

Windfall Housing Development within the Urban and Village Limits

- 4.10 In addition to the housing proposals identified specifically in the Local Plan, other housing development within the Urban or Village Limits will be supported where it meets the criteria set out in Policy SC2. Such windfall development will generally be on brownfield sites and will assist in meeting the general objective of recycling redundant land and minimising take up of greenfield sites. However, sites must meet requirements in terms of accessibility, amenity and infrastructure availability. An estimate of the output from windfall sites has been built into the housing land requirement calculation, and monitoring will take place to check the actual output against the estimate.

4.11

SC2 WINDFALL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN/VILLAGE LIMIT

Housing development within the Urban and Village Limits, in addition to proposals identified within the Local Plan, will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- (1) The site is a brownfield one, or comprises urban open space whose loss can be justified in terms of Policy SC12;
- (2) The proposed housing use is compatible with neighbouring uses and a satisfactory level of residential amenity can be achieved;
- (3) The site enjoys good accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling to shopping, recreational and other community facilities;
- (4) Existing physical infrastructure, such as roads and drainage, water supply, sewage capacity, and community facilities, such as education and healthcare, have the capacity to accommodate the increase in use associated with the proposed development, or can be upgraded through appropriate developer contributions as required by Policy SC11;
- (5) In the case of small gap sites and sub-divided plots, Policy SC8 is satisfied; and
- (6) There is no conflict with any other Local Plan policy or proposal.

Housing in the Countryside

- 4.12 There is continuing pressure for the development of individual houses or groups of houses in the countryside. Structure Plan Policy ENV.1 and Local Plan Policy EQ19 set out the broad approach of restricting new development in the countryside unless a countryside location is required. Policy SC3 contains detailed criteria for assessing the acceptability of proposals. In general, housing will be permitted where it is required to support a genuine rural economic activity. Further opportunities will arise from the rehabilitation of redundant properties and from appropriate infill sites.

4.13

SC3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

- (1) Housing essential to the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential. In these instances, the applicant must demonstrate all of the following:
 - The operational need for the additional house in association with the business;
 - That no existing dwelling which might have served that need has been sold or otherwise alienated from the holding;
 - That there are no reasonable opportunities for reusing or converting redundant buildings rather than building a new dwellinghouse; and
 - That the business as a whole is capable of providing the main source of income for the occupant;
- (2) Proposals involving the rehabilitation of former residential properties, or the conversion of farm and other buildings to residential use, where all of the following criteria are met:
 - The building, by virtue of its existing character, makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape;
 - The building is in a reasonable state of repair, still stands substantially intact and is capable of beneficial restoration, as verified by a report and certificate from a qualified structural engineer;
 - The restored or converted building is of comparable scale and character to the original building; and
 - In the case of former non-residential buildings, the building is no longer required for the purpose for which it was built; or
- (3) Appropriate infill opportunities within the envelope of an existing group of residential buildings, where the development would not result in ribbon, backland or sporadic development, and the proposal satisfies Policy SC8.



Infill Development and Plot Subdivision

- 4.30 The quality of residential areas can often be threatened by inappropriate infill development, sometimes termed 'town cramming'. Infill proposals, particularly where they involve the subdivision of the curtilage of existing houses, frequently take little account of the overall grain of the surrounding area, or of the setting and amenity of neighbouring properties. Policy SC8 seeks to prevent insensitive infill whilst allowing development where a legitimate opportunity exists and can be integrated successfully into the urban fabric.

4.31

SC8 INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION OF PLOTS

Proposals for the erection of additional dwellinghouses within the curtilage of existing properties or on small gap sites will only be considered favourably where:

- (1) the scale, density, disposition and design of the proposed houses respect the architectural and townscape character of the area;
- (2) adequate garden ground can be provided to serve the proposed houses without an unacceptable impact upon the size or functioning of existing gardens;
- (3) adequate privacy will be afforded to both the proposed houses and neighbouring properties;
- (4) the proposal would not result in the loss of features such as trees, vegetation or walls, such that the character or amenity of the area would be adversely affected;
- (5) the proposed vehicular access and other infrastructure is of an adequate standard; and
- (6) the proposal complies with other Local Plan policies.

Extensions and Alterations to Residential Properties

- 4.32 There is a need to ensure that alterations and extensions to residential properties do not, individually or cumulatively, detract from the environment of residential areas. Policy SC9 sets out the key considerations in determining the acceptability of proposals, dealing with the impact of changes on the integrity of the property itself, on the amenity of neighbouring properties and on the character of the area as a whole. Detailed guidance may be found within the Council's SPG Note on House Extensions and Alterations.

4.33

SC9 EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Extensions and alterations to residential properties will be permitted where:

- (1) the scale, design and materials are sympathetic to the existing building;
- (2) the location and scale of the extension or alterations will not significantly affect the degree of amenity, daylight or privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties; and
- (3) it will not result in overdevelopment of the plot, thereby giving rise to adverse impacts on the functioning of garden ground, or the unacceptable loss of off-street parking.

4.34

Creating and Maintaining Residential Amenity - Actions and Indicators

Actions:

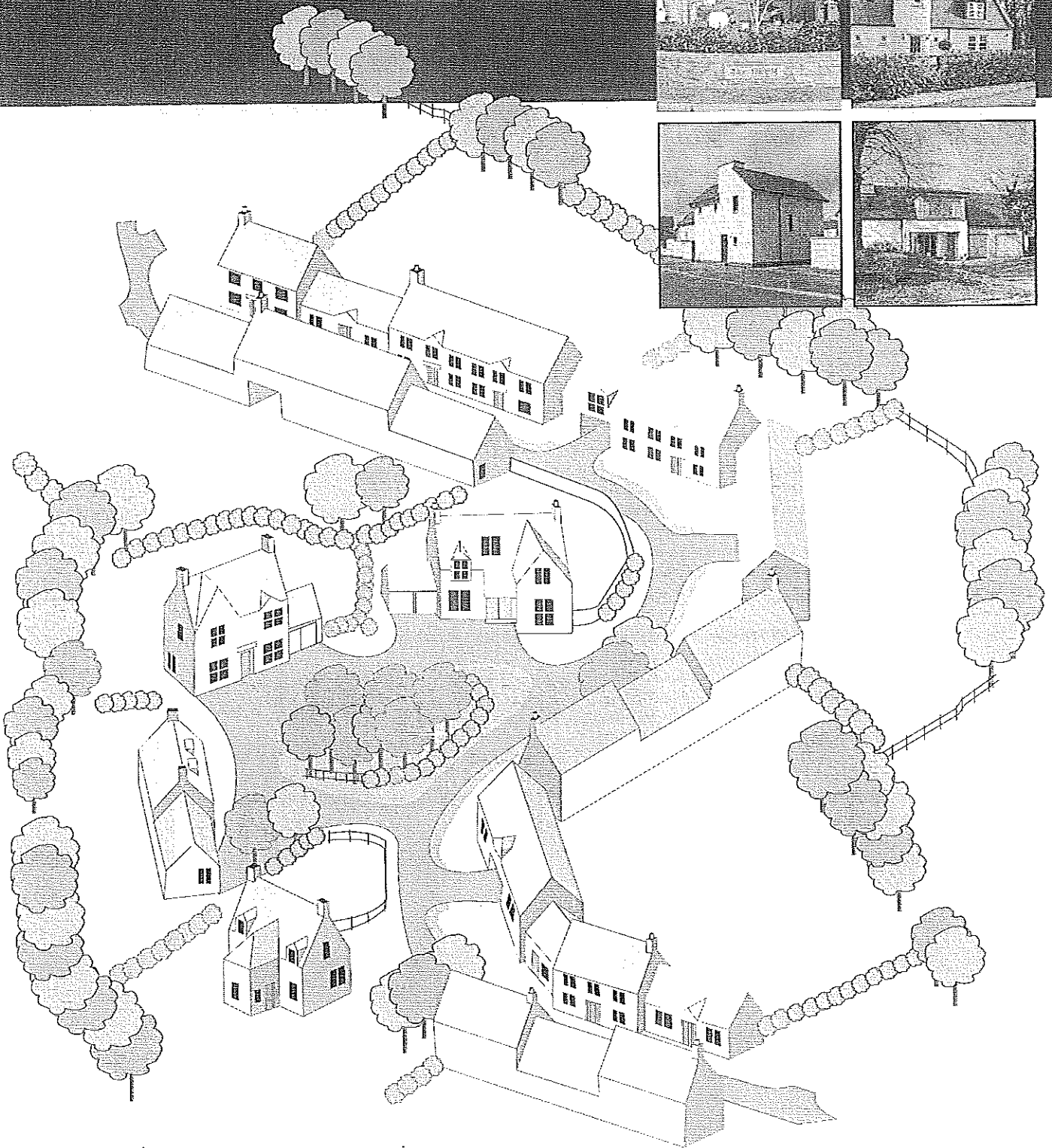
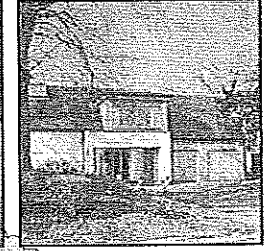
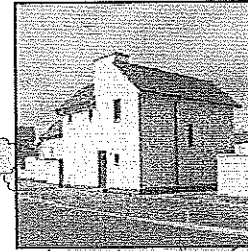
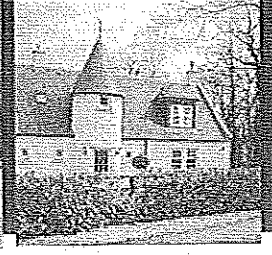
- Prepare development briefs for outstanding housing sites

Indicators:

- Quality as assessed through periodic audit of major built developments against sustainable development principles

Housing Layout and Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note



Falkirk Council
Development Services

Foreword



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David Alexander".

Welcome to this supplementary planning guidance note on Housing Layout and Design. It is one of a suite of such guides promoting development quality in the built environment and taking forward the Council's commitment to sustainable development as set out in the Development Plan.

Falkirk Council has set ambitious targets for continued sustainable housing growth. If well designed, new housing can be more sustainable, make a substantial contribution to a sense of place and improve the visual image of towns and settlements within the Falkirk area.

Although the guide will be of interest to all house builders, it is primarily intended to assist volume house builders achieve the necessary high standards of design acceptable to Falkirk Council. The advice addresses the architectural treatment of house design but, importantly, focuses on layout and the spaces between buildings to ensure the creation of quality urban settings for all our communities.

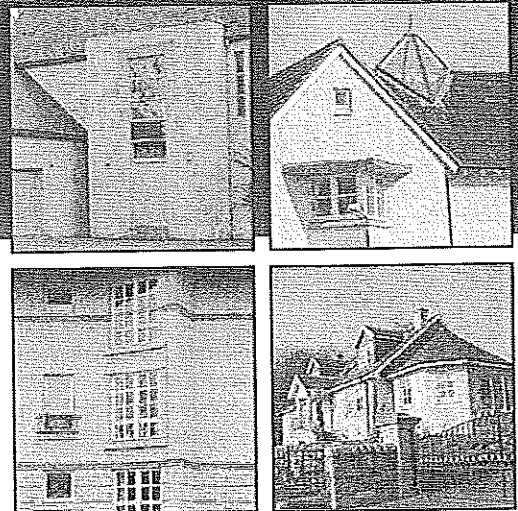
The Council commends the advice set out in this guide.

February 2007

Content

1. Introduction

- 1.1 What is the Basic Issue?
- 1.2 Who is the guidance for?
- 1.3 What general planning advice can be found pre-application?
- 1.4 Where will the guidance be most strictly applied?
- 1.5 What is the National and Local Plan policy background?
- 1.6 Will the guidance interfere with the Housing Market?
- 1.7 How is the design guidance set out?



2. Estate Layout

- 2.1 Site Characteristics and Constraints
physical - landform, landscape, structures, utilities, ground conditions,
visual - views in and out, local building character
- 2.2 Public Space Framework
entrances, public routes and open spaces
- 2.3 Built Edges
general and distributor roads, exposed fences, countryside and building height
- 2.4 Models for House Grouping
detachment, distinctiveness, urban and rural models
- 2.5 Distribution of House Grouping Models
town and site context, building height
- 2.6 Street Design and Roads Standards
road hierarchy and parking standards, street widths, ponds,
window to window distances, turning heads and visitor spaces
grouped parking spaces, refuse collection and SUDS ponds
- 2.7 Other Planning Considerations
infill, tandem and backland development, sloping ground, overshadowing,
open space standards
- 2.8 Security for Properties and Public Places
public/private hierarchy, surveillance, active public space
- 2.9 Sustainable Design
conservation, usable public space, denser building

3. Architectural Form and Aesthetics

- 3.1 Basic Approach
- 3.2 Design Advice

4. Building Form and Elevational Compositions

- 4.1 Illustrations of poor design improved through planning advice

5. Further Information

- 5.1 Useful Contacts
- 5.2 Checklist

Introduction

1.1 What is the Basic Issue?

New housing is much in demand today. This is driven by a number of factors e.g. size of accommodation, modern amenities, detachment from neighbours, closeness to countryside, distance from urban squalor and changing family and social patterns.

Areas of new housing are a very prominent form of current urban development. The quality of design applied to such development therefore requires to be of a very high standard in order to enhance the good character and appearance of our towns and villages.

The Guidance Note aims to provide advice on how a high standard of design can be achieved in estate layout and house architecture. Ultimately the quality resulting will be reflected in house sale prices. Other means of measuring design quality would be whether a housing estate might merit statutory protection in the future, the "conservation area test", or whether it would be attractive to visitors, the "postcard test".

Within the Falkirk and surrounding area new housing developments are generally taking place within two classic location types i.e. URBAN and SUB-URBAN sites.

URBAN:

town centre infill sites or "brownfield" land, perhaps where a former industrial use once operated, sometimes further out but still surrounded by the existing town.

Within a town centre, conservation concerns and greater civic pride tend to ensure that housing infill solutions are more one-off, appropriately more dense and engaging of better designers.

Outwith a town centre, however, there can be a greater tendency for volume house builders to apply the same layout principles to larger brownfield or redevelopment sites as to new suburban sites. Whereas the introduction of more affluent lifestyles into modest, perhaps run-down areas may have benefits, the townscape and social cohesion of an area can be prejudiced where an open suburban image is imposed. It is therefore important that housing development in such areas is designed to fit as seamlessly as possible into the existing urban "grain". This Guidance Note provides design conventions, patterns and models to assist in achieving this.

SUB-URBAN:

greenfield sites at the edge of a town traditionally characterised by dormitory developments of detached and semi detached housing with limited public facilities.

The design of sub-urban housing is probably the greatest concern to central and local government (see para.1.5) and especially informs this Guidance Note. Although it would appear to meet the demand criteria noted at the start of this section, the resulting housing estate designs generally fail either the "postcard" or "conservation area" tests. Despite the use of many different house types and changes in materials the image of "sameness" remains. Similarly, although detachment of one house from another characterises suburbia, there is the continuing impression that many of them are too close to one another.

Whereas this Guidance Note is predominantly concerned about the design of housing estates, it does not ignore the fact that the absence of shops and community facilities is partly responsible for the poor image of suburbia. Concerns about the commercial viability of and the potential source of nuisance from sometimes isolated amenities can discourage their inclusion in a housing area where not part of an appropriately scaled urban centre designed in from the start. The need for mixed-use development appropriately located in relation to natural focal points and primary road edges, is therefore noted.

Sustainability

It is important that the layout and design of public open space, together with the buildings set within or around it, support a sustainable environment i.e. the earth's resources protected and a healthy environment enhanced to ensure the continuity of life. Para.2.9 sets out the contribution of the Guidance Note to this. Specifically the advice will be applied in conjunction with the council's adopted Sustainable Falkirk Strategy and the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Sustainable Design currently in preparation.

Introduction

1.2 Who is the guidance for?

This Guidance Note is primarily intended to assist volume house builders and their design agents although guidance on plotted, backland and infill development may be of interest to smaller builders, architects and private individuals who may also wish to appraise a neighbouring proposal.

1.3 What general planning advice can be found pre-application?

House builders should seek the advice of the Development Management Officer for the local area for information on planning and other permissions, neighbour notification, fees, timescale and any further queries relating to this Guidance Note (see USEFUL CONTACTS). The submission of preliminary sketches would be useful to forestall any major redesign at a future date, with its consequences for wasted time and money.

1.4 Where will the guidance be most strictly applied?

This Guidance Note will be applied generally to all housing proposals seeking Planning Permission but especially to development relating to the following:

- Conservation Areas and the setting of Listed Buildings
- Areas of Townscape Value: as identified in Local Plan policy EQ13
- Major road edges: buildings should create frontage with no screen fencing
- Major urban edges: views of any development from the countryside should be attractive
- Canalside, riverbank, waterside or foreshore edges
- Countryside sites
- Sites requiring a Design Statement as per the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Design Statements.

1.5 What is the National and Local Plan policy background?

The current quality of housing design is a matter of concern to central and local government from the cultural, economic and environmental point of view as well as the merely aesthetic.

Following the earlier Planning Advice Note 44 (Fitting New Housing into the Landscape) and 46 (Planning for Crime Prevention) the Scottish Executive published its key design document 'Designing Places' in 2001 dealing with all aspects of urban design. There then followed further design PANs i.e.

- PAN 67 Housing Quality
- PAN 65 Planning & Open Space
- PAN 68 Design Statements
- PAN 76 New Residential Streets
- PAN 77 Designing Safer Places
- PAN 78 Inclusive Design

Current local authority policy documents also place strong emphasis on design quality and the need to raise standards i.e.

Structure Plan

- Policy ENV 7 - Quality of Development

Local Plan

- EQ3 Townscape Design
- EQ4 Landscape Design
- EQ5 Design & Community Safety
- SC 6 Housing Density and Amenity
- SC13 Open Space and Play Provision in New Residential Development

Other

- Sustainable Falkirk Strategy
- Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Design Statements
- Biodiversity and Development
- Trees and Development *
- Public Open Space and New Development *
- Sustainable Design *

* in preparation

Introduction

1.6 Will the guidance interfere with the Housing Market?

There is no doubt that central and local government planning policies already impact on the freedom of the housing market, for reasons of good town planning and the protection of the environment e.g. restricting development within the most lucrative rural areas outwith the urban limit. However, in the main, housebuilders have adapted to such policies and the profitable redevelopment of degraded brownfield sites within towns is testament to this. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that developers could be similarly flexible and innovative in response to the setting of design standards on housing layout for similar planning reasons.

Most current housing estates consist of uniformly detached and minimally spaced houses. Maximising the number of houses on the site on this basis would appear to be the accepted market approach today. Whilst this guide does not dispute that a site should be developed to its full capacity it considers that the most appropriate form and configuration of development will emerge from a careful urban design analysis of any site rather than from standardised marketing and house spacing factors. Accordingly, joined street enclosure will be promoted in combination and contrasting with truly detached, landscape dominated Arcadian-type houses all as an alternative to the sameness of the suburban model. These of course are the models which created our best traditional town and village settings which the volume builder aspires to emulate and where a strong housing market clearly continues to exist.

The guidance provided should bring to a developer a number of areas where specific savings can be made. The concern with well organised public space to avoid wastage may allow the prudent housebuilder to achieve a denser development where appropriate. The emphasis on grouping and patterning of housing to create character, rather than deriving this from contrasting house designs and finishes, should simplify the building production process. Finally the architectural style promoted, whilst honouring traditional principles of form, composition, vertical proportions and the balance of solid-to-void, seeks a contemporary interpretation of these free from over expensive elaboration. Fussy period imitations will not be generally welcomed.

1.7 How is the design guidance set out?

The design guidance progresses from the broad principles of estate layout to the more detailed aspects of architectural form and aesthetics.

The section on Estate Layout sets down the elements of the public space framework; primary edges, building heights and focal points being the additional urban design aspects relating to this.

The guidance then identifies two alternative house grouping models i.e.

- (i) joined housing enclosing space and
- (ii) detached housing enclosed by space.

This then leads to guidance on appropriate locations for these different models with building height and focal points as associated drivers.

The latter part of the section on Estate Layout section deals with more technical aspects e.g. road design, sloping land, security for public places and individual properties and energy efficiency and climate considerations. Since the guide is aimed at estate layout it only touches incidentally on housing forms at a town scale. However it does incorporate advice on minor developments in backland and gap sites.

Para. 3.1/2 **Architectural Form and Aesthetics** provides a brief discussion of design principles followed by a simple checklist of design conventions based on the traditional principles of building composition.

Introduction

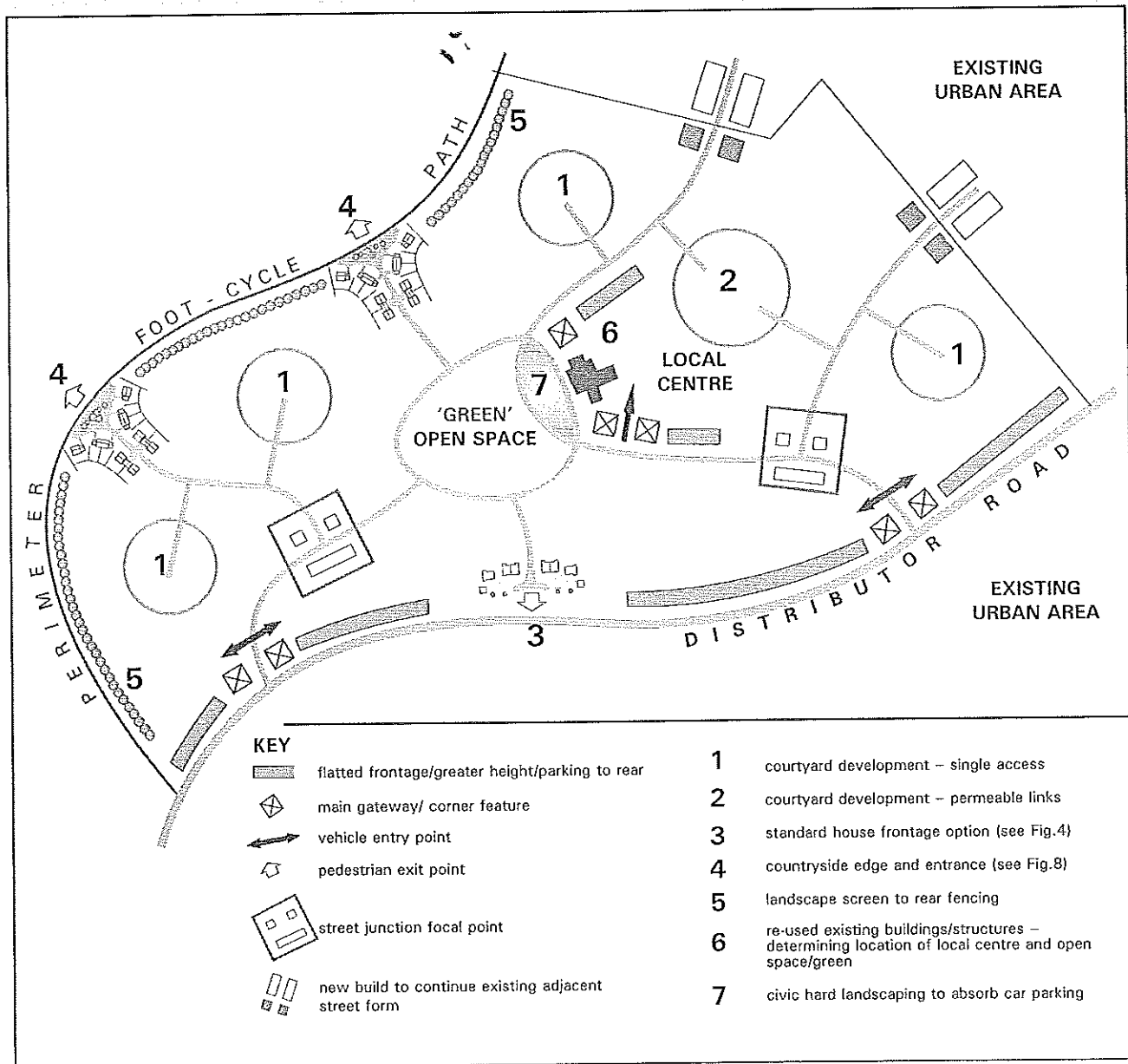


Figure 1 CONTEXT AND PLANNING - TOWN EXTENSION SITE

Feature retention, physical constraints, framework of route linkages and open space, entrances, built edges, corners and focal points.

Building frontages, with direct pedestrian entrance, preferred alongside all public streets and spaces.