

Neighbourhoods for Living

A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTIAL DESIGN IN LEEDS



Memorandum to 3rd Edition 2015

NFL Memorandum 2015.

An aerial photograph of a town, likely in a rural or semi-rural area. A major road, possibly a highway or dual carriageway, winds through the center of the town from the bottom left towards the top right. The town is densely packed with residential buildings, mostly two-story houses with gabled roofs. There are several larger commercial or institutional buildings scattered throughout. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green fields and wooded areas. In the background, rolling hills and a valley are visible under a clear sky. The title 'NFL Memorandum 2015.' is overlaid at the top center in a white, sans-serif font.

Neighbourhoods for Living (NFL) was adopted by the Council in 2003 as Supplementary Planning Guidance and needs to be read in conjunction with the Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies and the adopted Core Strategy. The focus of this Memorandum is to improve the clarity of the NFL document as planning guidance

Introduction.

I am delighted to introduce the Neighbourhoods for Living-explanatory Memorandum for 2015.

Neighbourhoods for Living was first launched and adopted by the Council in 2003, it continues to provide guidance to developers for delivering quality housing designs.

We want to work together to complement the rich character of our city, towns, villages and suburbs and continue to create the great legacy of producing places and houses that last and are worthy of future generations. To do this we need to ensure we have sustainable economic growth, a suitable housing mix and excellent places to live for all residents.

This document is a guide to help make the planning process effective and efficient for everyone. By adhering to this document and involving key stakeholders early in the process, we hope that the planning process will be as straightforward as possible.

We know that partners from developers to individual residents agree with us on the need for quality. We have had collaborative workshops and engaged with designers, housing providers, Councillors, Council officers and other stakeholders to look at how we can achieve this. What we agree on far outweighs our differences on a wide variety of issues. So putting this down in paper makes our shared commitments clear, whilst setting out what we feel are the requirements for quality building in Leeds.

We want to see high quality development in Leeds, in order to provide places for people to live for generations.



Councillor Richard Lewis
Leeds City Council
Executive Board Member for
Regeneration, Transport and Planning



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Planning.

The Leeds Standard.

A housing market which delivers high quality housing in attractive and well-designed neighbourhoods is central to the city's economic growth ambitions. The development of the 'Leeds Standard' (initiated for the Council Housing Growth Programme) is intended to set a high standard for the Council house building programme and encourage all housing developers to share the aspiration towards growth which is sustainable and to the benefit of communities.

The standard comprises 3 key themes: Design Quality, Space Standards (Internal), and Energy Efficiency Standards. This development programme has meant that the Council has experienced the pressures of quality delivery in difficult financial circumstances. We have concluded that quality should not diminish, and our minimum standards should stand us in good stead to serve our residents well in the coming period. We also consider that this provides good value into the future, and a level of flexibility built into our portfolio to stand the test of time and offering good quality for years to come. Neighbourhoods for Living, with the Explanatory Memorandum for clarity, provides a framework for 'Design Quality' and our minimum 'Space Standards' and 'Energy Efficiency Standards' provide a good measure for improving quality of life and minimising fuel bills for residents.

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Introduction / Outline 1.

The explanatory Memorandum is prepared for two key reasons. Firstly, it restates the importance of the guidance set out in Neighbourhoods for Living (NFL). Although first launched in 2003 the concepts for housing design within the document are still current and continue to illustrate a full range of quality concepts for the delivery of good housing design. It is the Council's view that these sound concepts continue to be valid to help deliver the primary objective of good housing design. The Council sees good housing design as one of the many things contributing to the aims of becoming the best city in the country.

Secondly, the explanatory Memorandum expands on some of the main objectives and principles within Neighbourhoods for Living. As a comprehensive document, Neighbourhoods for Living gives guidance on the concepts of good housing design. It guides developers as to what the Council considers is good practice in housing design. These Memorandum sheets go further in that they reiterate, expand and develop some of the original concepts: based on a number of key current issues around housing provision in Leeds. Neighbourhoods for Living, together with the explanatory Memorandum will be used to prompt, steer and assess design proposals as they develop.

The sheets are laid out to a simple format. To the outside edge of the page are the appropriate principles and references from Neighbourhoods for Living. In the centre main body of the page are the appropriate explanations and expanded notes of the principles. Explanatory sketches are included where appropriate.

The process of design is a vital component in delivering high quality housing. This process involves all the parties in housing delivery including landowners, local communities, elected members, designers, developers, landscape consultants and planners. The Council as a whole including the Local Planning Authority wants to ensure that it plays a full role in delivering quality housing but this requires that the applicants also participate in this process. To enable that, all those involved have to ensure that the housing delivery is a cohesive process and developers should include the Local Planning Authority in the design process from the outset. Subsequently the Planning Service can help a smooth process from inception to delivery on site.

Introduction Outline



Good housing design principles are a good investment for providers as purchasers also seek investment in a good family home.



Good housing design principles are timeless in that they provide all the qualities of a good family home.



Good housing design principles are also about enhancing opportunities for the community.

Part of the design process is analysing the existing townscape and responding to the context. Understanding what is there and undertaking a responsive design is outlined in Neighbourhoods for Living starting at page 2 with the process of Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail. Using this method can lead to a strong design which answers the challenges of the respective site. The use of this method ensures comprehension of the local context and character and a suitably responsive scheme evolves with the minimum of design disruption. Subsequently all involved understand the design aspirations for the site and the response for the local communities and context is sound.

The following pages then expand on the topics from NFL, and give some further guidance in achieving housing design excellence. They deal with the issues under the general topics of: Layout and Form. Layout looks at themes relating to the plan / masterplan issues. Form looks at the issues relating to the design of houses, the three dimensional forms and context.



Abbreviations.

- Where appropriate referenced documents will use abbreviations for titles.
- **NPPF.** National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- **LCC CS or CS.** Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2013). (Under Adoption).
- **NFL.** The original 'Neighbourhoods for Living' document.

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.

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Schemes too often fail to reflect positive character and identity of the individual places and communities as outlined in the 'Neighbourhoods for Living' document which provides a guide to high quality residential design in Leeds. Recent protocols have been adopted by the Council regarding the consultation work associated with planning applications and this document provides further assistance in responding to context.

The importance of achieving

positive character and design is supported by the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 64) which states that "permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions".

Applicants should check for local character assessments at the outset of site analysis and carry this through to the scheme design proposals.

Background Issues 1.

Relevant Background.

The current Vision for Leeds (2011-2030) and the Best Council Plan (2013-17) both continue to provide a foundation for 'Neighbourhoods for Living'. The Vision sets out a shared understanding of the ambition for Leeds to be the best city: for children, for business, for communities, for health & wellbeing, to live.

"Leeds will be a great place to live with good housing, and clean green spaces, where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life".

The Council Plan incorporates best Council outcomes to improve the quality of life of our residents: creating 'neighbourhoods for living' will contribute well to that, creating an increasingly attractive city for existing (and future) residents and businesses. The Best Council Plan also identifies 6 Objectives: supporting communities & tackling poverty/ promoting sustainable & inclusive economic growth/ building a child-friendly city/ delivering better lives programme/ dealing effectively with the city's waste/ becoming a more efficient & enterprising Council.

One of the three best Council outcomes (Best Council Plan 2013-17) is to *"improve the quality of life for our residents"*, and the objective of *"providing housing as the city grows"* gives a strong foundation to improving the quality of housing and 'liveability' of places delivered. The Core Strategy, linked with the site allocations process, emphasises the importance of design quality and enabling appropriate housing growth for Leeds. It states that *"one of the biggest challenges Leeds faces is to provide enough quality and accessible homes to meet the city's growing population, whilst protecting the quality of the environment and respecting community identity"*.

The Core Strategy continues to explain the housing growth principles which include: *"enhance the distinctiveness of existing neighbourhoods and quality of life of local communities through the design and standard of new homes (see Policies P10 and EN2)"*.

The over-arching National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 56) also provides a firm basis for this approach as it states: *"the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people."*

Our current Neighbourhood Planning processes, engaging with local people in neighbourhoods across the city, together with the existing neighbourhood planning documents (such as Neighbourhood and Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals) also indicate the importance of place-making and quality of local environment to people in their neighbourhoods.

Background Background

The 10 Urban Design Principles.

The Ten Urban Design Principles adopted by the Councils Executive Board in 2005 provide a strong framework for quality, and a process for place making in Leeds. The ten headline principles are:

1. Recognise that good design is good business.
2. Get the team right.
3. Make places for (and by) people.
4. Close the gap and move forward.
5. Provide for future generations.
6. Take a visionary approach.
7. Analyse and enhance the character.
8. Create visual and physical links.
9. Look after the place.
10. Improve continuously.

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy
- P10 (Design) & EN2.

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Background Background

Background Issues 2.

The following NFL Principles aid healthy living and should be referred to on this issue.

- **Access to health services and community facilities.**

Principles: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13, 60, 96 & 105.

- **Social cohesion and community resilience.**

Principles 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14, 15, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 81, 82, 86, & 93.

- **Accessibility & Physical activity.**

Principles. 6,13 to 16, 17, 19 to 21, 27 to 29, 34, 57, 63, 64, 74,75 ,92, 100, &103.

- **Increasing use of public transport.**

Principles. 13,14,18,19,21,73, &105

- **Open space, private outdoor space, natural habitats.**

Principles. 24,46,47,51,52,54 to 61, 63,64, 68 to 71 &118.

- **Adaptable / Lifetime homes.**

Principles. 83,111, & 112

- **Healthy design.**

Principles. 107,108,110,& 113

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.

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Two key Council partnership themes have been outlined below to support the emphasis on the principles of Neighbourhoods for Living to move towards making Leeds the best city in which to live.

Health and Wellbeing.

The design of the built environment and access to natural spaces is a major influence on health and wellbeing. High quality residential design with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing can promote improved physical and mental health and reduce healthcare costs in a number of ways.

These include physical activity, reducing pollution, improving access to health services, increasing energy efficiency and reducing social isolation. Well-designed buildings and public spaces generate health benefits and reduce inequalities in health both in terms of development and community wellbeing.

Neighbourhoods for Living principles can be used to prompt, steer and assess the delivery of some of the health themes enabling us to move forward collaboratively on the range of issues the Council and its partners are championing thereby benefiting all communities and neighbourhoods.

Child-friendly City

The Vision for Leeds is to be the UK's best city by 2030 – the best for all who live and work here (our children, our communities and our businesses).

An essential part of this ambition is to be the best city for children and young people to safely grow up in – to live, study, work and play. The commitment to being the best city for children and young people is founded on the global UNICEF movement of child-friendly cities (1996) and is driven by the voices of children and young people of Leeds. In 2011, thousands of children and young people told us what they thought would make the city of Leeds more child-friendly and these ideas became known as the 'Child-Friendly City 12 Wishes'. A number of these are especially relevant to Neighbourhoods for Living, including specifically:

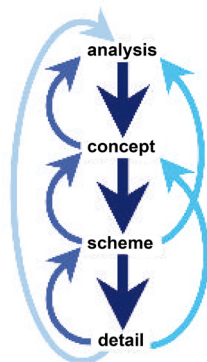
"Children and young people can make safe journeys and easily travel around the city/ There are places and spaces to play and things to do, in all areas and open to all".

Children and young people consistently speak of wanting to grow up in a city that feels a safe place, where they have the space and freedom to play, socialise and have fun. Being able to travel safely and easily around the city is essential. A direct interaction with nature is also good for children's development.

Being a child-friendly city does not simply mean that children are allotted specific areas in the city for play spaces. It means that children form an intrinsic part of the city and should be allowed space everywhere in order to thrive.

Layout 1.

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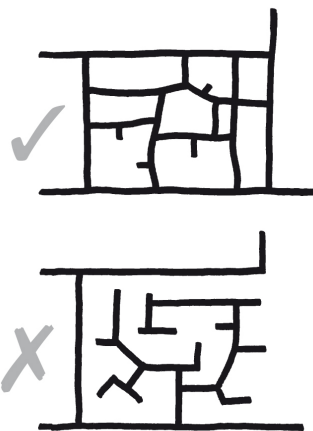
The issues regarding layout involve:

- The Plan. The overall design approach to the plan form.
- Connections and Linked Streets. (Legibility and Permeability).
- Space about Dwellings: Car Dominated Street Fronts
- Space about Dwellings: Ground Floor Treatments / Sterile Street Frontages.

- Space about Dwellings: Visual and Physical Amenity.
- Enclosure Built Edges and Streetscene
- Enclosure Generally: Security, Privacy and other issues.

The Plan. The plan form of the housing, the 'Masterplan', is an important step in evolving a scheme. The plan form drives much of the finished three dimensional scheme and if it is not right then the rest of the scheme will struggle to achieve quality. Developers should involve the Planning Authority from the outset to evolve a scheme that is suitably responsive to local character and context. As with the scheme generally, use the design process of Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail which will aid a good design response to local character and context.

- Developers should involve the Planning Authority prior to the finished scheme so that the plan can evolve co-operatively.
- Developers should involve the Planning Authority at the analysis stage and not start discussions with a finished plan populated with standardised house types.



Connected Layouts. (NFL p18)
Linked streets are encouraged within a site, but care is needed to ensure "rat runs" are not created. Layouts based purely on culs-de-sac should be avoided.

Connections and Linked Streets. (Legibility & Permeability).

The ability to rapidly understand and move around a place is important. Develop cogent masterplans that have the streets connected to other streets and the main roads. Single access 'estates' should be avoided. Avoid culs-de-sac and 'dead end' streets. Cul-de-sac arrangements create a more insular and introvert atmosphere and are more vulnerable to antisocial activity. When absolutely unavoidable culs-de-sac should be short / small and be directly off a main through road so that they can be seen and supervised. They should be observable down the full length of the culs-de-sac from the main road for safety and surveillance.

Connections encourage community integration and allow links to the surroundings such as shops and local facilities. Connected streets give the

Layout Layout

Principles (NFL)

- **relate the site to its particular neighbourhood** or character area and consider how particular attributes or activities can be strengthened (1)
- **connect new development into existing streets and footpaths** - which provide further connections to other neighbourhoods, town centres, established strategic bus routes and railway stations (14)
- **streets should lead to somewhere**, be simple and clear, providing choice for residents and visitors whilst discouraging "rat running" of vehicles; where appropriate enhance existing off-site links (15)
- **provide layouts based on linked streets** to allow more flexibility and change in the future. Generally avoid culs-de-sac, except as a limited part of a linked layout (16)
- **maximise connections** to spread impact of traffic rather than concentrating it as far as practical (17)

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- NFL page 41 Local Character.
- NFL pages 5, 62 & 63 Analysis.
- Urban Design Compendium, page 36 (&106 Safety)

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Layout

Layout

Principles (NFL)

- design **buildings to front onto streets** to make the place feel safer. There should be 'eyes on the street' including corners and gable ends ('active' windows, such as living rooms and kitchens, should overlook streets especially at ground floor) (38)
- **avoid car parking dominating streetscenes** using a balance of in-curtilage and on-street provision (77)
- **use discreet and innovative solutions for car parking**, especially where high densities are required (78)
- **set car parking behind the front of the dwellings** (to side or rear) in lower density layouts (including detached and semidetached building patterns), where appropriate. (80).
- Refer also to NFL Principles: **Pr 10. Natural Surveillance NFL. Pg 57, Distances between Dwellings**
- Refer to NFL references to diverse character areas throughout Leeds including 'city centre', 'urban', 'suburban' and 'edge' (p10 & p43). This memorandum focuses on suburban and edge situations

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- NFL page 38 et al Parking.
- NFL pages 57 Distances

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availability for through transit with both vehicles and people. This means 'active' streets that are naturally supervised and offer opportunities for amenity and neighbourliness. They are also less insular and do not become 'pseudo gated communities' with little to offer townscape or residents.

The design of the road layout should be clear and not convoluted. It should allow people to clearly grasp the ways in, around and out of the estate. It should be based on a readily understandable hierarchy of streets that are easy to navigate for both the car and the pedestrian.

- Link streets to other streets. Provide the connections for an active and legible layout.

Space about Dwellings. Car & Parking Dominated Frontages.

The space about a dwelling is important for the physical and psychological character of a place. 'Neighbourhoods for Living' (NFL) requires sufficient 'space about dwellings'. There are several reasons for having space

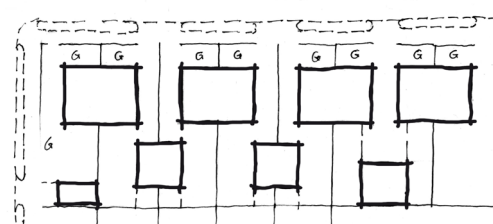
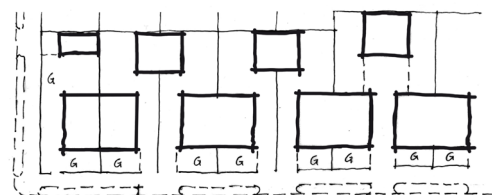
around the home and the first is to avoid having street frontages that are dominated by car parking and cars parking on the road and kerbs. When houses are designed to have the car parking solely at the front then this considerably erodes the character of the street to the level of becoming poor

design. Parking should be accommodated off the street to the side and or rear of the houses. Providing sufficient space about dwellings; to front, rear and side solves many issues. Sufficient space about houses alleviates car dominated frontages. This allows the provision of a semi private front garden and increases the positive perception of the street frontage generally. Parking off the street can also be accommodated through the use of shared drives and, if appropriate, then secure parking courts may be suitable for say flat blocks.

- Provide sufficient space to the side and rear of the dwelling in accordance with NFL so that parking can be accommodated off the street to the side and or rear of the houses. (See distances NFL page 57).



Car dominated frontage due to lack of space between houses.



Space between house provides visual amenity, a front garden and a relieved street scene. (Retains density greater than 35 dwellings per hectare).



Layout 3.

ISSUES

Space about Dwellings. Ground Floor Treatments / Sterile Street Frontages.

It is important to provide sufficient space about the dwelling not only to remove the car from the frontage and street but also to ensure that the benefits of this are an appropriate ground floor treatment and providing an 'active' street frontage. By 'ground floor treatment' and 'active frontages' we mean that the ground floor of the dwelling facing the street should have habitable, permanently used rooms on the ground floor and with the windows able to see the street. A room that is a primary living space such as a kitchen or living room would achieve this. When this is done there is that constant interaction between the residents and the street which engenders a live and active street. The homes engage the street and activity can be supervised; parents can see what is happening, people and children can feel safe.



No active ground floor encourages poor street activity with bins left out and cars parked on pavements etc. This sort of environment does not engage 'good neighbour' communities.



Space about the dwelling and active ground floor windows provides car parking and a more secure street frontage.



Streets where, for example, cramped houses are too close together and have only integral garages and a front door means that there is no real interplay between the inside and outside of homes. This is not an appropriate response.

- Provide an active ground floor street frontage with habitable rooms that can view the street.

Space about Dwellings. Visual and Physical Amenity. Privacy and Street Quality.

Provision of sufficient space about dwellings solves parking issues but provides other real benefits appreciated by home owners, visitors and



With small gaps even the larger quality detached house just appears as a big row of terraces. The front is permanently dominated by vehicles.



general users alike. Once the car is not the dominant factor then other benefits are provided. The houses can be given a semi private front garden which provides amenity relief for the home as it can be set back from the road. In essence the street frontage is less intensive. In reality the street generally is viewed from the oblique angle and one detriment of having houses too close together is they all, regardless of type and quality, begin to take on the appearance of a terraced 'wall'

Layout Layout

Principles (NFL)

- **maximise natural surveillance** by providing a variety of house types and, where appropriate, a mix of uses to ensure people are around throughout the day (10)
- Refer also to NFL Principles: **Pr 10**. Natural Surveillance **NFL. Pg 4**, Protecting privacy and personal amenity. Protecting against intrusion. **NFL. Pg 57**, Distances between Dwellings
- "increasing density should not be at the expense of amenity and quality of the environment." (**NFL, pg 16**)
- **prepare a landscape framework at the outset** of any scheme to integrate buildings and spaces within the wider context. A quality, well considered landscape design is fundamental to the creation of distinctive and attractive surroundings that will be satisfying places in which to live (26)

See also Principles 55 & 62, relating to landscape.

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- NFL pages 5, 16, 26, 27, 29, 38, 39, 46, 62. Active frontages.
- NFL pages 4, 16, 31 Amenity NFL pages 54 to 57. Privacy and Intrusion. (Note Distance requirements page 57). NFL Principles 10, 38

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Principles (NFL)

- use the building form and enclosure to **create spaces with a sense of local identity.** (32)
- **distinguish between private and publicly accessible space;** provide appropriate enclosure for front gardens (49)
- **avoid 'backs' facing onto publicly accessible space;** backs should be private and face each other to form secure private gardens and courtyards (50)
- **create enclosure to streets, squares, parks and other spaces** by designing buildings of appropriate scale/ height/ massing. The dimensions, sunpath and likely use will imply the appropriate form for its enclosure (87)
- design **buildings to front onto streets** to make the place feel safer. There should be 'eyes on the street' including corners and gable ends ('active' windows, such as living rooms and kitchens, should overlook streets especially at ground floor) (38)

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- NFL page 6. Context & building lines
- NFL page 25 Enclosure. 27 40 Continuity of street enclosure.

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of housing. This is detrimental to the streetscene.

It is expected that schemes will provide sufficient space around the homes for the important element of visual and physical amenity. By this we mean the open space around the home and not just in the rear garden. This also promotes privacy and prevents unnecessary closeness and intrusion on privacy. NFL deals with this in a section on 'privacy and intrusion' (p54 to 57). It is also important in that it promotes a less visually dense street scene. There is some visual relief in the street with the spaces between the dwellings providing a calmer less cramped perception of the street.

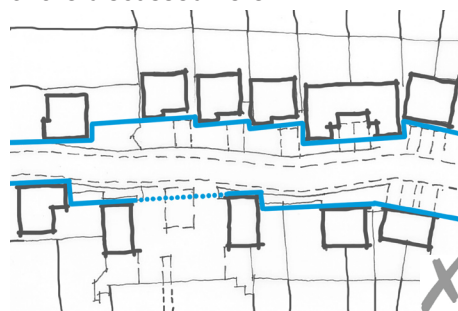
- Provide the space around dwellings to promote a less dense visual impact on the street. (Attention is drawn to the distances on NFL, page 57).
- Provide the space around dwellings to promote privacy and prevent intrusion on privacy.

Enclosure, (Generally).

How streets are formed can offer a positive addition to a scheme and there are some traditional cues to forming a good street design. Most of these methods are found in the NFL document but some of the basic methods the Planning Authority would look for are discussed here.

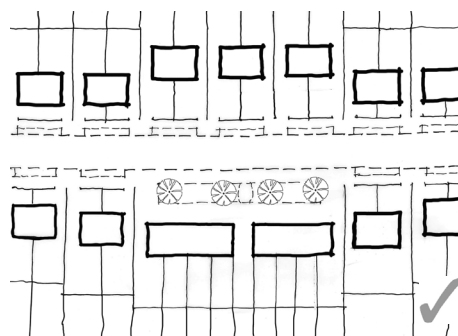
Enclosure, (Built Edges and Streetscape).

Enclosure is about how the streets envelop the physical three dimensional space. How the street provides a sense of pleasant and protective



surroundings is important. The streetscape should be relaxed and 'enclosed' enough to provide a welcoming feel without giving a sense of been cramped and oppressive.

Besides the space about dwelling it can also be about how the street itself is laid out. Streets should have a consistency which gives a sense of familiarity and comfort. They should not be erratic, fragmented and ad-hoc. This can be achieved with a few simple design devices.



Houses should face onto the street in a consistent fashion. They should face onto squares and public places. Houses should establish a solid 'built edge' through having an overall consistent building line. Variations in the building line can be achieved by stepping some groups of houses back or forward of the main building line or turning the pattern at right angles. Other devices also exist to achieve some active movement down the

Layout 5.

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building line. Even subtle shifts in the building line can create a quite dramatic effect when seen in the three dimensions, yet the overall building line still gives a theme of consistency and enclosure.

Too many variations in the building height can also be disruptive to the sense of a welcoming street if not done selectively and carefully.

An artificial constantly varying roof line, often done to hide design faults and 'add variety' is visually disruptive as the eye does not feel comfortable. Natural changes in building height to add a feature or accent may be suitable. If height changes are done selectively then they often add more impact and variety as the eye is drawn to them.

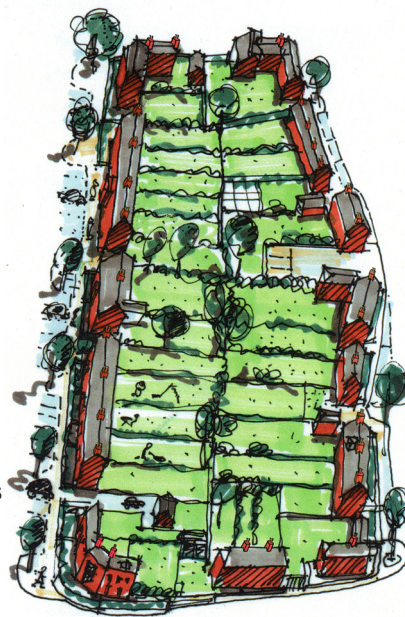
- Develop streets with a consistent building line and built edge.
- Develop streets where height changes are selective and not random.
- Develop streets where height differences are controlled and seem natural.

See also:
NFL p4. Privacy and Intrusion
NFL p8. Design for Community Safety.
NFL p30. Front and Back gardens.
NFL p54 to 57. Privacy and Intrusion. Distances p57.

Enclosure (2). Enclosure is also about the sense of security and privacy. It is expected that schemes will also accomplish these aims. Schemes should provide sufficient enclosure to provide security to private spaces such as the rear of properties and back gardens. Providing this security to private back gardens is important and schemes should provide what the NFL terms 'protected backs'. In other words back gardens should reverse onto other back gardens and not onto publicly accessible spaces where the rear 'backs' of houses can easily be accessed for crime and vandalism. By providing these protected backs the street frontages and the semi-private front gardens all provide a secure frontage that protects the rear gardens from unwanted access and provides a more private rear with a barrier to excess sound and visual intrusion from the street.

Privacy is also important and along with the private amenity space there should be a sense of privacy.

- Ensure that the rears of properties are secure.
- Ensure that privacy to private areas is maintained.



*Fronts and Backs. (NFL p27)
 Buildings should front onto streets, whilst back gardens should be private and face each other to form secure private areas which are inaccessible to the public.*

Layout Layout

Principles (NFL)

- **avoid unnecessary rear access** and ensure that where it is provided it is secure (40)
- **provide adequate outdoor private spaces** in all new developments. The design concept for a scheme should determine the quality, form and level of private space provision. Outdoor space for flats could be communal, or at the very least, balconies (47)
- **front gardens serve differing purposes in different places** which include discreetly located/ screened car parking, meters and refuse stores, privacy zones (keeping public from ground floor windows) (48)
- **distinguish between private and publicly accessible space;** provide appropriate enclosure for front gardens (49)
provide access to private gardens without compromising security; access to rear areas should be gated and vehicle entrances small and obviously private. Generally avoid screened access paths particularly at the rear (53)

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- NFL page 6. Context & building lines
- NFL page 25 Enclosure. 27 40 Continuity of street enclosure.

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Layout Layout

Principles (NFL)

TRADITIONAL MINIMUM GUIDE DISTANCES

It is inappropriate to simply apply the following distances without further consideration, especially of local character.

	boundary	highway	side
Ground Floor			
MAIN to	10.5m	4m	12m
SECONDARY to	7.5m	4m	9m
TERTIARY to	2.5m	2.5m	3.5m
SIDE to	2.5m	-	3.5m

DEFINITIONS

main aspect - main windows to living and dining rooms/areas

secondary aspect - windows to bedrooms, ground floor kitchens when overlooking

tertiary aspects - windows to kitchens and utility rooms excluding dining areas

side - windows to bathrooms, staircase and landings plus blank walls

boundary - limit of curtilage

An extract from the NFL page 57 (Distances) which the authority sees as an important guide.

- provide layouts based on **linked streets** to allow more flexibility and change in the future. Generally avoid culs-de-sac, except as a limited part of a linked layout (16)
- design **buildings to front onto streets** to make the place feel safer. There should be 'eyes on the street' including corners and gable ends ('active' windows, such as living rooms and kitchens, should overlook streets especially at ground floor) (38)

Summary

● Use the NFL Guidance

Use the NFL Guidance from the start with the Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail to provide a good contextual response to local character.

- Connect new development to other streets as much as is possible.
- Avoid culs-de-sac except as a limited part of a linked layout. (NFL Principle 16)
- Maximise connections. Ensure streets are connected. Ensure good access to local facilities
- Buildings should respond to the street frontage. (NFL Principle 38).
- Allow sufficient space about dwellings for amenity and parking. (NFL page 57).
- Avoid car parking and vehicular dominated street fronts.
- Set vehicle parking at side or rear of homes.
- Design schemes with active ground floor frontages to provide for natural surveillance and active street frontages.
- Allow sufficient space about dwellings to provide for visual and physical amenity to protect privacy and prevent unwanted intrusion.

Secured by Design.

The Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) latest Housing Standards Review consultation indicates that the latest proposals for security standards in new homes reflect the views expressed by Secured by Design and that Secured by Design, in partnership with the academic community and others, would be best able to show how to protect homes from crime.

'Neighbourhoods for Living' encompassed Secured by Design and continues to do so for the secure design of housing.

References in NFL supporting this:

Information boxes on pages 29 & 49. Principle 43. Concepts on pages 8, 26, 27 and 62.

See also General Information in NFL page 22.

Form (and Aesthetics) 1.

Form Form

ISSUES

Form and Aesthetics.

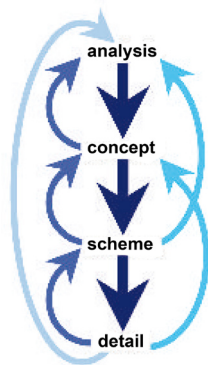
It is not only the plan of the scheme that delivers a good design but the form of the housing is equally important. Form and Aesthetics covers the house designs, and what the Planning Authority would look for in the delivery of successful and good house designs. Contextual quality housing should be at the heart of schemes, with the homes built to deliver quality. Designers are expected to use the Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail method to design the homes for the particular site. Form and Aesthetics covers issues such as;

- Context and Character. • Scale and Massing. • Roof Forms (Eaves and Chimneys etc).
- Elevations and Elevation Composition (inc Porches and Doors). • Elevation Details (Heads and Cills etc). • Materials. These are looked at below.

Context and Character.

Local context and character are central themes to Neighbourhoods for Living (NFL). The importance of context and local character is paramount and supported by the Core Strategy and Policy. Houses should be designed for the particular site location and context. Standardised housing types that could be for anywhere in the country will not be encouraged. If promoters of housing schemes have a range of 'standard' house types then the designs should be capable of being adapted to the local contextual requirements of the particular neighbourhood of Leeds where the scheme is proposed. Design of the houses should be driven by the use of the 'Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail' method as described throughout the NFL. Any precedent images for designs should be contextual to the site. The designs should then derive a contextual scheme.

- Derive the design of the houses from local context through an appropriate analysis.
- House designs should respond to the local character and context and be designed to respect the layout, materials and three dimensional forms of the local context.
- Involve community consultation on the design process to ensure that new homes do not negatively challenge the local context and community.



NFL p60

Scale and Massing: The three dimensional massing of housing should be considered as a balanced design. The plan form is the start and this should be driven by a well-proportioned overall plan. For house design ensure that the width to length ratio is well balanced and the height to the overall plan should be considered. Avoid building forms where the ratio of length, width and height is out of proportion resulting in an unbalanced massing. If the massing is large then it can be broken down into domestic

Principles (NFL)

- relate the site to its **particular neighbourhood** or character area and consider how particular attributes or activities can be strengthened (1).
- consider the **historical network of spaces** in an area. Positive qualities of these can be used as a basis to develop the new. (31)
- use the building form and enclosure to **create spaces with a sense of local identity.** (32)
- **Local Character.** Full section p40 to 41.
- **Scale and Massing.** Section P42 and 43. **ensure buildings, streets and places are of a human scale.** (86)
- ensure that massing and height of buildings **respect what would be overlooked and overshadowed** (88)
- **provide well-articulated elevations** to break down its scale, with accommodation in the roof where appropriate, to reduce the impact of a development. This may allow increased density with minimal visual impact. (89)

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- Analysis, Concept, Scheme, and Detail.
- p8. Analysis based design should underpin all proposals for housing development.
- p9. Analysis drawings required.
- p10 & 11. Better Design. Context.

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Form Form

Form (and Aesthetics) 2.

ISSUES

Principles (NFL)

- **Scale and Massing.** Section P42 and 43. **ensure buildings, streets and places are of a human scale.** (86)
- ensure that massing and height of buildings **respect what would be overlooked and overshadowed** (88)
- **provide well-articulated elevations** to break down its scale, with accommodation in the roof where appropriate, to reduce the impact of a development. This may allow increased density with minimal visual impact. (89).

Secured by Design.

'Neighbourhoods for Living' encompassed Secured by Design and continues to do so for the secure design of housing.

References in NFL supporting this:

- Information boxes on pages 29 & 49.
- Principle 43.
- Concepts on pages 8, 26, 27 and 62.

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- Scale & Massing. NFL, Section p42 and 43.
- Roof Forms. NFL p62 analysis (&Scale and Massing References).

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scale pieces or the large elevations can be visually broken with indents or setbacks etc.

The scale and massing should be appropriate to context and should consider the grain and context of the proposed site. Scale and massing of proposals should be a balanced composition and changes should not be abrupt or of a disproportionate nature. Scale and massing of the development needs to respect the adjacent built forms (buildings or open space and views) and the topography. In responding to topography the development should be complementary to the ground form so that the scale and massing is blended into the topography to alleviate any abrupt transitions.

The scale and massing also needs to be considered in relation to the overall enclosure of streets and views. It should not be of a scale to become oppressive but should enclose the spaces and streets giving a comfortable welcoming feel. The overall height of the proposals in relation to the space enclosed needs to be considered. The plan forms should have good proportions and if necessary be broken down with suitable projections or setbacks. The use of a limited palette of varying materials can also be used to help break down the massing.

- Ensure scale and massing is designed to complement the context and character of the area.
- Ensure changes of scale and massing is not abrupt and challenging to the context.
- Ensure the scale and massing respects the scale of adjacent forms (buildings or open space and views) and the topography.



Housing can be of a modern design and contextual. This resonates with local character in choice of brick and simple elegant proportions.

Roof forms. Eaves, Ridges and Chimney details.

The roof forms of a development are an important element particularly if the proposal is seen in its entirety from a distance. The roof forms in many cases provide the visual signature to the scheme from long distance and can do much to enhance the scheme if well designed. Roofs should be of a contextual manner and material and offer a consistency to deliver sufficient visual certainty and be a settling presence rather than be visually challenging. A strong eaves with relevant overhang to express the transition from the wall is a good design detail. The eaves overhang also provides the interest and variety by giving a strong shadow line which expresses the eaves line and delineates a visually strong roof component. Much of Leeds indigenous architecture follows this model.

Form (and Aesthetics) 3.

ISSUES

The roofs themselves and the ridges to the roofline are another component where the visual composition is important. Do not use excessive changes in ridge heights and roof materials. This does not 'add variety' but proffers a visual confusion. Arbitrary, unnatural and unnecessary changes in roof pitch are also a design idiom that usually results in visual confusion and weakens the streetscape composition. Some variations may be necessary and these can add interest if introduced sparingly.

Roofs, like the massing, should follow the topography. The linear nature of the ridges to roofs should be broken up with vertical emphasis. The interesting element to many existing roofs is the chimney element. The chimney element provides the break to the linear elements by providing multiple small vertical visual 'stops' which arrest and calm the eye as it travels the roof scene.



For housing the roofscape is important with the need for some vertical emphasis to the roofs. Traditionally the chimneys provided this element.

Whilst they may not be a technical necessity some form of vertical break to the roofs is essential. Some elements or percentage of the roofs to developments should provide these vertical accents or breaks. They need not necessarily be chimneys and can be formed of some other visual element that has the visual stature to achieve the visual breaks on the skyline. Simple television and 'satellite' dishes are not sufficient. (In cases where the housing proposal has primary flat roofs then some other elements of visual interest may be appropriate).

- Design the eaves to overhang if possible to provide a strong visual roof and shadow line.
- Design the roofs to have predominantly consistent roof lines and a consistency of contextual materials
- Avoid arbitrary changes of roof pitch and materials.
- Roofs should have a majority of roofs with some element of vertical accent or visual break such as chimneys.

Elevations 1: (Elements and Composition). The treatment of windows, doors and porches is particularly important: their form and pattern do much to determine the character of the building. Careful use of well-proportioned windows and doors creates a balanced scheme which should respond to local context.

This section covers the composition of elevations and indicates some simple design actions that can give a more balanced and harmonious contextual composition. Poor elevations are those that are simple 'elevated plans' or with an arbitrary placement of openings resulting in a visual incongruity which is detrimental to the scheme. Window and door openings should be considered not only in relation to the internal function but in relation to the external elevations. Do not allow elevations

Form Form

Principles (NFL)

- **NFL p29.** "Articulation of the front elevation, with different building elements such as porches creates a welcoming feel and offers a semi-private space for chatting".
- **respond to the context** of the development in terms of scale, massing and height in relation to adjacent buildings, topography, general patterns in the area, views, vistas and landmarks (84)
- **NFL p47** Windows. "The treatment of windows and doors is particularly important: their form and pattern do so much to determine the character of the building. Careful use of well-proportioned windows should create a scheme which provides consistency and responds to local context".
- **NFL p48.** (Grey Box). Gives guidance on three dimensional design including elevations.
- **provide well-articulated elevations** to break down its scale, with accommodation in the roof where appropriate, to reduce the impact of a development. This may allow increased density with minimal visual impact. (89)

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- Roof Forms. NFL p62 analysis (&Scale and Massing References).

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Form Form

Form (and Aesthetics) 4.

ISSUES

Principles (NFL)

- **NFL p29.** "Articulation of the front elevation, with different building elements such as porches creates a welcoming feel and offers a semi-private space for chatting".
- **respond to the context** of the development in terms of scale, massing and height in relation to adjacent buildings, topography, general patterns in the area, views, vistas and landmarks (84)
- **provide well-articulated elevations** to break down its scale, with accommodation in the roof where appropriate, to reduce the impact of a development. This may allow increased density with minimal visual impact. (89)
- **pay particular attention to the treatment of windows and doors.** Careful use of well proportioned windows should create a scheme which provides a consistency and responds to local context (102)

to simply develop in an arbitrary manner solely as a result of the plan function. Openings should be ordered, balanced and proportional within the wall area. They should have an understandable cadence along the façade. The elevations should also be consistent throughout the house and relate to the street context. Some simple cues to assembling a well-designed façade would be:

- The ratio of wall to window and doors needs to be considered and usually in domestic properties the ratio should be higher for the walls, the solid element.
- In many cases the windows and doors usually form a vertical emphasis to the elevations and the proportions are important.
- As a guide a 3:5 ratio of width to height forms a good starting point for windows.
- The openings should be aligned properly. If smaller windows are above larger windows then align them down the centre line. Windows can also be aligned to the edges particularly if they are the same size.
- The window and door pattern should have an ordered consistency both along and down the elevation. The interest comes in the detailing and style of the windows. Window styles should be consistent throughout the house and the scheme generally.
- Interest can also be added to the elevations by the addition of the porches to doors and the addition of bay windows to alleviate the elevation from becoming a flat façade.
- The addition of porches and doors should be contextual or of a relatively balanced and proportional form. Over enthusiastic additions can detract from the main elevation and massing forms.



Disorganised Composition.



Structured Composition. Shows verticality and organised window pattern. Chimney, elevation details and porch add interest

Elevations 2: (Details). The details of the elevation, the window and door style and associated detailing are also a strong component in the elevation. It is here that much can be done to add appropriate expression and interest. Windows and doors should have appropriate details in the form of heads, cills, and reveals. Windows and doors should also relate well to existing context and character. Windows and doors usually should have suitable depth to the reveals with the window or door set back to form the reveal. The shadow from the

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- NFL p29. Articulation of Elevations.
- NFL p47. Windows
- NFL p48 Elevation Guidance.

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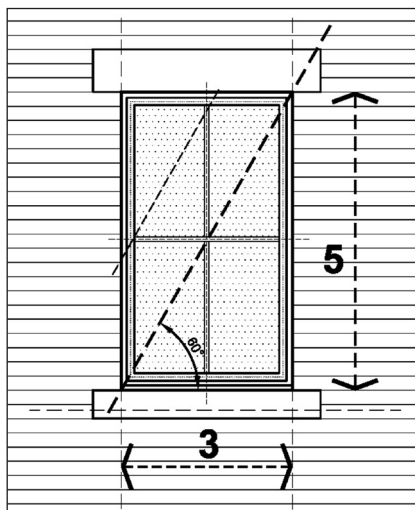
Form (and Aesthetics) 5.

ISSUES

reveals helps to model the façade with the interplay of light and darker areas. Plain elevations can also be enhanced with suitable details such as string courses, indents and appropriate contextual details.

Some general guides are given below:

- Window and door openings should be addressed appropriately and in most cases should have at least the appropriate head and cill details. If appropriate they may also have suitable quoin details.
- Window and door frames should be suitably set back into the opening to provide adequate reveals to the opening. Typically this should be around 75mm.
- Unnecessary and arbitrary 'brise-soleil' should not be used in an attempt to 'add interest', they often add to the visual 'clutter'.
- If the heads and cills are stone, artificial stone or concrete then they should appear to span the opening in one single piece. Lintels with joints in are not appropriate. 'Keystone' pieces should only be used if they are suitably contextual.
- Stone details such as string courses when judiciously and contextually used can provide appropriate interest and style to the elevations.
- Suitable detailing to brick and stonework such as indent courses or projecting 'base' courses can also add interest and style if appropriate.



Window proportions of 3:5 form a good ratio to give a vertical emphasis.

Materials. The materials chosen for a scheme significantly affect the design quality and the choices should be initially based around the NFL design guide of Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail. The materials used should be based on a good analysis of the contextual local character. Arbitrary introduction of non-contextual and non-domestic, commercial scale, colours and materials will not be supported. The material palette should be limited to avoid visual confusion and be ordered and consistent. Providing a limited and consistent palette of materials which can create a simple, more purposeful, character to a place would be encouraged. Even within a limited palette the materials can help articulate the massing and still provide a consistent character.

- The materials used should be contextual to the local character.
- Provide a limited palette of materials to avoid visual confusion and incongruity.
- Materials should be high quality, durable and sustainable with the need for minimum maintenance
- Material samples should be constructed on site and be of a sufficient size to enable a reasonable judgement as to the samples suitability.

Form Form

Principles (NFL)

- **Materials.**
NFL p6. Submission details. Suitable samples
NFL p25. How materials consistency and external details can form character and style to streets.
NFL p34. Durable and sustainable materials.
NFL p46. Red brick stone and slate are most common for Leeds.
- carefully choose **materials and construction methods** which provide a visually attractive result, and ensure that they are vandal resistant and durable with minimal maintenance. (37)
- **use durable materials** that will withstand their environment and likely abuse with minimal maintenance and still provide an attractive appearance. (104).
- **NFL p47** Windows. "The treatment of windows and doors is particularly important: their form and pattern do so much to determine the character of the building. Careful use of well-proportioned windows should create a scheme which provides consistency and responds to local context".
- **NFL p48.** (Grey Box). Gives guidance on three dimensional design including elevations.

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- Materials NFL p6, 25, 34 & 46.

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Form Form

Form (and Aesthetics) 6.

Visual Examples



Space about dwellings for parking.

Ordered and proportional window and door alignment.



Space between dwellings and porches add visual relief and interest.

Reference Also :

- NPPF, s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.

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Summary

- Derive the design of the houses from local context through an appropriate analysis.
- House designs should respond to the local character and context and be designed to complement the local character.
- Involve community consultation on the design process to ensure that new homes do not negatively challenge the local context and community.
- Ensure scale and massing is designed to complement the context and character of the area.
- Ensure the scale and massing respects the scale of adjacent forms (buildings or open space and views) and the topography.
- Design the eaves to overhang if possible to provide a strong visual roof and shadow line, responding to context and character.
- Avoid arbitrary changes of roof pitch and materials.
- Roofs should have a major percentage of roofs with some element of vertical accent or visual break such as chimneys.
- Windows usually form a vertical emphasis to the elevations and the proportions are important.
- The window openings should be aligned properly. If smaller windows are above larger then align them down the centre line.
- The window pattern should have an ordered consistency along and down the elevation. The interest comes in the detailing and style of the windows.
- Interest can also be added to the elevations by the addition of the porches to doors and the addition of bay windows to alleviate the elevation from becoming a flat façade.
- The addition of porches and doors should be contextual or of a relatively balanced and proportional form.
- Windows should have respective 'dressing in the form of appropriate contextual 'heads and cills'.
- Window frames should be suitably set back into the opening to provide adequate reveals to the opening.
- If the heads and cills are stone, artificial stone or concrete then they should appear to span the opening in one single piece.
- The materials used should be contextual to the local character.
- Provide a limited palette of materials to avoid visual confusion and incongruity.

Local Character 1.

Local Character.

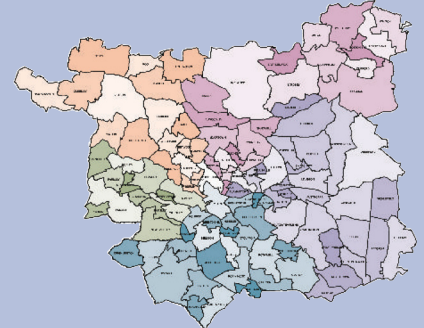
Collages

Much of the 'Neighbourhoods for Living' document is about the design response within the 'local character' or context of the sites. Designing within the local character and context should be seen as a positive and vibrant exercise. Leeds has many 'character areas' and a wide diversity of context. The following collages serve as a reminder of some of the varying and stimulating visual character of Leeds and its surrounding settlements.

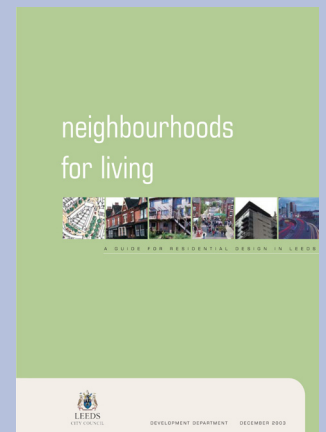


Form & Character

● Community and Character Areas



Leeds has many diverse communities and vibrant visual character areas. (NFL p14).



Front cover of the 'Neighbourhoods for Living' document.

Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.
- Materials NFL p6, 25, 34 & 46.

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Form and Character 2.

Local Character.

Collage of some of the varying and stimulating visual character of Leeds and its surrounding settlements.



Reference Also :

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Leeds CC CS (2013). Policy P10 (Design) & EN2.

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Policy Update 1.

UDP Policies Mentioned in NFL (Saved and Superseded).

“Superseded” refers to:

Superseded by Core Strategy (CS) Objectives and Spatial (SP) policies.

“Saved” refers to Saved policies from the UDP

SG2. Superseded
SG4. Superseded
SA1. Superseded
SA8. Superseded
SP1. Superseded
SP2. Superseded

N8. Saved
N9. Saved
N14. Saved
N15. Saved
N16. Saved
N17. Saved
N18A. Saved
N18B. Saved
N19. Saved
N20. Saved
N22. Removed covered by separate legislation
N23. Saved
N24. Saved
N25. Saved
N26. Superseded by development management validation requirements
N49. Superseded by CS policy G8.
N50. Superseded by CS policy G7.
N51. Superseded by CS policy G8.
N52. Deleted previously in UDP review
N53. Deleted previously in UDP review
N54. Superseded by CS policy EN3 and NRWLP policies 1, 2, 3, 4

T2. Superseded by CS policy T2.

T3. Deleted previously in UDP review
T6. Superseded by CS policy SP11.
T5. Superseded by CS policies SP11 and T2.
T7. Superseded by CS policies Sp11 and CC3.
T23. Superseded by CS policy SP11.

H7. Deleted previously in UDP review

S8. Superseded by CS policies P3, P4, P8.
S9. Superseded by CS policies P4, P8.

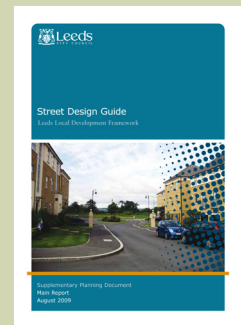
LD1. Deleted previously in UDP review

A9A. Superseded by CS policy T2 but saved until adoption of parking SPD

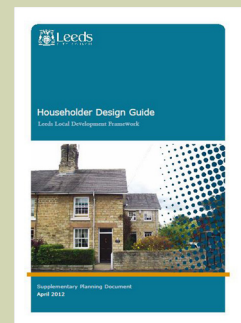
BC1. Deleted previously in UDP review
BC7. Saved
BC8. Saved
BD2. Saved
BD5. Saved
BD5A. Included within BD5
BD6.Saved

General Information

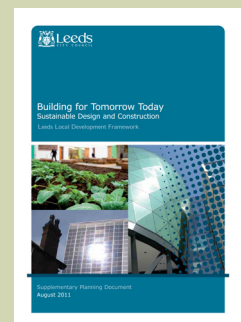
- **Examples** of associated Supplementary Planning Guidance which is used alongside NFL and to which reference can be made. They are available from the Leeds City Council website.



‘Street Design Guide’. Advice on road and street design for housing.



‘Householder Design Guide’. Design advice to householders regarding extensions and the like.



‘Building for Tomorrow Today’. Sustainable Design and Construction Guide.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

CABE at Design Council
Design Council
Angel Building
407 St John Street
London
EC1V 4AB
Tel: 020 7420 5200
Fax: 020 7420 5300
Email: info@designcouncil.org.uk
www.designcouncil.org.uk

CONCOURSE
The Green Sand Foundry
99 Water Lane
Holbeck
Leeds
LS11 5QN
Tel: 0113 283 2600 ext 23222
www.concourse.org.uk

DEPARTMENT FOR
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT (DCLG)
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Tel: 030 3444 0000 (General
Enquiries)
[www.gov.uk/government/
organisations/department-for-
communities-and-local-government](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government)

DESIGN FOR HOMES
The Building Centre
26 Store Street
London
WC1E 7BT
Tel: 020 3301 3855 and 020 3301
3856
Email: info@designforhomes.org
www.designforhomes.org

HOME BUILDERS FEDERATION
(HBF)
Home Builders Federation
HBF House
27 Broadwall
London
SE1 9PL
Tel: 020 7960 1600
Email: info@hbf.co.uk
www.hbf.co.uk

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL
ENGINEERS (ICE)
1 Great George Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3AA
Tel: 020 7222 7722
Email: [info@onegreatgeorgestreet.
com](mailto:info@onegreatgeorgestreet.com)
www.ice.org.uk

THE CHARTERED INSTITUTION
OF HIGHWAYS AND
TRANSPORTATION (CIHT)
119 Britannia Walk
London
N1 7JE
Tel: 020 7336 1555
Fax: 020 7336 1556
Email: info@ciht.org.uk
www.ciht.org.uk

LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE (LI)
Charles Darwin House
12 Roger Street
London
WC1N 2JU
Tel: 0207 685 2640
www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk
Yorkshire and Humber branch
Email: [mail.yorkshirehumber@
landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:mail.yorkshirehumber@landscapeinstitute.org)

RESOURCE FOR URBAN
DESIGN INFORMATION (RUDI)
Apollo House
359 Kennington Lane
London
SE11 5QY
Tel: 020 7091 7857
Fax: 020 7091 7961
Email: info@rudi.net
www.rudi.net

JOSEPH ROUNDTREE
FOUNDATION (JRF)
Head Office
The Homestead
40 Water End
York
YO30 6WP
Tel: 01904 629 241
Fax: 01904 620 072
Minicom: 01904 615 910
Email: info@jrf.org.uk
www.jrf.org.uk

Addressess 2.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH
ARCHITECTS (RIBA)
RIBA Headquarters
66 Portland Place
London
W1B 1AD
Tel: 0207 580 5533
Email: info@riba.org
www.architecture.com

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
Development Department
The Leonardo Building
2 Rossington Street
Leeds
LS2 8HD
Tel: 0113 247 7898
www.leeds.gov.uk

RIBA Yorkshire
The Studio
32 The Calls
Leeds
LS2 7EW
Tel: 0113 389 9870
Email: riba.yorkshire@riba.org

THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING
INSTITUTE (RTPI)
41 Botolph Lane
London
EC3R 8DL
Tel: 020 7929 9494
Fax: 020 7929 9490
www.rtpi.org.uk

Yorkshire Regional Office
RTPI Yorkshire
c/o Botolph Lane
London
EC3R 8DL
Tel: 020 7929 8192 and 07738
023302
Email: Yorkshire@rtpi.org.uk

SECURED BY DESIGN (SBD)
ACPO Secured by Design
1st Floor, 10 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0NN
Tel: 0207 084 8962
Fax: 0207 084 8951/01
Email: acpopi@acpo.pnn.police.uk
www.securedbydesign.com

URBAN DESIGN GROUP (UDG)
URBAN DESIGN ALLIANCE
(UDA)
70 Cowcross Street
London
EC1M 6EJ
Tel: 020 7250 0892
Email: admin@udg.org.uk
www.udg.org.uk

