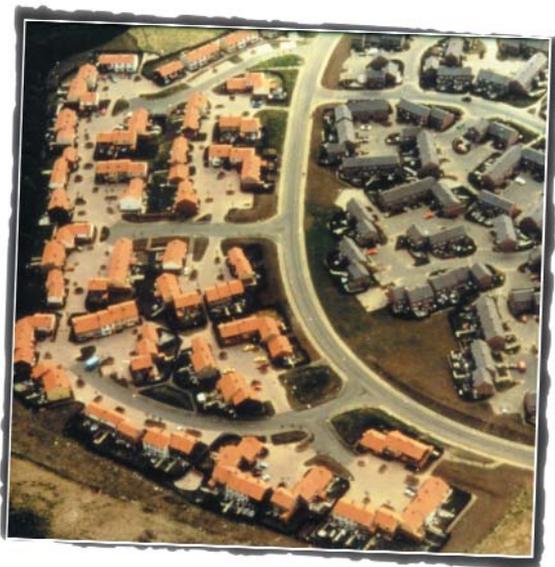


1. The intention of this design guide is to provide information and advice to help everyone involved in the design of new residential developments in Staffordshire to create residential environments that are visually attractive, safe, convenient, secure and economical in both construction and maintenance.
2. The most lasting impression of any housing area is created by the spaces between the buildings rather than the houses themselves. These spaces are defined by the buildings, the landscaping, the gardens, the boundary treatments, the roads and the footpaths. Roads and footpaths affect the arrangement, spacing and appearance of the houses they serve, the size and shape of gardens, the choice of planting, the location of open areas and play spaces and the routes for public utility services.



3. The layout of roads and footpaths is an integral part of the design of residential spaces and should not be regarded as a separate technical task. This design guide creates opportunities for designers to achieve a better balance between spatial elements, by reducing the physical and visual dominance of roads and by making it easier to group buildings in ways that create attractive spaces. This change in emphasis means that the landscape design becomes more important and will have a greater influence on the character of spaces between the buildings
4. Since the first edition of DB32, the concepts of shared vehicle and pedestrian roads and road hierarchies have gained widespread acceptance. Experience in practice has now enabled earlier principles to be refined into clear aims and objectives that increase the opportunities to develop new residential areas with innovative designs that respond to the characteristics of each individual site. These more flexible standards will facilitate better design, enabling new housing to respect its setting and be economically viable.
5. It is appropriate that this should be the case as the nature of development sites for house building is also changing. An increasing emphasis is being placed on the re-use of previously developed land and on the development of the more difficult sites within the built up areas of villages, towns and cities. Development at higher densities is also being considered, to reduce the amount of green field land needed for new housing.
6. The form and layout of the buildings, the use of local materials, construction techniques and the relationship of buildings to adjoining streets and spaces all contribute to their character and visual distinctiveness. The design process set out in this guide will help designers to respond to the context of new development, drawing on the qualities of our established towns and villages, and reinterpreting these in a manner, which caters for the needs of present and future generations.



7. The design of the built environment should be treated holistically, as advocated in the companion guide to Design Bulletin 32 “Places Streets and Movement”. This draws from the historic context to inform the character of future developments and identifies the need to create a sense of place and community as a key design objective.
8. A close working relationship between highway engineers, architects, urban designers, planners and landscape architects should be encouraged to recapture this sense of overall vision.
9. This guide is particular to Staffordshire, and sets out Staffordshire’s design philosophy for residential areas, their roads, built form, landscape and open spaces. It has been prepared by officers of the County and District Councils, with support from the house building industry and amenity bodies. It draws on many years of experience, with the aim of making a better and more sustainable environment for the future. Individual Councils will build on this general advice and adapt it to the particular situations in their areas, but the underlying principles will be applied consistently throughout the County.

10. Standards have a tendency to become rigid, limiting regulations. This is not their purpose and it is to be avoided. The important consideration is the spirit and not the letter of the law. This guide should be regarded as a flexible and creative tool, which explains a philosophy and sets out principles and design objectives. These seek to achieve economy, safety, attractiveness and sustainability while imposing the minimum constraint on designers.
11. The Staffordshire Authorities encourage innovation in design. It is hoped that as sites become more challenging, then the design solutions will become less standardised. Any examples of road form and layout put forward in this design guide are neither definitive nor exhaustive. Most importantly, they cannot be a design response to a particular site.
12. The identification of the design parameters of each site can only be decided through a systematic study of the context of each site, identifying the character of its surroundings and the important features of the site. In some settlements, Village Design Statements may be a helpful way of identifying important local design characteristics. By adopting this method, an overall concept can be conceived to help establish design objectives to which the layout proposals must respond. **If a developer or designer can demonstrate that a particular layout solution satisfies the principles set out in this design guide, and that it flows from a logical analysis of the site in its context, then that solution should receive the support of the planning and highway authorities.**
13. The design of residential areas can also play a part in reducing the risk of crime and opportunities for vandalism. The advice contained within this guide is intended to produce more secure residential environments, where there is less actual crime and less fear of crime. To achieve this objective, road and footpath systems, landscaping and the position of houses in relation to them, should be considered in relation to their contribution to crime reduction and personal security.

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