

The **Edinburgh** Standards for --- **Urban Design**



এডিনবরার নগর পরিকল্পনার মান

愛丁堡城市設計標準

ایڈنبرا شہر کے نقشے کے متعلق معیار

مستویات ادنبرہ المطلوبة لتصميم المدينة

The **Edinburgh**
Standards for _____
UrbanDesign

APPROVED
BY

**THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL**

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Town planning seeks to achieve good quality development. Urban design is about relationships, the character of buildings and spaces and how people perceive and use both. Increasing interest is being shown, at national and local levels, in the three-dimensional quality of new development and the role and contribution of urban design. A great deal of urban design advice has now been produced from a variety of sources including the Scottish Executive. This document translates that advice into the Edinburgh context.

A user-friendly text is employed, illustrating principles with drawings and photographs of environments in the city. It does not attempt to cover every issue but concentrates on those aspects which are of particular importance to Edinburgh and make it distinctive. They have been presented in a way which should make them of interest to a wide audience. The Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design underpin the Council's commitment to take design matters seriously.

EDINBURGH'S SPECIAL CHARACTER

Edinburgh's special character is reflected in its unique central area, which is of World Heritage Status, and its quality suburbs and villages. In addition there are several urban expansion areas and these, with the large-scale regeneration of a number of inner and outer city sites, help define the modern Edinburgh.

Wide visual appreciation of much of the city's core and surroundings is made possible by Edinburgh's spectacular topography revealing both the urban grain and an often dramatic townscape. A complex interplay of elements has shaped the character of Edinburgh. It is a city in which landscape, history and buildings are combined in harmony.



The **Edinburgh** Standards for **UrbanDesign**

The Old Town is characterised by the survival of the little altered medieval fishbone street pattern of narrow closes, wynds and courts leading off the spine formed by the Royal Mile. Also of significance is the height of the picturesque multi-storey 16th and 17th century merchants' and nobles' houses and important early public buildings such as the Canongate Tolbooth and St. Giles Cathedral.

The development of the Georgian New Town is a model of structured urban design. It is characterised by disciplined palace fronted facades in local sandstone creating a regular grid of streets, squares and crescents, interspersed by formal gardens, and containing a series of major neo-classical buildings. It now constitutes the most extensive example of a Romantic Classical city in the world. The juxtaposition of the Old and New Towns across a landscaped divide creates a Capital City image of world renown.

Victorian and Edwardian expansion gave Edinburgh a ring of tenemental and villa neighbourhoods. Stone and slate remained the predominant building materials and several are formally laid out with high quality architecture and landscaping. This expansion was interspersed with older villages and extensive open areas, undeveloped hillsides and wooded river valleys. The 20th century added suburban and peripheral developments to the solid core.

The city's buildings and open spaces reflect its long history as royal residence and centre of court life to its later development as a centre of learning, culture and commerce. Now, once again, it is a seat of government.

Edinburgh's identity stems from the relationship between its natural and built form, the configuration of buildings and city structure, the composition of historic buildings and tenement setting and the contrast between planned and organic, enclosure and openness. The variety of viewing points and juxtaposition of forms results in a townscape of great interest yet considerable visual unity.

This combination of natural and built heritage should not be lost or weakened. The principles presented here are informed by qualities which make Edinburgh special. They seek to achieve new development which draws on and interprets the past, although the emphasis is strongly on interpretation, creativity and innovation rather than prescription and pastiche.

Edinburgh is experiencing its most intense period of development for generations, not only in established areas, and the periphery, but also in regeneration areas and other brownfield sites. It is now wholly appropriate to pursue quality in new development and the Council is therefore committed to delivering development that respects the special character of the city, is environmentally sustainable and is sensitive to the needs of people.

POLICY CONTEXT

Urban design combines a concern with the visual form and function of development with its fit in its surroundings and wider context. The concept of the public realm, achieving a sense of place and the public significance of new development, is vital within the urban design perspective. Matters such as community safety, accessibility, sustainability, quality of life and protecting the heritage legacy, are key concerns within the public realm and are significant elements within the urban design agenda.

This document has been prepared as part of the Council's intention to improve the design quality of new build. In particular it takes forward the recommendation of the Council's Urban Design Group and the Council's programme of work for advancing the Scottish Executive's agenda for design quality. It contains illustrations demonstrating urban design principles and highlighting quality solutions. A small number show less satisfactory outcomes.

These Standards will be used to supplement plans and policies and to reinforce and expand the design training recently undertaken by many planning staff. Developers should find them useful in clearly stating the Council's design requirements.

There is a need to draw together the various threads of urban design advice. The principles will be an important reference in development planning, the preparation of master plans, and in design and development briefs. They will also be relevant to the preparation of supplementary planning advice and be part of the context for Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

CONCLUSIONS

The Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design are set out in the Urban Design Principles in this report.

These are supplementary planning guidance and are intended to:

- maintain and improve the visual image and identity of Edinburgh as a European capital, by raising awareness of the city's structure and the importance of its key structural components
- ensure that strong pressures for development are directed to achieve better design quality in both the assemblage of buildings and their setting. An appropriate and durable fit of new development in its setting is sought
- ensure high quality urban design is sought from new development across the whole city
- foster greater interest in the contribution of new development to improving the public realm and commitment to the making of places for people to appreciate and enjoy

The Standards are set out as urban design principles and are shown within a hierarchy which comprises:

- City-wide dimension
- Local Area dimension
- Site/Street dimension
- Public Realm dimension

There is a sequential relationship between the different levels and, where appropriate, the same criteria can often be applied at different levels of detail

1.1

INTEGRATE NEW DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTE TO DISTINCTIVENESS

Recognise the role of the site within the urban structure. Integrate major new proposals into the city structure and ensure that new developments emphasise, retain or enhance the City's identity.

Edinburgh is renowned for the quality of its natural and built heritage. The importance of the latter is recognised by the UNESCO designation of its Old and New Towns as a World Heritage Site. The distinctive quality of the varied environments and life offered by the city lead to demands for new development. This brings new opportunities but it is important that development enhances the quality and diversity of this heritage. Bland development can erode local character.

Major development, or development in sensitive locations, can have a significant impact on the wider setting of the city.



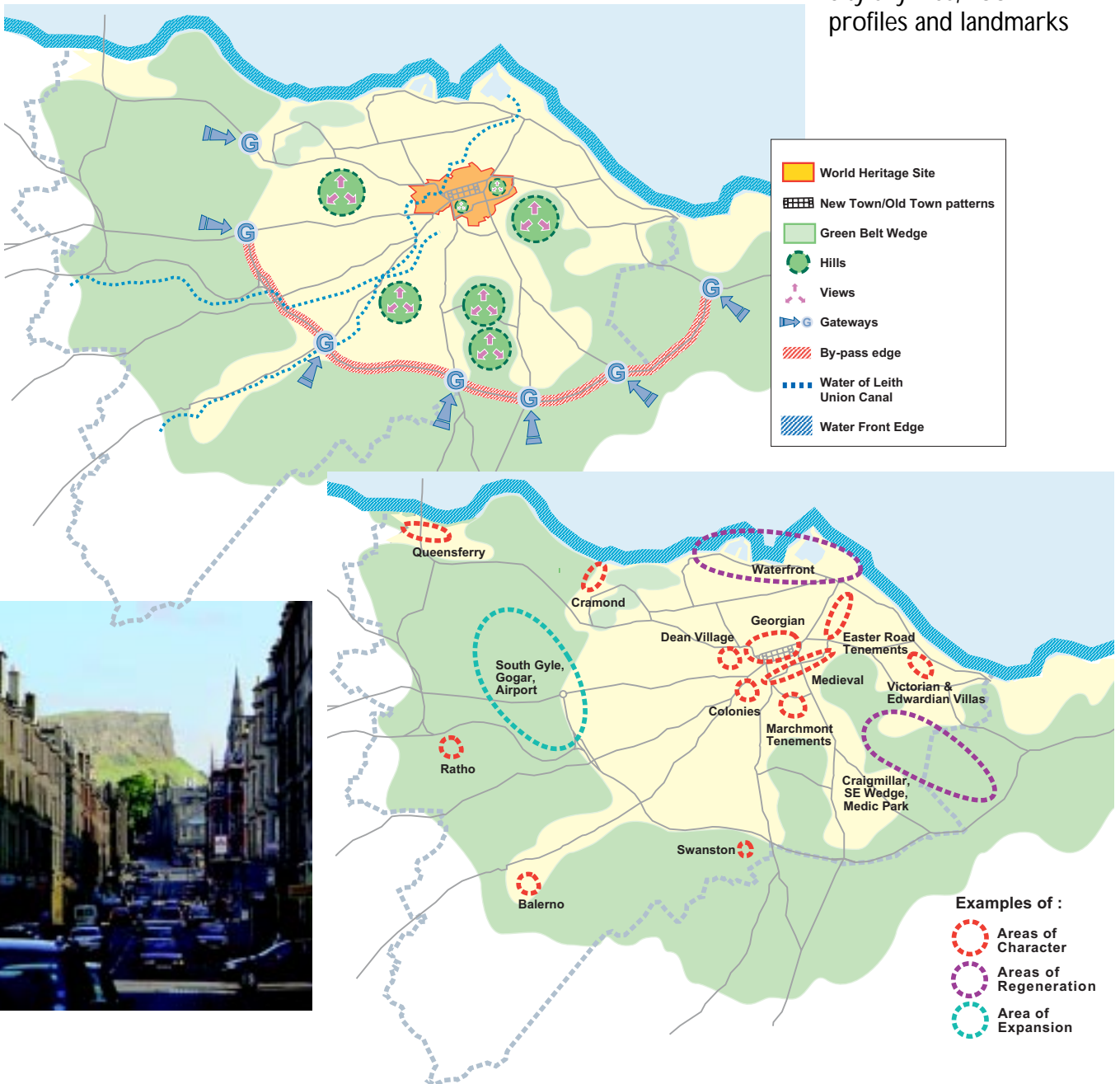
Royal Infirmary redevelopment site.

UrbanDesign Principles

Key components in the urban structure of Edinburgh are :

- topography and natural setting, including the seven hills and their interrelated views; waterfront, river valleys, canal and the backcloth of the Pentlands

- gateways and arterial routes provide strong visual messages about the city character, image, and identity
- the World Heritage Site, and other areas with distinctive spatial structures, building patterns, townscapes, special characteristics and built forms including city skylines, roof profiles and landmarks



Urban Design Principles

1.1



- clearly defined, and varied urban edges (including the boundaries between conservation areas) and urban/rural divides with attractive green belt land, regional park at the city edge, green corridors (wedges and fingers) that penetrate and interlock with the urban form
- major public parks, structural open spaces of landscape and townscape value; historic gardens and designed landscapes, significant Sites of Special Scientific Interest and areas of trees and woodland

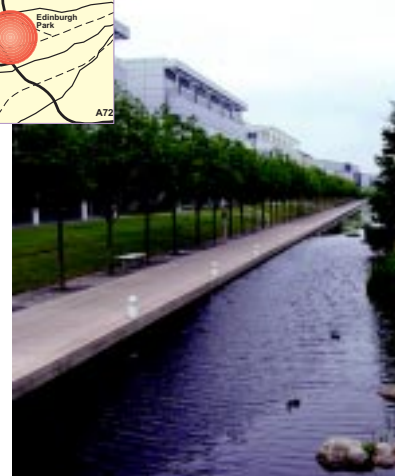
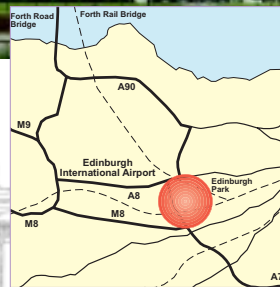


Urban Design Principles

1.1

New developments of importance should contribute to the image of a modern, prosperous City.

The Edinburgh Business Park at the Gyle gives the impression of entering a prosperous modern city shown by the scale of new business, the care in layout and landscape design and by modernity of buildings and finishes.



Challenges and Opportunities in development sites

Types of developments needing a particularly careful design approach at the strategic level are those which are :

- located at or along the Green Belt edge, at a gateway, along an arterial route or other major linear feature
- near or within a major area of transition between one kind of edge and another, eg development close to open space
- between a residential area and local centre, around villages, between one landscape designation area and another, in or close to Conservation Areas
- in areas of strategic change, eg regeneration areas, concentrations of old industries and warehouses , large institutions, transport interchanges etc
- capable of contributing significantly to the city's public realm, particularly new civic/ green spaces



Green belt at the west



Green belt at the south



Leith regeneration

Summary

- major or significant proposals should be considered in the citywide context
- proposals should protect and enhance the image of the city
- proposals should not cause unsympathetic change

1.2 CITY WIDE VIEWS AND CONTEXT

Protect and enhance views to and from established landmarks, hills, skylines, and recognise distinctive urban zones, layers of built form and backcloths. Maintain strategic views from major access routes and public vantage points.

Edinburgh offers the finest views of any city in Britain. Many are intimate, urban and incidental. Others are panoramic reaching Fife and beyond. Some key structural features, such as the Castle and Arthur's Seat, are prominent not only from much of the city but from the countryside around.



Development can adversely affect views of landmarks, skyline and traditional urban patterns. These are integral parts of the city's structure and identity, history, urban and architectural character. Some higher buildings, or those with large footprints, bland forms, poorly articulated massing, and insensitively formed roof structures can have a harmful effect on these important amenities.



Protecting and enhancing the skyline, urban grain, hill environments and their surroundings

Important design issues which need to be considered are:

- scale (mass and height) appropriate to those prevailing in the wider area, the existing topography and urban grain
- location in the World Heritage Site, in Conservation Areas, or relation to other key city components
- visibility from any key or incidental viewpoints
- intrusion into views of the city's main landmarks and silhouettes





integrity and clean slope



development creeping up slope

The hills referred to are: Arthur's Seat, Calton Hill, The Braids, Blackford Hill, Craigo Hill, Corstorphine Hill, Castle Hill and the backcloth of the Pentlands.

Development should be avoided where it intrudes into views of the hills. It is crucial that the important qualities of such views are not eroded.

Summary

- all new development should integrate with its wider surroundings and harmonise with the general height of buildings prevailing in the area
- development should re-inforce and not detract from valued skyline and views
- development should respect the general urban topography
- proposed buildings, visible from higher points should maintain or enhance the prevailing massing, articulation and any interesting existing pattern of roofs
- low rise buildings adjacent to higher neighbours should provide attractive roofscapes
- proposals visually affecting Edinburgh's hills require detailed scrutiny through urban design analysis, and should exhibit architectural excellence

1.3 DEFINE CITY EDGES

City edges and settings can be improved through appropriate new development. These should provide integration and visual continuity from urban to rural areas.

Planning in Edinburgh has been very successful in maintaining a clear separation between town and country. Several urban edges in the city are exemplary.

City edges are important since they convey first visual impressions. They can present a welcoming atmosphere or can be indifferent

and even threatening. Some developments are too close to important edges and can present elevations of a lesser quality. Some edge locations are unsightly or derelict. It is too often assumed that substandard treatment of these areas is acceptable but edge sites are often highly visible, especially from roads, railways and vantage points.

Major peripheral developments and strategic regeneration proposals along edges, such as the river frontage, should include measures to improve environmental quality. They should create distinctiveness, as well as providing for better public access/ links and recreation.

A strong and confident development edge can provide an effective contrast, in certain circumstances. For example topography and landscape setting can combine with higher built forms to produce an attractive result.



Defining edges & settings

City edges can be defined and improved in a number of ways including the creation or retention of :

- urban forestry/shelter belts
- structural landscape buffers
- medium density or compact low rise development well articulated with significant landscape zones
- varied and broken roofscape mass with generally maximum three storeys for feature buildings
- landscaped routes or sites for footpaths, cycleways and bridleways at coast, river, stream and canal edges



Fort Kinnaird - aerial view



Summary

- examine proposals for their possible contribution to definition of edges
- integrate new and existing development at the city edges in order to provide continuity and underline contrast and gradation between urban and rural character

1.4 AIM TO IMPROVE IMAGE AND LEGIBILITY

Enhance the appearance and maintain the complex and varied character of arterial routes.

The economic success of a city is increasingly dependent on how it is perceived and remembered.

Edinburgh's success is derived partly from its clear and dramatic physical images.

Lower quality development at some entrances of the city, and to a lesser degree along the arterial routes, may reflect its 'off centre' location, the practical nature of its use, the need to take advantage of transport connections and by the priorities given in the past to the needs of the car. The city's environmental quality can be eroded by ad-hoc incremental growth and by allowing poor quality precedent to be repeated.

Caring for City Gateways and Routes Enhancement

Many of Edinburgh's gateways and arterial routes are attractive. Along others there is scope for improvement. Many routes are old and have developed sections of different character over the years. They are multi-functional combining safe and efficient movement with a multiplicity of activity

alongside. Their role in presenting the city's image, cohesiveness and legibility needs highlighting.

Proposals along arterial routes can interfere with the framing and visual connections of city landmarks. They need to take account of that wider context. Arterial routes often provide a 'staged' introduction to the city centre through a series of coherent zones. Developments alongside these routes should be sympathetic to their character.

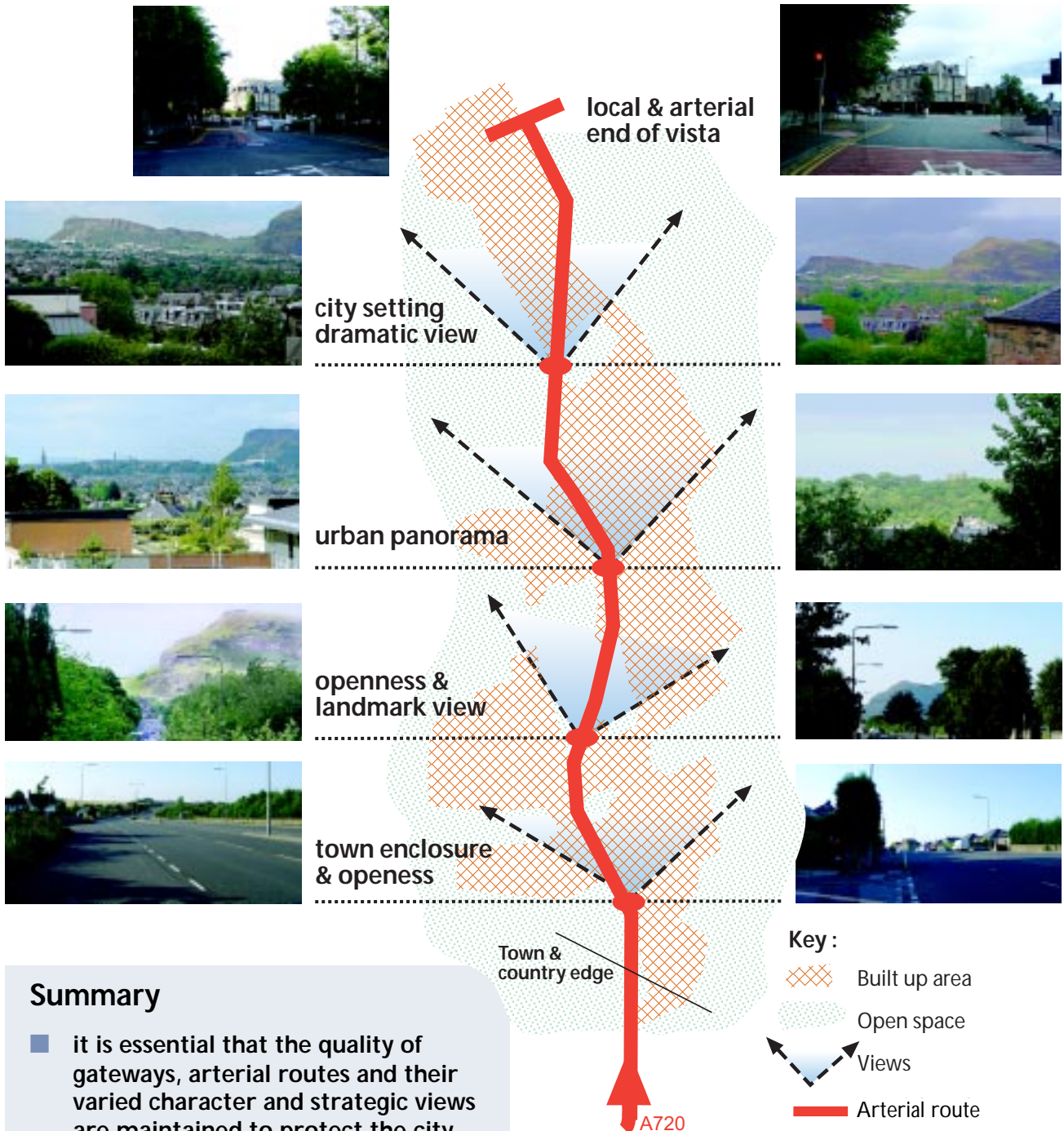


Distinctive characters - Corstorphine Road



Bland roadside development no distinctiveness





Summary

- it is essential that the quality of gateways, arterial routes and their varied character and strategic views are maintained to protect the city image and legibility
- new developments along these locations should be of high quality urban design and architecture. This will involve consideration of their context and providing them with appropriate settings

Arterial route example :
 (City edge to edge of inner city)
 character -
 interplay of substantial open space and low rise residential with striking views of urban setting

1.5 STRENGTHEN AND EXTEND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND CIVIC SPACES

Continue to maximise opportunities to enhance and extend links to individual spaces and the open space network in the city.

Edinburgh has a spectacular natural setting, a wealth of hard and soft outdoor spaces, rivers, hills, a canal, a burgeoning urban forest, beaches and coastline. It also has historic and

walled gardens, squares, parks, areas of great landscape value and wildlife sites. These occur in many parts of the city and convey a very special sense of place.

The combined effect of private and communal gardens visually creates green structures within the urban fabric.

Some development has been on areas of green space. This can result in the loss of landscape features, amenity and recreational space, and can also reduce public accessibility.

Links to major city assets can be physical and visual. They re-inforce the feeling of inclusion and aid orientation.



Strengthening Strategic Open Space Links

Every opportunity should be taken to:

- create new outdoor spaces and links to green and civic space networks
- strengthen and increase links between existing and new development

- extend the network of cycleways and footpaths
- ensure new developments do not jeopardise existing open spaces as well as being appropriately separated from natural heritage areas



Examples of rivers and linkages

Summary

- consider outdoor spaces as a means of integrating and linking development to provide structure and a shared community focus
- minimise the loss of public access to areas of outdoor/visual amenity, recreation and biodiversity interest
- open spaces and citywide green corridors are of particular interest. Development proposals should be assessed to establish the threat or contribution they might make

2.1 LIVELY AND ATTRACTIVE LOCAL PLACES

Mixed uses and human scale can give vitality and create attractive places that contribute to promoting safe and sustainable communities.

An attractive feature of Edinburgh's historic core, many of its neighbourhoods and former villages is that they still retain 'living centres'. They remain places where people both work and live. This mix of uses helps to create a vitality that maintains a neighbourhood's identity and adds to its attraction.

This is a key principle in urban design at the neighbourhood level. A range of initiatives from 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' to 'Designing Places' demonstrate some key themes in successful implementation



Quality and the creative process

The design quality of neighbourhoods can help to facilitate social inclusion and sustainable living. The design process brings together principles with elements of local character to create distinctive places. It avoids the imposition of standardised solutions which make it difficult to tell one place apart from another.



Offering Choice

There should be a choice and mix of uses. Proposals should offer a variety of types, sizes, designs and, in housing, tenures for all sectors of the community.



Housing Associations have played a key role in regenerating the Old Town, much as private house builders are now doing in peripheral areas.

Encouraging vitality

The most attractive neighbourhoods are those which offer in addition to houses a range of work, service, shopping, educational and leisure opportunities. Together with quality in the public realm, they help to create a focus for the local community and shape a sense of place.

Raising densities to support such uses has been used to justify attempts to cram in a maximum number of units generating unusual accommodation and building forms out of character with the context and lacking human scale. This is not acceptable.

Frequently little or no improvement to mixed uses or public transport is offered. A sense of balance between building and amenity, between site and surroundings is lost. Raising densities should be proportional to the context and need not mean high rise, or town cramming.



The results include poor street definition, the absence of any usable open space and domination of the car.)

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Providing Human Scale

Edinburgh already has successful tenemental areas and low rise examples of high density which can provide models for new development.

These developments are successful because of their legibility (the order and cohesion of layout and buildings), the security they offer, their private gardens, well kept communal gardens and the mix of other uses nearby, even the car does not completely dominate the environment.



a



b



c



d

Popular low rise high density examples include the new Colonies (a), four in a block flats (b), townhouses (c) and terraced houses (d).

These qualities create a human scale and offer opportunities for vitality through a range of activities and uses which make them successful places.



Tenements & Mixed Uses

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Providing Safe and Pleasant Spaces



Well designed and maintained open spaces, whether they are foot paths, streets, parks, squares, can be seen as places for people to meet. They also provide opportunities to improve integration between different places, spaces and buildings.



Connectivity

Priority in shaping new layouts should be redirected from the needs of the car to those of pedestrians and cyclists. Connections should follow desire lines and allow direct access to public transport, mixed uses, open and public spaces. Walkways should provide a choice of routes and be safe and accessible for all. Walkways can be extended to form 'green'



East Craigs Walkway

networks integrating neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with the city centre.

A 500m walking distance is recommended to access community facilities, mixed uses and recreational open space. New development should demonstrate that it is well connected.



Acknowledgement - "Towards an Urban Renaissance" copyright of Andrew Wright Associates

The Importance of 'Place'

Existing guidance places considerable emphasis on sustainability issues ranging from reusing brownfield land, energy efficient building design to improving natural habitats.

Urban design, in helping to make neighbourhoods attractive and accessible, encourages mixed use and vitality. In turn this creates places where people want to live.



Attachment fosters community involvement and management, possibly one of the most sustainable objectives of all.

Summary

Proposals should demonstrate :

- urban design to create a 'sense of place' and integration with local context.
- places which are attractive, offering mixed uses, variety of form and choice
- integration with public transport
- priority to pedestrian and cycle movement
- sensitivity to human scale

2.2 REINFORCE LOCAL IDENTITY

Where new development is to be located within a neighbourhood of distinctive spatial structure, townscape and landscape, the proposal should reinforce the existing character.

Recognising Development Patterns in Edinburgh

Character appraisals of many of Edinburgh's central, villa and village conservation areas reveal their individual identities and include an analysis of the physical attributes of their spatial layout and townscape qualities. They include the study of buildings and their relationships to their natural setting, to each other, to the streets and spaces around them.

Interpreting Edinburgh's character in Urban Design led regeneration

The Council has approved a number of urban design frameworks, master plans, planning briefs and design statements in both the inner and outer city. These have interpreted the

prevailing local character and shaped proposals which respect and improve their particular context. Together with negotiations on planning applications, this process has informed urban design principles appropriate to Edinburgh.



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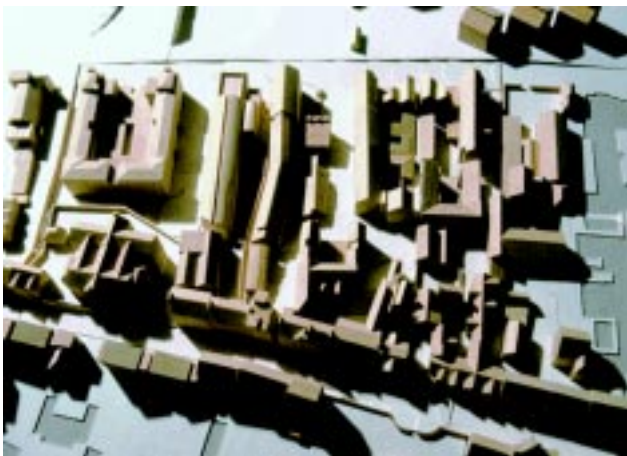


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Reinforcing Local Character

These examples are only a very few of the distinctive neighbourhoods to be found throughout the city. Their coherence helps to reinforce spatial structure and enhances local character.

New development should demonstrate the following qualities :



Acknowledgement - John Hope



Acknowledgement - Smith Scott Mullan Architects

- connect with existing good development and street structure and offer links to future development opportunities

- increase mix of uses and building forms if appropriate



- fit with adjacent building types, form mass and proportions



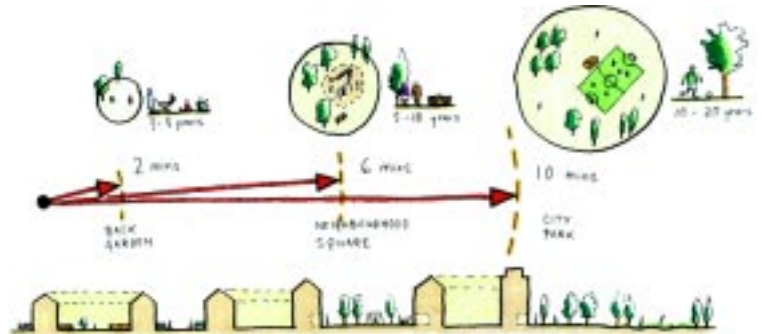
- complement the surrounding townscape, the prevailing urban form, skyline features



- reinforce ground level street life and human scale



- respect the prevailing spatial structure, plot sizes and shape, building spacing



Acknowledgement - Smith Scott Mullan Architects

- identify opportunities for new civic and open spaces to create identity and act as organising elements

Using a Contextual Analysis

An analysis of the context can help to identify guidelines from which judgements may be made on the suitability and extent to which proposals should either fit with, offer transition from or present opportunities to 'punctuate' or vary that context.

Summary

- significant proposals at this scale should be accompanied by a Contextual Analysis
- new build should not be higher nor of greater mass than adjacent existing development unless there are special townscape reasons
- identify needs/opportunities to improve the components of urban design, form, space, activities

2.3 MAKE DISTINCTIVE URBAN FORM

Shape distinctive neighbourhoods to create local identity, where the existing development form is poor or due for regeneration.

Shaping Distinctive Form

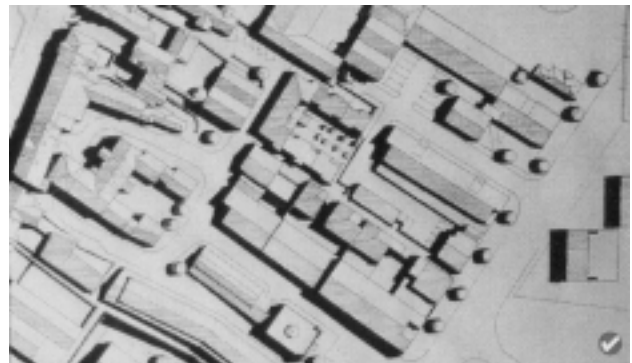
Urban design is about creating a 'place' in which every building recognises that it is part of a greater whole in which "development either contributes to making the urban fabric coherent or undermines it" (By Design, DETR). Good places are what makes so much of Edinburgh distinctive and recognisable. Where there is no built context, or comprehensive development is proposed, a 'coherent' urban fabric is often defined by the characteristics below.

■ Respect Setting

New area development should reflect the topography, conserve and provide a setting for natural and best built features and focus on the reuse buildings of character, especially when of traditional stone construction.

■ Links with Surroundings

Connections should be made with the surrounding access routes and streets providing linkages in building form and access.



Developers Master Plan



Not piecemeal opportunism

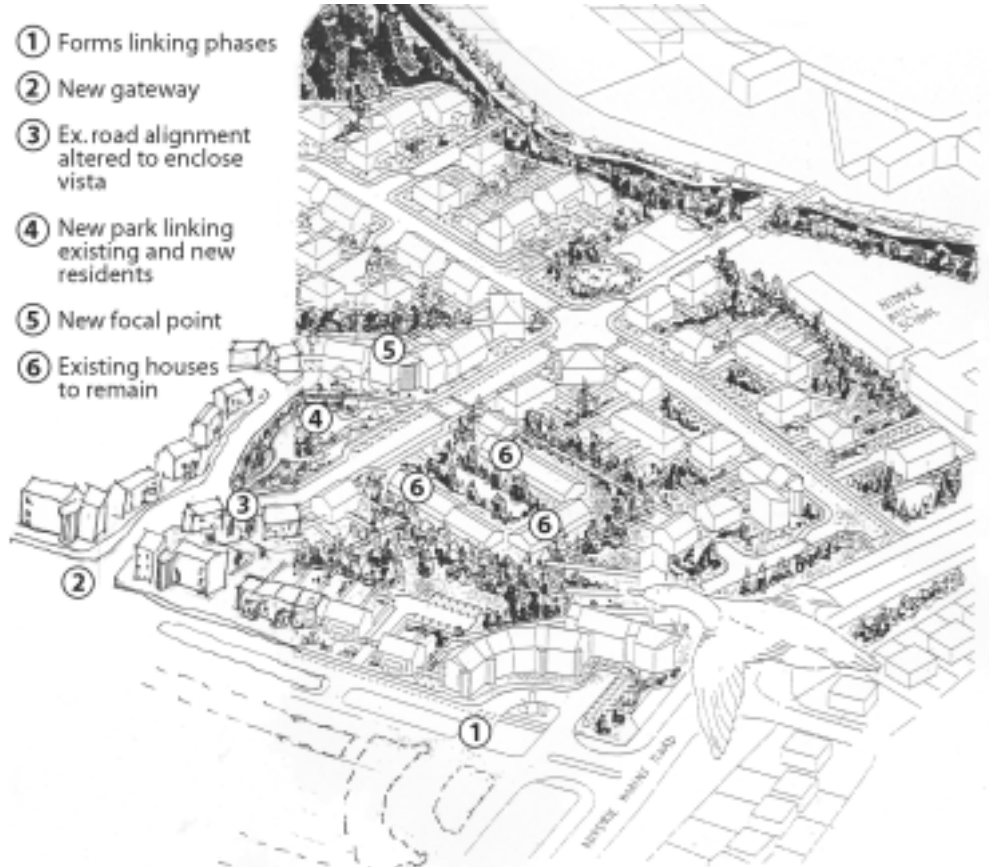
■ A new development pattern

In new area development, opportunities exist to create context by composing hierarchies and sequences of built forms, access and arrival points and open spaces.

■ Frontages, Edges and Boundaries

Building frontages should address or offer informal supervision to streets, open spaces, walkways along canals, rivers, burns etc. Between changing character areas, land uses and building scales, space should be created for within proposal boundaries for appropriate transition zones and hard or soft landscaping.

- ① Forms linking phases
- ② New gateway
- ③ Ex. road alignment altered to enclose vista
- ④ New park linking existing and new residents
- ⑤ New focal point
- ⑥ Existing houses to remain



Acknowledgement - Smith Scott Mullan Architects



■ Attractive Spaces

“Successful urban space is defined and enclosed by buildings, structures and landscape. The relationship between buildings on a street, and between buildings and the street, are the key to this” (By Design, DETR). Open spaces should be an integral part of the design and not a left over.



■ Clear and permeable layouts

A clear access network, a coherent spatial structure (see next principle), appropriate building spacing and vistas to focal points help people to orientate themselves

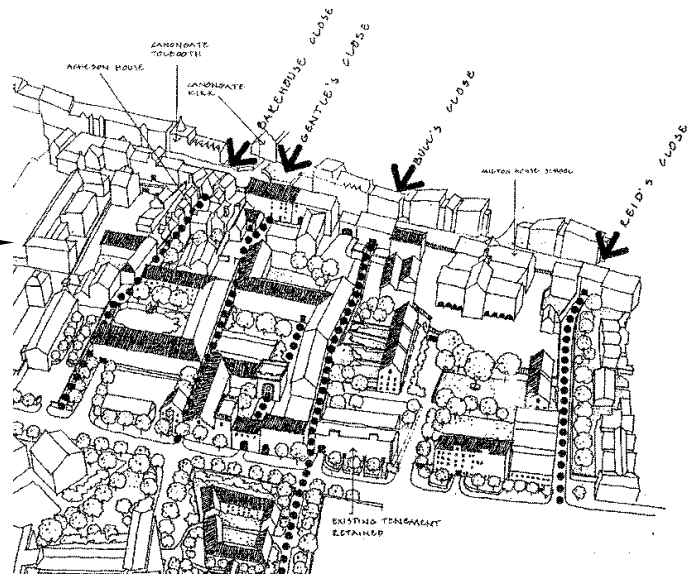
■ Landmarks and meeting places

Too many new developments lack civic space, landmark buildings or public uses to mark their centres. Good focal points give activity and 'life', 'punctuation' in built form to the wider context and convenient access to public transport.



■ Reflect Edinburgh's heritage

New development should be of an innovative and high quality design interpreting Edinburgh's heritage but without resorting to 'pastiche'. Emphasis should be given to recognition of context, natural materials and craftsmanship.



■ Amenity, Interest and Safety

Edinburgh's northern location requires careful siting and orientation of streets, buildings, open spaces and pedestrian routes. Interest and safety should be given by offering choice, maintaining views, providing well designed hard and soft landscaping, good quality lighting and public art.



Summary

- early pre application discussion is crucial for the development of larger or sensitive sites
- master plans will often be the preferred way of tackling larger, mixed-use sites
- mix of uses and building forms need to be encouraged according to Local Plan requirements and area character
- combine activities, development and spaces to give distinctive urban form

2.4

MAKE COHERENT LAYOUTS

Provide a clear and coherent spatial structure offering potential for diversity and vitality.

Development proposals frequently fail to recognise context or demonstrate relationship to their surroundings.

Island and Cul-de-Sac Developments

Stand alone (or 'pavilion') developments often overwhelm or are out of scale with their context whilst cul-de-sac layouts turn their back to it. The former approach means that commercial, retail and housing developments appear as stand alone and isolated whilst the latter, often presenting fences to the public view, are introspective. These development approaches lead to an increasingly fragmented urban fabric in which relationships with the street, distinctions between public and private and ultimately the identity of an area is lost.

Creating coherence with flexibility

One approach that can help to deliver a coherent spatial structure in larger developments is variation of perimeter block design. They can accommodate a range of land uses, building types, densities, or open space, making successful connections between adjacent areas.



Flexible perimeter blocks



Unrelated island development



Cul-de-sac layouts

Perimeter Blocks

Perimeter blocks, where development directly fronts significant streets is common in both tenemental, villa and older suburban parts of Edinburgh.

Perimeter blocks help to make a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs - these are further reinforced when primary access to development is from the street side





Reintroducing perimeter blocks

Block size

The optimum size of blocks is determined by:

- ease of access
- ability to encompass a variety of building sizes and uses
- ability to change over time

Square blocks offer the most flexible layout for commercial and residential buildings and for internal treatment. Rectangular blocks with the short side onto the main street improves connectivity, for example blocks of about 100m have been found to be successful in inner urban areas. It may be appropriate to reduce these dimensions in more central locations.



Acknowledgement - Granton Masterplan

Small perimeter blocks

By keeping blocks small a more human scale, 'walkable' and user friendly public realm is created. Numerous pedestrian accesses give permeability and make walking and cycling easy, convenient and safe. They minimise car dependency and maximise the use of public transport.

Block definition

Continuous building lines provide good enclosures to streets or squares. Frequent doors onto the street and windows are crucial to provide animation and security to the public realm. Diversity within the block may be expressed by differing plot widths emphasised by entrances, skews, chimneys, and changes in levels, window composition, vertical features.



Acknowledgement - Smith Scott Mullan Architects

Summary

- proposals should connect with the surrounding structure and address adjacent development form and character
- establish a clear block grain and street pattern
- perimeter blocks can be used to create an attractive public realm and promote diversity

3.1

REINFORCE CHARACTER

Establish key elements to ensure fit with surroundings

Frequently new buildings pay little respect to their role within streets by ignoring key elements, such as plot widths, massing and heights, resulting in over development, loss of amenity and conflicts of scale. In particular the integration of new with old can be forced and crude.

New buildings should integrate with the established local character where this is of merit.

In reinforcing local character, new buildings should :

- acknowledge natural features and landscape
- take account of the spacing between buildings and the relationship to open space
- improve local street and access patterns
- fit the composition within prevailing building types and their significant features such as density, mass, footprints and heights
- use existing plot widths to continue rhythms and give vertical emphasis
- interpret local history and design elements
- respect building lines, existing window proportions and solid to void relationships
- Use appropriate materials and be designed with a consistent approach to all elevations.
- where a roof is visible consider it as the fifth elevation by respecting and reflecting adjacent roofscapes
- maximise the number of dwelling/building entrances directly from the street

- use dominant local materials both in texture and colour
- rear elevations and the spaces created should also reflect the above



Street Frontage

- layout follows the road alignment
- street frontage follows the existing building line, with all flats having separate door entries onto the street
- traditional elements are reflected such as - wall head gables, providing a pend through to the rear and the use of render
- existing plot width, scale and proportions are followed providing a good rhythm



Street corner

- effective turning of corner gives emphasis
- materials and colour match with adjacent buildings
- building line is respected and continued
- good scale and proportions are expressed
- a corner building need not be higher than its adjacent buildings

Innovative composition

The past can help to inform innovative approaches to design by researching historic layout patterns and reinterpreting Edinburgh building forms.



interpretation of colonies / mews house forms into a contemporary and innovative development

- sensitive colonies style can be made appropriate in scale and composition
- design, detailing and materials can be modern and innovative while reflecting traditional built features
- flats can be entered directly from the street providing visual interest, activity and community surveillance

Resolving conflict of scale

There are many circumstances when trying to fit new buildings into an existing context where conflicts of scale arise and have to be resolved.

Big shed uses present special problems. These large stores/cinemas etc are often “stand alone structures” with exposed dead frontages. They sit behind extensive areas of parking and servicing, standing out within compact traditional and domestic scale streets.



Typical store layout

There is always scope to overcome some of the worst aspects; by turning or wrapping the big shed, by breaking the mass into smaller elements, by adapting proportions to express existing rhythms and grain. Incorporating big shed uses into the existing urban grain and disguise / screen large areas of car parking.



Store 'wrapped' by other development

Summary

- make reference to local, natural and built features, or special relationships.
- have respect for and reflect local proportions and plot sizes
- be consistent in the detailed design to all elevations
- use quality local materials

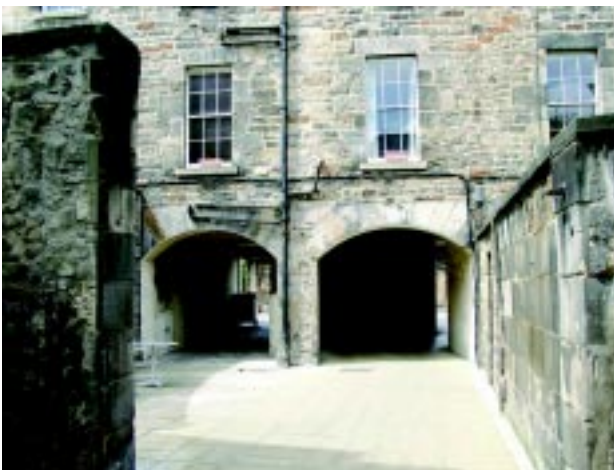
3.2 PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Developments should connect with, extend or improve the local street structure.

Within many new developments priority is given to car access. Pedestrians are frequently given lower priority and their needs often appear to be fitted in afterwards. This can lead to environments which are bleak, unwelcoming, unsafe and unattractive for the pedestrian and encourage car use. More circulation space for pedestrians will be sought when development is proposed.

Choice of routes and connections

The connections between a site and its surroundings are important for even the smallest of developments. Attractive links between areas help to create livelier safer and pleasant environments. Connections should be designed in favour of walking and cycling and give convenient access to public transport.



Consider how best the site can be connected with nearby main routes and public transport facilities



The typical cul-de-sac response creates an introverted layout, which fails to integrate with the surroundings



A more pedestrian-friendly approach that integrates with the surrounding community links existing and proposed streets, and provides direct links to bus stops



This street pattern then forms the basis for perimeter blocks, which ensure that buildings contribute positively to the public realm

Key

- Principal routes
- Bus stop
- Internal streets

Acknowledgement - The Urban Design Compendium courtesy of Llewelyn-Davies, English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation

Street Connectivity

Making connections is an essential part of creating a sense of place, which should be designed in response to the local context. New developments should connect into wider networks of movement and provide a variety of direct ways to main streets.



Linkages

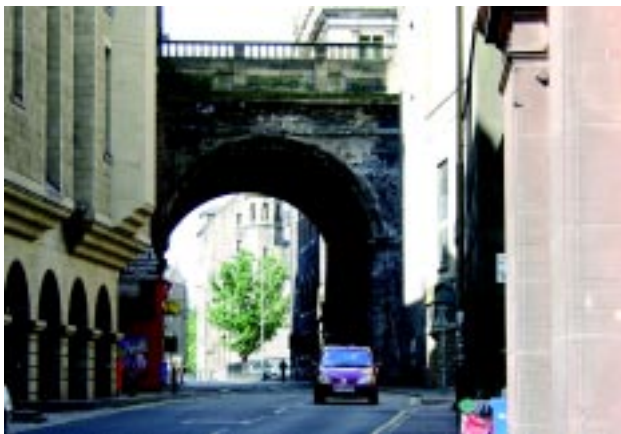
All routes, including public transport, cycling and pedestrian routes should be designed as an integral part of the street layout.

Creating new links

A development site may be bounded or confined by the topography, a river, canal, parkland, busy road etc. Sometimes cutting through, or spanning these barriers, can create new links with surrounding areas and reduce severance and isolation.



A clear street structure helps in the creation of places for people. Development that is sited to enhance existing views and vistas, or create new ones, is valuable to the streetscape and helps people to find their way about by reinforcing a sense of place.



Summary

- reinforce a new or existing street structure
- provide a choice of routes that maximise connectivity and linkages
- ensure that the street structure is clearly understood



3.3

VALUE OPEN SPACE

New Development should enhance existing, and provide new open space.

Open space can provide a range of functions including both visual and local amenity. In new development landscape and topography, as well as buildings define open space. These places can be 'green' or 'civic' spaces and include water, parks, squares, streets, courtyards, playgrounds and carparks. They can combine both hard and soft landscape elements.

Types of open space <i>(from the Draft Open Space Framework for Edinburgh)</i>	Description <i>(from PAN 65 Planning and Open Space and Draft Open Space Framework for Edinburgh)</i>
Parks and Gardens	Enclosed areas, designed and managed and those in public use, include for example areas for sport and recreation, biodiversity, local and visual amenity, play. Some areas are in private ownership
Walkways and Linear Parks	Areas along canals, river corridors, old railway lines and woodlands, linking different areas within the city as part of a designated and managed network or linking the city or area to the surrounding countryside
Play	Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for children's play. City wide and local facilities should be provided in local communities
Educational Grounds	Areas associated with schools and other educational premises that provide sport and recreation, biodiversity for example
Outdoor Recreation	Sports pitches and other active sports facilities such as tennis courts and bowling greens and including golfcourses
Natural Green Space	Areas identified in the biodiversity action plan and the urban wildlife and urban forestry strategies. Areas created as habitat enhancement (refer to Councils supplementary planning guidance, biodiversity policy)
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Areas that provide an opportunity for remembrance and for biodiversity
Allotments	Those areas specifically allocated as such for community benefit. This can also be provided by private and communal gardens
Amenity	All incidental green space that provides the setting to any development area. This can be both hard and soft landscaping (refer to council's supplementary planning guidance quality of landscaping in developments)
Civic Space	Streets, squares and waterfront promenades, that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and make connections for people and wildlife

Amenity

Developments can blend with each other through good landscaping which can also be an important part of the street character. Integrating new and existing development at their boundaries maintains the continuity of urban form. Responding to the existing layout, built form and spaces in the street ensures that new buildings complement them.



Work with what is there

Retained landscape, both built and natural features give form, local identity and optimise amenity to development. They help to provide a better relationship between new development and its environment.

A landscape framework gives amenity to development.



The three dimensional shape of the site is the basis for a development's form (expressed in its layout, massing and site contours). Natural features can help give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area, contributing to a sense of place. *(further advice can be found in Quality of Landscaping in Developments, Biodiversity and Open Space in Housing Developments Policies, supplementary Planning Guidance)*



The Murrays Housing Estate at Gilmerton demonstrates the effect of a substantial tree belt being introduced

Local Open Spaces

Local open spaces should be well located to allow safe access, preferably without having to cross roads, providing opportunities for informal supervision from houses nearby. These spaces and facilities give focus, variety and visual amenity to layouts. Open space should be “designed” into a development from the beginning to have meaning and utility, and not just space that is left over after a design has been produced.



Open space is often privately owned yet contributes to the visual quality of the street (private gardens) or to its urban structure.



Small open spaces such as pocket parks, children's play areas, well screened parking, open sitting areas also make an important amenity contribution, although their success depends on appropriate location and design.



Pocket Parks

Small parks of 20m x 20m can be absorbed within the overall block structure providing popular spots for relaxation



Versatile and Barrier Free Spaces

Different age and cultural groups will use spaces in different ways. Rather than segregating activity types and thus user groups, it is better to design versatile spaces that enable different people to enjoy different activities in the same space through the creation of inclusive environments

Summary

- ensure that amenity is both visual and functional (recreational)
- integrate new and existing development at their boundaries.
- relate and connect new developments to existing street layout and built form.
- integrate the site's landscape and natural features.
- ensure that civic spaces encourage activity.

3.4

INTEGRATE CAR PARKING

Almost all developments require provision for car parking. This can be catered for in one of three ways; either, inside the boundary of a development; or outside, usually on street; or underground. The main consideration is how to integrate parking without allowing it to dominate the development, the streetscene, or adjacent developments.



Car parking dominating space

On street parking - allow buildings to breathe

Well designed on street parking can be attractive, improve safety and security as well as help traffic calming. Generous footpaths or an equivalent landscaped/garden strip around buildings will keep parking away from a building's elevations and help to reduce car impact.

Off street parking - courtyard parking

A well designed overlooked courtyard with parking arranged in clusters, softened with landscaping and floorscape treatment can avoid tarmac deserts .



Off street parking - multi storey car parks

Wrapping parking with buildings is an effective method of screening car impact from public view. However the needs of building users need to be considered.

Multi storey car parks should only be considered when they can be designed to incorporate ground floor activities, such as shops or offices and thus integrate and contribute to the street scene.



Underground or Undercroft Parking

Underground parking is preferable to undercroft parking as the former allows ground floor activity to take place. Where undercroft parking is considered then the separation of the ground floor from the street level should be minimised.

Landscape and parking

Adequate space should be allowed for tree planting to all parking areas, be they retail / business parks, supermarkets or housing. This can be one of the most successful devices for integrating parking into the urban landscape.



Summary

- balanced approach to parking
- sufficient to cater for contemporary needs
- conveniently located close to destinations
- limited visual intrusion through the use of landscaping and quality materials
- safe and secure

4.1

THE OUTSIDE ROOM THAT EVERYONE EXPERIENCES

Wherever possible, opportunities should be taken to create new public spaces in association with development.

Their design and management demands as much care and attention as the buildings which enclose them.

The comfort, safety and convenience that people experience in travelling through public spaces determines the success of that space. Public spaces should offer an attractive, safe and enjoyable environment for all and not just be designed for traffic. Well-designed public spaces should function as part of a network of pedestrian routes providing for the needs of all users.

The following factors should be taken into account when considering public space.

Reflect the past

Within historic areas new public spaces should make reference to, and honour, the existing pattern and materials to reinforce local character.

Permeability



Red lines illustrate the high degree of permeability in the Old Town which provides

- access to and through internal areas of blocks
- linkage to major routes and public amenities
- interest, vitality and choice of route
- a good pedestrian scale through use of closes and pends

Pedestrian choice of routes

Pedestrians should be able to move around freely and directly between all parts of different environments, both locally and citywide. Street and access design should give priority to pedestrians and offer a choice of routes while respecting desire lines.



Sequence of public spaces

Ideally when moving around areas there should be a sequence of connected public spaces from the intimate to the grand.



The High Street and the range of public squares surrounding St. Giles demonstrate:

- human scale and pedestrian activity
- linked spaces connecting routes and movement patterns
- interest and vitality
- grandeur and visual connection

Pedestrian Interest

Uses that relate directly to passing pedestrians to give activity and interest should be provided at ground floor level.



Public space dominated by car

Where existing, or new, public spaces, are designed primarily to accommodate cars they tend to be difficult for pedestrians to navigate, or use the space. If streets and junctions are designed as public spaces and not just as routes for traffic, they are more likely to be convenient for all users.



Active public space

The best public spaces often have nodes of activity - cafes, stalls etc, complemented by quiet zones for rest and people watching. The positioning of activities requires attention to:

- Visibility - enabling people to have views across spaces
- Orientation - south facing, sunny and shaded spots for sitting
- Facilities for sitting and stopping
- Accessibility - directly from surrounding buildings
- Opportunities - to incorporate art



Summary

- determine the appropriate balance between pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- public spaces should provide a focus for pedestrian routes which should be accessible, safe and comfortable
- public spaces should have varied activities to attract people

4.2 ENCLOSE PUBLIC SPACES

Buildings should give positive definition and enclosure to the shape and function of public space encouraging a range of activities to take place. Outdoor space and buildings should make direct contact with each other.



Streets, squares, parks, walkways and canals should be treated as welcoming outdoor rooms whose character varies according to local identity. They should provide some of the following:

- Comfort - protection from the elements and physical comfort in the form of seating
- Relaxation - the use of natural elements - trees, greenery, water features - and separation from vehicular traffic
- Passive engagement - experiencing the environment without getting involved - providing sitting places that allow people watching
- Active engagement - becoming involved through - public art, fountains, coffee stalls, the arrangement of benches
- Variety and change - through festivals, street theatre, parades markets
- Social engagement - through location on a busy street and being visually accessible; level with the street and providing places to sit
- Active movement - presenting opportunities to shop, stop, watch, chat. A pedestrian journey is rarely single purpose

If buildings and their surrounding open space are considered as a totality then the success of a building should be determined by its ability to face the open space, animate and connect with it.



Building Lines

A strong building line creates continuity of frontage and provides definition and enclosure to outdoor space. Buildings facing onto, and address public open spaces create a sense of ownership.



Discontinuous and disrupted building lines produce a less lively and safe environment. They lack direct surveillance.



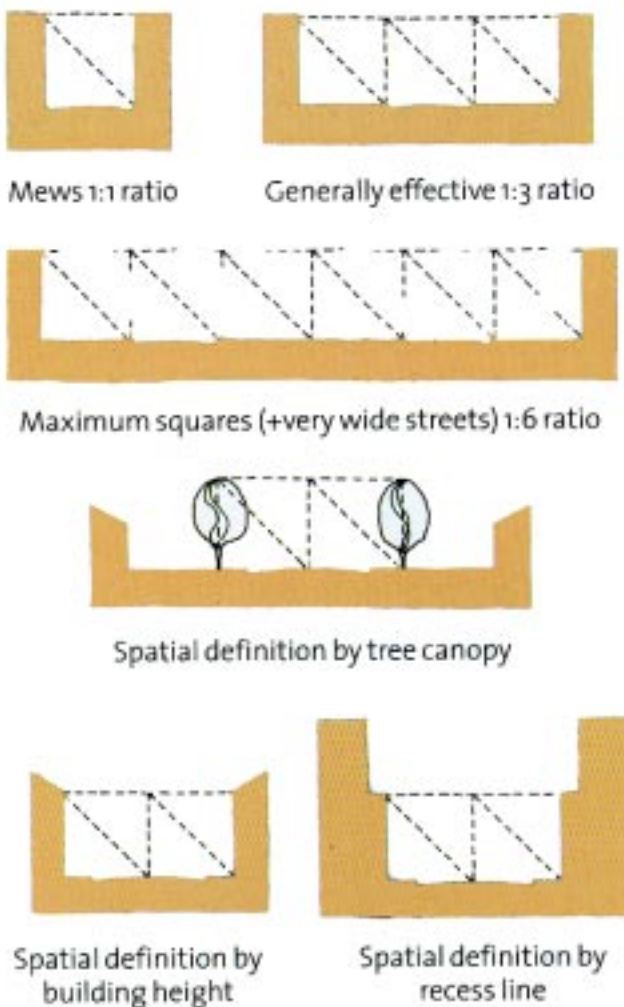
Articulation of facades is important to integrate new build well into a street. Features such as bays, balconies and porches can help to achieve this. Deviations from the building line can add interest and variety, but care needs to be taken to ensure that resulting spaces are useable, clearly defined and attractive. Setbacks can vary with location and setting

Use windows and doorways to create interest and provide security. Avoid blank gables and set backs, overlooking spaces.



Enclosure

In order to create a satisfactory enclosure of space with human scale it is necessary to establish a suitable ratio between the width of the space and its enclosing buildings. The following height to width enclosure ratios serve as a guide and need to be checked to ensure daylight, sunlight and privacy standards are met.



Height to width ratios

Acknowledgement - The Urban Design Compendium courtesy of Llewelyn-Davies, English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation

Using narrow frontage buildings gives vertical rhythm to street scenes. This is a predominant characteristic in many attractive streets in Edinburgh.



Summary

- provide a welcoming space that contains activity and safety and acknowledges its local circumstances
- continue or create a strong building line that addresses public spaces.
- where setbacks occur from the building line ensure that useable space is created
- always define enclosures

4.3

MATERIALS AND STREET FURNITURE IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Ensure high quality streetscape design, street furniture and materials are used in the renewal/provision of the public realm. Street furniture should be located sensitively in relation to vistas, elevations of buildings and should avoid becoming street clutter.

A well designed public realm can help to nurture local distinctiveness and restore a sense of visual order. Too often the public realm has been characterised by traffic design requirements adopting short-term solutions and poor materials.

Ground surfaces

Ground surfaces form half of what pedestrians see and therefore quality in the design and construction of footways and street surfaces is vital to the character of an area.

An entire street can be adversely affected by the impact of clutter and poor design.

The main factors to consider are to:

- provide visual continuity to the street
- give context to buildings. Pavements act as a plinth on which buildings sit
- ensure quality comes from simplicity and durability
- use simple design and a limited palette of materials

In achieving an attractive layout it is essential to:

- select and use materials appropriate to the area
- retain and marry kerb lines and levels
- avoid using the same material from wall to wall
- respect local designs and details
- design and use appropriately sized materials to avoid poor junctions and details
- accommodate changes in level at the design stage

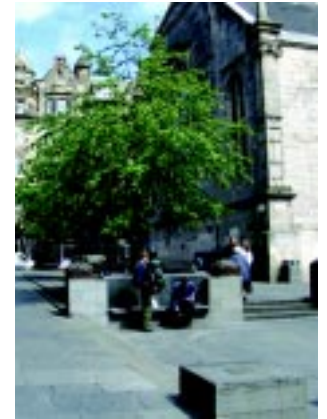


Appropriate materials used to emphasise local design also give visual continuity and context. New physical elements should visually reinforce or enhance local character and the established street scene.



Footway extension - The need for coordinated design

- contrasting materials should always be avoided



Street signs, lighting and furniture

In many public areas the historic accumulation of street furniture reduces or obscures local character and identity. Signs, posts, boxes and bollards need to be placed with regard to surrounding buildings or to the overall visual composition. It is necessary to:

- identify and remove superfluous or redundant items.
- reduce markings and signs to the statutory minimum.
- locate signs on existing street furniture or buildings. Rationalise the number of poles.
- new development should consider signage, street lighting and street furniture as an important part of the detailed proposal.

Removal of street clutter helps to reveal townscape and creates streets for people. At the same time street furniture and surface design can be used to emphasise and complement a building.

(Reference should be made to the Edinburgh streetscape manual)



Summary

- keep the design of street and footway simple and use appropriate materials to fit local character
- remove superfluous street signs and keep new signs to a minimum
- use street furniture to help create and delineate the public realm

1.1 INTEGRATE NEW DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTE TO DISTINCTIVENESS

Recognise the role of the site within the urban structure. Integrate major new proposals into the city structure and ensure that new developments emphasise, retain or enhance the City's identity.

- major or significant proposals should be considered in the citywide context
- proposals should protect and enhance the image of the city
- proposals should not cause unsympathetic change

1.2 CITY WIDE VIEWS AND CONTEXT

Protect and enhance views to and from established landmarks, hills, skylines, and recognise distinctive urban zones, layers of built form and backcloths. Maintain strategic views from major access routes and public vantage points.

- all new development should integrate with its wider surroundings and harmonise with the general height of buildings prevailing in the area
- development should re-inforce and not detract from valued skyline and views.
- development should respect the general urban topography
- proposed buildings, visible from higher points should maintain or enhance the prevailing massing, articulation and any interesting existing pattern of roofs
- low rise buildings adjacent to higher neighbours should provide attractive roofscapes
- proposals visually affecting Edinburgh's hills require detailed scrutiny through urban design analysis, and should exhibit architectural excellence

1.3 DEFINE CITY EDGES

City edges and settings can be improved through appropriate new development. These should provide integration and visual continuity from urban to rural areas.

- examine proposals for their possible contribution to definition of edges
- integrate new and existing development at the city edges in order to provide continuity and underline contrast and gradation between urban and rural character

1.4 AIM TO IMPROVE IMAGE AND LEGIBILITY

Enhance the appearance and maintain the complex and varied character of arterial routes.

- it is essential that the quality of gateways, arterial routes and their varied character and strategic views are maintained to protect the city image and legibility
- new developments along these locations should be of high quality urban design and architecture. This will involve providing them with appropriate settings

1.5 STRENGTHEN AND EXTEND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND CIVIC SPACES

Continue to maximise opportunities to enhance and extend links to individual spaces and the open space network in the city.

- consider outdoor spaces as a means of integrating and linking development to provide structure and a shared community focus
- minimise the loss of public access to areas of outdoor/visual amenity, recreation and biodiversity interest
- open spaces and citywide green corridors are of particular interest. Development proposals should be assessed to establish the threat or contribution they might make

2.1 LIVELY AND ATTRACTIVE LOCAL PLACES

Mixed uses and human scale can give vitality and create attractive places that contribute to promoting safe and sustainable communities.

Proposals should demonstrate :

- urban design to create a 'sense of place' and integration with local context.
- places which are attractive, offering mixed uses, variety of form and choice
- integration with public transport
- priority to pedestrian and cycle movement
- sensitivity to human scale

2.2 REINFORCE LOCAL IDENTITY

Where new development is to be located within a neighbourhood of distinctive spatial structure, townscape and landscape, the proposal should reinforce the existing character.

- significant proposals at this scale should be accompanied by a Contextual Analysis
- new build should not be higher nor of greater mass than adjacent existing development unless there are special townscape reasons
- identify needs/opportunities to improve the components of urban design, form, space, activities

2.3 MAKE DISTINCTIVE URBAN FORM

Shape distinctive neighbourhoods to create local identity, where the existing development form is poor or due for regeneration

- early pre application discussion is crucial for the development of larger or sensitive sites
- master plans will often be the preferred way of tackling larger, mixed-use sites
- mix of uses and building forms need to be encouraged according to Local Plan requirements and area character
- combine activities, development and spaces to give distinctive urban form

2.4 MAKE COHERENT LAYOUTS

Provide a clear and coherent spatial structure offering potential for diversity and vitality.

- proposals should connect with the surrounding structure and address adjacent development form and character
- establish a clear block grain and street pattern
- perimeter blocks can be used to create an attractive public realm and promote diversity

3.1 REINFORCE CHARACTER

Establish key elements to ensure fit with surroundings.

- make reference to local, natural and built features, or special relationships.
- have respect for and reflect local proportions and plot sizes
- be consistent in the detailed design to all elevations
- use quality local materials

3.2 PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Developments should connect with, extend or improve the local street structure.

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- ensure that the street structure is clearly understood.

3.3 VALUE OPEN SPACE

New Development should enhance existing, and provide new open space.

- ensure that amenity is both visual and functional (recreational)
- integrate new and existing development at their boundaries
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- integrate the site's landscape and natural features
- ensure that civic spaces encourage activity

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- balanced approach to parking
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- conveniently located close to destinations
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The **Edinburgh** Standards for **UrbanDesign**

This document is available *on request* in Braille, tape, large print various computer formats and community languages. Please contact ITS on 0131 242 8181 and quote ref.03707. For additional English copies please contact the Enquiry Counter, City Development, 1 Cockburn Street, Edinburgh. Telephone 0131 529 3900.

এই দলিলপত্রে শহরব্যাপী নতুন উন্নয়ন গঠন করার উদ্দেশ্যে উচ্চতম মানের পরিকল্পনা তৈরি করা হয়েছে। আপনার সম্প্রদায়ের ভাষায় তথ্য পেতে হলে ইন্টারপ্রেটেশান এ্যান্ড ট্রান্সলেশান সারভিস-এর সাথে 0131 242 8181 ফোন করে রেফারেন্স নম্বর 03707 উল্লেখ করবেন।

這文件刊載有關在遍及本市新發展計劃中須達致高質素設計的指引。如欲查詢本文件的翻譯資訊，請電愛丁堡市議會傳譯及翻譯服務部 (ITS) 及說明檔案編號 03707，電話：0131 242 8181。

یہ دستاویز پورے شہر میں اعلیٰ اور معیاری ڈیزائن کی نئی تعمیرات کے متعلق رہنمائی فراہم کرتی ہے۔ اپنی کیونٹی میں ہولی جانے والی زبان میں اس دستاویز کے ترجمے کے بارے میں معلومات کیلئے برائے مہربانی انٹرنیشنل اینڈ ٹرانسلیشن سروس کو 0131 242 8181 پر ٹیلیفون کریں اور ریفرنس نمبر 03707 کا حوالہ دیں۔

هذا المستند موجه نحو تحقيق مستوى تصميم رفيع الجودة بالنسبة للتطوير في المناطق الجديدة في كل مكان من المدينة. إذا كنت ترغب في معلومات عن ترجمة هذا المستند الى لغة جاليتك نرجو الاتصال هاتفيا بمكتب الترجمة على الرقم 0131 242 8181 و ذكر الرقم .03707

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