

## Design Guidelines

### 06.04

### Conclusion

The studies undertaken as part of the background for this Statement found that, whilst Sturminster Newton cannot truly be regarded as unique or exceptional in townscape terms, the old town with its immediate landscape setting is nonetheless a delightful and attractive rural town with many interesting and historic features.

The study has also found that, in marked contrast to the old town, the larger new northern extension to the town is, for the most part, substantially lacking in character or local distinctiveness.

The Design Guidelines included in this Statement seek to ensure that both the essential characteristics of the old town are conserved and that any future redevelopment in the newer part of the town uses the opportunity to create a much higher quality of urban environment. It also seeks to encourage substantially higher quality new development around the edges of the town wherever and whenever that may take place, and some of the issues associated with creating new urban environments in such locations have been discussed. An important tool in achieving high quality new development is the Development Brief, the use of which is strongly recommended.

Whilst the Design Guidelines also seek to provide a useful tool for the encouragement of sensitive and high quality development, it does not seek to be so prescriptive as to stifle development or the expression of imagination and flair.

Critical to the application of this principle must be the exercise of reasonable and balanced judgement in the evolution and consideration of each planning application, weighing often opposing issues of protection and change.

This places considerable demands on the skill and application of both would-be developers and planning authority alike. The view is expressed here that, professionally handled, the balance between protection and change can be successfully managed and that, within the guidance provided by the government, Local Plan policies and the more detailed Design Guidance provided in this Statement, Sturminster Newton can remain a delightful town, further enriched through an ever on-going process of sensitive change and evolution.

## APPENDIX

### Relevant Local Plan Policies

The Design Guidelines all comply with and/or support existing Policies in the current North Dorset District-wide Local Plan (1st Revision) Adopted Plan to 2011.

It will be noted that the Local Plan identifies under Strategy and Environment four problems and issues that are considered to be “particularly critical” in drawing up the Strategy and environmental policies for the Plan. Three of these (1.6 Protection of the Countryside, 1.7 protection of the District’s Heritage and 1.8 The Quality of New Development) are addressed in one way or another in the Design Guidelines. Also, of the eight aims of the Sustainable Development Strategy, two of them (1. Improve the quality of life and 7. Conserve the built and the natural heritage character) relate to the Town Design Statement Design Guidelines.

In Part 06.03, Design Guidelines, a note is added that identifies which Local Plan Policies apply to each Design Guideline to ensure that they comply with existing policy.

For ease of reference, the relevant Local Plan policies are listed below:

Policy 1.7  
Development within Settlement Boundaries  
Development will only be approved within Settlement Boundaries if the proposal satisfies the Standard Assessment Criteria Policy.

#### **(b) Protecting the Environment**

Policy 1.8  
Standard Assessment Criteria

The following assessment criteria are of acknowledged importance for the environment of North Dorset District and will be used in the determination of planning applications.

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria;

(ii) Character  
The form, scale and density of new development should be in character or enhance the immediate surroundings and the settlement or area as a whole.

(iii) Amenity  
The amenity of neighbouring land users should be safeguarded.

(iv) Design & external appearance of buildings  
The adoption of local vernacular styles and use of local materials will be expected in conservation areas which have a strong local historic character where pre-20th century properties predominate. Buildings in a modern idiom may be approved where they are in sympathetic relationship to their surroundings. The main elevation of new buildings will be expected to face either the major road leading to, or the major road running through the development, so as to create a sense of enclosure, public security and to help integrate new development with existing patterns of development.

(v) Views of the countryside and the built environment heritage  
Development should not adversely affect public views of the countryside, the built environment or Important Open/Wooded Areas.

(vi) Vehicular access & car parking  
The provision of access roads, turning areas and car parking which generate traffic movements likely to cause or increase unnecessary danger to highway users, will not be permitted. (For car parking strategy see Policies 1.1 (ii) and 5.17). Road networks leading into new development shall be designed so as to achieve a high level of ‘permeability’ i.e. to have the maximum number of links and access points between all areas for pedestrians, cyclists and for motor vehicles so as to integrate new development with existing patterns of development, to create a greater sense of public security and to reduce journey length.

(viii) Pedestrian & cycle rights of way  
Existing rights of way for pedestrians and cyclists should be safeguarded and improved where necessary.

#### **(c) Conservation of the Historic Environment**

Policy 1.21;  
Alterations to Listed Buildings

Development proposals which involve the alteration or extension of a listed building will only be permitted if the architectural and historic interest of the building will be preserved and no original or historic features will be destroyed.

Policy 1.23  
Setting of Listed Buildings

Development affecting the setting of a listed building and its contribution to the local scene will only be permitted provided that it either preserves or enhances the listed building’s special interest or its setting.

Policy 1.24  
Character of Conservation Areas

The District Council will pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and proposals for any new development, alterations and changes of use of existing buildings and land which have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will not be permitted.

Policy 1.27  
Shopfronts in Conservation Areas

Proposals to alter or remove traditional shopfronts which have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be resisted. Proposals for any new shopfront that will have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will not be permitted.

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### Relevant Local Plan Policies

#### (d) Landscape Protection and Ecology

Policy 1.39

##### Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Preservation Orders will be made to protect individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands that;

- (i) contribute to the amenity and character of an area;
- (ii) are under a known threat of felling that would be detrimental to the amenity and character of an area;
- (iii) are fine and rare species that make a particular contribution to the area's quality, character and interest.

Tree preservation Orders will be reviewed to take account of development, storm damage, age or legislative changes in order to maintain accurate and enforceable tree protection across the District.

Policy 1.40

##### Landscaping of New Development

On any development site where existing trees are a significant landscape feature, a full tree survey, (based on an accurate land survey), forming part of the submitted planning application is required. Existing woodland and the most significant trees and hedgerows will be retained wherever possible. Appropriate management initiatives will be encouraged.

Where appropriate, schemes for good quality hard and soft landscaping (and proper provision for long term landscape maintenance) should be submitted as an integral part of any development proposals, in order to enhance the environment and setting of new development or to help integrate the development into its surroundings.

Policy 1.41

##### Amenity Tree Planning

In connection with development proposals, the planting of locally occurring trees, shrubs and hedges, and positive management of trees and woodlands is proposed in order to:

- (i) strengthen existing tree cover
- (ii) improve public amenity

(iii) create new woodlands

unless there are overriding ecological, archaeological or local landscape or amenity objections.

#### (e) Housing

Policy 2.10

##### Density of New Development

The density of new development should make full and effective use of the proposed site, bearing in mind the character of the locality and following the principles of good design in line with the urban village approach.

Policy 2.11

##### Extension to Dwellings

Proposals for the extension of existing residential properties will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the plot size of the existing property is large enough to accommodate the extension without resulting in a cramped or overdeveloped site;
- (ii) the scale and design of the proposal compliments the existing dwelling.
- (iii) the character of neighbouring properties and amenity enjoyed by their occupants are not jeopardised.

#### (f) Local Area Policies - Sturminster Newton

Policy SN1

(i) All development in Sturminster Newton should respect the historic character of the town and its surroundings.

(ii) In accordance with the overall Local Plan Strategy, Sturminster Newton will act as the main centre for the Stalbridge/Sturminster Newton area and will receive the majority of population, housing and employment growth and the development of major community facilities.

(iii) In the period up to 2011 "moderate" levels of development will be permitted within the settlement boundary of the town. This will include the development of a limited number of sites defined as "major".

Policy SN3

Development will only be approved within the Sturminster Newton Conservation Area if the proposal is in keeping with the intrinsic character of each environmental sub-area.

Policy SN4

Approximately 3.5 Ha of land to the north of the Livestock Market will be released for residential development of about 90 dwellings, subject to the following requirements:

- (i) The land will not be released for development until the link road required under Pl.Ap 2/97/390/(54) has been completed.
- (ii) A traffic assessment of the impact of the development on the junction of bath Road/Rabin Hill will be required.
- (iii) Provision of a landscaping/buffer zone to the east of the site to incorporate footway/cycleway provision.
- (iv) Footway/cycleway provision through to bath Road and the former Livestock Market Site to the south will also be sought.
- (v) Provision for the accommodation or relocation of badgers on the site must be made.
- (vi) Hedgerows together with associated land within the site should be retained and used as an amenity corridor for pedestrian access.

Policy SN10

Measures to make cycling safer and more attractive will be encouraged along the following routes;

- (i) East - West link. Sturminster High School - Rixon estate via the proposed housing developments to the north of the town (sites 'D' and 'B');
- (ii) North - south link. Honey mead Lane - Station Road via the proposed informal open space, residential development (site 'C') and former Livestock Market Site.