

## ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION

### SWDP 21: Design



**A. All development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, reinforce local distinctiveness and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance cultural and heritage assets and their settings. New and innovative designs will be encouraged and supported where they enhance the overall quality of the built environment.**

**B. Applications should demonstrate, through a Design and Access Statement or other supporting evidence, how the objectives outlined in criterion A have been addressed. They will also need to address the following matters:**

**i. Siting and Layout**

**The siting and layout of a development should reflect the given characteristics of the site in terms of its appearance and function. Orientation should take advantage of passive heating and cooling**

systems, offer shade as appropriate and provide for the use of renewable energy.

## ii. Relationship to Surroundings and to Other Development

Development proposals must complement the character of the area. In particular, development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area.

## iii. The Settings of the City and Towns

Design proposals should ensure that the prominent views, vistas and skylines of Worcester city and the towns are maintained and safeguarded, particularly where they relate to heritage assets, existing landmark buildings, and 'gateway' sites. Development at the urban edges should respect the rural setting.

## iv. Neighbouring Amenity

Development should provide an adequate level of privacy, outlook, sunlight and daylight, and should not be unduly overbearing.

## v. Settlement Character

The distinct identity and character of settlements should be safeguarded.

## vi. Mix of Uses

To create vitality and interest, proposals should incorporate a mix of uses where appropriate to the location.

## vii. Flexible Design

Buildings should incorporate flexible designs, addressing access to public open spaces and enabling adaption for future needs and uses in terms of internal spaces and extensions.

## viii. Scale, Height and Massing

The scale, height and massing of development must be appropriate to the setting of the site and the surrounding landscape character and townscape, including existing urban grain and density.

## **ix. Links, Connectivity and Access**

**Design and layouts should maximise opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages to the surrounding area and local services and should be generally accessible for all users, including those with disabilities. Vehicular traffic from the development should be able to access the highway safely and the road network should have the capacity to accommodate the type and volume of traffic from the development.**

## **x. Detailed Design and Materials**

**The detailing and materials of development should be of high quality and appropriate to its context. Design should have regard to sustainable construction approaches and ensure adaptability to changes in the climate.**

## **xi. Appropriate Facilities**

**Development should incorporate the required parking facilities and provision for the storage of bicycles. Satisfactory access and provision for the parking, servicing and manoeuvring of vehicles should be provided in accordance with the recognised standards.**

## **xii. Landscaping**

**Development should provide high quality hard and soft landscaping. The importance of soft landscaping, using appropriate species and incorporating arrangements for long-term management is emphasised.**

## **xiii. Public Realm**

**Public realm and open spaces should be well-designed, appropriately detailed and maintained via management agreements. They should also incorporate active frontages where appropriate. Proposals should include hard and soft surfaces, public art, street furniture, shade, lighting and signage as appropriate to the development.**

## **xiv. Creating a Safe and Secure Environment**

**Opportunities for creating a safe and secure environment and providing surveillance should be included, principally through the layout and positioning of buildings, spaces and uses. Where appropriate, development should incorporate measures for crime reduction that are consistent with those recommended by the Secured by Design guides. Buildings and their surrounding spaces should incorporate fire safety**

**measures and be designed to allow rapid access by the emergency services.**

## **xv. Advertisements**

**Illuminated signage will only be permitted where lighting is unobtrusive or not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the site or surroundings. Consent will be granted for outdoor advertisements (including poster hoardings) provided the display will not adversely affect the amenities of the area or impact on public safety.**

## **Reasoned Justification**

1. Design quality is critical to good planning as excellence in design can enhance the quality of people's lives, create a sense of place, improve the attractiveness of a location and create safer places to live and work. Streets, pathways and public open spaces are the 'glue' that binds a place together, making it accessible, attractive and safe and an easy place to move around. Poor design, on the other hand, has the potential to detract from people's day-to-day lives through poor building relationships, car-dominated layouts and a sub-standard public realm, all of which add little to a sense of place and have a negative impact on land values, property prices and the environment in general.
2. Consequently, the policy criteria are applicable to all aspects of design, including those associated with residential and employment development, public buildings and the public realm.
3. Good design is also a crucial element in supporting economic prosperity. Ensuring the highest quality of design in employment and retail locations, along with enhancement through quality design of Worcester and south Worcestershire's market towns and villages, is an important factor in attracting inward investment and promoting a vibrant tourist economy. However, for some employment development proposals, notwithstanding the need for energy efficient designs, it is recognised that the aesthetics may be less important with respect to established industrial estates.
4. It is essential that full consideration is given to achieving sustainable development and counteracting climatic variations over the lifetime of a new building or development through the choice of location, design and materials and through addressing ecological integrity. Reducing the demand for energy and improving energy efficiency is also an important starting point for achieving sustainable design. Designs should include energy-efficient methods of heating, lighting and ventilation and, where viable, incorporate the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources in accordance with SWDP 27. Support will be given for new residential development that seeks to achieve the New Home Quality Mark.
5. Good design is also vital in protecting and enhancing the special character of south Worcestershire. The design principles set out in this policy provide a high-level design framework for new development that supports the diverse nature of good design. These will be explained further in a Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. They

may also be complemented by Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Plans, or Village Design Statements that can provide the "fine grain" local design detail. In accordance with the Framework, it is expected that pre-application discussions should include design-related matters and applicants should employ the 'Building for Life 12' methodology to assess the scheme at pre-application and submission stages. Where development proposals are required to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, these should be used to explain how the principles of good design, including those set out in this policy's criteria, have been incorporated into the development. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies in the SWDP and proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they have been informed by current available guidance<sup>(46)</sup> and evolving best practice.

6. Development proposals are not designed in isolation from their context. Although there are considerable variations in local architectural styles, buildings and urban areas across south Worcestershire can be characterised within the broad typologies to be set out in the South Worcestershire Design SPD. New development should take account of the characteristics of the site, as well as the distinctiveness of the wider locality and make a positive contribution to the surrounding area. Where appropriate, particularly with respect to masterplanning the urban extensions, the use of design codes will be considered, in accordance with the Framework.
7. In accordance with the Framework, a development will not be acceptable if its design is inappropriate in its context, or if it fails to take any opportunity available to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. This includes ensuring that there is no unacceptable detrimental impact on the amenity of existing or new residents or occupants resulting from the new development. In certain circumstances development proposals may be referred to a local design review panel.
8. It is the intention to ensure that in Worcester city and the towns the historic skyline is protected and enhanced, with distant views into and from the city being preserved, especially of towers, spires, hills, ridges and waterside, including the floodplain where applicable. Gateway and entry locations to the city are also important and design proposals should have regard to enhancing these arrival points where opportunities exist.
9. The use of innovative and contemporary design that enhances the overall quality of the townscape, either in established core areas or as extensions to more recent development, is encouraged. Through employing the best aspects and approaches of contemporary design, it will be possible to leave a legacy of architecture and urban design for future generations to value. Contemporary design can either involve new materials and technology used in a traditional format or the use of traditional materials in a new and innovative design, or a combination of both. Where adventurous new designs have been tried, they can become valued local landmarks and make a positive contribution to the

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46 South Worcestershire Design Guide SPD Building for Life 12: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/Documents/Documents/OurWork/CABE/Building%20for%20Life/Building%20for%20Life%2012.pdf>  
 New Home Quality Mark: [www.newhomequalitymark.com](http://www.newhomequalitymark.com)  
 AONB Design  
 Guidance: [http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/documents/Malvern-Building-Design-Guidance\\_CONSULTATION-DRAFT.pdf](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/documents/Malvern-Building-Design-Guidance_CONSULTATION-DRAFT.pdf)  
 Better By Design  
 Manual for Streets: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/3891/pdfmanforstreets.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3891/pdfmanforstreets.pdf)  
 Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment:  
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%20Nov%202011.pdf>  
 South Worcestershire Historic Environment Assessment: [http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page\\_id=553](http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/?page_id=553)

locality. Innovative designs can also be successful when integrated into conservation areas or as extensions to historic buildings and do not need to be confined to areas outside these designations.

10. Attention to detail is essential in ensuring high quality design and appearance. This should take into account the decoration of a building or structure and the texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials used. To improve the sustainability and local distinctiveness of new development, the use of locally sourced materials and those recovered from demolished structures on site will be encouraged where feasible and appropriate. However, it is acknowledged that there will be instances when modern construction methods and sustainable design solutions will necessitate the use of other materials. Development opportunities that seek to minimise resources, energy use and climate change impact through the design, layout and use of materials in development will be encouraged.
11. Appropriate facilities for users of new development should be integrated effectively into its design and layout to ensure that they can be accessed in a safe and convenient manner, whilst not detracting from the overall appearance of the development. The nature of the facilities will vary depending on the development proposed but should include:
  - a. waste management and storage facilities.
  - b. storage for bicycles.
  - c. easy access to public transport.
12. Advertisements on shop fronts, commercial and industrial buildings, including fascia and projecting signs and brackets, both illuminated and non-illuminated, canopies and awnings, grilles and fixing of alarm boxes, should all comply with the relevant supplementary planning documents.