Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance

Placemaking and Design

Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan

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Contents

Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared to guide and promote high quality, sustainable design within the County. It provides further guidance, and where applicable elaborates on the policies and proposals of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP), providing additional clarity to assist developers in understanding the core requirements and considerations necessary to be included within a planning proposal.

1.1.2 The guidance contained within the SPG is aimed at securing a deliverable, coordinated, high standard of development and ensuring that proposals reflect and respect the character and requirements of Carmarthenshire.

1.1.3 Production of this SPG has taken place following the adoption of the LDP and having regard to National Planning Policy. Its main purpose is to provide further information and detail on the principles and parameters that developers should adhere to in order to achieve deliverable, well designed and cohesive developments. It also explains and sets out the other considerations to be addressed as part of a planning application submission.

1.1.4 It should be noted that whilst SPG do not have the same status as adopted development plan policies, they may be taken into account a material considerations in determining planning applications.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Achieving good design and creating an effective sense of place requires an understanding of the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. Design is a fundamental component in creating sustainable development and consequently needs to include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, as well as its aesthetic form.

1.2.2 Employing better design in developments has a number of advantages. For example, aesthetic improvements to the built environment could result in the revitalisation of run-down neighbourhoods, whilst introducing the concept of green infrastructure to developments can result in benefits and enhancements to habitats and biodiversity within the natural environment. In addition, well designed, well connected public spaces will encourage local residents and the public to walk and cycle, thereby reducing reliance on the motor car. These, together with simple environmental design improvements, such as traffic calming, new landscaping and street lighting can result in better places to live and enhanced social cohesion.

1.2.3 Design is important to our quality of life. Well designed landscapes and townscapes help to instil a sense of place, something that is important for communities and neighbourhoods. Creating well designed places, whether urban or rural, will result in quality environments which will help foster communities that are safe and accessible for everyone.

2.1 National

2.1.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Ed 7) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government (WG). Its central objective is to promote and provide a framework for sustainable development within Wales. One of the key factors in achieving this is the promotion of sustainability through good design.

2.1.2 Design is defined in PPW (Ed.7) as:
"the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings." (Paragraph 4.11.1)

2.1.3 Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design considers design issues and sets out WG's objectives for new development. The purpose of the TAN is to provide all those involved in the design of development with advice on how the promotion of sustainability through good design

may be facilitated through the planning system. The TAN emphasises that good design requires a collaborative, creative, process of problem solving and innovation - embracing sustainability, architecture, place making, public realm, landscape, and infrastructure.

2.1.4 WG is committed to promoting more sustainable forms of development, and their sustainable development scheme, One Wales: One Planet, (2009) sets out their approach to sustainable development. Through the planning system in Wales, good design can be used to play a major role in delivering sustainable forms of development and PPW provides guidance on how the planning system in Wales can achieve this.

2.1.5 There are a number of ways in which placemaking and design principles can contribute towards sustainable development and sustainability. These include:

- respect local character and distinctiveness;
- respect landform & topography;
- respect landscape and biodiversity;
- sustainable use of natural materials and resources;
- construct robust and durable buildings

These principles are covered in detail in subsequent sections where they form part of the place-making and design process.

2.2 Local

2.2.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the policies and guidance that are set out in the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted December, 2014. The SPG is supplementary to the LDP, and principally this policy:

Policy GP1 Sustainability and High Quality Design
Development proposals will be permitted where they accord with the following:
  a) It conforms with and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing, elevation treatment, and detailing;
  b) It incorporates existing landscape or other features, takes account of site contours and changes in levels and prominent skylines or ridges;
  c) Utilises materials appropriate to the area within which it is located;

d) It would not have a significant impact on the amenity of adjacent land uses, properties, residents or the community;
e) Includes an integrated mixture of uses appropriate to the scale of the development;
f) It retains, and where appropriate incorporates important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, spaces, trees, woodlands and hedgerows) and ensures the use of good quality hard and soft landscaping and embraces opportunities to enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity;
g) It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, which ensures security through the 'designing-out-crime' principles of Secured by Design (including providing natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement);
h) An appropriate access exists or can be provided which does not give rise to any parking or highway safety concerns on the site or within the locality;

i) It protects and enhances the landscape, townscape, historic and cultural heritage of the County and there are no adverse effects on the setting or integrity of the historic environment;
j) It ensures or provides for, the satisfactory generation, treatment and disposal of both surface and foul water;
k) It has regard to the generation, treatment and disposal of waste.
l) It has regard for the safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network;
m) It provides an integrated network which promotes the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport which ensures ease of access for all;
n) It includes, where applicable, provision for the appropriate management and eradication of invasive species.

Proposals will also be considered in light of the policies and provisions of this Plan and National Policy (PPW: Edition 7 and TAN12: Design).

Other relevant LDP policies include:

H1   Housing Allocations
TR2   Location of Development- Transport Considerations
TR3   Highways in Developments- Design Considerations
TR4   Cycling and Walking
EQ1   Protection of Buildings, Landscapes and Features of Historic Importance
EQ3   Regional and Local Designations
EQ6   Special Landscape Areas
REC2   Open Space Provision and New Developments
EP1   Water Quality and Resources
SP13   Protection and Enhancement of the Built and Historic Environment
SP16   Community Facilities.

Due regard should be had to other SPG prepared in respect of the Carmarthenshire LDP.

Placemaking & Design Principles: The Broader Area

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Carmarthenshire is the third largest county in Wales covering some 2,365 square kilometres, which represents 11.5% of the total land mass of Wales. Carmarthenshire is a rich and diverse county of contrasts.   The agricultural economy and landscape of rural Carmarthenshire is juxtaposed with the more urban and industrial south-eastern area. Within the County, the former coal, steel and other heavy industries have left their environmental legacy, whilst at the same time large areas have been afforded with national or local designations due to their special ecological or landscape value. The Council is committed to meeting the demands of the modern economy and society through ensuring that all new development is of high quality, sustainable and respects and where possible, enhances the distinctive character of the specific location where the development is proposed.

3.1.2 The process of placemaking relies on understanding a range of social, economic and environmental factors during the planning application and design process.   For the purpose of this guidance, the process has been broken down into three different, interrelated stages:

1. how a new development fits in to and the functional role it can play within the broader area, taking into account the environmental and visual context;
2. how a development relates to and forms an integral part of a local area and community; and
3. the positive contribution that individual buildings within a development can make to an area, in terms of its design quality and functionality.

3.1.3 Whilst this Section, and Section 4 below respectively deal with stages 1 and 2 above, stage 3 is touched upon in Section 4, however, specific design considerations relating to individual buildings will be subject to a separate SPG on residential design.

The Benefits of Good Design

3.1.4 There are environmental, social, as well as economic benefits to creating a well designed development. Studies have shown that designing a high quality environment is an essential ingredient to achieving economic prosperity as it will be more attractive to potential investors as well as being more appealing to customers, key workers and tourists. Similarly, better designed buildings and places for work will result in more productive employees. At the same time, well-designed neighbourhoods will create happier and healthier communities that will be more committed to the maintenance of their surroundings.   The environmental benefits might include less pollution through the reduction in traffic, the protection or enhancement of biodiversity, and the conservation of the built heritage. All these benefits are central to achieving sustainable development and to the long term economic prosperity of an area.

3.2 Landscape Character

3.2.1 It is important that new development acknowledges and respects the unique variety of landscapes within Carmarthenshire. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has produced a landscape character map for the whole of Wales, with 48 regional scale landscape
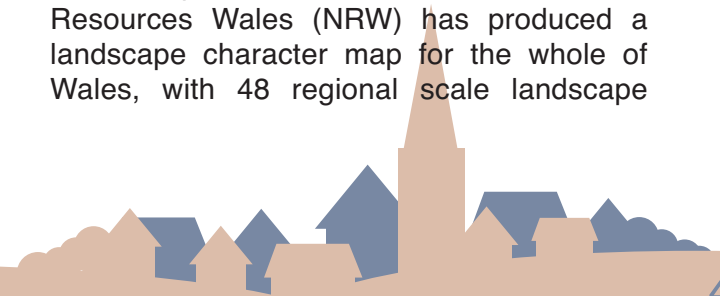
character areas. Each has a distinctive sense of place that enables it to be recognised as a single area – e.g. a range of hills or a major urban area. Carmarthenshire contains 13 of these distinctive character areas. The character areas cover landscapes from rugged mountains to rolling green hills, from rural river valleys to post-industrial vales, and from rocky coastlines with large beaches to picturesque tidal estuaries.
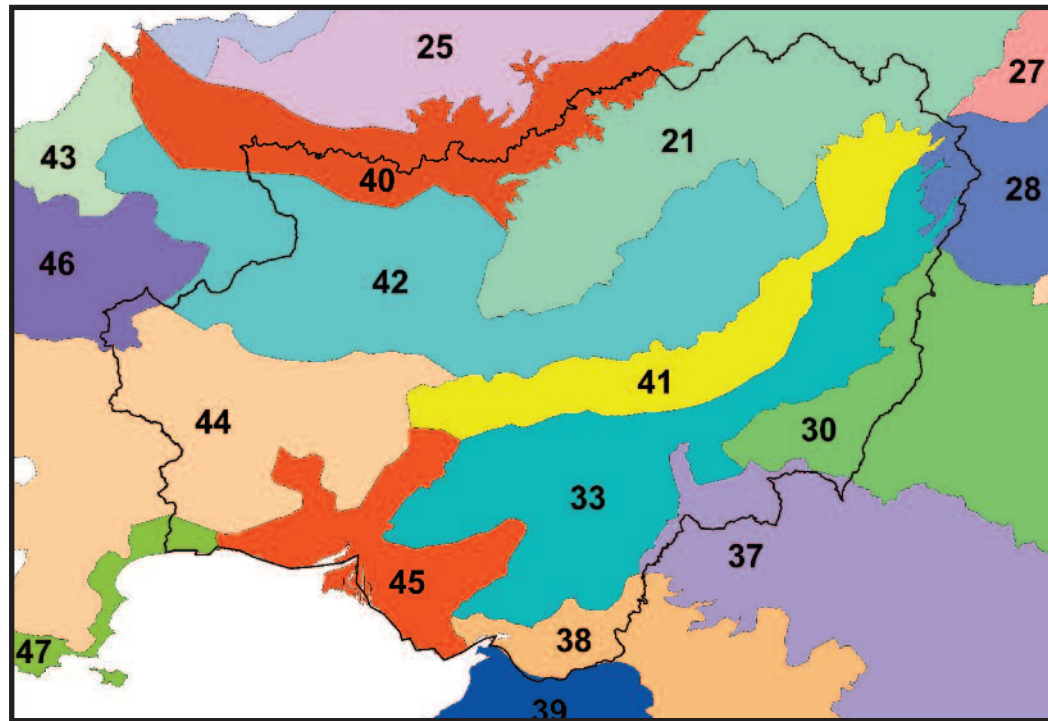
Landscape Character Map for Carmarthenshire

Upland landscapes vary from rugged mountains to rolling hills.

For centuries the river valleys within Carmarthenshire have provided good quality agricultural land.

21-Cambrian Mountains; 28 Eppynt Plateau and Valleys; 30-Brecon Beacons; 33-Gwendraeth Vales; 37 South Wales Valleys; 38-Swansea Bay; 40-Teifi Valley; 41-Towy Valley; 42-Pembroke & Carmarthen foothills; 44-Taf & Cleddau Vales; 45-Taf, Tywi & Gwendraeth Estuaries; 46 Preseli Hills; 47-South Pembrokeshire Coast.

Rolling hills and attractive villages within the Gwendraeth Vale.

Picturesque, environmentally sensitive areas such as Llansteffan require a heightened sensitivity when it comes to designing for new development.

3.2.2 These varied landscapes have historically influenced where settlements have become established, and this interrelationship is essential to our understanding of how new development can integrate positively with the broader landscape. New development should complement and reinforce existing character by responding to the sense of place in a manner that reconciles the past with what is suitable and appropriate today.

3.2.3 Landscape character is influenced by an area's geology and landform. These need to be understood and appreciated in order to gain an understanding of how development can appropriately fit in and contribute to the broader landscape of an area. Geological processes have shaped the land into the general form that we see today and the rock types, often of economic value, can influence the productivity of the overlying land. The resultant landform, from rolling hills to flat coastal areas, has influenced the nature of human settlement and shapes the visual character of an area and how development can be incorporated sympathetically into the landscape.


Ammanford and Mynydd Betws from Carmel Woods NNR, on Carmarthenshire's prominent limestone ridge.

Special Landscape Areas

3.2.4 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) represents a non-statutory designation which were identified following a formal assessment of the landscape qualities of the County. Their designation utilised the former Countryside Council for Wales' Guidance Note in applying the results from the LANDMAP data. In this regard their designation reflects the aspect areas defined within LANDMAP and seeks to utilise 'outstanding' categorisations supported where appropriate by those classified as 'high'

3.2.5 LANDMAP is a Wales wide approach to landscape assessment which describes and evaluates aspects of landscapes and can be used by authorities in informing policy and decision making. It identifies five 'aspect areas': geological landscape, visual and sensory, landscape habitat, cultural landscape, and historic landscape.

3.2.6 SLAs are identified on the LDP Proposals Map and are covered in Policy EQ6. They number 18 in total and include river valleys, upland landscapes and coastal landscapes, however, the Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SLA contains a number of distinct landscapes which have been considered as a continuum.
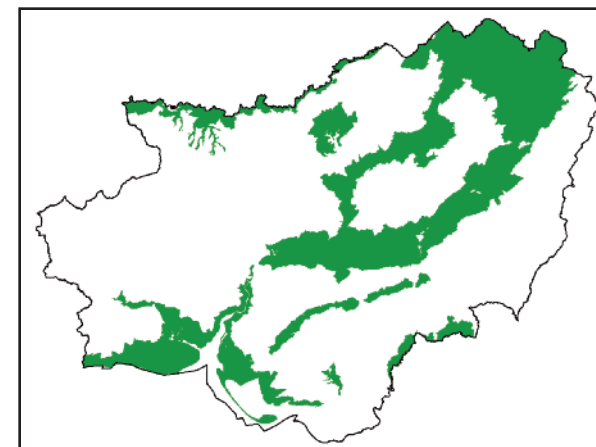
Carmarthenshire Special Landscape Areas. Reference should be made to Policy EQ6 Special Landscape Areas.

1. *The lower part of the Tywi Valley Special Landscape Area is characterised by a wide floodplain dominated by agricultural land, with mature hedgerows and trees. Historic parklands and castles are also a feature of this part of the valley.*

2. *The sparsely populated Llwchwr Valley Special Landscape Area supports an attractive mix of woodland and agricultural land.*

3. *The upper part of the Tywi Valley Special Landscape Area is typified by narrow, rising steeply sides. It is characterised by small fields, hedgerows, woodland, traditional farms, and the river.*

4. *The Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries Special Landscape Area: The juxtaposition of differing landscapes, such as salt marsh, beaches and wooded estuary slopes create an area of high scenic quality.*

5. *The Mynydd Mallaen Special Landscape Area: A wild and exposed area of upland plateau.*

Design Evaluation Summary for Landscape Character:

✓ Does the form of the development proposal fit in with and complement the broader landscape?
✓ Has the design proposal taken into account any landscape designations?
✓ Where landscape designations exist, have pre-application discussions been conducted with the Local Planning Authority to ascertain potential impacts or the types of proposal that would be permitted / not permitted?

Green Infrastructure

3.2.7   Green Infrastructure is the term used for the harnessing of the natural environment, such as ecological features, green space, water management systems to the benefit of the social, economic and environmental health of an area. It provides a systems approach to planning and development that strives to integrate the potentially competing objectives of development and the requirements to preserve and enhance the natural environment. Whilst the Green Infrastructure approach identifies the natural environment as an asset which developers can utilise to bring about economic growth, it also provides the means whereby these 'assets' can be robustly protected and enhanced. This is why Green infrastructure systems are viewed as a critical element of sustainable development.

Green Infrastructure Assets

3.2.8   The following examples of assets that can be considered to be green infrastructure are provided in the Town and Country Planning Association's 'The essential role of green infrastructure - eco-towns green infrastructure worksheet' (2008):

• Parks and gardens - urban parks, country and regional parks, formal and private gardens, and institutional grounds (for example at schools and hospitals).

• Amenity green space - informal recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sport facilities, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space, green roofs, hedges, civic squares and spaces, and highway trees and verges.

• Allotments, community gardens, city farms, orchards, roof gardens, and urban edge farmland.

• Cemeteries and churchyards.

• Natural and semi-natural rural, peri-urban and urban green spaces, including: woodland and scrub, grassland (for example downland and meadow), heath and moor, wetlands, open and running water, brownfield sites, bare rock habitats (for example cliffs and quarries), coast, beaches, and Community Forests.

• Green corridors - rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, and rights of way. Green corridors can play a vital role in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and reversing the effects of habitat fragmentation on biodiversity. They also deliver a range of other social and environmental benefits, including enhancement of local landscape character, and greater opportunities for public access and recreational use.

• Existing national and local nature reserves and locally designated sites for nature conservation (for example Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) etc.).

• Archaeological and historic sites.

• Functional green space such as sustainable urban drainage schemes and flood storage areas.

1. *New housing set around attractive public open space.*

2. *The incorporation of a water feature and the use of appropriate planting have resulted in a pleasing environment which adds to the sense of place.*

3. *Millennium Coastal Park, Llanelli: stretching from Pembrey Harbour in the west to the Loughor estuary in the east, this comprises a series of distinct landscapes, habitats, places and landmarks linked by a foot and cycle way.*

4. *Dinefwr Park, Llandeilo: Popular visitor attraction providing extensive footpaths and managed parkland.*

5. *Effective use of amenity open space.*

Design Evaluation Summary for Green Infrastructure:

✓ Have the elements (assets) of Green Infrastructure highlighted above been addressed in the design proposals? Examples might include:

 - Full regard to, and integration of green infrastructure features both within and outside the site area;
 - Sufficient green open space within a new development;
 - The use of SuDs where applicable;
 - Sites of ecological, geological, historical and landscape value are properly acknowledged in the design proposal and no adverse effects will result.

Placemaking & Design Principles: Local Areas

4.1 Character

Built Character

4.1.1 An area's distinctive built character is defined by the existing layout and architectural style of its buildings, features, spaces and structures. New development proposals should be designed to have a positive character that is appropriate for, and can be successfully integrated into, the place where it is located. To achieve this, it is important that an understanding is gained of the historical origins of a place – how it formed, and how new development can complement and enhance the built character.

4.1.2 Built form contributes to the character, identity and distinctiveness of a place. Along with other aspects such as social and economic well-being, built form contributes towards a 'sense of place' – the qualities that give a place a distinctive character. It is important that new developments are not bland and lacking in character. The layout and form of the buildings are crucial in animating the character of a place and creating a diversity of interest.

Carmarthen: Modern regeneration project within a traditional market town.

Ammanford: Late Victorian listed buildings add to the sense of place in the centre of the town

National Botanic Gardens. The impressive glass dome is a major piece of modern architecture which provides a contrasting yet iconic addition to the area's sense of place.

Carmarthen: Transformation of a once busy road has resulted in a tranquil, pedestrian friendly environment between the historic St. Peter's Church and the more modern Myrddin Gallery.

Built Heritage: Historic Origins

4.1.3 New development will need to respect and integrate with the existing pattern of development. The historic make up and location of the towns and villages within Carmarthenshire is central to their character, identity and sense of place and how they fit within the diverse range of landscapes within the County. It is important that new development acknowledges this historical context by seeking to form logical additions to the existing patterns of urban form and by avoiding standardised building forms and road layouts.

4.1.4 Applications for new development will need to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the existing and historic make up of the settlement in which it is proposed. An analysis of the present day form of the settlement and its visual relationship with the broader landscape should be carried out in order to establish whether the form and layout of the new proposals are appropriate to the existing pattern of the settlement.

Market Town: Llandovery

Harbour Town: Burry Port, harbour founded in trade (coal) has been transformed into a active marina

Castle Town: Kidwelly, which originated as result of its strategic importance

4.1.5 Carmarthenshire has a rich and diverse historical and cultural built heritage with some 27 designated conservation areas, 470 Scheduled Ancient Monuments ranging from Prehistoric to post-Medieval/Modern features of cultural historic interest as well as over 1,800 listed buildings. The aims of the LDP in respect of the built environment and historic buildings is, in conjunction with primary legislation, to safeguard the cultural integrity of the historic settlements, features and buildings within the Plan area, and where applicable contribute to the enhancement of the historic and built environment.

Nott's Square and Carmarthen Castle: Carmarthen, as the oldest continuously inhabited town in Wales, provides a mix of new developments and traditional shops within narrow cobbled streets and modern shopping areas.

4.1.6 The County's historic buildings, townscape and landscape should be regarded as assets and positively conserved and enhanced for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. The special and often diverse character of the County, with its unspoilt countryside, industrial heritage and wealth of historic towns and villages, reflects the changes experienced through the ages, linking the past to the present and maintaining the area's distinct cultural identity.

The village of Cenarth, straddling the border with Ceredigion, includes a picturesque section of the River Teifi, and Cenarth Bridge which exhibits notable built conservation value.

Carmarthen has many old and historic buildings which characterise the built environment and quality of the area.

The familiar view of Bridge Street, Llandeilo from across the River Tywi. The prominent and many coloured frontages to the houses defines this entrance gateway into the town and reinforces the sense of place.

4.1.7 Any proposals in respect of conservation areas will be assessed against their effect on the character and appearance of the area. New developments should accord with the special architectural and historic interest of the area. Designated conservation areas are identified within the LDP and are shown on the Proposals Map.

Design Evaluation Summary for Character:

✓ The proposal should exhibit and demonstrate a clear understanding of the existing built heritage, character and sense of place;
✓ The proposal should acknowledge and have full regard to any built heritage designations on or near to the site and should ensure that these are sensitively dealt with in the scheme;
✓ The proposal should preserve or enhance the existing built form;
✓ The proposal should contribute strongly to an area's sense of place.

4.2 Siting of Development

4.2.1 An initial assessment of the development site should be carried out to ascertain how the site conditions will affect the proposal and, conversely, the potential impact that the development might have on its surrounding area. This should include an analysis of the topography and landform, aspect and microclimate of the site and its environs.

Landform and Topography

4.2.2 The landform and topography of an area will influence how a new development will fit into a landscape, including how the development will appear from the surrounding area, as well as the views from the development itself. New development should be designed so as to complement the topographic form. Development on ridgelines can often be visually obtrusive and should generally be avoided. If developments are to be situated close to ridgelines, then appropriate measures should be employed to reduce their impact, for example the use of trees for screening (either in front or behind depending upon the individual proposal).

4.2.3 Similarly with sloping sites, a development should utilise the topography and not impose itself on the landscape. The layout of the buildings and the roads therefore should generally look to follow the contours of the land; this will result in a complementary relationship between the development itself and the character of the local area.
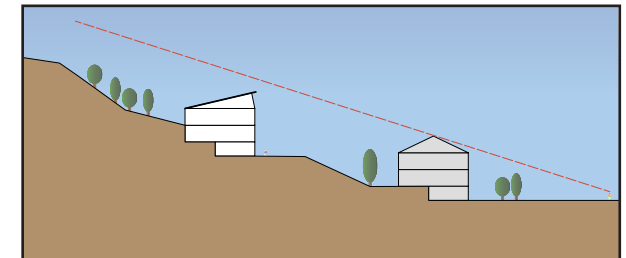
Design response to sloping sites - examples of split level housing. This can offer opportunities for innovative, creative design solutions. For example, by building into sloping land, the development can complement the topography and any potential visual impact can be minimised.
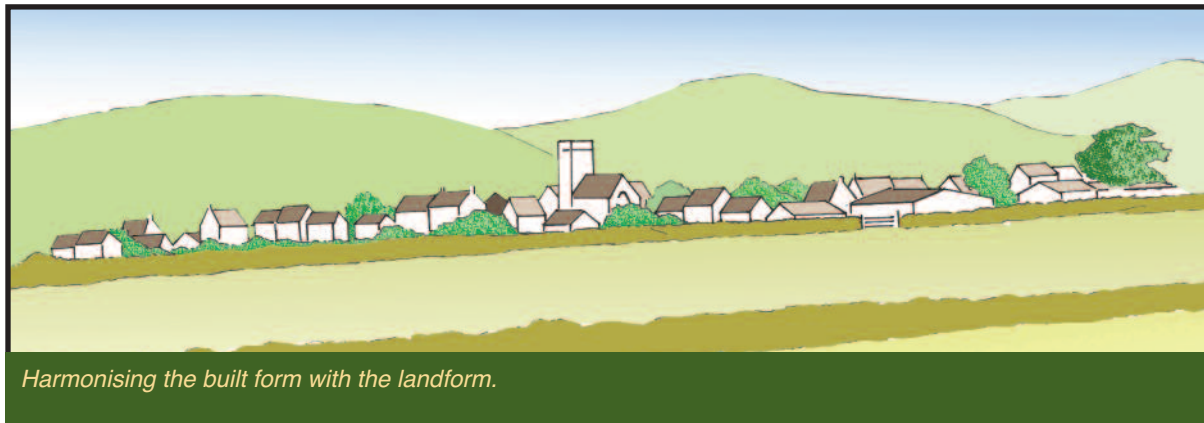
Microclimate

4.2.4 Design proposals will need to have regard to the climatic and site conditions, including the prevailing direction of wind, the site's aspect (the particular direction that a piece of land faces) and the topography (which influences small-scale shelter and shading). Design solutions should seek to orientate buildings to give a southerly aspect to gain the greatest amount of heat and light during the day. Careful consideration of the orientation of

Harmonising the built form with the landform.

a site's aspect will ensure that the design of the development is as sustainable as possible and will influence its design quality and performance (refer to section 4.8, below). Sometimes it will be necessary to have dual aspect buildings due to changes in a site's topography. Streets should be designed, wherever possible against the prevailing wind direction, to avoid wind tunnelling, however, where this is not possible, shelter could be provided by planting. The use of existing trees and/or hedges should also be considered in a scheme, whether for shelter or as through their retention as green infrastructure (refer to section 3.2.8 above).

Design Evaluation Summary for Siting of Development:

✓ Design proposals should exhibit a full understanding of the following:

- The landscape characteristics of the area;
- The local built character of the area;
- The sense of place particular to that area

✓ New proposals must harmonise with local landscape and contribute to the sense of place, wherever possible enhancing the local character.
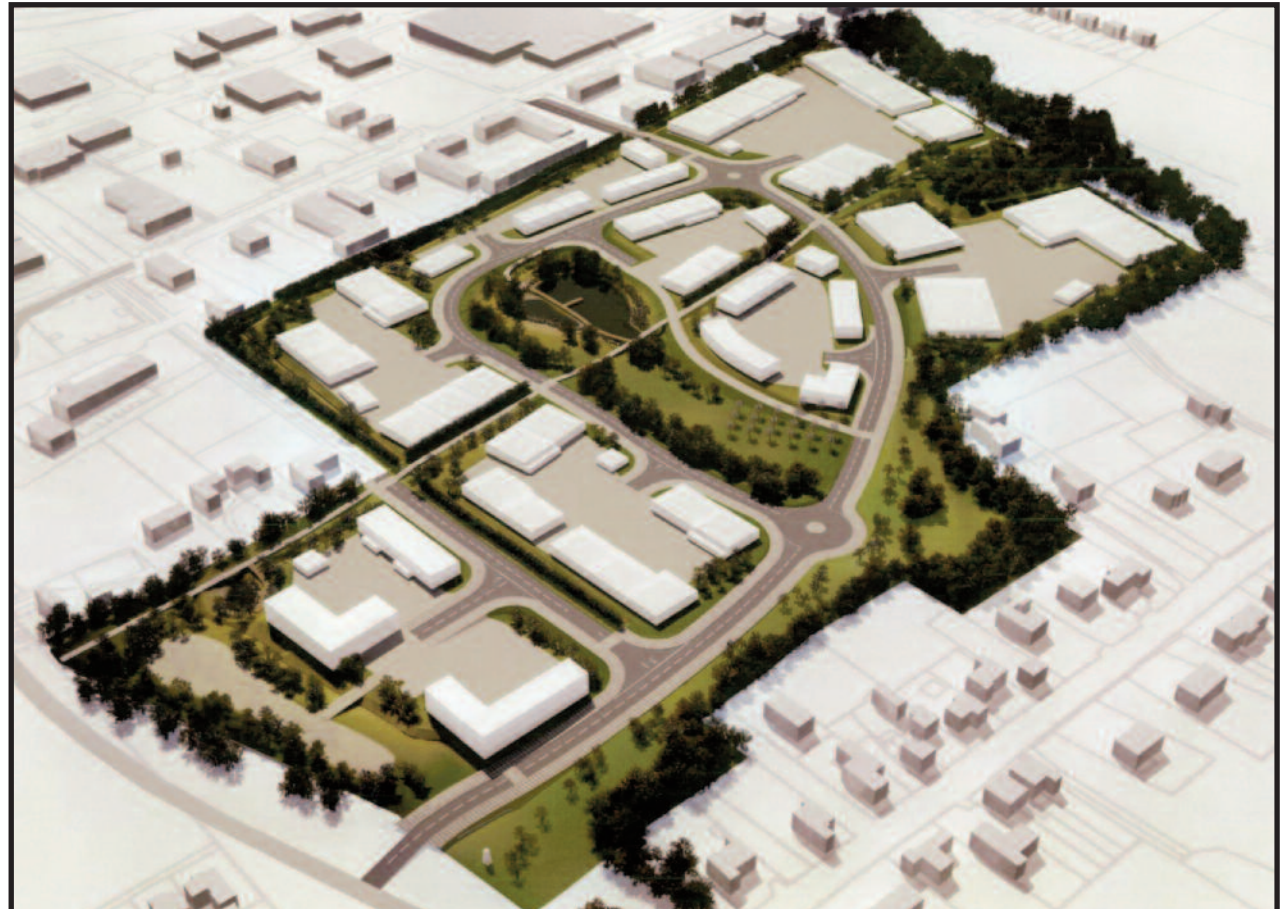
Design proposals for Cross Hands East Employment Site showing the incorporation of existing (and new) trees and hedgerows; the retention/creation of habitats; the use of sustainable a grade industrial buildings and the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SuDS).

4.3 Site Assets

The Benefits of Green Infrastructure

4.3.1 Adopting a green infrastructure approach is increasingly viewed as being beneficial, not only for the environment, but also because of its potential to improve the health and vitality of businesses and the lives of local residents and the public. The benefits include the following:

- Climate change – the importance of green infrastructure has increased in recent years as a response to climate change. The approach can play an important role in educating the public and supporting the adaptation of people to a changing climate;

- Health and well-being – studies have shown that residents and workers that live or work in green surroundings are healthier and more content than their counterparts who have no immediate access to green spaces;

- Economic growth and investment - research has shown that investment in green infrastructure accrues financial benefits to developers in terms of increased sale prices, as well as providing a more attractive environment for inward investment;

- Land regeneration - previously developed (brownfield) land can potentially provide social, environmental and economic benefits through conversion to green infrastructure;

- Ecological benefits - through the creation and enhancement of habitats, green infrastructure benefits biodiversity by integrating into the built environment and enabling residents to appreciate nature.

4.3.2 The benefits will be achieved most successfully if green infrastructure creation is part of an integrated approach to development. Some of the assets that need to be considered in terms of landscape value include the following:

Landscape Features

4.3.3 Development proposals should retain existing features of value such as trees and hedgerows. New planting and provision should also be considered as trees, woodland, open space and hedgerows can greatly enhance the local character of a place as well as its ecological and recreational qualities.

4.3.4 Incorporating trees, other vegetation and established features can contribute to the unique sense of place of an area or settlement. Retaining existing features into proposals helps to create places that are distinct and can help to soften the impact of change by creating a sense of continuity that acknowledges local identity.

Mature trees, and an area of green space adjacent to a watercourse, have been retained giving the new development distinctiveness and character.

4.3.5 As well as the visual amenity that vegetation can provide, trees, hedges, water resources and formal and informal open space can benefit local microclimate and biodiversity through for example providing shelter from the wind and a range of habitats for flora and fauna. They can also contribute towards the health and well being of local communities by, for example, screening a site from other uses.

4.3.6 Other features that should, where possible, be retained within a new development include watercourses (see green infrastructure, sections 3.2.8 & 4.3.1, above), as well as original buildings and walls. Less obvious assets such as archaeological features should be identified within the site survey and should not be impacted upon by the proposal.

Landscape Planting and Green Corridors

4.3.7 Planting should be considered early on in a development proposal as part of the landscape design scheme. Planting serves a number of purposes including, breaking up the built form, screening, defining properties as well as providing amenity and ecological benefits.

4.3.8 Along with maintaining existing landscape features, planting can contribute to providing a network of 'green corridors' within a new development whereby existing trees and hedgerows would be retained and enhanced with new landscaping. Such green corridors can have the effect of the countryside integrating into the new development. These corridors will also allow for increased biodiversity and connectivity potential.

4.3.9 Reference should be made to other relevant SPGs, in particular Biodiversity, to ensure that consistency of approach is maintained.

The effective use of trees to soften and complement the built form.

Site and Settlement Boundaries

4.3.10 New development is often located on the edge of a settlement. Indeed the LDP allocates land in such locations to enable settlements to expand. These locations are often visually prominent, effectively representing the boundary between the built form and the countryside. Consequently, development proposals at the edge of settlements will need to demonstrate that the visual impacts have been fully considered and a favourable scheme is put forward that complements the surrounding landscape.

4.3.11 Edge of settlement locations will often define the entrance to a town or village from a particular direction and so an attractive design that blends in with both the settlement as well as the surrounding countryside is crucial. Appropriate landscape planting together with variety in the built form will create an attractive composition and a positive edge that is sympathetic to the urban to rural transition.

A poor edge of settlement development, with monotonous, bland built form, visually intrusive fencing and insufficient landscaping.

Creating an attractive and positive edge of settlement development would include providing variety in landscape planting and built form.

Variation in roofline

Building designed to overlook footpaths

Contrasting building line adds variety

Incorporation of open space

Green landscaping framing development

Design Evaluation Summary for Site Assets:

✓ New proposals should identify the existing characteristics and features of the site and assess their value;

✓ The assessment should set out those characteristics and features that contribute towards the local character and sense of place;

✓ The proposal should retain and work with the valuable site features, integrating them into the development;

✓ The proposal should respond positively to the local characteristics of the area and its sense of place.

4.4 Accessibility and Ease of Movement

4.4.1 Accessibility and ease of movement are two of the most important aspects to any new development. Ensuring a development in which vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are taken into account is very important. An initial appraisal of the footpath, cycle and bridleway network and the hierarchy of streets in the surrounding area will help in determining the access routes to a new development. It is vital that there is an early dialogue between the designer and the local authority's Highway and Planning departments to gain advice on access and design issues.

4.4.2 Street design and accessibility within and beyond the site is seen as being critically important in providing alternatives to car travel and achieving high quality in the environment. The arrangement of streets and other access ways within a new development must always be aimed at creating permeable places, and these should be closely linked with the wider access network.

4.4.3 Making connections between new and existing developments is essential in creating a successful and vibrant place. Furthermore,
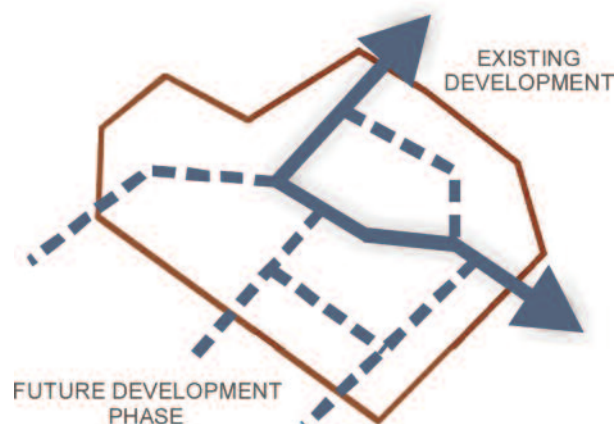
The network of streets should be permeable, connecting the development to adjacent areas.

integrating a clear hierarchy of routes through a new development is important in creating legibility and permeability. For example, having a main route through with secondary roads leading to access roads will provide good legibility for a site. Such proposals should reduce the need to use the car and encourage walking or cycling.

4.4.4 In terms of the existing access networks, it is essential that these are protected wherever possible when designing a new development. It should be noted that public rights of way are material planning considerations and should therefore be incorporated into new design. Appropriate mitigation should be provided if impacts to existing access are unavoidable.

Public Transport

4.4.5 Where possible, new development should be related or accessible to public transport (depending upon the scale of an individual scheme). In some cases, it might be conducive for Developers and the Council to discuss the potential for altering an existing bus route and / or creating new bus stops with the local transport company. This will offer future residents a choice of how to travel and will help to reduce reliance on private cars. This will have the consequence of reducing the environmental impact of a new development as well as providing more opportunities and enhancing the experience of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. There are obvious health and amenity benefits associated with this approach.

Design Evaluation Summary for Accessibility and Ease of Movement:

Development schemes should:
- ✓ Identify the accessibility of local public transport services in relation to the site;
- ✓ Identify whether there is a need for new or improved public transport services and whether the proposal itself will provide or contribute to these new services;
- ✓ Identify existing footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways and should highlight accessibility to these;
- ✓ Set out clearly how access and linkages will be achieved between the development and the surrounding street/road network.

4.5 Public Realm

4.5.1 The public realm is the only part of a place that every member of society can see, therefore it is important that new developments provide quality, attractive and safe environments for all. All aspects of the development should be considered, not only the public spaces themselves (green spaces, playgrounds, squares etc), but also the position of buildings, surfacing, lighting, street furniture and planting. Such attention to detail will enhance the overall environment and help to define its "sense of place". It is important that the public realm is overlooked and thereby potentially supervised. New developments should have windows and doors onto public spaces; this provides surveillance and helps to create safe and secure environments in which to live and work.

4.5.2 Buildings should be located so that the public realm is supervised. Housing developments are particularly effective at providing supervision. In new housing developments, active frontages (where the frontage facade of the building, including the main entrance, faces and open towards the street) should be designed to overlook the public realm. Windows, particularly from living accommodation, should overlook street frontages. Supervision is particularly important from the ground floor level of development, and less so from windows on staircases or bathrooms. Where side elevations face onto the public realm, then windows to living accommodation should be included and blank gable walls should be avoided.

4.5.3 Other methods of supervising the public realm and 'designing out crime' include providing adequate street lighting and the use of plant species to deter access and to minimise opportunity for unobserved crime. In terms of pedestrian routes, these should be wide with no hidden corners and with clear lines of site.

Adding visual interest to an area through the use of hard and soft landscaping.

4.5.4 Most new developments in town centres will benefit from the public realm, it is therefore appropriate that such developments should contribute to public realm improvements and maintenance. This can be achieved through developer contributions (Section 106 Agreements). At the same time, it is imperative that public realm areas within new proposals (for example, open spaces within housing sites) are designed to be readily maintainable and that a management structure is in place to guide and protect them. The developers of the public realm must seek to ensure that all unnecessary maintenance is taken into account at the design stage and that a maintenance plan is put in place where necessary.

Housing overlooking a footpath adds to the sense of security.

Car Parking

4.5.5 Development proposals should incorporate sufficient parking to accommodate not only cars but also other modes of transport such as bicycles and motorcycles. The parking must be safe, convenient and attractive and should contribute to the quality of the environment and the sense of place. The Welsh Government's policy on residential car parking is set out in Planning Policy Wales, supplemented by TAN 8, however the Department for Transport's Manual for Streets goes into more detail with regards parking in respect of cycles and motorcycles as well as cars.

4.5.6 Parking provision should be incorporated into the design proposal from the outset, as parking can have a significant impact upon the quality of a new development. Car parking within the development will need to balance the requirements set out in relevant guidance with the desire to create a high quality public realm.

4.5.7 Developments should avoid a parking-dominated landscape that would compromise the character and quality of the place. Parking should be designed sensitively; employing a mixture of parking options such as on-plot garages, courtyards and on street parking will help to avoid motor vehicles dominating the streetscene. Reference should be made to the Council's car parking standards.

Pedestrianisation, attractive street furniture and sensitive treatment in a regeneration scheme of listed buildings help to add to the sense of place.

Courtyard Parking

On-site parking (driveway)

On-street parking

Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SuDS): What is SuDS?

4.5.8 The introduction of SuDS into development proposals provides opportunities to manage surface water runoff in a fashion that minimises the impacts of development. Such interventions can impact upon the quality and quantity of road runoff, whilst also maximising amenity and biodiversity opportunities within both rural and urban settings. Successfully implemented schemes can slow down the flow of water, thus contributing to a reduction in flood risk and protecting water quality as well as reducing any long term maintenance obligations and costs.

4.5.9 Where feasible, SuDS provides an alternative to conventional, piped drainage via methods such as permeable paving, soakaways, green roofs, swales and ponds. In exploring their feasibility, it is vital that adoption and management arrangements for SuDS infrastructure and all drainage elements are agreed with the local authority or sewerage undertaker at the planning stage. This can ensure that SuDS infrastructure is properly maintained and functions effectively for its design life.

SuDS: Legal and policy context

4.5.10 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (Schedule 3 - which has not been commenced), requires new developments to include SuDS features that comply with national standards. The Welsh Government has proposed to publish interim national standards on an advisory basis until such time as it determines the most effective way of embedding SuDS principles in new developments in the longer term. Until such time as the SuDS Approval Boards (SABS) are in place, the Authority's Technical Services (Hydrology) Department can continue to assist developers in the implementation of SuDS as part of a collaborative approach. Developers are advised to undertake early consultation with the Authority (and where appropriate partner agencies such as Natural Resources Wales) in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for all parties and ensure that any systems can be subsequently adopted.

4.5.11 Whilst Schedule 3 has yet to be commenced, there is a firm policy commitment to the implementation of sustainable drainage approaches within Carmarthenshire. LDP Policy SP2: Climate Change, outlines the potential contribution of SuDS and flood resilient design towards the delivery of sustainable development. LDP Policy EP3: Sustainable Drainage, requires that the effectiveness of incorporating SuDS should be fully investigated and that the details and options resulting from this investigation must show that there are justifiable reasons for not incorporating SuDS into the scheme. To this end, Policy EP3 seeks to reflect national policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 15.

RainScape: Llanelli & Burry Port

4.5.12 There are keynote examples of sustainable drainage approaches being delivered across Carmarthenshire. Such schemes are testimony to an innovative and collaborative approach towards place-making. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) is developing and using new, innovative solutions to manage the amount of surface water entering the sewers in the Llanelli area. By building upon lessons learned from the international examples of surface water schemes in Malmö, (Sweden) and Portland (Oregon, USA), DCWW has created its own range of surface water solutions that it calls RainScape. Such solutions can be incorporated into new developments, or

The use of a swale as part of a SuDS, Llanelli.

Employing a SuDS at Stebonheath School, Llanelli.

Employing a SuDS within a street in Llanelli.

installed into the existing sewer systems and include Basins and Planters, Swales, Porous paving, Filter strips, Grass channels and Geocellular storage.

4.5.13 RainScape is particularly needed in Llanelli as the area sees almost as much storm water in its network as Swansea, despite the fact that Swansea serves three times the number of properties, and three times the area compared with Llanelli. One project that has been completed is the construction of a swale on the Queen Mary's Walk playing field. During periods of heavy rainfall the swale captures the water, and lets it gradually seep into a below ground storage unit, before releasing it into the sewer network. This delays the time it takes for the water to get into the network. The swale has been planted with a range of interesting plants and trees, especially selected to help with soaking up the rainwater. At a cost of £850,000, it is anticipated that it will remove approximately 4,365,000,000 litres of water a year from the sewer network.

4.5.14 LDP Policy EP1: Water Quality and Resources recognises that the fact that water as a resource is extremely valuable. Proposals should seek wherever possible to incorporate water conservation techniques including

rainwater harvesting and grey-water recycling. In terms of water quality, recognition is give to the need to improve the whole water environment and promote the sustainable use of water for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Water quality can be improved through a number of measures including the effective design, construction and operation of sewerage systems, the use of wetlands/greenspace for flood alleviation, the use of SuDS and sustainable water use in design.

Design Evaluation Summary for Public Realm:

✓ To achieve greater security, building frontages should be designed so as to overlook streets and public spaces;
✓ Safe routes should be created through the development for walkers and cyclists through surveillance and appropriate design (e.g. street lighting);
✓ Appropriate car parking should be designed into a scheme; it should be safe, attractive and should not dominate a development;
✓ It would be more favourable to provide a variety of parking options such as courtyards and street bays rather than have one dominate.
✓ The introduction of sustainable drainage into development proposals should be considered where feasible.

4.6 Development Form

Streets and Roads

4.6.1 Until recent years, there had been a tendency towards development being designed around car movement, based on technical highway design criteria. Such an approach, where streets were essentially channels for the movement of vehicles, did little to enhance an area, rather it resulted in an erosion of its sense of place through the development of uniform and linear streets.

4.6.2 There is now a return to a more holistic view of streets and their role in modern life. The role of streets in new developments are now seen as central to social and leisure activities, and are now being designed as much with the pedestrian and cyclist in mind as the motorist. Large new developments should therefore avoid creating monotonous, homogeneous layouts, but should rather ensure that the design concept is clear in defining distinct places which display a hierarchy of streets and a range of densities within the built form.

4.6.3 Developers should consult the Manual for Streets when designing their layouts. A hierarchy of streets, with associated public spaces, will provide people (whether these are residents, shoppers or workers) with an ease of accessibility and navigation as well as choices as to where to move around and meet others.

4.6.4 A clear hierarchy of streets also has highway safety benefits. An avoidance of unbroken straights will reduce driver visibility and will help to reduce traffic speeds, thereby improving the safety of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Other traffic calming measures can be achieved through using changes in road surfaces (such as a rougher surface to encourage speed reduction) or shared surfaces (which helps calm traffic speed and encourages greater use by pedestrians and cyclists).

4.6.5 Reference should be made to the case study in Section 6, which incorporates many of the factors set out above, as well as other issue such as the importance of linking the design of a new street network with that of the surrounding area, thereby achieving continuity.

The use of traffic calming methods and landscape features helps to maintain driver awareness and assists in improving the amenity and safety of an area.

Development Blocks

4.6.6 New development should be made up of clearly defined development blocks, with buildings orientated to emphasise a clear distinction public and private space. This can be achieved through the fronts of buildings facing the streets and the rear facing private areas. The most successful designs are those which achieve this distinction to best effect; they not only contribute towards making people (whether residents, workers or visitors) feel safe and secure, but can enhance the character of the development and help to create a sense of place.

4.6.7 Development blocks should generally be small enough to accommodate a mixture of styles and should ensure that there is clear a hierarchy of streets. The surrounding area will have an influence on the new development which will need to blend in and complement the existing built form in terms of both building style, access and linkages.

4.6.8 In terms of housing schemes, a number of different styles could be employed to development blocks, dependent upon individual circumstances such as topography and the nature of the surrounding built form. Types of development might include sensitively designed cul-de-sacs, such as mews or courtyards. In response to changes in slope and topography, more innovative types of development might be employed, such as three storey and split level properties. At edge of settlement locations, attractive frontage development will help to define the entrance to the town from that particular direction and enhance an area's sense of place, particularly if this mirrors the architectural character elsewhere in the town.

A development employing a clear hierarchy of streets and a varied mixture of housing styles. Integration and access with the Llanelli Coastal Park is provided through a direct link with the existing footpath/cycleway.

An example of high quality design in a Cul-de-sac setting.

An example of a proposal employing a variety of development blocks and open spaces.
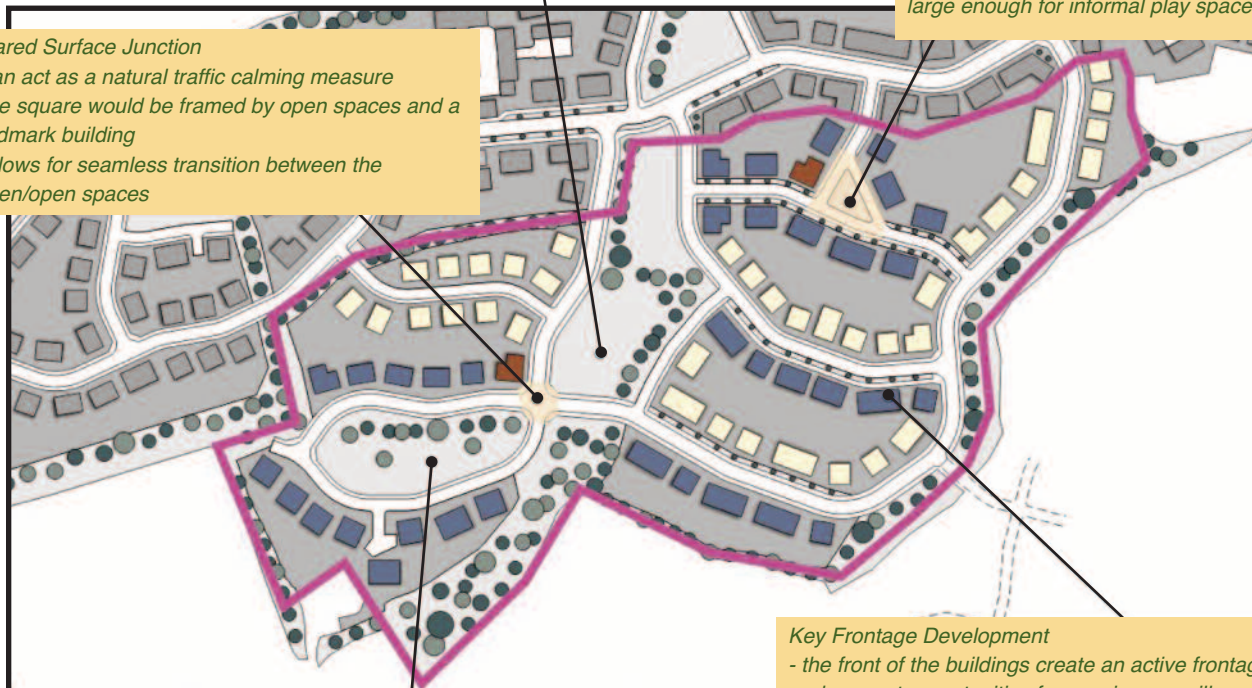
Hedgerows and Wooded Areas
- existing hedgerowshelp to define developments plots
- where appropriate, hedgerows and trees will be maintained and enhanced where needed

Incidental Open Space
- small triangular open space framed from a strong frontage with properties directly overlooking the space, which is large enough for informal play space

Shared Surface Junction
- can act as a natural traffic calming measure
- the square would be framed by open spaces and a landmark building
- allows for seamless transition between the green/open spaces

Open Space
- open space framed by executive housing to the south and a semi-formal frontage of detached and/or semi-detached properties
- a LAP or LEAP can be provided within the space

Key Frontage Development
- the front of the buildings create an active frontage and present opportunities for passive surveillance or 'eyes on the street'

4.6.9 Public open spaces should be located where they are likely to be well used, for example where streets meet. They should be overlooked by well-defined frontages to reinforce security. Areas of open space can be of varying sizes, with Local Area for Play (LAPs) or Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAPs) being provided within them. Smaller, incidental areas of open space can also be of value to a new development; sometimes this might be an opportunity to display innovative street furniture to enhance the character of the area, or it might be large enough to incorporate an informal play space. Reference should be made to SPG on Leisure & Open Space Requirements for New Developments.

4.6.10 The importance of frontages in a new development has been covered above, in relation to supervision and security. The continuity of frontages in a development depends on where it is situated. Frontages in an urban street will be mostly continuous; this enclosure will reinforce the feeling of security and will make people feel safe when walking through them. The design of the frontages in such locations can enhance an area (if done sensitively) and can also help to create a sense of place.

4.6.11 In a new housing development there is greater flexibility for experimentation with frontages. This might be associated with the provision of a wide range of housing types. A larger development might include several areas of terraced or semi-detached properties with almost continuous frontages, as well as larger, detached properties where the frontages are broken to include the larger curtilages. In all cases however, it is important that the treatment of public and private space is carried out as outlined in paragraphs 4.5.1 & 4.5.2 above, so that no areas are seen as exclusive. Reference should be made to Mixed tenure at paragraph 4.7.6 below.

New residential frontage development.

Mixed use frontage development with residential above the shops.
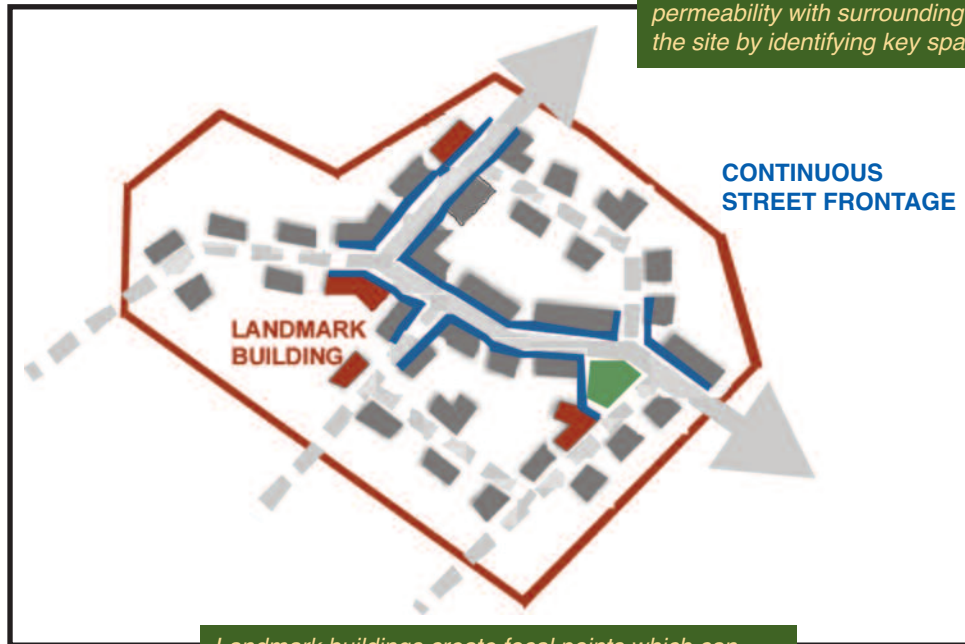

Permeability and Legibility

4.6.12 The provision of a permeable street layout that is well integrated with the character and form of the surrounding area, is key to achieving a sustainably designed development. By creating a range of attractive routes through a site, in a well-defined street hierarchy, permeability is enhanced which encourages increased pedestrian and cycle movement and less dependence on the motorcar.

4.6.13 The legibility of a development is reinforced when it contains features and a readily identified layout which allows ease of movement around the site. The use of landmarks and focal points at key nodes within the site is an effective way of enhancing legibility. People will identify with such features which not only aid navigation but will also enhance the character of the site. The use of landmark buildings, public squares or open spaces are some examples of these features. Increasing the legibility of a site can be achieved through a number of means, including variations in character between different areas within the site – part of the site might be steep and would require specific architectural building styles to cope with the

topography, whereas another part might require strong frontage development to emphasise an entrance gateway to the site.

CONTINUOUS STREET FRONTAGE

LANDMARK BUILDING

Landmark buildings create focal points which can make a development more memorable and legible.

Design Evaluation Summary for Development Form:

✓ Larger residential and mixed use development proposals should establish a clear hierarchy of streets;

✓ The streets should have appropriate access links with the existing built form and highway network;

✓ The streets should be designed to be safe for all types of users;

✓ The sense of place should be considered through an appreciation of how the development will be experienced as users move through it;

✓ The scheme should set out well defined development blocks with well defined street frontages;

✓ There should be clear distinctions between private (individual properties) and public space (e.g. pavements, cycle ways, recreational open space).

The Beacon, Dafen Employment Site, Llanelli
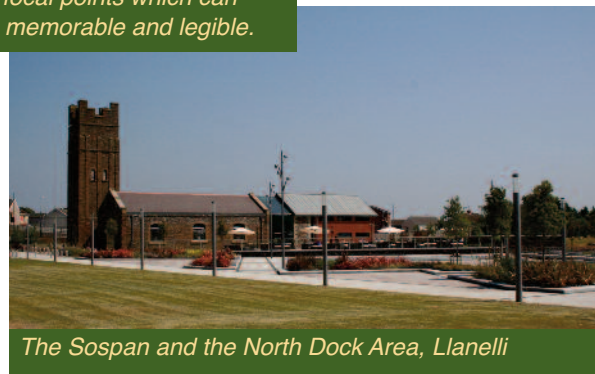
The Sospan and the North Dock Area, Llanelli

4.7 Uses and Activities

Community Facilities

4.7.1   In terms of new housing developments, it is important to ascertain whether new community facilities are required or whether the proposed residents could utilise existing facilities within the settlement. Community facilities provide an essential contribution to the vibrancy of neighbourhoods - from parks, play areas and shops to community centres, schools and healthcare. Reference should be made to LDP Policy SP16 Community Facilities.

4.7.2 Community facilities provide an important social role in creating places where members of the community can meet one another. They also help to support health and well-being through encouraging walking and cycling and by providing education, healthcare, local services and employment.

4.7.3 The importance of integrating new developments with their surroundings has been noted above (refer to paragraph 4.4.3). Where new facilities are deemed to be necessary, their location in relation to the existing built form of the settlement must be carefully considered. Locating them towards the edge of a new development will enable its use by both new and existing residents and will help to promote social integration. It might be more appropriate to provide a new facility more centrally within a settlement, or extending an existing one.

4.7.4 Accessibility is a vital factor when considering community facilities. In terms of new developments, it is important to locate them as close a possible (in terms of walking/cycling) to existing facilities. If new facilities are to be provided, then they should be located within walking distance of as many residents as possible (existing as well as new).

Ysgol y Bedol Glanamman – an attractive, modern sustainable development incorporating multiple uses, including primary school, library and community centre.

Mix of Uses

4.7.5 Developments that incorporate a mix of uses are more sustainable and are more beneficial to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities. A mix of uses, including housing, community facilities, shops, open spaces and employment contribute towards meeting the local needs of residents, workers and visitors.   Such developments can reduce the reliance on the motor car and add to the vibrancy of an area, resulting in a safe and well used environment.

Mixed Tenure

4.7.6 In terms of larger residential developments, a wide range of housing types should be provided ensuring that the needs of a variety of potential residents are catered for. The use of mixed tenure housing will enhance the social cohesion of a community by providing accommodation for the needs of all, including owner occupied (including affordable housing) and rented. The mix should also be evenly distributed throughout the development so as to avoid social segregation. A poor mix of housing tenure can result in an uneven social mix within an area and the potential for social exclusion.

Examples of mixed tenure housing within a new development.

Mixed-use development

4.7.7 Mixed use development includes a variety of different uses, for example residential, employment, retail, community use and leisure. Where mixed use development is proposed, care should be taken to ensure that there is no potential for conflict between the different uses.

4.7.8 In larger developments outside of a town centre, the mix of uses can be located close or adjacent to one another, for example a health centre or mini supermarket next to or within a residential area. It is important however, that the different uses relate well to one another – the two aforementioned examples for instance will benefit the local neighbourhoods and will reduce the need to travel by car.

4.7.9 In town centres, mixed use development can be accommodated in different levels within a building, for example shops on the ground floor with flats above. The use of upper floors encourages owners/occupiers to keep the property in a good condition, which in turn contributes to the vitality of the town centre and makes it more attractive to visitors.

The Discovery Centre, Llanelli includes a mix of uses at a key tourism location.

Design Evaluation Summary for Uses and Activities:

✓ Proposals should identify local community facilities (shops, schools, health facilities etc) in relation to the site;
✓ Proposals should identify whether the existing facilities can be accessed on foot or by cycle;
✓ Where facilities cannot be accessed on foot or by cycle, the need for the provision of such facilities should be considered in the proposal;
✓ For mixed use proposals, the mix of uses should provide sufficient choice in terms of housing and work places;
✓ For mixed use proposals, the different uses should be compatible with one another and should have no negative effects upon amenity and quality of life;
✓ Residential proposals should identify the local need for mixed tenure and affordable housing;
✓ Schemes should provide mixed tenure and affordable housing to meet the local demand;
✓ Proposals should distribute the different tenures across the site to ensure a balanced social mix and to avoid social segregation.

4.8 Design Quality and Performance

Introduction

4.8.1 It is not the remit of this SPG to cover such detail as the design of street layouts or the design and construction of individual buildings. This will be covered in a separate SPG on residential development. What is detailed in this SPG however, are the place-making and design issues, such as a development's relationship with its surroundings, general architectural quality, durability and fitness for purpose, and the infrastructure and services that must be accommodated within development and should be considered early on in the design stage.

Relationship to the Site

4.8.2 Developments (whether whole sites or individual buildings) should conform with and complement the form and make-up of the landscape or townscape in which they occupy. Designs should exhibit a knowledge of the landform and topography of the area and also an appreciation of features of interest such as trees, hedgerows and streams. Similarly, in a more urban context, new buildings should respond to the nature of the existing built form. Whilst there might be opportunities to experiment with different architectural forms in, for example new residential or employment developments in a streetscape, new buildings should generally complement the neighbouring buildings in terms of built frontage, roofline and storey heights.

Carmarthen: A new streetscape which has been developed and which complements the historical built form.

A new development integrated within existing landscape features.

Fit for Purpose, Durable and Sustainable

4.8.3 New developments should be well-built, durable and suitable for their intended purpose. This includes their layout, orientation and aspect. The internal layout will include the number, size and position of rooms, whilst the external elements will include the size, orientation and aspect of gardens and car parking space (in respect of residential properties) and potential vehicular parking, cycle bays and landscaping (in respect of public buildings, employment and commercial properties).

4.8.4 Wherever practicable developments should utilise sustainable materials (materials with a low environmental impact) which have been sourced locally (to reduce transport emissions). Additionally, the use of used, reclaimed and recycled materials should also be investigated.

Fit for purpose and durable – Furnace School Llanelli, high standard, sustainable development.

Infrastructure Requirements

4.8.5 It is important that the infrastructure requirements of a proposal are considered early on during the design stage in order for them to be integrated into the scheme and so that any potential problematic issues can be addressed. Typical infrastructure elements that need to be addressed include sewerage, electricity, water supply and telecommunications. In addition, the local highways authority should be consulted on matters of highway access and design of on-site streets and roads.

Waste and Recycling

4.8.6 One of the more detailed design considerations in a scheme relates to the storage and recycling of waste. Due to the changing way in which waste is dealt with there is pressure to separate waste into recyclables and non-recyclables before it is collected. Therefore one household or business may have more than one storage bin.

4.8.7 It is essential to allow sufficient space for refuse storage and to incorporate this into the design of the development. Bins should preferably be stored in covered units, for example as part of a garage block, a lean-to extension to a building, or an enclosed wooded unit.

4.8.8 Access is also very important. Users of the waste facility should be able to access them safely and conveniently. This is also true for collections, as ease of access to the storage areas should be achievable from main roads. Pollution and safety are also concerns when dealing with gathered waste as odours and vermin are potential problems. Good ventilation of any facility as well as enclosing it as much as possible will reduce the impact of odours and restrict access to vermin.

Architectural Quality

4.8.9 Generally, buildings should be attractive and pleasing to the eye. Sometimes it is important that a development reflects some of the attractive qualities of the local historic form of buildings in the area. In these instances, new buildings are likely to sit well in the landscape and streetscape. Sometimes however, new developments fail to emulate traditional buildings or the built form and the result is a poor imitation of the traditional local style.

4.8.10 Whilst not having a particular vernacular style, many settlements within Carmarthenshire are characterised and are recognisable by their streetscapes and distinct buildings, whether this is due to the nature of the building stone used (often reflective of the local geology) or the historic make up of the individual town. Therefore, if a traditional

approach is to be followed then it should be true to the original form to which it is following, in terms of style and materials used.

Modern restoration of a farmhouse that has re-interpreted traditional styles.

4.8.11 There are, alternatively, many modern approaches that can be used to achieve attractive and pleasing developments. Urban environments for example, are places where the styles have evolved to incorporate new forms that result in innovative and distinctive structures. Carmarthenshire is a County that is renowned for its historic importance and one that can boast a number of impressive medieval castles, modern architecturally pleasing developments have been incorporated in recent years in both urban and rural areas.

Furnace Theatre, Llanelli: This quality modern development within a historic town centre makes a strong architectural statement which adds to the appeal of this popular visitor attraction.

Quality modern design at the new teaching and learning building at the University of Trinity Saint David in Carmarthen.

Pont King Morgan Carmarthen: a modern, visually pleasing addition to the townscape and landscape providing pedestrian and cycle links from the railway station to the town centre.

Design Evaluation Summary for Design Quality and Performance:

✓ Proposals should conform with and complement the form and make-up of the landscape in which they are located;
✓ Proposals should endeavour to create attractive and sympathetic environments;
✓ New developments should be well-built, durable and suitable for their intended purpose;
✓ Infrastructure and service requirements of a proposal should be considered early on and should to be integrated into the scheme.

Placemaking & Design Process

Introduction

Achieving good quality and well designed places requires a step by step process, based on the evolution of a proposal together with an understanding of the character of Carmarthenshire, and taking into account all the factors detailed in the sections above.

Working together: early discussion with planners/local community:

At an early stage of the design and placemaking process, pre-application discussions with a planning officer should be undertaken in order to ascertain whether the site is appropriate for the nature and scale of the development envisaged and whether the project is likely to be supported in planning terms. The planning officer, and colleagues such as the County Ecologist, will also be able to advise as to what information should accompany the application. The Planning officer will also be in a position to advise on how to engage with key local stakeholders and produce a proposal that will be supported through the application process. Applicants / Developers are also advised to contact external agencies and organisations such as Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water; NRW, Dyfed Archaeological Trust to ascertain a comprehensive understanding of the site and any issues which may impact upon it.

Initial considerations

The process from instigating an initial proposal to ultimately submitting a planning application will normally consist of a number of steps, set out below.

- **Initiation of the Project** - this will involve selecting a site and carrying out an initial appraisal based on local planning policy, site constraints and potential technical issues;

- **Understand the Character of Carmarthenshire -** identify the character area in which the proposed development is located. Consider the key characteristics and design and placemaking principles as the starting point for the design process;

- **Identify the design and placemaking principles** - Establish the development vision based on the initial appraisal of site and character area. Set out how the proposal will contribute towards the sustainability of the area and can complement and/or enhance the character of the area.

Appraising the Site and its Context

Developers should carry out a detailed analysis of the site and its immediate setting. This will usually involve both a desktop study and a site analysis, as set out below.

The **desktop study** will include the collection of the following types of data depicting the site and its surroundings:

- Development Plan inset map of site;
- Aerial photographs;
- Relevant information detailing utilities & services, land contamination, sites of archaeological importance; sites of nature conservation interest etc;
- Advice from suitably qualified specialists e.g. preliminary ecological appraisal.

The **site analysis** should identify constraints and opportunities that will influence the design of the proposal and should be illustrated by annotated plans, photographs and sketches. The analysis will cover such aspects as:

- Landscape - including topography, microclimate, drainage etc;
- Views and Vistas - e.g. are there any notable views or landmarks? What are the opportunities for responding to views into and out of the site?
- Existing Land Use and facilities - e.g. current land use, surrounding uses, capacity of existing services etc;
- Ecology and Biodiversity - e.g. are there protected species or any designated national or local sites on or adjacent to the site;
- Built Form - description of the nature of any buildings on site, will they be retained?
- Access and Movement - how do people travel between local facilities? Location of any bus stops, what is the pattern of pedestrian movement in and around the site?

Developing a Design Concept

The design concepts of the project should respond positively to the character of the site and its environs based on the site analysis and the Design and Placemaking principles. Some essential considerations would include:

- Existing Character - proposals should positively contribute to and not detract from their surrounding environs. Where the site lies within an area that has no distinct character or identity, then the development should draw influence from the broader character of Carmarthenshire and the design principles set out within this SPG;

- Green Infrastructure - proposals should have full regard to, and integration of green infrastructure features both within and outside the site area;

- Landscape Character - Positive features in the landscape such as mature trees and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and should be contiguous with the surrounding area;

- Built Character - existing building styles in the area should be understood in order to inform new developments. This does not mean that the new build should copy the existing forms, but there should be a general relationship in visual terms;

- Infrastructure and Utilities - Developers should ensure that the necessary infrastructure (water, gas, electricity, sewerage etc) is either available or could be accommodated within a new development. This would involve prior discussion with the appropriate utilities companies;

- Facilities and Services - New developments should be designed so as to make the most use of existing community facilities, such as shops and schools;

- Access and Movement - New development should be designed so that it can be integrated into the surrounding area, taking advantage of the existing movement framework, and wherever possible enhancing it through reinforcing pedestrian and local transport linkages, and through the potential for other opportunities such as creating new cycle ways;

- Ecology and Biodiversity - These issues should be addressed at an early stage in the design process to ensure that there is minimal impact upon habitats or species present. Developers should ensure that a suitably qualified professional is engaged to be able to produce any necessary ecological report that may be required.

The Planning Application Process

The culmination of the design and placemaking process will be the submission of a planning application (should the developer chose to do so). Planning applications will need to be accompanied by the relevant documentation - appraisals of all the factors set out in the earlier sections of this SPG.

Information regarding the submission of a planning application can be found online on the Council's website. Here, there is a link to the Planning Portal which sets out further guidance on submitting an application, pre-application advice and local and national requirements. You can submit an application online, or you prefer you can download a pdf, complete it and submit it by post.

Case Study

This chapter seeks to draw upon the design process highlighted in previous chapter in the form of a hypothetical case study, in order to indicate how good quality and well designed places can be achieved. As indicated in chapter 5, achieving quality design requires a step by step process, and the following case study identifies the key considerations within any development proposals.

## Map 1- Appraising the site and its context

A key consideration of a scheme is to identify the growth area in which the proposed development is located and to appraise the site and its more immediate setting.

Development should be designed to integrate with, protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity. The key considerations in this case study would be to consider the topography, watercourses, ecological importance and potential development area.

Map 1

A brownfield parcel of land within a central urban location. The proposed development should have regard to the surrounding urban facilities and amenities.

Key
- Site Boundary
- Watercourse
- Key Services & Amenities
- Retail & Commercial Uses
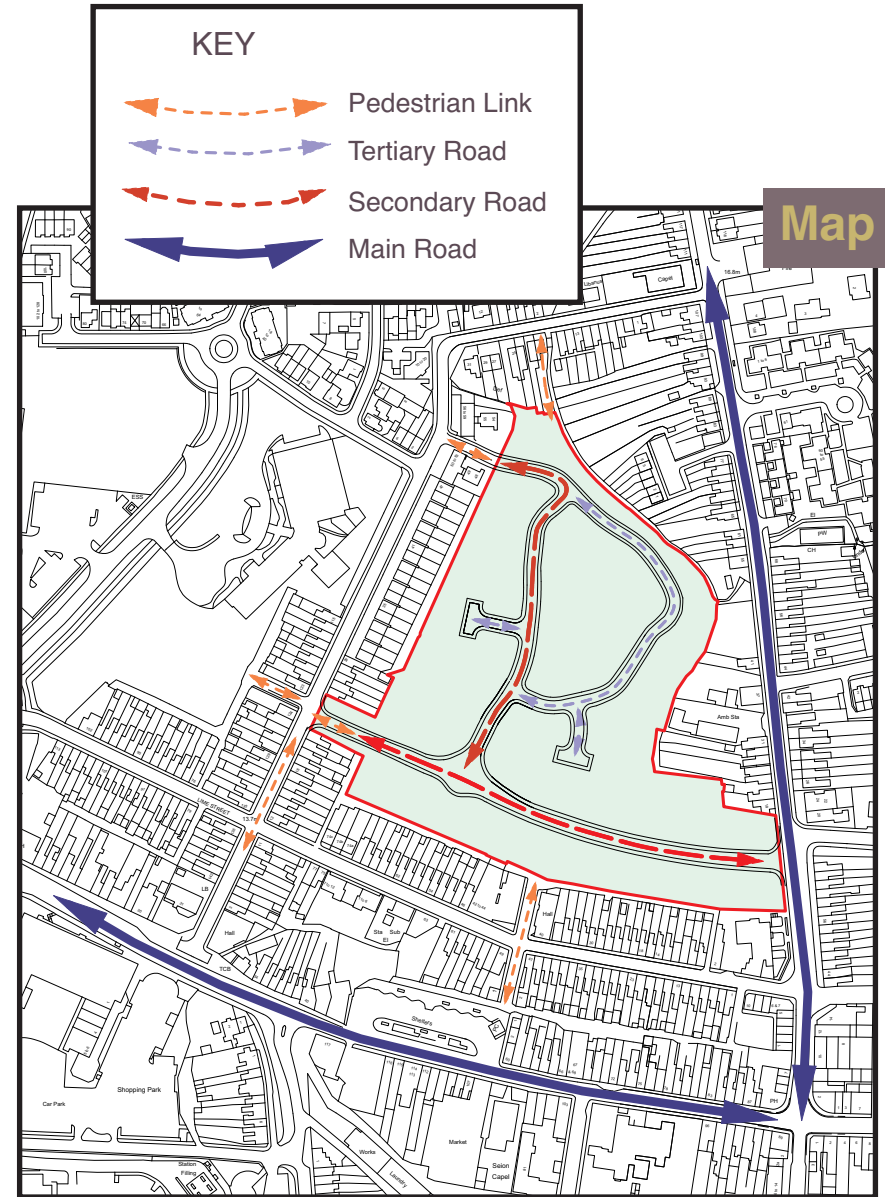- Existing Trees
- Existing Access

The site offers the potential to design in new features to promote biodiversity and to ensure that established ecological or landscape value are protected in any development scheme.

The tree coverage on the site is sporadic however it does show a strong ecological potential on the northern end along the watercourse.
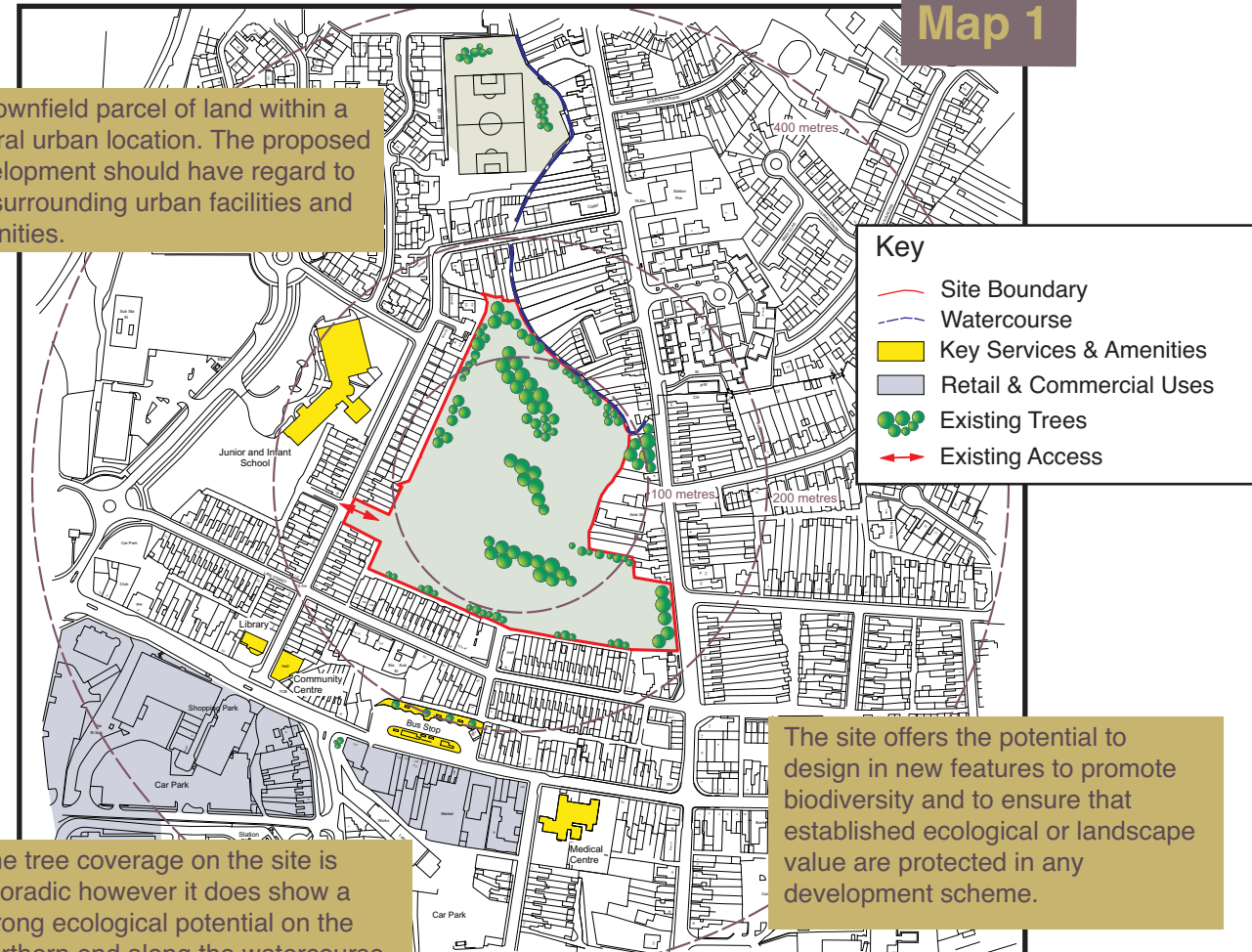
Map 2 - Movement Strategy

An important feature of any new development is the accessibility and ease of movement considerations of the scheme. New development should be designed so that it can be integrated into the surrounding area, taking advantage of the existing movement framework, and wherever possible enhance it through reinforcing pedestrian and local transport linkages, and through the potential for other opportunities such as creating new cycle ways.

Map 2a

Key
- Site Boundary
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Pedestrian linkages to Key Services & Amenities
- Potential Access Framework within Site
- Existing Biodiversity Corridor
- Key Services & Amenities
- Recreation Area
- Retail & Commercial Area

Map 2b

KEY
- Pedestrian Link
- Tertiary Road
- Secondary Road
- Main Road
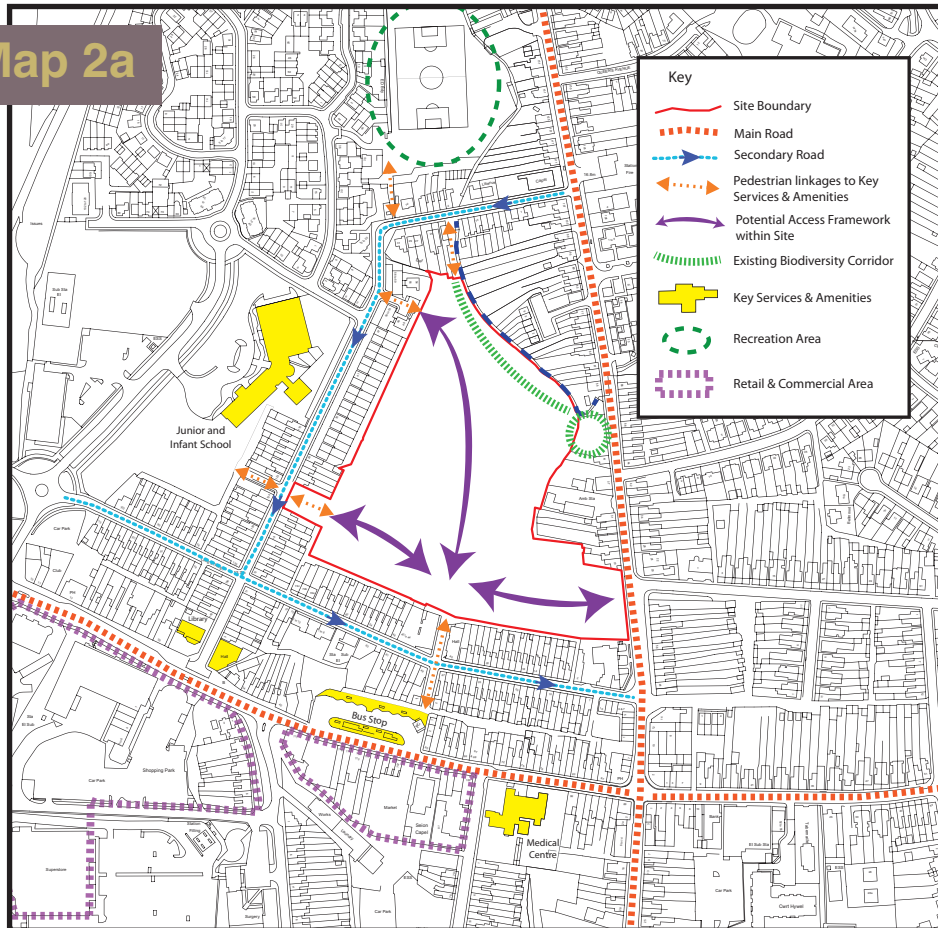
Map 3 - Permeability, legibility, views and features
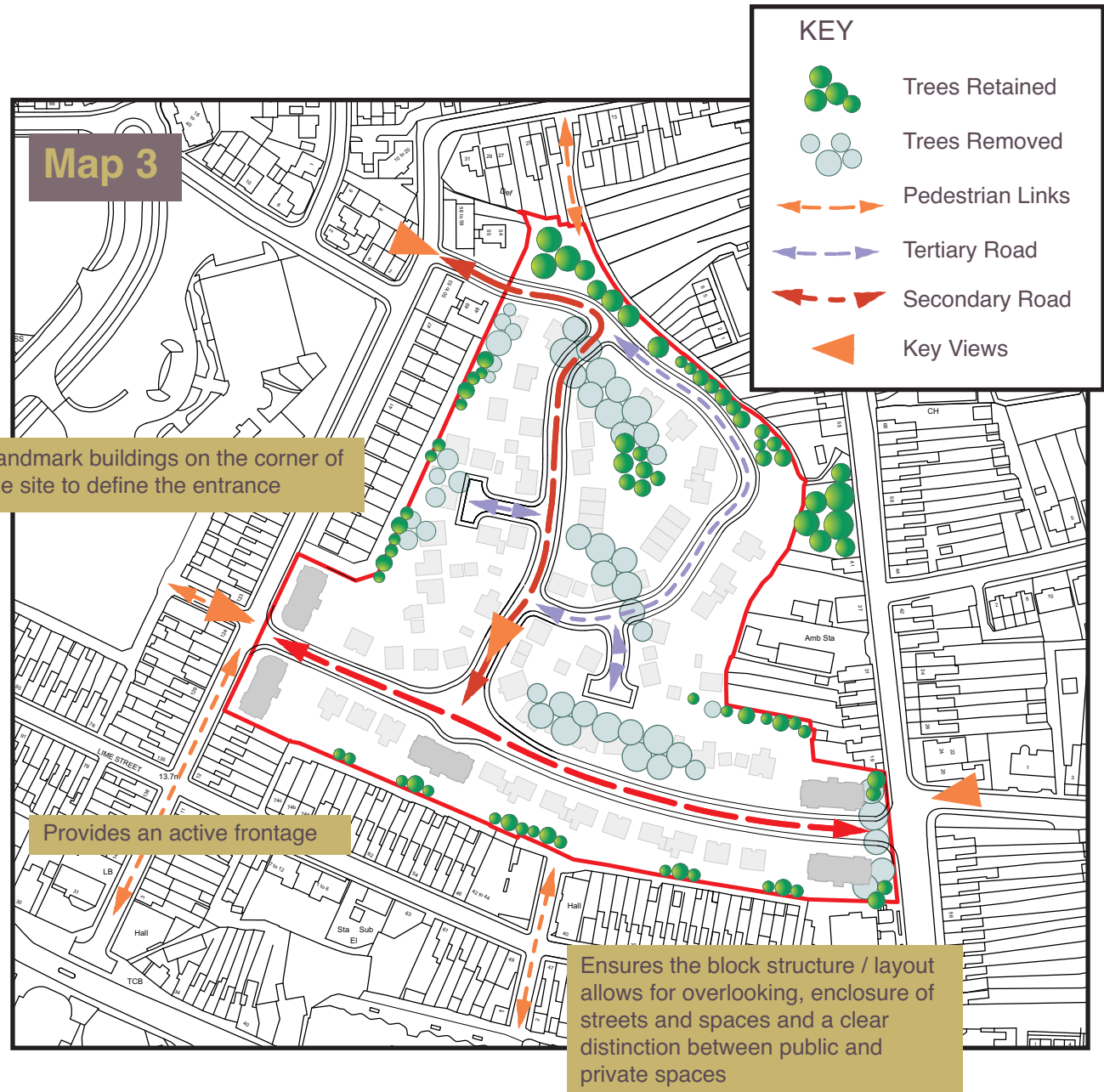
Within an overall well-connected and permeable site there should be opportunities for a full range of street designs, however the monoculture of street types should be avoided. At a more detailed design level, consideration would be given to the spaces and shape of plots, building width, facade and features.

The overall visual effect of the development must be considered by looking at the development from the surrounding area. This site considers the placement and design of landscape and buildings to create memorable spaces and focal points, and also creating landmark buildings to define the entrance to the development. The density of the development is reflective of its surrounding area and existing character, and allows for a clearly defined and enclosed residential street

Map 3

KEY

Trees Retained

Trees Removed

Pedestrian Links

Tertiary Road

Secondary Road

Key Views

Landmark buildings on the corner of the site to define the entrance

Provides an active frontage

Ensures the block structure / layout allows for overlooking, enclosure of streets and spaces and a clear distinction between public and private spaces

Map 4 - Illustrative Layout

From an early design concept, the existing landscape and biodiversity has shaped the northern element of the site, offering and attractive and open space to this part of the site.

Mixes vertical and horizontal emphasis to limit repetitiveness

Houses overlooking open space and improving safety on the secondary road

Use of hard and soft landscaping elements to provide continuity and enclosure of streets and spaces

The site designs in open space and utilises the existing tree coverage and vegetation to buffer the site from the existing surrounding dwellings.

Road lined with landscaping

Formal parking spaces breaks up straight road