

Residential Design Guide



Supplementary Planning Guidance
November 2000



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Directorate of Development and Leisure

Foreword

We are entering a period of great challenge in Stroud District as we seek to accommodate our share of the current national housing growth. Inevitably this means the construction of a lot of new houses, and it is absolutely critical that we embrace the current government's thinking on improving the layout and design of these new residential areas. At Stroud we will be putting much more emphasis on these matters as we look at housing schemes in the years ahead, and this design guide should help us considerably in that process.

In addition, anyone proposing to build new houses in the District should find that, if the advice in the guide is followed, the procedure runs more smoothly.

Chris Brine
Chair of Planning Committee

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE 2000

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The Purpose of the Guide

This guide has been produced to assist those wishing to build residential development within Stroud District. It includes advice for those looking to build one house alone, although it is primarily aimed at groups of houses, from small groups up to large developments of many hundreds.



The guide does not attempt to be prescriptive, and say that a particular approach should be followed. Rather it suggests ways of looking at a development, and sets out principles which, if adhered to, will be more likely to produce a positive recommendation.

Background

Stroud District has suffered, as have so many parts of this country, from too much development in recent decades which conveys no sense of place whatsoever. Slavish adherence to standard highway requirements, minimum distances between houses, and standard house types, arranged in unimaginative ways on a site, have all too often been the norm. The result has been dull,

uninteresting development which at best could be from anywhere in the country, and at worst clashes with nearby more traditional development and detracts from the unique character of the District.

Much of this development occurred during a time when Government advice was that Local Authorities should not get involved in design matters - they were seen as primarily the concern of developers and their customers. The market was king.

This started to change in 1997, with the production of the revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 1, entitled 'General Policy and Principles'. This stresses that new buildings and their curtilages have a significant effect on the character and quality of an area, and are matters of proper public interest. It states that both urban design (the relationship of buildings to spaces), and the design of buildings, are material considerations, and makes it clear that "urban design" is not limited to urban areas, but is equally applicable to the countryside. PPG 1 advises Local Planning Authorities to reject poor designs, particularly where their decisions are supported by clear plan policies or supplementary guidance which has been subjected to public consultation and adopted. It tells us that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, again particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary design guidance.

The importance of urban design within the planning process took another step forward with the publication by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), in September 1998, of 'Places, Streets and Movement'. This is described as a companion guide to Design Bulletin 32, on residential roads and footpaths, but marks a complete change in Government advice on how we should look at the design of new residential areas, and particularly the relationship between buildings, roads and footpaths. It stresses the importance of creating new quality spaces and places. Its emphasis can most readily be appreciated by looking at the chapter on key principles and issues, and noting that these include "Look at the place not the car", "Creating a high quality public realm" and "Responding to the local context". 'Places, Streets and Movement' (PSM) is used as the background for much of what follows in this guide.

The change in Government advice on the design and layout continued in October 1998 with the production by the DETR of 'Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice'. Whilst obviously about a lot more than the design of new residential areas, it contains useful advice on how to make such developments more sustainable, and will also be referred to again in this guide.

More recently, Planning Policy Guidance Note 3, Housing, has been revised (March 2000) to introduce a new approach to planning for housing with a greater emphasis on design. In May 2000 the DETR published a new guide by The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment called 'By Design - Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice', which aims to promote higher standards in urban design. Its central message is 'that careful assessments of places, well-designed proposals, robust decision-making and a collaborative approach are needed throughout the country if better places are to be created' (p8).

Using the Guide - the Relationship with the Local Plan

At the same time as producing this guide, Stroud District Council is producing a Local Plan to 2011. The revised Deposit Version October 2000 contains an Environment chapter, which explains that this guide will be produced and adopted as supplementary planning guidance. It also contains three policies, B1A, B1 and B2, which underpin the production of this guide, and to which reference should be made when considering how to interpret the guidance in this document. In due course, it is intended that these policies will be part of the Development Plan, and will therefore be very significant in the determination of planning applications. These policies are reproduced in Appendix 1.

It is the purpose of this guide to provide more detailed guidance on how proposals for new housing can seek to comply with these policies.

