spaces.
- Landscape and open spaces are as vital as buildings in defining and influencing the quality of the public realm.
- Design streets firstly for residents and pedestrians, then for cyclists, public transport and cars.
- Ensure a good transition from private to semi-private to public space. This will secure adequate privacy of homes.
- Architecture gives character to an area and makes it recognisable. This must not produce sculptured homes that are unsuitable for the intended client group.
- Ensure that parking standards are appropriate for the development and that provision of parking spaces does not dominate the development. Consider interlinking them with more sustainable alternatives.
- Every development must have a bias towards on-street parking, with parking courts and in-boundary parking as alternatives.

Designing the site

A place is defined and characterised by its public spaces and how buildings relate to these

Good places are created by attention to form, layout and street frontage. This can be achieved when using standard housing types

High density and bespoke buildings can add distinctiveness and create unique landmark locations

Shared surface streets accommodating pedestrians and cars

Streets for people

Car parking should appear sub-ordinate to houses and open space

Variety of car parking solutions within one scheme
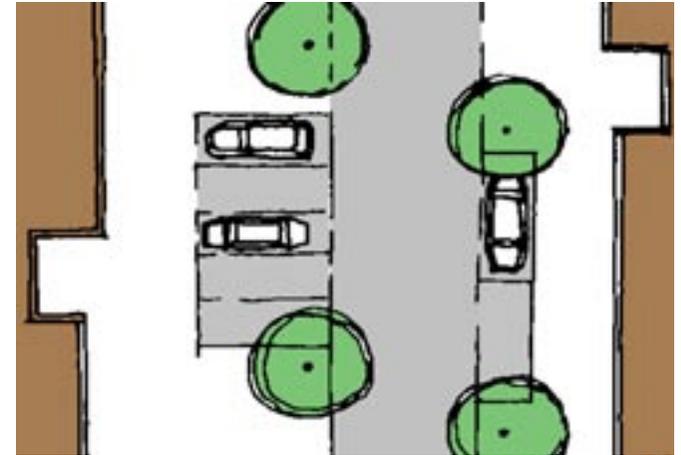
On-street car parking integrated with tree planting to soften the effect

Courtyard car parking in high-density urban development

Private car parking set back between houses appear less domineering in the street scene


On-street parking with high quality detailing and landscaping
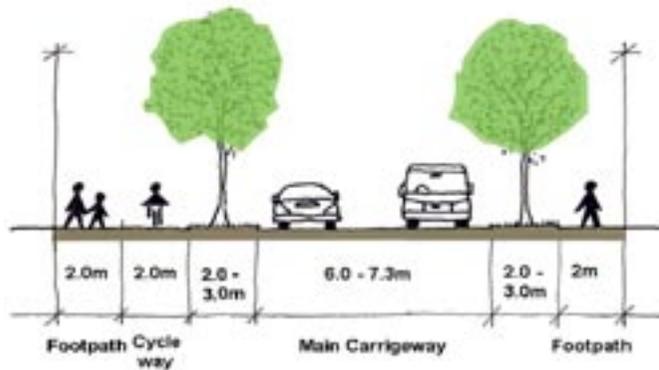
Avenue / collector street
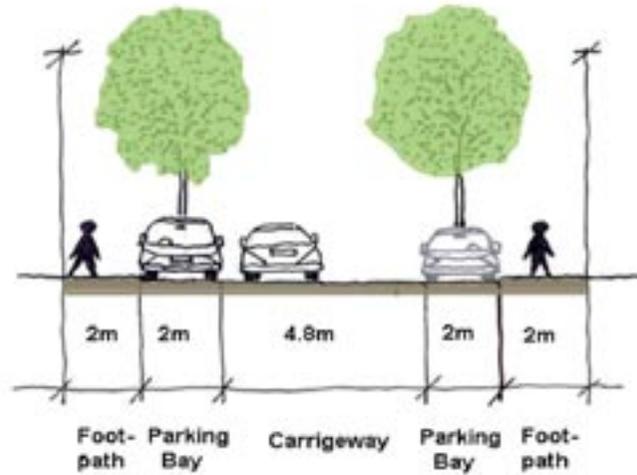
Local road with parallel parking
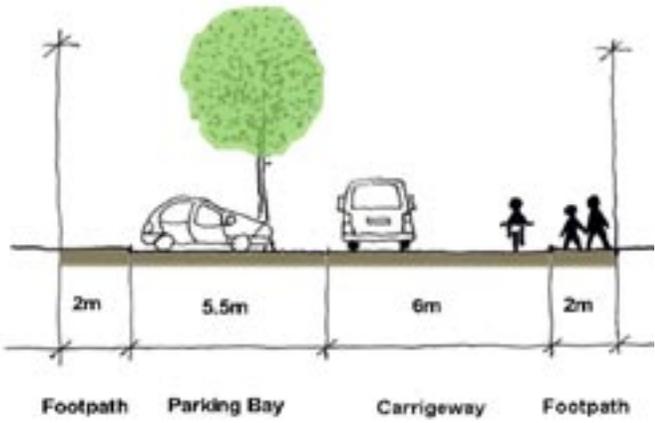
Local road with parking at right angles

8: Space within and around the home

There are many factors that contribute to the attractiveness of a home and these are seldom style related. Rather they are to do with how the home works for its inhabitants. Elements such as size, number of rooms and the scale of those rooms contribute to this but how it feels is the most vital element. It must be light and airy. It must offer the resident choice and flexibility in the use of space. Where possible, it should offer pleasant views and its long term sustainability should be considered. The characteristics that enhance the quality of space within and around the home that the Council wish to see demonstrated in schemes are set out below.

8.1   The home

People often think that higher densities have to mean lower space standards for individual dwellings. This is not so. There are many examples of traditional schemes where high densities have been used to create spacious accommodation. Imaginative site and dwelling design can increase the value of the usable space and reduce or eliminate wasted "no man's land". As an example, both flats and town houses can be built in urban centres at high densities but with spacious accommodation.

Flexibility of use can greatly increase the feeling, or perception, of space. For example, designing for expandable space into loft areas and connecting with outdoor space can make the available space more usable. Good daylight penetration and best use of surrounding views and landscaping also improve the quality of the space.

Relating indoor to outdoor space can greatly improve the feeling of space indoors. Views of a garden or balcony (or hills, landmarks and buildings further afield) expand a room. The quality of a room is greatly influenced by outlook, light penetration and solar orientation. If a pleasant outlook can be achieved, it must be used to enhance the quality of the room. Larger windows or a direct link to the outdoor space aid this even further.

Large rooms and rooms that can be combined give more flexibility and different opportunities for use in a home. Maximum flexibility can be achieved through the use of non-load bearing partitions throughout the home. This enables the home to become more functional and adaptable. A larger-size room also allows for different layouts of furniture and decor to suit individual needs. However, the size of the home needs to be balanced against the financial viability of providing this extra space. Open-plan solutions can work well in smaller and narrow frontage plan types but are generally less successful in family accommodation due

Light penetration should be maximised. The size and position of the window in relation to the size and type of the room and its solar orientation influence internal light levels. Orientation of living-room windows to the south or west helps to maximise solar gain. This greatly influences the desirability of a room or home. The use of internal windows and glazing in internal doors (safety glass where necessary) to provide "borrowed light" to internal areas can help. The aim is to create light levels that are pleasant and appropriate for the particular room. Larger

windows are appropriate for living rooms, where views out of these rooms are as important as the light within.

Storage should always be considered both internally and externally. Bike storage accessed directly from the front of the house is desirable as are bin stores. Internally storage is just as important and efforts should be made to design for this whether it is in roof spaces, basements or under-stairs.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions	
2	Do buildings exhibit architectural quality?
11	Is the design specific to the scheme?
13	Do buildings or spaces out perform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?
14	Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhances its performance, quality and attractiveness?
15	Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?

8.2   Private outdoor space

Well positioned private outdoor space can be a good extension to the home. Socialising, children's play and family life all benefit from it. Factors that influence its level of use include its orientation to the sun, its size, how it's accessed from the home and what level of privacy can be achieved.

The usability of a garden, terrace or balcony is greatly influence by its orientation. As a general rule, outdoor space must be oriented towards the sun. This is especially critical for small spaces

like balconies and terraces. Gardens are more flexible, as longer gardens can compensate overshadowing by buildings.

Outdoor spaces that are too small have restricted uses, while very large spaces are often a luxury that can quickly turn into a maintenance burden. Ideally, a garden should be about twice as long as the property is wide. To increase choice, though, it is advisable to offer a range of garden sizes. Where only a patio is provided, it must be at least 2 by 3 metres. Good size, functional balconies (that can accommodate a table and chairs) measure about 1.8 by 3 metres. Balconies less than 0.9 metres are undesirable.

Private outdoor space must ideally be accessed from the most public spaces within the home, namely the living room, dining room or kitchen. As people prefer different access points, various options must be offered in a development. Young families might prefer the garden door to lead to the kitchen, while others might favour a direct link to the living room. For family homes alternative rear access to the garden, other than through a living room may be preferable.

A private outdoor space must offer a degree of privacy and safety. Careful planning can avoid the need for high fences. Neighbours' windows must not directly overlook the space. However, gardens, patios and balconies are never fully private spaces. Balconies are generally less private than gardens; they tend to be places where people can see and be seen.

Some types of developments benefit more from communal space than others. Communal areas are necessary when private outdoor space is kept to a minimum. Access to them must occur via communal hallways and private back gardens only (other than for maintenance via locked gates etc.) This limits access to the people living there and whom the space is supposed to serve. Communal space reinforces the residents' sense of community and is especially beneficial if secure children's play is desired. From the outset, designers must make appropriate arrangements for maintaining common space.

When setting out the development, awkward pieces of leftover space, either in the public or private domain, must be avoided. The function of all spaces in a development needs to be self-evident and understood.

SPACE WITHIN AND AROUND THE HOME TASK CHECKLIST

The following offers a Task Checklist for considerations in terms of the private aspects of a scheme:

- Retain flexibility in home types to make them feel more spacious.
- Consider energy-saving opportunities and use of more sustainable materials.
- Take care when designing the threshold to homes, as this is where public and private areas meet.
- Early on, designers need to consider ease of maintenance and servicing. This will lengthen a development's life.
- Wherever possible, relate homes to outdoor space.
- If it is oriented towards the sun, private outdoor space much improves the quality and feeling of space of a home. This can be integrated with passive solar design in terms of energy savings for the home.
- When providing communal open space, careful consideration needs to be given to security, access for maintenance and ensuring a sense of "ownership" for residents.

A front door off a semi private space gives identity to the home

Well-designed spaces at the entrance to the homes improves the public realm and gives identity to the area

Relating indoor and outdoor rooms can greatly improve the feeling of space indoors

Even the smallest outdoor space, given the right orientation, is a valuable extension to the home

Some developments benefit more from shared outdoor space than others

A home has to meet the needs of its inhabitants

9 : Detailing

The detailing of a scheme is as important as understanding the context, neighbourhood and layout principles previously described. A development can conform to all the design principles but still be soulless.

This final section of guidance intends to give rise to considerations of detail relative to the buildings, the spaces around them and the environmental performance of a development. These factors should be given due consideration in the development of schemes.

9.1   Materials

Natural, renewable materials that hold lower embodied energy (such as mineral, wool or wood) are preferred in Wansbeck and reference should be made to "The Green Guide to Housing Specification" in all developments.

Natural and recycled materials should always be considered first. Wherever possible and viable, materials should be sourced locally, cutting transport distances and costs. Local materials can also be much more in keeping with the local style helping the development fit better into its surroundings.

The use of prefabricated materials, brought from a distance, is not precluded, however, if the factory uses materials from sources close to it. At least the journey from material source to factory is minimised.

The potential for reusing existing materials should also be considered. This is especially true for sites where existing buildings are being demolished or where this is happening nearby. Paviours, bricks,

railings, doors and some fittings may be salvaged for reuse in the new development and demolition material can be incorporated in the construction. This reduces the need for new materials and can also preserve local character. Even if materials can't be reused for structural functions, they could still be useful to enhance the landscape areas, build boundary walls or produce aggregate. This will also reduce the cost of waste disposal.

Surface treatments of roads, footpaths and driveways are crucial in creating an attractive streetscape. Paving is a major element of this. While uniform treatment of each of these elements would tie them together, their different functions would not be clear. It is best to use a variety of related materials, unifying the space but still giving variety.

Street furniture (signs, bollards, seating, lighting, tree grilles, fences, railings and public art) must be selected in relation to the design and character of the place and related to the surface treatment. The number of posts, columns and railings must be minimised. Lighting and signage can share masts or be wall mounted. The aim should be for less clutter in public areas, more attention could then be given to spatial qualities which will define the development.

Good quality lighting can bring an important contribution to the attractiveness of an area and help security at night. High lighting glare on neighbouring residential properties must be avoided and light pollution, especially in rural areas, minimised.

Lighting does not always have to be fixed on columns. Alternatives include wall mounted or atmospheric lighting integrated in bollards and carefully directed uplighters.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions
13 Do buildings or spaces out perform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?
14 Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhances its performance, quality and attractiveness?
17 Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impacts?

9.2   Water Conservation and SUDS

Water conservation should be considered and water-conserving sanitary fittings used – these can save up to 30% of domestic water consumption. These include spray taps, low-flush toilets and showers over baths, which should be specified as standard. Further conservation can be achieved by introducing secondary water systems. Mains drinking water doesn't have to be used for flushing toilets. Wastewater from showers, baths and washing machines can be used instead.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) is an environmentally friendly way of dealing with surface water run-off. It relies on gravity to drain both soft and hard surface areas. Rather than installing underground storm sewers the water is channelled and collected in swales, ditches and ponds. It is then naturally cleaned and slowly released into watercourses or into the ground to replenish the aquifer. This not only reduces the construction

and maintenance cost of large new developments but also provides community and environmental benefits. It can be used for developments providing benefits such as mitigation of flooding and increased bio-diversity of species.

Full SUDS systems are probably only applicable to larger developments but the principles can be used on smaller projects.

Addressing these issues should answer the following Building for Life questions

13 Do buildings or spaces out perform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?

14 Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhances its performance, quality and attractiveness?

17 Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impacts?

DETAILING
TASK CHECKLIST

The following offers a Task Checklist for consideration in terms of the details of schemes:

- Encourage the project team to work together and create a family of details across the project rather than only in their own area of influence.
- Ensure that landscape elements are designed and constructed to a high specification in line with the buildings in the development. Publicly accessible and visible areas highly influence the quality of the development.
- The detailing of buildings needs to harmonise with the concept and style of the development and work as part of the building, rather than just be stuck on.
- Every development must aim to improve its environmental standards. Good selection of materials and internal fittings makes a contribution to this objective.
- All developments need to aim for a better energy-efficiency level. The choice of heating system, together with improved construction to minimise heat loss, are key if this is to be pursued.
- High water costs are a burden on household bills as well as indicating environmental unsustainability. Use low-use fittings.
- Technology is moving fast. Provide ducting from back of the pavement edge to assist the fitting and changing of cabling in the future.

High quality materials and detailing should be encouraged

Attention to detailing must be carried through; including the positioning of access to services

10: Glossary of terms

This glossary is intended to provide general guidance, not authoritative definitions of terms:

Accessibility
The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

Adaptability
The capacity of a building or space to be changed so as to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Building line
The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

Conservation Area
An areas of special architectural or historic interest, which warranted the area being designated.

Context
The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

Defensible space
Public and semi-public space that is 'defensible' in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. Derived from Oscar Newman's 1973 study of the same name, and an important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependent upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity, which can be anticipated by the users of the space.

Design Principle
An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or a development.

Elevation
The facade of a building, or the drawing of a facade.

Enclosure
The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

Feasibility
The viability of development in relation to economic and market conditions.

Fenestration
The arrangement of windows on a facade.

Figure/ground
A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background (or the other way round).

Form
The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

Human scale
The use within development of elements, which relate well in size to an individual human being and their assembly in a way which makes people feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.

In-curtilage parking
Parking within a building's site boundary, rather than on a public street or space.

Landmark
A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

Landscape
The character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, colours and elements and the way these components combine.

Layout
The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

Legibility
The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

Local distinctiveness
The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

Mixed uses
A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

Movement
People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces. The movement network can be shown on plans, by space syntax analysis, by highway designations, by figure and ground diagrams, through data on origins and destinations or pedestrian flows, by desire

lines, by details of public transport services, by walk bands or by details of cycle routes.

Natural surveillance (or supervision)
The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

Permeability
The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

Planning Policy Statement notes (PPSs)
Documents embodying Government guidance on general and specific aspects of planning policy to be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in making planning decisions.

Public Realm
The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks. Also called public realm.

Settlement pattern
The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular place.

Strategic view
The line of sight from a particular point to an important landmark or skyline.

Street furniture
Structures in and adjacent to the highway which contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting, railings and signs.

Surveillance
The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen from surrounding windows.

Sustainable development
Defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987, and quoted in PPG1) as 'Development, which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations'. The UK's strategy for sustainable development "A better quality of life" was published in May 1999 and highlights the need for environmental improvement, social justice and economic success to go hand-in-hand.

Topography
A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

Urban design
The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes, which facilitate successful development.

Urban grain
The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

View
What is visible from a particular point.

Vista
An enclosed view, usually a long and narrow one.

Visual clutter
The uncoordinated arrangement of street furniture, signs and other features.