

## STATUS OF SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON HIGH DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

### **Status**

This Planning Guidance, which is supplementary to Policy BE1, WTC1 and WTC2 of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999, has been formally adopted by Woking Borough Council. In this respect the Supplementary Guidance has the status of a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by this Authority and in its decisions at appeal.

### **Statement of Public Consultation**

In accordance with the advice set out in Annex A (A3) of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) on General Policy and Principles, the Supplementary Guidance has been the subject of wide public consultation with a total of 83 consultees, as follows:

i) Professional Practitioners

A range of local practitioners, including; architects, designers, planning consultants and housing developers, who are actively involved in multiple housing developments were consulted. These number 49 in total.

ii) Local Residents and Amenity Groups

The Byfleet Parish Council and all residents and amenity groups within the Borough which are known to the Council, together with Surrey Police, which number 34 in total.

The period of public consultation allowed eight weeks for the various individuals and organisations to make comments on the draft guidance. Altogether 10 responses were received. After careful consideration of these representations the Guidance was amended to address the valid points of concern. In particular the Guidance has been reconfigured to focus on the design aspects of high density, housing development. These amendments were considered at the Councils Executive Committee on 3 April 2003, when the Guidance was formally adopted. Full details of the representations made to Council, together with the Councils response can be obtained on request by contacting 01483 743443.

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

### HIGH DENSITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This document is not intended to impose detailed design control but to promote well designed high density housing in the urban area that is suitable for its location. Although all applications are considered on their merits, proposals which do not conform with the Guidance may result in delay or refusal of planning permission.
- 1.2 This Guidance is intended to supplement design policies BE1, WTC1 and WTC2 in the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999 where they relate to the design of high density housing.
- 1.3 Since the Local Plan was adopted, the Government has revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 – Housing (PPG3). Whilst the Local Plan encourages more sustainable development patterns and concentrating new development in the urban areas, PPG3 and related Government Guidance elevate the status of these principles and in particular seek to make more efficient use of housing land by encouraging local planning authorities to;
  - Avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (less than 30dph)
  - Encourage housing developments which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dph)
  - Seek greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility such as city, town district and local centres or around major nodes along public transport corridors.
  - Promote good design in new housing developments in order to create attractive, high quality living environments in which people will choose to live.
  - Adopt a more flexible approach with regard to car parking provision, especially in accessible locations.
- 1.4 This Guidance is intended to assist in the delivery of high density housing by providing design advice on forms of development which can use land more effectively whilst providing high quality residential environments which respect local character.

#### 2.0 General Approach

- 2.1 There will be most potential for high density housing developments within the central area of Woking Town Centre, as the Local Plan encourages the highest densities in the most sustainable locations and the use of tall buildings will be more compatible with their context (policy WTC2). This advice also accords with PPG-3 that the greatest intensity of development should occur at places with good transport accessibility.
- 2.2 This approach is encouraged by Local Plan Policy WTC8 which expects that housing developments in the Town Centre should achieve the maximum density appropriate for the site.

- 2.3 Although the policy suggests that residential densities should be in excess of 200 habitable rooms per ha. (approximately 65 dwellings per ha.), the Council has approved developments in the Town Centre well above this level following the publication of PPG3. The table in Appendix 4 sets out examples of residential densities approved in recent planning decisions.
- 2.4 Local Plan Policies BE1 and WTC1 require high standards of design in all new developments and PPG3 further advises that good design and layout can help to make the best use of land and improve the quality and attractiveness of residential environments. Advice on achieving design quality in high density developments, which is particularly appropriate for those in more central locations, is set out in section 3.0 below.
- 2.5 Local Plan Policies BE1 and WTC1 also require that the design of all proposals should respect and enhance the local character of the area, and this advice is supported in PPG3. Particular regard over this matter will be required in established residential areas which have a well defined character, and especially within or adjacent to Conservation Areas, where the existing character or appearance must be preserved or enhanced. The advice in Section 4.0 provides guidance on how various forms of development might be applied in areas of different character and density. Developers will be expected to submit a 'Design Statement' for any significant proposal setting how the development is intended to respond to the character of its context. Further advice on 'Design Statements' is set out in Appendix 5.
- 2.6 Achieving a suitable level of provision and satisfactory design of parking arrangements can often be a key factor in the compatibility of a development proposal. Sites where reduced parking standards can be applied are more likely to achieve significant increases in density without adverse impact on adjoining residential areas. Evidence that a site is within a convenient walking distance to good transport links and other main services may warrant reduced parking standards. The table in Appendix 4 sets out examples of reduced parking levels which have been approved in recent planning submissions in accessible locations.
- 2.6 Exceptionally, sites which are sufficiently large to create their own character, may enable higher density housing to be achieved without any adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area. Assembling sites of sufficient size will often be the key to achieving much higher densities to the surrounding area.

### **3.0 Achieving Design Quality in High Density Housing Development**

- 3.1 PPG3 indicates that imaginative use of design and layout can make more efficient use of land but must result in high quality environments. Such designs must not be viewed in isolation but should consider the broader context, having regard to the townscape and landscape of the wider locality, including the local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and ecology to help determine their character. They should;

- Create places and spaces with the needs of people in mind, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity but respect and enhance the local character.
- Promote designs and layouts which are safe and take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety considerations.
- Focus on the quality of the place and living environment being created and give priority to the needs of pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles.
- Avoid inflexible planning standards and reduce road widths, traffic speeds and promote safer environments for pedestrians.
- Promote energy efficiency of new housing where possible.
- The Government also attaches particular importance to the 'Greening' of residential environments. Greening initiatives can enhance quality, assist the permeability of land for storm drainage and contribute to biodiversity. Well designed layouts can also contribute to the energy efficiency of new housing. Landscaping should be an integral part of new development and opportunities should be taken for the retention of existing trees shrubs, and for new plantings.

3.2 As some of the most attractive and highest quality residential areas are to be found in the dense urban sections of our established cities, such as the formal Georgian and Victorian terraces, many design characteristics of their form and layout can be employed to help achieve quality in new high density developments. Clearly, more contemporary forms of building can be used in this way and more innovative solutions are welcomed if they enable the more efficient use of land. However, many of the most desirable qualities associated with these forms of housing are only likely to be achieved on larger sites where there is potential for more comprehensive forms of development. as follows ;

### **3.3 Street Pattern and Layout**

- Developments should be carefully planned and clearly structured to help create or reinforce a well defined network of streets. To assist ease of walking to all local services and amenities which are conveniently located close by, satisfactory links must be made with the existing street network to ensure that all routes are connected. However, the opportunity to create new street patterns will usually be restricted to larger developments.
- Where possible the building developments themselves should define the streets. In particular buildings should have elevations which overlook the street, to create 'active' frontages, with their building fabric forming the boundary between public and private areas and keeping them secure. This is best achieved by siting developments around the perimeter of sites to form street blocks, presenting largely continuous building frontages along their boundaries. Where this is not possible the arrangement must provide some form of clear definition between private areas and the public realm. A street block arrangement can also provide a buffer to traffic noise and create tranquil inner amenity areas within the core of the block. See Fig1 & 1a below.

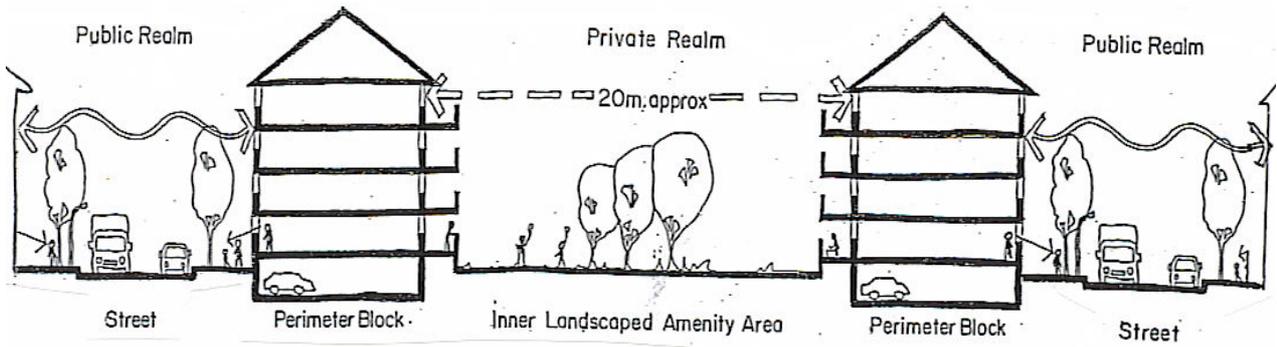
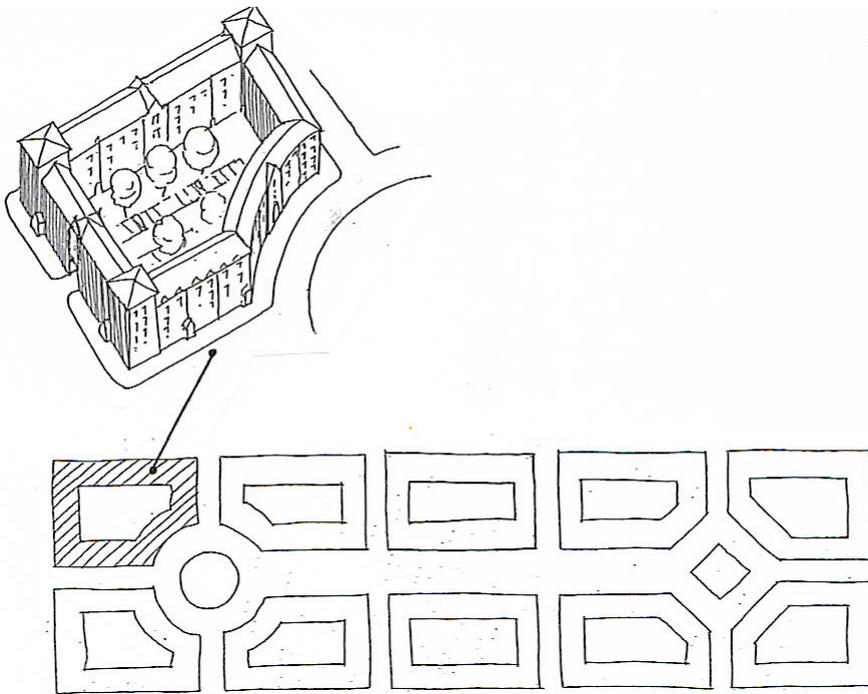


Fig.1. Typical arrangement of buildings placed around the perimeter of a street block to provide clear definition of public and private areas.



- The alignment and spacing of street blocks can be arranged to set out geometric street patterns such as formal crescents or set back to form avenues and squares to create a high quality public realm with a distinctive sense of place. Open space / amenity space provision may be relaxed in central locations in exchange for a generous landscaped public realm which benefits the local community. See Fig. 1a.

Fig. 1a Use of street block developments to create a distinctive street pattern.

### 3.4 Building Design

- Use well designed, low rise buildings that are broadly in scale with the width of the street, although building height should respect the local context (a ratio of 1.5 to 2 times the building height is most comfortable). Buildings of three to four storeys in height will usually have sufficient scale to provide good definition of the street, although taller buildings may be more appropriate in the Town Centre to provide sufficient urban scale. Taller building elements can also be justified where they help to achieve well defined urban design objectives, such as to strengthen a corner site, define 'gateways' into an area, or create a vista or landmark to identify an important destination, as set out in Local Plan policy WTC2. Where building height is restricted, accommodation can often be located within the roofspace or basement area to maintain more modest dimensions, although some variations in height can often add visual interest. Upper levels of accommodation can be set back from a frontage where they will be less visible from ground level. The use of light wells and similar techniques can also help to achieve deeper floorplans and increase accommodation whilst maintaining acceptable levels of amenity.

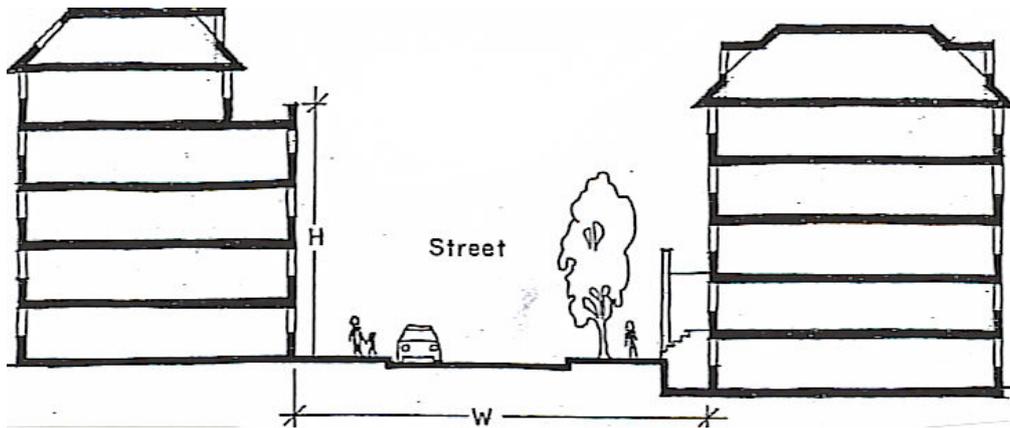


Fig.2. A ratio of building height to width of street is most comfortable at 1:1.5 or 1:2. If height is a concern accommodation can be located in the roofspace or basement or set back from the building frontage.

- Architectural treatment should be elegant and well modelled in form and use high quality facing materials. Elevational designs should be sufficiently structured to be capable of repetition but allow for sufficient personalisation to avoid monotony. Features, such as the main entrances to blocks of flats, should be designed to form focal points so that the function of the building is clearly understandable. Collective utilities such as bin storage and statutory undertaker meter cabinets should be conveniently located for access but should not impinge on the appearance of public frontages.
- Focus on the size and quality of accommodation in comparison to private external amenity space. i.e. generous floorspace with good levels of privacy, sound insulation and natural daylight. Front gardens have little amenity value and should be deleted to improve rear separation distances, for which a minimum of 20 m. is advised for all developments (subject to any adverse overshadowing, although designs solutions which avoid overlooking may also be appropriate).

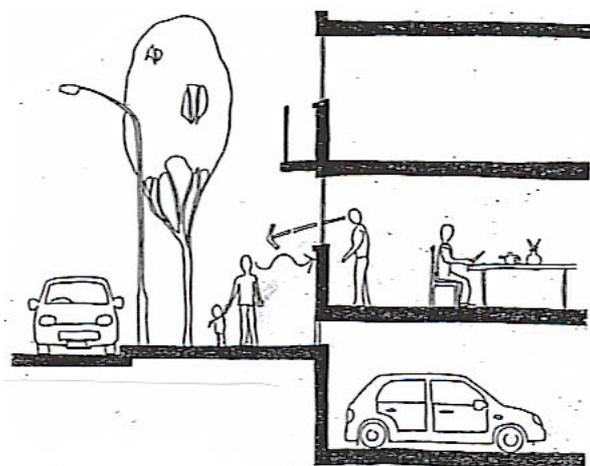
Relaxation of the Council’s adopted guidance for ‘outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight’ (HSG21) may be permitted in more central locations in order to achieve higher density forms of development. The use of balconies and terraces can help to off-set the lack of private amenity space, particularly for freestanding buildings which have no private area.

### 3.5 Design of Affordable Housing

- Although internal standards of accommodation may vary from those of housing for sale, the external appearance of all buildings on the site should achieve the same standards of design and material finish. The Council will expect affordable housing to be provided on site in accordance with Policy HSG10 of the Woking Borough Local Plan for any development of more than 1.0ha or 25 units (of at least 25%). Smaller units for sale will not count towards the affordable housing provision

### 3.6 Parking Arrangements

- Achieving a suitable level of provision and satisfactory design of parking arrangements can be a key factor in the compatibility of a development proposal with its surroundings.
- Where circumstances allow, parking provision should be kept to a minimum, and reduced standards will normally be permitted in accessible locations close to main services with good public transport. Specialised forms of accommodation which require little or no parking provision, such as sheltered housing, can often be successfully integrated into areas of much lower density without harming their character. The table in annex sets out some examples of parking ratios which have been approved as part of recent developments in accessible locations. Where very limited on site provision is proposed the Council may seek a contribution towards improved public transport in lieu of parking facilities.. Limited or no visible off-street space should given over to parking, so that buildings rather than cars, dominate the street scene. However, in some locations limited on-street parking may be acceptable where it can be integrated into the landscape treatment of the street scene.



- Undercroft parking is encouraged, especially for freestanding buildings and sites where open parking might impact on neighbours as it ;
- is enclosed from public view
- can assist security.
- uses natural ventilation.
- Raises ground floor accommodation which improves privacy of these rooms
- Increases surveillance of the street.

Fig.3. Undercroft parking removes cars from view and can assist privacy of ground floor rooms.

- Surface parking located within the core of a block is secure, cheaper to construct and provides ease of access. It can also reinforce the separation of accommodation particularly if combined with good quality hard and soft landscaping, including structural tree planting. However, it can be more intensive and noise intrusive to neighbours if poorly sited.

### 3.7 Landscape

- High quality hard and soft landscape is required in all schemes and in particular well planned structural tree planting is required within the public realm, often in formal arrangements such as tree lined avenues and squares. Land must be specifically dedicated for this provision at the layout stage, possibly at the expense of private amenity space. Any underground services should be located to avoid conflict with tree roots etc. Any good existing specimen trees should be retained.

### 3.8 Recreational Open Space Provision

- On developments of 15 dwellings or more the Council will expect the provision of a suitable area for of land for recreation or make a financial contribution towards planned off-site provision if this is not practical, in accordance with policy REC1. Such provision will contribute towards a co-ordinated programme of recreational improvements across the Borough.
- Developments will not be permitted which result in the loss of provision or access to areas used for informal open space recreation in accordance with policy REC4.

### 3.9 Adaptability of Building Use

- Residential use in more central locations of the Town and Village Centres can sometimes form part of a mixed use development, often with commercial uses at ground floor. Building structures which can be adapted to either residential, office or other uses can offer great flexibility and can respond to economic changes without further investment in reconstruction. Parking provision must allow for flexibility of use.

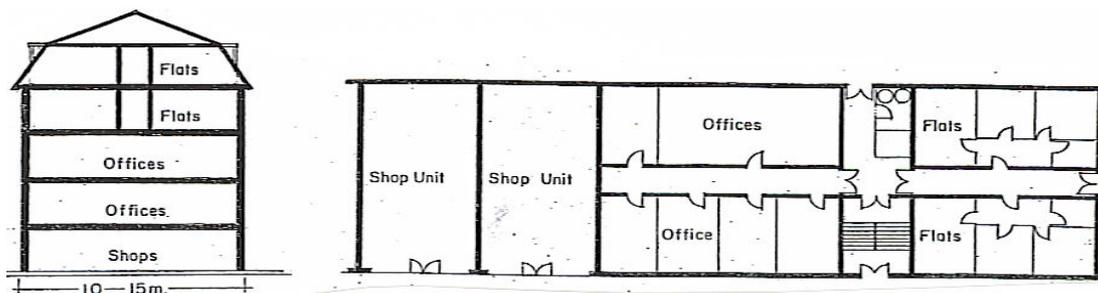


Fig. 5. Adaptable building structures with a shallow floorplan offer greater scope for flexibility of use.

#### 4.0 Density and Character

- 4.1 It is important that all housing developments, irrespective of their density respond to their site context, in terms of site layout, building form, height, scale and material finish, and should reinforce any recognised features of local distinctiveness. In many older established residential areas the landscape characteristics may be as important as the building characteristics.
- 4.2 High density developments, particularly those over 80 dwellings per ha. are only likely to be compatible in scale with buildings of a more urban context, such as within Woking Town Centre and the larger village centres where taller buildings of 4 storeys and higher are located. (Appendix 1 sets out some examples of typical forms of development for densities between 80 – 240 dwellings per hectare). However, even densities moderately above 50 dwellings per ha. are only likely to be satisfactorily achieved with developments of 3 storeys or above which generally makes them incompatible in scale for infilling in many traditional housing areas, although 3 storey buildings may be compatible with large Victorian villas. (Appendix 2 sets out examples of typical forms of development for densities between 60 – 80 dwellings per ha).

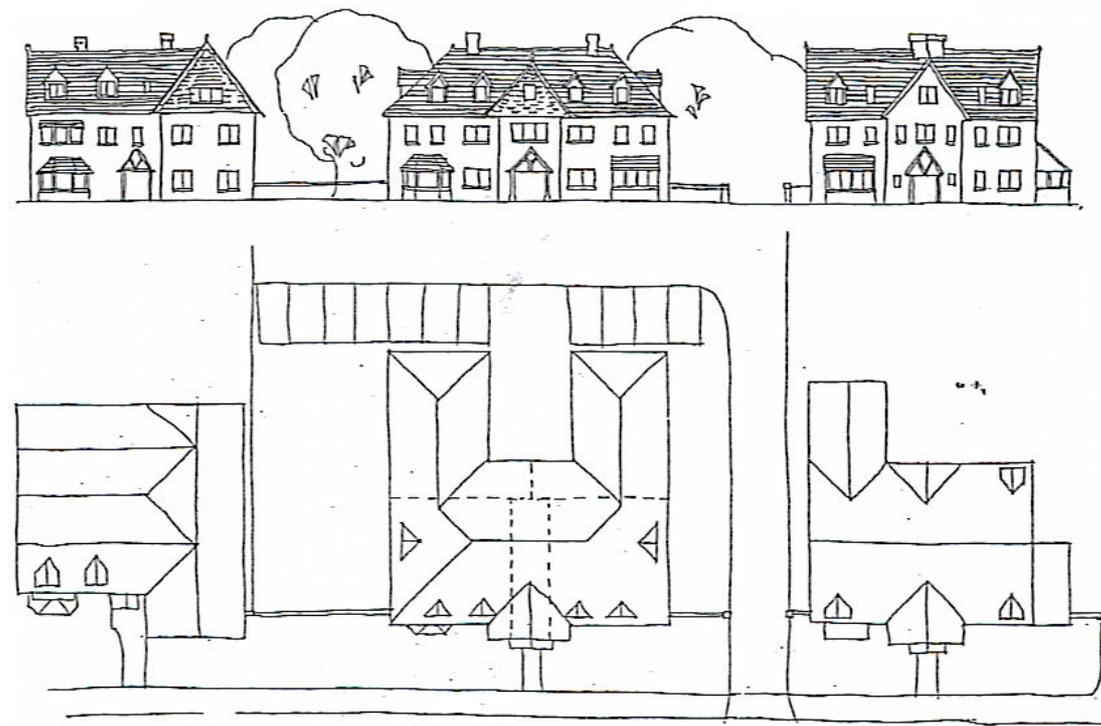


Fig. 6. A modest block of flats designed to match the appearance of a large Victorian villa.

- 4.3 Larger sites, particularly those over 1 hectare (0.5 ha in centres) may be large enough to create their own character and enable higher densities to be achieved compared to their surroundings, without harming local character. However, it is important that the site layout integrates with the existing street pattern and taller buildings are sited to avoid any adverse impact on the outlook, amenity, privacy or daylighting of existing dwellings or have an overbearing impact. (See Fig. 7 below.)



Fig. 7. Site layouts should avoid siting taller buildings where they will have an adverse impact on existing dwellings. The location of access drives and similar devices may help to overcome large changes in scale.

4.4 Densities within the range of 30 –50 dwellings per ha. can usually be achieved with modest 2 storey developments, including traditional semi-detached and terraced family housing and small 2 - 2½ storey blocks of flats, which should be compatible with the form and scale of many sub-urban housing areas . They are particularly suitable for infilling as they can be designed in a variety of formats. It is often possible to design a pair or terrace of houses, or modest block of flats to have the outward appearance of one large dwelling to reflect the characteristic form and spacing of dwellings in more established areas, providing that access and parking do not have any adverse impact..

(Appendix 3 sets out examples of typical forms of development required to achieve densities between 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare.)

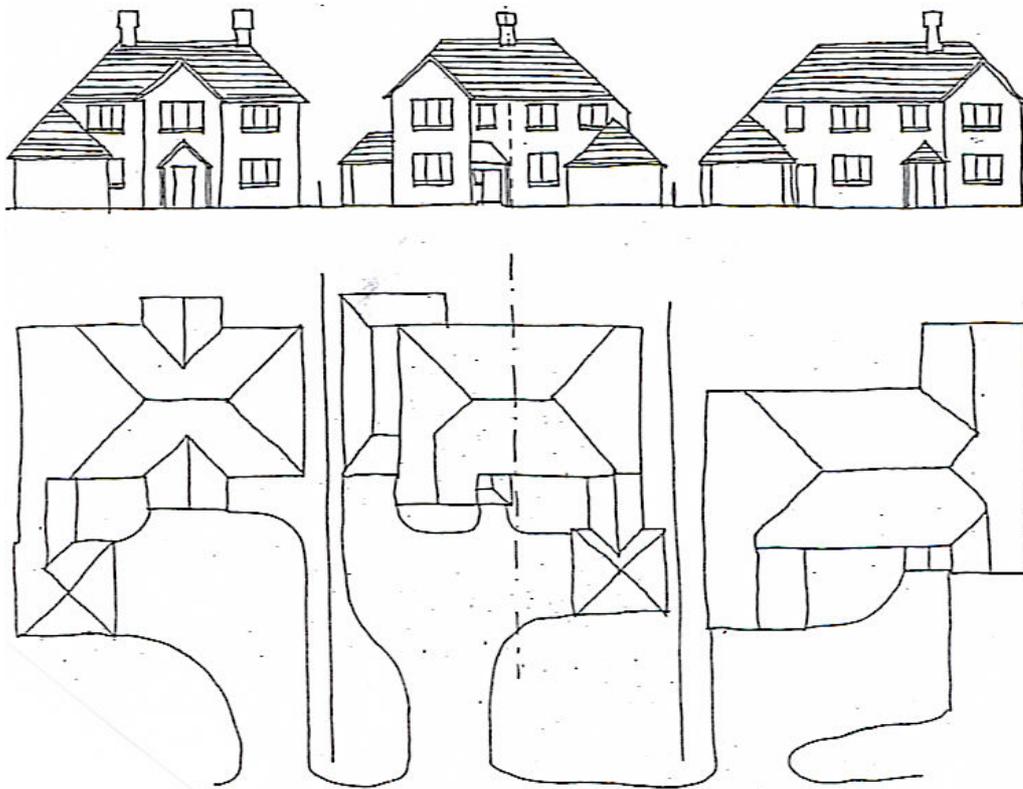
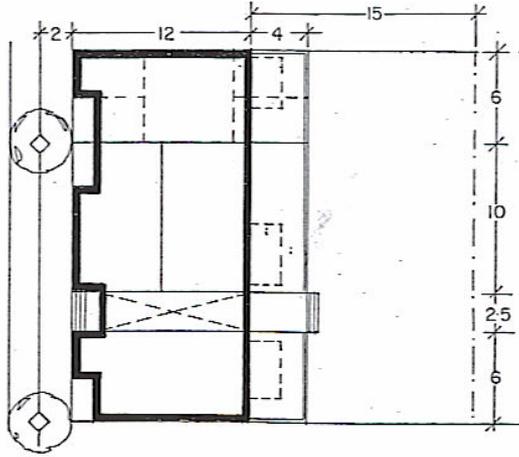
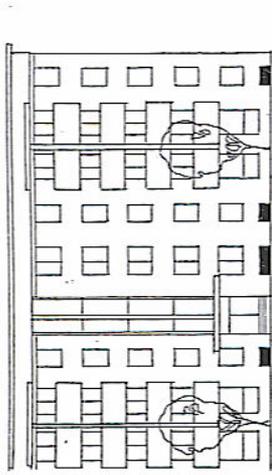


Fig.3 A pair of semi-detached houses designed to match the character of adjoining detached dwellings

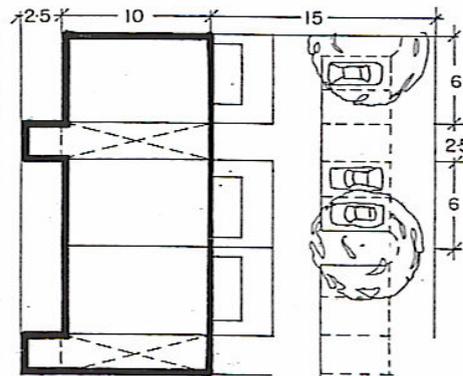
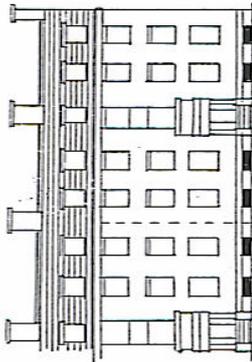
- 4.5 A number of older established residential areas in the Borough which have a well defined character have been designated as 'Urban Areas of Special Residential Character' under Local Plan Policy HSG 20. Within these areas development proposals will be critically examined to ensure the character of the area is maintained. The Council has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for these areas which should assist in highlighting the more important characteristics of each area. There are also a number of residential Conservation Areas where development proposals will only be permitted where they preserve or enhance the areas existing character or appearance. The Council is preparing detailed character appraisals and design guidance for each conservation area which should be of assistance. Generally, it is the provision of additional parking facilities which has the most impact on the character of these areas. In this regard there will be most scope for raising densities in accessible locations close to centres with good public transport and a range of facilities as parking levels can often be at reduced standards.
- 4.6 Small infill sites of one or two dwellings will have much less scope for achieving higher density developments, particularly in established residential areas which have a well defined character. The Council has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance concerning 'Infilling & Back land Development' which should assist in the preparation of proposals for more limited sites where individual dwellings may be more appropriate in retaining the areas character.

# APPENDIX 1

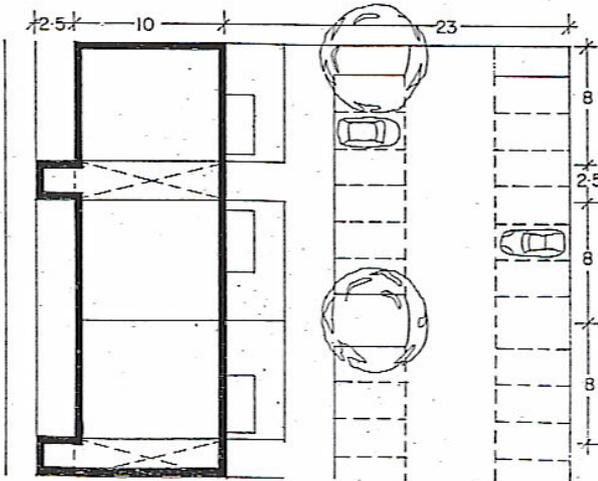
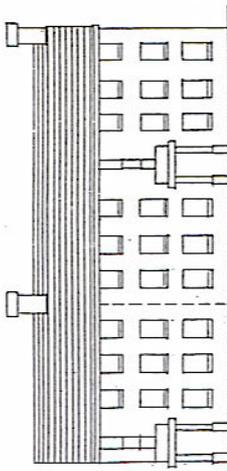
Typical forms of development to achieve densities of 80 – 240 dwellings per hectare



Five storey  
2 bed apartments  
Single or double aspect  
240 units per ha.  
720 hab rooms per ha.  
Minimal undercroft parking  
0.75 spaces per unit.



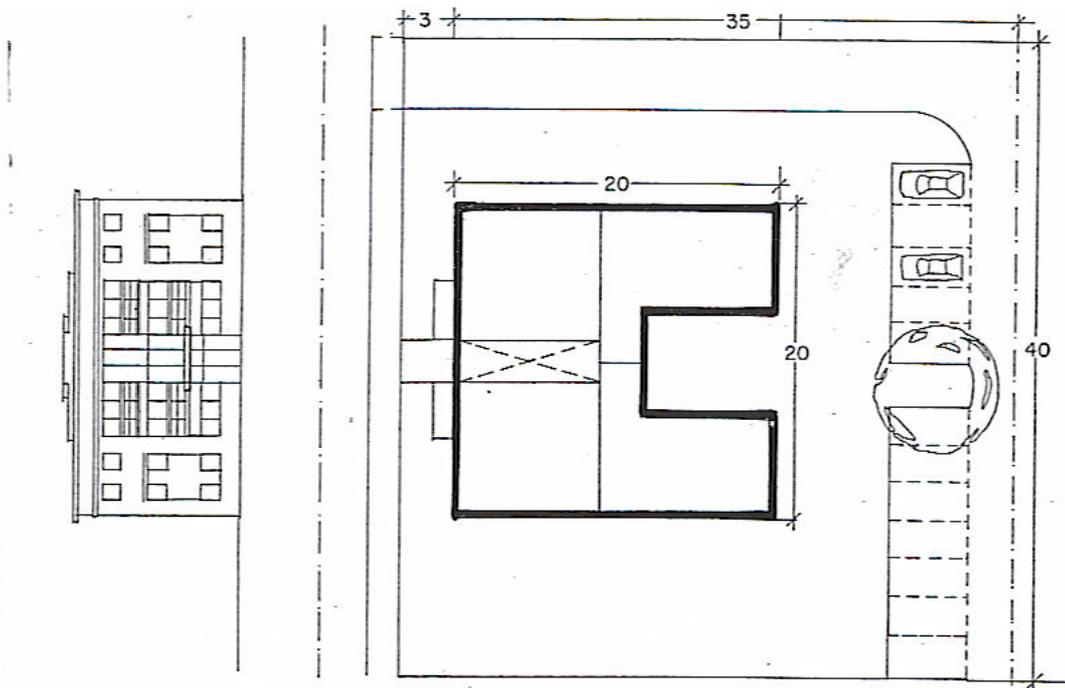
Four storey  
2 bed apartments (60m<sup>2</sup>)  
160 units per ha.  
480 hab rooms per ha.  
Off street parking, undercroft – 1.0 per unit  
or courtyard – 0.75 per unit.



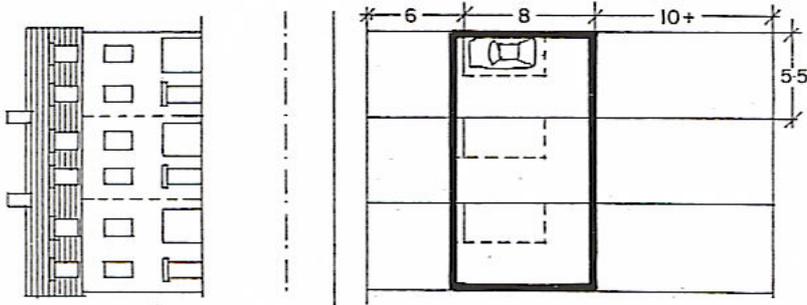
Three storey  
2/3 bed flats (75m<sup>2</sup>)  
80 units per ha.  
Courtyard parking  
2.0 per unit.

## APPENDIX 2

Typical forms of development to achieve densities between 60 – 80 dwellings per hectare



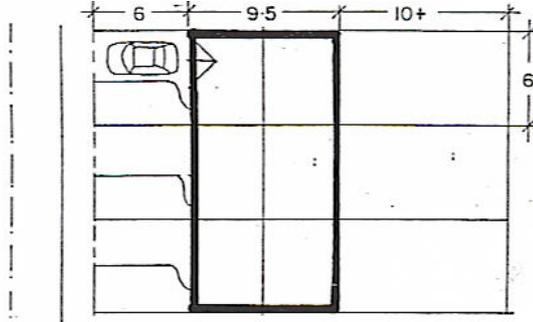
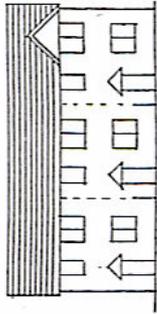
Three storey  
 3 bed town house (130m<sup>2</sup>)  
 63 units per ha.  
 315 hab rooms per ha.  
 Integral parking.  
 2.0 per unit.



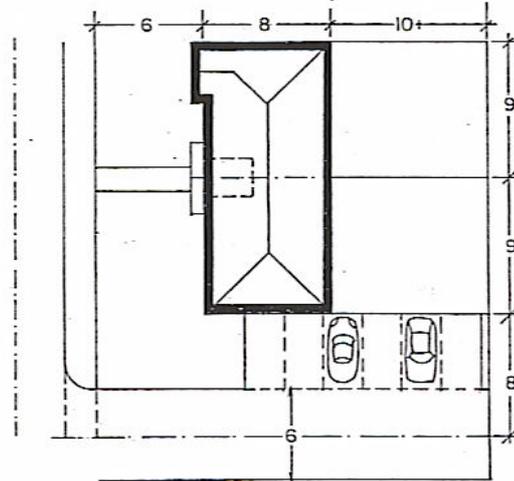
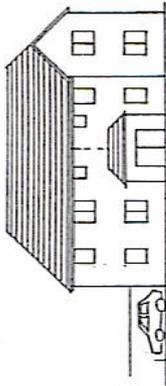
Three storey  
 2/3 bed flats (80m<sup>2</sup>)  
 70 units per ha.  
 350 hab rooms per ha.  
 Minimal of street parking  
 1.0 per unit

### APPENDIX 3

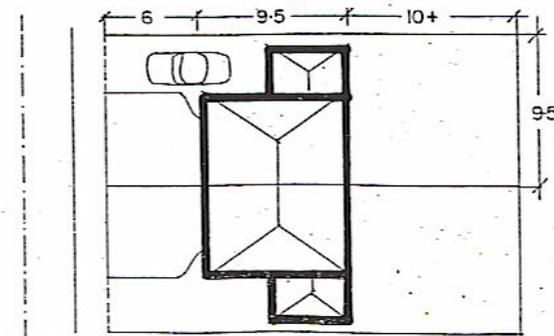
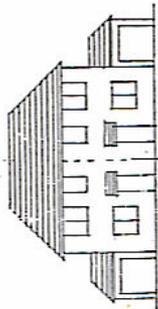
Typical forms of development to achieve densities between 30 -50 dwellings per hectare



Traditional two storey  
3 bed terraced (114m<sup>2</sup>)  
50 units per ha.  
250 hab rooms per ha.  
Minimum off street parking  
1.0 per unit.



Traditional two storey  
2 bed flats (70m<sup>2</sup>)  
50 units per ha.  
150 hab rooms per ha.  
Off street parking.  
2.0 per unit.



Traditional two storey  
3 bed semi (114m<sup>2</sup>)  
34 units per ha.  
170 hab rooms per ha.  
Full off street parking  
2/3 per unit.

**ANNEX 4 : RECENT PLANNING DECISIONS**

<b>i) Sites in Woking Town Centre</b>						
<b>Site Ref. No</b>	<b>Size in HA</b>	<b>No. of units</b>	<b>Density – Dwelling/hectare</b>	<b>Parking Ratio</b>	<b>No Storeys</b>	<b>When Approved</b>
<b>89 – 91 Chertsey Road DF/02/0224</b>	0.097ha	38	390	0.74	4-5	Granted 13/11/2002
<b>8 – 10 High Street, Woking DF/02/0091</b>	0.0391 ha	18	360	0.0	4 – 5	Granted 29/01/2002
<b>Former Railway Yard Depot, Victoria Road MC/02/1417</b>	0.77 ha	240	312	0.75	16½	Granted 01/04/2003
<b>45 – 49 Goldsworth Road MC/01/0730</b>	0.06 ha	16	267	1	7	Granted 24/04/2001
<b>Lismore, 9 Heathside Road MC/02/1370</b>	0.456ha	72	158	1.0	3-4	Granted 11/2/2003
<b>Century Court, Victoria Way MC/99/0008</b>	0.84ha	99	118	1.2	2-5	Granted 30/03/1999
<b>110 Goldsworth Road SB/02/0300</b>	0.2ha	23	115	1.17	3	Granted 18/4/2002
<b>Mountside Place, Heathside Road MC/97/0471</b>	0.19ha	21	110	2	3-4	Granted 8/7/1997
<b>St. Andrews Gate, Heathside Road DF/99/0961</b>	0.37ha	24	65	2	3	Granted 07/12/1999

<b>ii) Sites in Urban Area</b>						
<b>Site Ref. No</b>	<b>Size in HA</b>	<b>No. of units</b>	<b>Density – Dwelling/hectare</b>	<b>Parking Ratio</b>	<b>No. Storeys</b>	<b>When Approved</b>
<b>Northfleet Hotel, Claremont Road DF/02/7312</b>	0.18ha	20	111	1.1	3	Granted 11/11/2002
<b>Grosvenor Gardens EH/95/0938</b>	0.44ha	48	109	1.6	2-4	Granted 6/11/1995
<b>4 Monument Road DF/02/0273</b>	0.12ha	11	91	1.36	3-4	Granted 12/11/2002
<b>88 Maybury Road MC/00/0701</b>	0.1134ha	10	88	1.5	3	Granted 24/10/2000
<b>Bracken Hill, Heathside Crescent MC/01/0753</b>	1.2ha	96	80	1.05	3-5	Granted 24/4/2002
<b>Katana, Brooklyn Road 96/0179 96/1088</b>	0.1435ha	10	70	2	3	Granted 9/7/1996
<b>Hascombe &amp; Lamorna, Brooklyn Road 99/0576</b>	0.275ha	18	65	2	3	Granted 17/03/2000
<b>Pembroke Court, Oriental Road CH/99/1266</b>	0.2ha	12	60	1.83	3	Granted 1/2/2000

<b>Shuna, Sheerwater Road DF/02/0614</b>	0.2ha	11	55	1.8	2.5	Granted 31/7/2002
<b>Marie Carlise House Coley Avenue Plan/2002/0996</b>	0.3ha	12	40	1.33	2.5	Granted 8/11/2002





## DESIGN STATEMENTS: NOTES FOR APPLICANTS AND AGENTS

### What is a Design Statement ?

A Design Statement is a method by which applicants and agents should be able to show how they have achieved good design in their development proposals. It should clearly demonstrate how the proposal fits the context of the site and its immediate surroundings and, if appropriate, to wider parts of towns and villages. This should include its relationship between buildings, streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces.

**Design Statements are a requirement of Annex A of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) issued by the DTLR in February 1997 (this may be referred to for further advice). A Design Statement will be required for all complex development proposals. Failure to submit one is likely to result in delay or refusal of your application.**

### How will a design statement help?

It will help the planning authority, Members, neighbours, the public and yourself to:-

- Understand fully your proposals and the principles of the design
- Consider the proposals against design policies in the Local Plan
- Consider the proposal against design objectives in PPG1.

### What do I need to do?

There are 3 essential steps to producing a design statement:-

- Site analysis and evaluation
- Identifying the design principles
- Creating the design solutions

### Step 1 – Site Analysis and Evaluation

This is a factual account either in writing or using photographs and drawings to describe qualities of the site and show the relationship with its context, e.g. urban, wooded, conservation area, hilly, industrial etc. This needs to be undertaken by an on-site appraisal examining both the site and its surroundings. It is important that this analysis has its basis in fact and reason rather than opinion and should include:-

- An explanation of the constraints and opportunities of the site in terms of its context e.g. pattern of layout, characteristic spaces between buildings and their uses, local building characteristics and materials, location of main service utilities, etc.
- An explanation of the constraints and opportunities the site has in terms of its design e.g. important views, site aspect, features worthy of retention or protection, quality and structure of existing landscape, pedestrian desire lines, opportunities for access . etc.

## **Step 2 – Identifying the Design Principles**

The main design criteria which need to be achieved. A clear list of design matters of such prime importance they need to be included in any design regardless of the approach.

The principles may also include constraints which are critical to the applicant such as minimum accommodation requirements or financial constraints, where these have a clear planning justification. It should also include the Planning Authorities requirements as set down in the Local Plan or in a Planning /Development Brief for the site.

It is important to understand that each site and development proposal is unique and there is not a right or wrong set of design principles. Design principles should be able to be justified against the site analysis and evaluation, or Local Plan requirements.

Design principles will vary in number and complexity from proposal to proposal. Principles may include; the retention of important views, the mass and scale of buildings being similar to those in the street, or a new building being taller to create a focal point. Important trees may need to be kept, or buildings may need to create a continuous street frontage or be in a specific layout to meet the needs of industrial activities, etc.

## **Step 3 – Creating the design solution**

There may be several design options for the site. Planning Officers will always be willing to discuss the merits of different options prior to a planning application being submitted. The design solution should be based upon the design principles which were established through the site analysis and evaluation. Without undertaking proper site analysis and defining the design principles at the outset the resulting design is likely to be flawed.

The sustainability of the development (its impact on the environment now and in the future) should be considered in all cases, and include measures such as passive solar energy, sustainable drainage and water conservation as set out in the Council's Climate Neutral Practice Note.

Demonstrating these design processes can be quite simple. Applicants and agents already go through these processes before making an application. The only change is that there has not previously been a requirement to explain this process as part of the submission.

## **What will the Design Statement look like?**

There is no set format. It is likely to include a short written statement setting out the constraints, opportunities and design principles together with illustrative material such as plans and elevations, as appropriate. Photographs of the site and surroundings would be helpful. The statement should relate to the wider context. Plans and drawings can be quite simple. Sketches, or notes on plans can be a most effective way to explain even the most complex of site proposals.

## **Where do I get help?**

Planning Officers will be willing to advise you on preparing a Design Statement. Also what matters to consider in any checklist when undertaking an analysis of the site, so that the design principles might be agreed. It can be helpful if the site analysis and design principles can first be agreed with the Planning Authority before any detailed design work is undertaken, then you will have some confidence that the application should be processed relatively smoothly. You need to be aware, however, that any recommendation by an Officer may not be supported by the Planning Committee.