

TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING GUIDELINES

New Residential Development

September 2004

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These guidelines relate to all proposals for residential development in Trafford, including new houses, flats and flat conversions. The Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides the statutory land-use planning framework for residential development in the Borough. These guidelines act as supplementary planning guidance to Proposal D3 (Residential Development) of the UDP, and explain in more detail how this Proposal will be applied.
- 1.2 In drafting these guidelines the Council has taken account of Government advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (March 2000), 'Better Places to Live: By Design – A companion guide to PPG3' (September 2001) and 'By Design: urban design in the planning system – towards better practice' (2000).
- 1.3 These guidelines also take account of local circumstances in the Borough. Trafford, because of its generally high quality physical environment, good employment opportunities, the reputation of its educational establishments, and demographic change, continues to experience considerable pressure from developers wanting to build housing to meet growing demand. In its UDP, the Council has identified sites for residential development with a preferred order of release in line with the sequential approach advised in PPG3. However, there also continues to be significant interest for redevelopment and conversion of existing property within established residential areas.
- 1.4 The Council acknowledges the need to achieve a balance between encouraging urban regeneration, through higher density development, and maintaining and enhancing the character and amenity of established residential areas. This is reflected in Proposal D3 of the UDP. All planning applications will be dealt with on their merits having regard to the Development Plan and all other material considerations.
- 1.5 These guidelines are based on the following principles: -
- The need to make efficient use of land within the urban area.
 - The need to ensure that new development has good links to public transport.
 - The need to ensure that new development is well integrated with the Borough's existing neighbourhoods.
 - The need to maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the Borough's established residential areas.
- 1.6 The guidelines should be read in conjunction with other approved Council guidelines and standards, in particular: -
- Car Parking Standards.
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance on Crime and Security.
 - South Hale Conservation Area.
 - The Downs, The Devisdale, Bowdon, and Ashley Heath Conservation Areas.
 - Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes for the Elderly.
 - Day Nurseries and Playgroups.
 - Use of Residential Property for Business Purposes.
 - Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- 1.7 The Council will produce further detailed guidance, where appropriate, for particular areas or sites.
- 1.8 To produce a scheme of an acceptably high standard much will depend on the skill of the designers and their response to the characteristics of particular sites and their surroundings, taking into account amongst other things these guidelines.

- 1.9 There may be occasional situations where the improvements that the development of the site will provide to the surrounding area are significant enough to justify a departure from these guidelines but it is expected that such instances will be rare.

2: SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT

New Development

- 2.1 UDP Policy H1 outlines the overall scope for new housing development in the Borough up to April 2006 and until such time as Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) is revised. UDP Policy H2 outlines the Council's requirement that housing development should occur in sustainable locations, and that previously developed brown-field land should be considered before the release of green-field land. UDP Proposal H3 identifies large new housing sites that are to be released for development during the Plan period.

Redevelopment

- 2.2 Subject to the overall scope for development provisions of UDP Policy H1, redevelopment of sites within residential areas will normally be acceptable in principle except where: -
- a) The development involves demolition of buildings which are 'listed' as being of special architectural or historic interest. Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas may also be resisted, depending on the quality of the building and its proposed replacement, or,
 - b) The site is allocated in the UDP for other purposes including public or private open space.
- 2.3 Opportunities for the conversion of existing buildings should be thoroughly explored and are encouraged by the Council, especially within established residential areas. Proposals for the conversion of property will need to take account of the requirements laid down in these guidelines.

Infilling

- 2.4 Development of small vacant sites or the retention of buildings and construction of new dwellings within their garden areas are all possible forms of development. Whilst the Council acknowledges that the development of smaller urban sites with small scale housing or flat developments makes a valuable contribution towards the supply of new housing in the Borough, the way in which the new buildings relate to the existing will be of paramount importance. This type of development will not be accepted at the expense of the amenity of the surrounding properties or the character of the surrounding area. The resulting plot sizes and frontages should, therefore, be sympathetic to the character of the area as well as being satisfactorily related to each other and the street scene. Both the new property and the retained dwelling should comply with the standards set out in these guidelines.

Tandem and Backland Development

- 2.5 Tandem development (a new building behind an existing one with shared access from the road) will not normally be acceptable. The main problems with this type of development are that it introduces disturbance into formerly quiet garden areas, causes disturbance from the comings and goings of vehicles and pedestrians passing close behind and between the houses on the frontage, creates problems of overlooking and of being overlooked, and is likely to appear visually obtrusive. Other forms of development in backland areas may create similar problems.

- 2.6 As with infill development, tandem and backland development will not be accepted at the expense of the amenity of the surrounding properties or the character of the local area.

Development in Established Areas of Older Housing

- 2.7 Within Trafford there are many areas of older housing. These areas often contain Victorian and Edwardian residential properties, many of which are large detached and semi-detached properties set within spacious and mature landscaped gardens.
- 2.8 Some areas of older housing have been designated as Conservation Areas and some buildings within them are listed, thereby benefiting from legislative protection. This protection requires new development nearby to take account of the architectural styles, massing and materials that characterise these areas. However, many older houses do not lie within Conservation Areas and are not listed. They may, however, have a significant role to play in characterising the Borough's established residential areas and their architectural style, form and layout help shape the identity of these areas.
- 2.9 In the past, new developments have been allowed in areas of older established housing that have impacted detrimentally on the quality of the local environment. The Council is concerned to promote better design and, where appropriate, will encourage new residential developments that pay due regard to the character and architectural styles of the surrounding area. .

Conversion to flats

- 2.10 The Council wishes to encourage, wherever possible, the retention of existing housing within its established residential areas and it acknowledges that conversion of large properties to flats is a means to this end. This has been an increasing trend in the Borough, with older properties and properties of character often being the subject of such proposals. However, it is important that local character and highway safety are not detrimentally affected by such proposals. . Conversions that result in excessive reductions in open space, too high a proportion of hard surfacing, unacceptable levels of traffic generation and adverse effects on highway safety will not normally be acceptable.
- 2.11 Use of the upper floors for living rooms and kitchens rather than bedrooms will increase the likelihood of overlooking and if distances to neighbouring properties are short the proposed conversion may be unacceptable.
- 2.12 The need for fire escapes should be considered at an early stage. External fire escapes can be unsightly so internal escape routes will often be preferable.
- 2.13 Each application will be considered on its merits having regard to the number of new dwellings proposed, floor layouts, type of construction and proposed noise insulation.

3. DENSITY

- 3.1 Densities of between 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare (net) will be encouraged, in accordance with PPG3. Greater intensity of development will be sought at places with good public transport accessibility such as town, district and local centres or around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors. However, development at a density greater than 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare (net) should not be achieved at the expense of the character of the local area. Specific guidance on acceptable densities may be provided if a development brief is produced for a particular site.

- 3.2 Good design will play a vital role in providing attractive living conditions in higher density developments. There are many examples of successful schemes in 'Better Places to Live: By Design – A companion guide to PPG3' (September 2001).
- 3.3 The ability of local infrastructure to provide for the increased population associated with higher density development is a further consideration. Therefore, the Council will consider the extent to which the new population will be catered for in terms of community facilities, education, access to public transport and recreation provision.

4. MIXED AREAS

- 4.1 The Council will encourage, in appropriate locations, a mix of uses within new residential developments. This is intended to promote vitality, community safety and reduce the need to travel. In these cases care should be taken that developments contribute to the mix of uses within the local area, and that they are compatible with neighbouring uses.
- 4.2 Developers should aim to provide a range of accommodation in order to attract a range of people and create diverse communities. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of homes which incorporate workshop/home office space whilst ensuring the least disturbance to other residents. This, along with a range of accommodation and tenures within developments, helps to provide natural surveillance and reduces the need to travel.

5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.1 UDP Proposal H8, and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing, sets out the criteria for the provision of affordable housing as part of new residential development schemes. It should be noted that the Council will not seek to apply the affordable housing requirement to schemes where the accommodation is intended for occupation by elderly persons.
- 5.2 Criterion vii) of UDP Proposal D3 provides that, in determining proposals for new residential development, the Council will have regard to the contribution made by existing buildings on the site to the provision of affordable housing in the locality, taking account of the long-term benefits of redevelopment at higher densities and of any new affordable housing which might be provided under Proposal H8. This is an acknowledgement of the fact that there may be a case in particular circumstances for shorter term retention of buildings currently providing accommodation with low rentals, and falling within the definition of affordable housing provided by Proposal H8.

6. INFORMAL RECREATION AND CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE PROVISION

- 6.1 UDP Proposal OSR9, and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Informal/Children's Playing Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities Provision and Commuted Sums, sets out the criteria for the provision of informal recreation and children's play space as part of new residential development schemes. This requirement applies to residential developments proposed in areas of the Borough that have a proven deficiency of open space.

7. VEHICULAR ACCESS/ROAD LAYOUTS

- 7.1 For sites large enough to require the provision of new roads, reference should be made to Places, Streets and Movement – A Companion Guide to Design Bulletin 32 (Residential Roads and Footpaths) (DETR, 1998). Road layouts and connections to

the existing highway network should comply with the principles set out in these documents.

- 7.2 Individual accesses to a house or a block of flats should normally not be from the primary route network and should preferably not be from any other classified road, especially if access is possible from a side road.
- 7.3 As a guide, access to a block of flats should have 4.5 m kerb radii and provide 4.5 m access width to the parking area to allow for two-way traffic. Sight line requirements will vary according to the type of road. A dropped footway crossing may be adequate for very small flat developments and conversions.
- 7.4 There should be sufficient manoeuvring space within flat developments to allow for the turning of vehicles if the parking spaces are all occupied. This space should be equivalent to a standard residential road turning head.
- 7.5 Measures to reduce the speed of traffic to ensure the safety of residents should be incorporated as part of any large development. Traffic calming/speed restraint measures may include changes in horizontal alignment (reducing straight road lengths), changes in vertical alignment (such as road humps, raised junctions and speed tables) or a combination of measures. Any traffic calming measures should be designed as an integral part of the development's layout and not added on as an afterthought.
- 7.6 Whilst the Council considers the issue of highway safety to be of paramount importance, it also acknowledges that a rigid adherence to standards and guidelines may not always produce the best design solution depending upon the circumstances of the proposed development. Therefore, the Council is prepared to adopt a more flexible approach, where necessary, provided this does not prejudice the safety of road users.
- 7.7 For sites incorporating new road layouts, the permeability of the site should be optimised, consistent with crime prevention and personal safety considerations. This means that developments should be easy to get to and move through. Wherever possible, layouts should be designed to encourage walking and cycling, with links between proposed and existing streets, and provision of direct links to public transport and local facilities.

8. PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

- 8.1 Consideration of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities should be given in line with the Council's UDP policies and proposals. Links should normally be created where they would provide significantly shorter routes than the alternative vehicle route or where they will reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflict. Any proposed routes for the sole use of pedestrians and/or cyclists should be safe, direct, secure, convenient and visually attractive in terms of layout, materials and landscaping.

9. CAR PARKING

- 9.1 In terms of car parking provision for residential development, the Council is currently reviewing its car parking guidelines in the context of the countywide Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan process. UDP Proposal D2 and Appendix J set out the current vehicle parking guidelines.
- 9.2 Where a garage (or garage space) is provided, there should be a minimum of 5.5 m (18 ft) in front to allow a car to stand clear of any part of the highway whilst the garage doors are opened, or whilst the car is temporarily parked in the open. A garage should be a minimum of 2.4m wide by 4.8m long (internal dimensions) if it is

to be readily usable for most cars and therefore to count towards the parking provision required.

- 9.3 Residents' parking should normally be behind the building line, capable of accommodating a garage and be within the curtilage of the dwelling or conveniently adjoining it. Residents' parking in front of the building line may be accepted if the need for this can be justified, and if the result in terms of appearance is shown to be satisfactory and in character with the area. Large expanses of car parking in formerly quiet garden areas will not be acceptable.

10. HEIGHT

- 10.1 Development should complement the characteristics of the surrounding area. Heights to eaves and to ridge are both important, as is the effect of the overall massing.
- 10.2 A building on an infill site that is taller than nearby properties may be over-dominant and out of place. It is therefore advisable to consider providing buildings of similar heights to those nearby. If a taller building is to be allowed it will normally need significantly more space around it than would a lower building for it to be properly assimilated in the area. On small infill sites in an area of regular development, any new development significantly higher or lower than the nearby properties is likely to be refused.
- 10.3 On large sites, where the surroundings are more varied, there will be more scope for different heights. In principle, taller buildings can provide interesting variety to an area. For example, at the corner plots where buildings are to be located next to road junctions, there can be the opportunity in the more densely built up areas to increase building heights in order to create visual interest and landmarks. The use of varying heights within new developments will require careful overall design.

11. PRIVACY

- 11.1 The Council acknowledges that a rigid adherence to spacing standards can stifle creativity in design and result in uniformity of development. The Council is looking to encourage imaginative design solutions and in doing so it accepts the need for a flexible approach to privacy distances between buildings within a development site, where good design or the particular circumstances of the site allow this.
- 11.2 Notwithstanding the above, the following guidelines should be taken into account: -
- For new **two storey** dwellings (houses or flats) in cases where special provisions for creating internal and external privacy are not employed, the minimum distance between dwellings which have major facing windows is 21 metres across public highways and 27 metres across private gardens.
 - Where **three storey** dwellings (houses or flats) are proposed, the minimum distances are increased by 3 metres over the above figures.
 - For **four or more storeys**, the figures as for 3 storeys apply.
- 11.3 Where privacy and visual amenity is achieved by permanent screening, such as walls or fences, or by window design and location these distances may be reduced. Trees and other planting may affect a marginal case but are not a substitute for adequate distance, as they cannot be regarded as permanent. Deciduous trees, in particular, offer little screening for half the year and new planting will take some years to become established.

- 11.4 Private rear garden areas should not be closely overlooked. Distances to rear garden boundaries from main windows should be at least 10.5 m for 2 storey houses and 13.5 m for 2 storey flats or houses or flats with 3 or more storeys.

12. OVERSHADOWING

- 12.1 Careful consideration should be given to the orientation of dwellings and the potential for overshadowing, bearing in mind movements of the sun. There are many possible relationships of properties with each other, and so in these matters the Council will generally adopt a flexible approach. However, dwellings should not be grouped so closely that they unduly overshadow each other, their garden areas or neighbouring property. In situations where overshadowing is likely with a main elevation facing a two storey blank gable then a minimum distance of 15 m (49 ft) should normally be provided.

13. GARDEN AND AMENITY SPACE

- 13.1 Most new dwellings, including new build and conversions, should provide some private outdoor space. This does not include front or side garden areas open to view from roads, nor space needed to comply with parking standards. Private outdoor space is needed for a variety of functional requirements such as sitting out, children's play and hanging washing.
- 13.2 There may be a limited number of exceptions, such as where conversions to residential use are desirable but provision of garden space is not possible. An example of this would be in the case of the conversion of vacant storage space over a shop to a flat.
- 13.3 Where a dwelling already has inadequate garden space, its sub-division into smaller units will not normally be acceptable.
- 13.4 Whether the amount of proposed private outdoor space is adequate will mainly depend upon the type and size of dwelling and the nature of its surroundings. Around 80 sq. m of garden space will normally be acceptable for 3 bedroom semi-detached houses in an area of similar properties. Smaller houses such as small terraced properties may be acceptable with somewhat less. Estates of houses could have a range of garden space sizes, which helps provide variety to the layout, subject to each house having a reasonable minimum and the average being acceptable and appropriate to the area.
- 13.5 For flats, 18 sq. m of adequately screened communal area per flat is generally sufficient for the functional requirements. Balconies can count as part of the amenity space provision.
- 13.6 As well as meeting functional requirements, garden space also usually contributes to meeting adequate privacy distances and provides important amenity value to residential areas.

14. TREES AND LANDSCAPING

- 14.1 UDP Proposal ENV16, and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Developer Contributions Towards Red Rose Forest, sets out the tree provision required from developers throughout the Borough.
- 14.2 Good design of external space is as essential to the success of a scheme as that of internal space. In urban areas, where there is increasing pressure on land, it is particularly important that all outdoor space should contribute fully to the

attractiveness of the development. The satisfactory integration of buildings with the space around them is an essential contribution to urban design. The proportion of planted areas to buildings and hard surfacing will often be an important consideration when the Council assesses the acceptability of individual developments in particular areas.

- 14.3 Every effort should be made to retain good quality existing trees and a proposal that does not do this satisfactorily may be refused planning permission. This applies particularly in the case of trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order and important trees in Conservation Areas.
- 14.4 Proposals for development which abut an industrial area should include suitable landscaping measures on the periphery of the site in order to form a visual barrier between the site and the adjoining land use. Similarly, development on the edge of the urban area, adjoining public open space or adjacent to areas of known wildlife interest should be landscaped such that it sits well with the adjacent countryside, public open space or wildlife area. Proposals adjoining main transportation routes will need particular attention to provide a high standard of planting and boundary treatment.
- 14.5 Tree planting will be encouraged where it is not detrimental to an existing target habitat or species, as detailed within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Tree species should be native and, where possible, of local provenance, with planting carried out to reflect a natural community incorporating diversity of species and ages. The planting of deciduous street trees which add to the character of an area will be encouraged.
- 14.6 Site boundaries should be enclosed with materials appropriate to the character of the area and should be used where necessary to afford privacy to dwellings. Facilities which may be unneighbourly, such as parking areas and bin stores, should be suitably screened or located away from general view. Front boundaries are particularly important to the character of an area and it may be necessary to retain a characteristic stone wall or retain a well-planted frontage rather than provide a new wall or fence.
- 14.7 Planning applications for residential development should as a minimum provide the following information: -
- (a) trees to be retained and removed;
 - (b) areas to be landscaped, and the general form of treatment intended for such areas;
 - (c) intended boundary treatment and any measures necessary to protect neighbours' privacy.
- 14.8 Where there are significant trees on, or adjacent to, the site (including trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order) which may be affected by the closeness of buildings, roads, hard surfacing or underground services, or where there is a need to improve sight lines, the following information should also be provided: -
- (d) a detailed survey of trees on the site including species, location, branch spread and height;
 - (e) details of tree pruning work required for the implementation of the development;
 - (f) description of proposed work likely to affect the trees, including any changes in levels, surface treatment, service trenches or any other excavations;
 - (g) a bat survey of the trees.

- 14.9 A full landscaping scheme including details of species, size and numbers of plants, specification of hard surfacing, levels, walls, fences and any other boundary treatment, and measures to avoid damage to underground/overhead utility services, will be needed before development starts. General indications of what is intended should be provided as part of the planning application. A scheme for the protection of trees during demolition and building work will also be required. Where appropriate, landscaping schemes should incorporate provision for habitat creation, taking into account local geology, soil type, vegetation, aspect, and altitude.

15. MATERIALS

- 15.1 In order to achieve a good standard of development it is essential that external materials should be visually appropriate, of good quality, and sympathetic to the character of the area. Since no materials can be considered typical to the Trafford area as a whole, each case must be treated on its merits.
- 15.2 Good quality landscaping for the car parking, access and other hard landscaping elements can add considerably to the quality of a scheme and careful consideration should be given to this aspect.

16. REFUSE DISPOSAL AND COLLECTION

- 16.1 Provision should be made in all new housing developments for the safe storage of refuse in bins or bin stores awaiting collection. Such provision should allow for the separate storage of recyclable refuse materials.
- 16.2 Provision of bins and bin stores, preferably under cover, for flat developments (new or conversions) should be made so as to ensure convenient access for residents and refuse collectors. Bin stores should be located conveniently close to part of the vehicle manoeuvring area so as to encourage collection to take place wholly within the site. Applications for flats should include siting and details of bin stores.
- 16.3 Bins and stores, if located outside, should be suitably screened from public view, living room windows and sitting out areas. They should not be located at the extremities of the site to the disadvantage of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. Special care in design will be needed if they are located in front of the building. Bin storage areas should be located conveniently close to the properties that they are intended to serve.

17. REAR ACCESS

- 17.1 It is normally desirable for all new houses to be provided with means of access to the rear without passing through the living quarters of the house. This will normally be easy with semi detached and detached houses. Special consideration will be needed for terraced properties. Developers will be expected to show that they have taken account in their layouts of the convenience of moving garden items and building materials and equipment, the ease of refuse storage and collection, and the needs of security.

18. DESIGNING OUT CRIME

- 18.1 Residential environments should be as safe as possible. Developers should be able to demonstrate that their schemes have been designed to reduce the risk of crime and that the risks to vulnerable members of society, such as children and elderly people, have been minimised. The Council is keen that the occupiers of new

residential development should feel a sense of ownership of their surroundings and passive surveillance should be a major consideration in design.

- 18.2 Circular 5/94 (DoE) on 'Planning out crime' provides further guidance about planning considerations relating to crime prevention. The Council has also issued advice in its Supplementary Planning Guidance on Crime and Security. Detailed advice on good practice can also be obtained from the Greater Manchester Police Architectural Liaison Unit at the following address:

Greater Manchester Police
Architectural Liaison Unit
Community Affairs Branch
Chester House
Boyer Street
Manchester
M16 0RE

19. INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

- 19.1 New residential development should reflect the principles of inclusive access for people with disabilities. This applies to the housing itself and the spaces between dwellings. Further guidance on inclusive design is provided in 'Planning and Access for Disabled People - A Good Practice Guide', published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (March 2003).