Vale of White Horse District Council

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE

December 2009

4 Detailed Criteria

4.0
Detailed Criteria

The purpose of this section is to set out detailed criteria on how to plan and design the following types of residential development:

- Developments of 10 or more dwellings
- Developments of less than 10 dwellings
- Replacement dwellings
- Conversion of buildings to flats
- Developments in areas of lower density
- Residential extensions
- Conversion of agricultural buildings
- Conversion of chapels and churches
- Conversion of industrial buildings
- Refurbishment

This section does not repeat the principles set out in Section 3. Instead this section provides specific guidance for individual types of development.

The topics within this section cover the same headings within Section 3. However, where specific advice is required for a development type it is set out with the use of detailed plans and specific guidance.

A pro-active approach should be adopted when planning for all sites, though this is especially important for larger sites where the potential range of issues is very broad. Early liaison with the council is recommended to determine the key issues which will need to be resolved. This may include the appropriate mix of dwellings, the amount of affordable housing required, means of access, layout, and local issues such as flooding.


429 Cumnor Hill


430 Blewbury


431 Marcham

4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

432 **Abingdon**

4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

Site Layout

Section 3 above provides information on the general principles of a good site layout. This section provides a number of examples of how this can be successfully applied to large residential developments.

One of the most fundamental problems with many large residential developments constructed during the twentieth century is the dominance of the private car and the impact that has on the character of developments.

In a successful residential development the street hierarchy introduces a variety of spaces with differing levels of enclosure. This section illustrates some of the streets and spaces that can be incorporated into a site layout.

Image 433 below illustrates a typical village street found towards the centre of a settlement. In this example, a continuous built frontage is created by the buildings and the use of stone walls where there are gaps between the buildings. This creates a strong sense of enclosure, which helps to create a comfortable residential environment.

433 Typical Village Street Layout, based on examples in the Vale

① The development is focused around the building rather than the road. However the road outline shows that a standard 4.8m road width could be applied throughout.

② Traffic calming could be undertaken by narrowing the road or providing integrated street parking - designed from the outset.

③ The majority of parking is located behind the building line either in garages to the rear or in parking courtyards which are contained by housing and have no public access.

④ The siting of buildings creates a legible layout where the route through is clear and easy to follow, with focal features such as buildings or landscaping at strategic points.

4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

Image 434 illustrates a typical block layout where a mix of houses and flats are clustered around a central space, which is used for parking. The perimeter of the block is defined by a continuous built frontage of houses and flats.

434 Typical urban block layout, with internal courtyard parking

① The development provides "eyes on the street" both within the block and looking outwards from the block.

② The majority of parking is located within the largely visually enclosed courtyard, which reduces the visual dominance of the car on the street and on the buildings. Car parking is linked to individual units, with direct rear access to garages and spaces offered.

③ The siting of buildings and the approach to corners allows gardens to be provided for all houses and amenity space to be provided for all apartments.

④ Landscaping is introduced to the perimeter of the block to soften the built form.

4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

Image 435 illustrates a typical block layout where a mix of houses and flats are clustered around a central open space. In contrast to the previous layout, the primary elevations of perimeter houses and flats focus inwards on a central public open space.

435 Housing sited around open space, Wantage

1. Dwellings overlook the central open space, providing "eyes on the street".
2. Frequent corners and short straights naturally slows traffic, offering a safe pedestrian environment.
3. Landscaping is introduced within the courtyard to help create a more enclosed space and to protect the residential amenity of properties, which abut the street.
4. Linkages to other streets improves permeability.

436 **Courtyard Housing overlooking public open space**

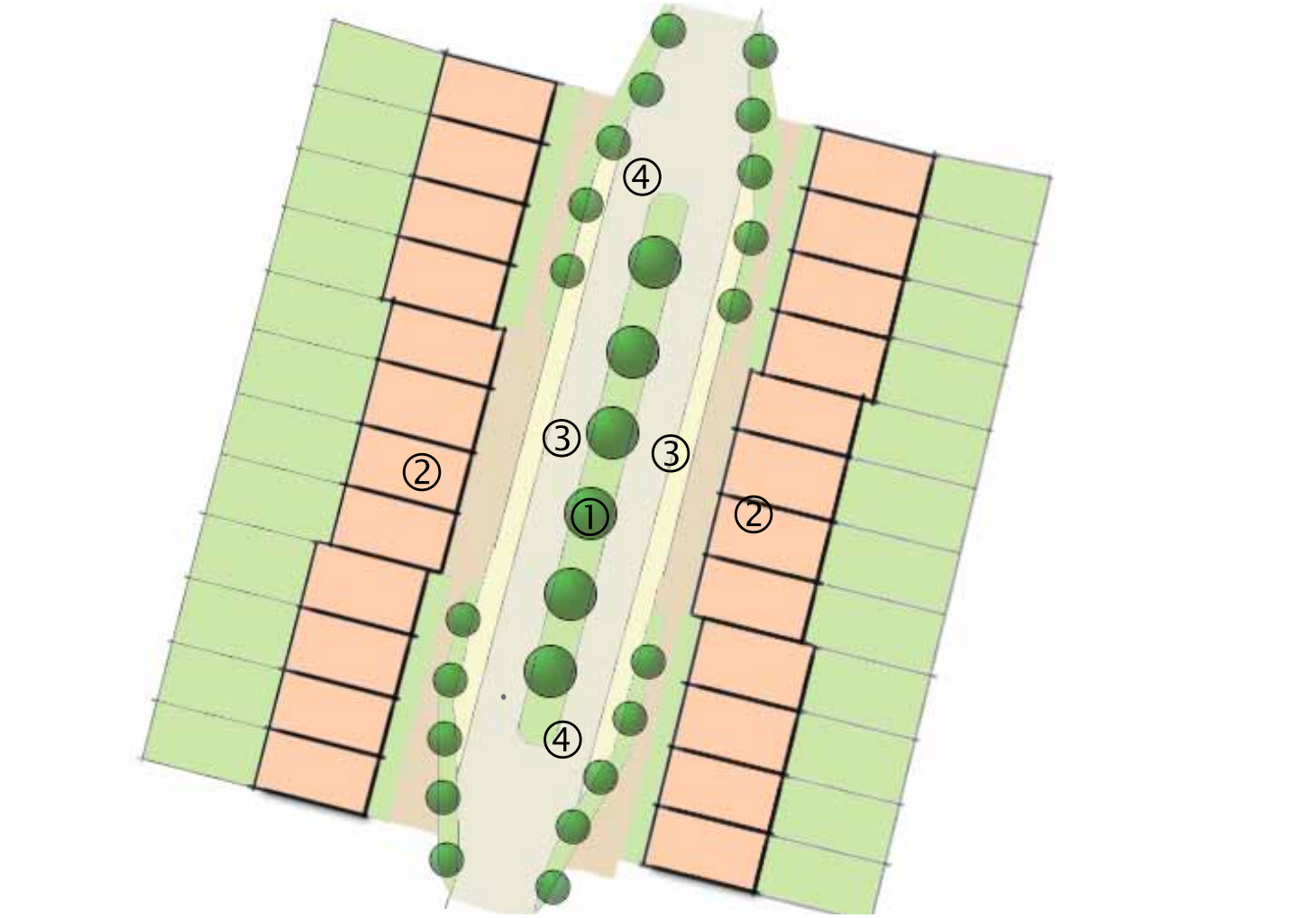
4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

Avenues can form an important part of an overall street hierarchy within a large residential development, but they need to be carefully designed to ensure that the car does not dominate.

To ensure that traffic speeds are minimised, the length of avenues should normally be less than 200 metres.

Building heights and features such as tree planting can help enclose the space, thereby enhancing its appearance and helping to reduce traffic speeds.

437 Tree lined avenue, Abingdon



① Existing mature trees can be utilised as a feature rather than seen as a constraint

② Three to four storey housing and smaller street trees line either side of the street adding to the sense of enclosure

③ On street parallel parking provides sufficient space in a sustainable urban environment

④ Speeds are reduced by narrowing the street to a single carriageway on either side

438 Avenue design based around existing mature trees

4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

Built Form

A significant problem within some large residential developments is the monotony of the built form. This can contrast with the historic streetscene where a greater variety of building types exist.

It is essential that residents have "pride of place' in their environment. Providing variety within the streetscene can help achieve this by creating a sense of identity. Using differing eaves and ridge heights, a variety of appropriate materials and colours, and a range of architectural features such as bay windows, dormer windows, chimneys, porches and boundary treatments can all help to achieve this.

Images 439 to 441 below illustrate how variety and interest can be achieved.

439 Well designed, uniform elevations create harmony

440 Different roof heights add variety

441 Careful, complementary selection of materials

4.1 Developments of 10 or More Dwellings

Case Study Elm Farm Close, Grove

442 **Variety of images showing density, design and landscaping**

Mix & Density

Elm Farm Close provides a broad mix of units, including one-bed flats and detached family houses.

The site was developed at a density of 54dph. High density developments can be successfully delivered with good design and layout.

Design

Elm Farm Close incorporates a variety of building styles, which helps give the development a sense of identity.

Interest is added to the streetscene by incorporating variety in eaves and ridge heights and by introducing interesting design features such as dormer and bay windows. Doors are painted in bright primary colours, which are appropriate for the area.

Materials & Landscaping

This high density development is softened by landscaping. The three central trees provide a central focus for the development. Other planting to the front of properties provides an attractive setting for the dwellings.

The hard landscaping is also successful because of the use of appropriate pavers. Pavers can be attractive and low maintenance, and can also form part of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (see 3.9).

Street Frontage

The frontage of Elm Farm Close onto Grove Road is less successful as the design of these elevations has less variety and fewer interesting features compared to the internal elevations. The introduction of an appropriately designed landscaping scheme could improve development's appearance.

443 **Existing Street Frontage**

444 **Potential landscaping improvements to street frontage**