

06 Design Guidelines



Design Guidelines

06.01

Discussion of issues

Having studied the principal characteristics of Sturminster Newton that make it unique, as well as some of the weaknesses and other issues, this section of the Statement provides the main outcome of the study, namely a series of Design Guidelines.

It is important to note that these guidelines have been developed, not only from the authors' own views, but that they have been tested against the opinion of local people through on-going public consultation, as well of course with the involvement of North Dorset District Council and SturQuest. Although few opinions on local character were raised at the main public consultation event in July 2007, there was a clear concurrence with the assessment presented at the event.

It will be remembered that the purpose of the Design Guidelines is to safeguard local character and to encourage sensitive, high quality design where new development occurs through a process of development guidance and control. As such, its purpose is to manage change and indeed to encourage regeneration, and not to prevent it.

It should be noted that the Design Guidelines are all linked to appropriate existing planning policies and guidance, both national and local.

What makes Sturminster Newton distinctive?

This Town Design Statement finds that Sturminster Newton has a number of fine characteristics that make it distinctive from other towns elsewhere, whilst also exhibiting a number of features that make it representative of Dorset and the Blackmore Vale.

The study has found that the town does not contain features that make it wholly unique to the degree to which say, Bath, Salisbury or Lyme Regis are, although, as a community, it does have a distinct sense of energy. It does not contain any particularly unique relationship to its surrounding landscape, it does not contain any outstanding buildings or architectural themes, nor is it planned in any comprehensive and historically outstanding way in the manner of Blandford Forum, for example.

This view is largely supported by the findings of the public consultation at which when asked what makes the town unique, the majority answered that it is the people and the sense of community, although closely followed by the historic environment in general without any particular aspect predominating.

However there are several features that make the old part of Sturminster Newton a delightful and attractive part of the old town. Although not nationally or regionally remarkable, these features nonetheless contribute to making a fine historic environment, rightly to be conserved and enhanced.

Some key features of the town are::

- Its close relationship to the surrounding landscape, both topographically and historically with special reference to the River Stour and its ancient bridge and mill.
- Its special relationship between town and country, particularly the progressive transition between the town centre and open countryside.
- The importance of the public realm within the town centre.
- The network of narrow shared-surface lanes radiating out from the town centre.
- The network of public footpaths linking town and country.
- The rich matrix of historic buildings, walls and vegetation that together make up the old town.
- The historic layout and development pattern of the old town.

It is important to note that many of these qualities relate to what might be termed the 'backland' areas behind the main frontage onto the Market Place, Bridge Street etc.. In the past, it is often these areas that have been overlooked and, whilst the main frontages have been well protected, the 'backland' areas have been disrupted by inappropriate development including relief roads, car parks, filling stations, large shed development etc.. Here in the old town of Sturminster Newton the 'backland' areas have survived substantially intact and they remain a delightful environment, particularly in view of their location between the town centre and open countryside.

It should be noted that none of the features identified as special relate to the more recent northern part of the town which is substantially lacking in any features that make it characteristic or distinctive, let alone unique.

Design Guidelines

06.01

Discussion of issues

A feature of the Town Design Statement is its emphasis on the protection of quality environments demonstrating "how local character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced in new development." (NDDC Adopting Village and Town Design Statements as Supplementary Planning Documents - Planning Guidance Note, March 2007)

This issue is fairly straightforward in locations in and adjacent to historic environments, but it begs the question about what will be appropriate in both the new town with its lack of local distinctiveness and uniqueness and any further expansion into the surrounding countryside that will be even further removed from any historic context.

There are several options on this issue, as follows:

1. Adopt historic references irrespective of location around the town.
2. Adopt references from the immediate context, even if the locality is lacking in urban quality (i.e. 1930s Council estate)
3. Respect and adopt historic references in historic and quality contexts, but in other areas where quality and local distinctiveness are poor, or in greenfield locations encourage the creation of places with new and distinctive urban character.

Whilst the respect of existing and adjacent urban environments is unquestionably the way forward in and adjacent to historic areas, the creation of exciting new character areas, free from many of the constraints of more historic environments, could provide an exciting way forward for any greenfield and/or edge of town developments.

This study has found that there is a certain incongruity about some of the recent higher density neo-Georgian development located on the northern extremity of the town, especially when modern methods and materials try to emulate earlier features.

The authors are also of the view that the development of more contemporary urban forms and styles, perhaps expressive of modern trends such as sustainable 'eco' development, within certain constraints, could result in some new and dynamic neighbourhoods not dependent on potentially pastiche references.

Taking an historic perspective on this issue, it might be recalled that some of the main building styles that are now regarded as part of our cultural heritage were once themselves novel and even contentious. The Georgian style, now so much part of Sturminster Newton might be cited as an example.

The authors of this study consider that, within certain clearly defined constraints or guidelines, the opportunity to introduce some rather more contemporary urban development could be an exciting way forward, possibly to be preferred to the adoption of retrospective styles that have no immediate historic context.

An important element in this debate is the point that the Government is firmly committed to the creation of quality environments, as confirmed in PPS3 for example.

Whatever form new development does take, the question arises over how new, high quality buildings and urban environments can be assured. An important tool in this regard is the **development brief** which can be a natural site-specific extension of the Town Design Statement Design Guidelines. Development briefs and design codes are a well established principle with a long and illustrious history. Much of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian town building was governed by similar codes, as well as more recent developments such as Letchworth Garden City.

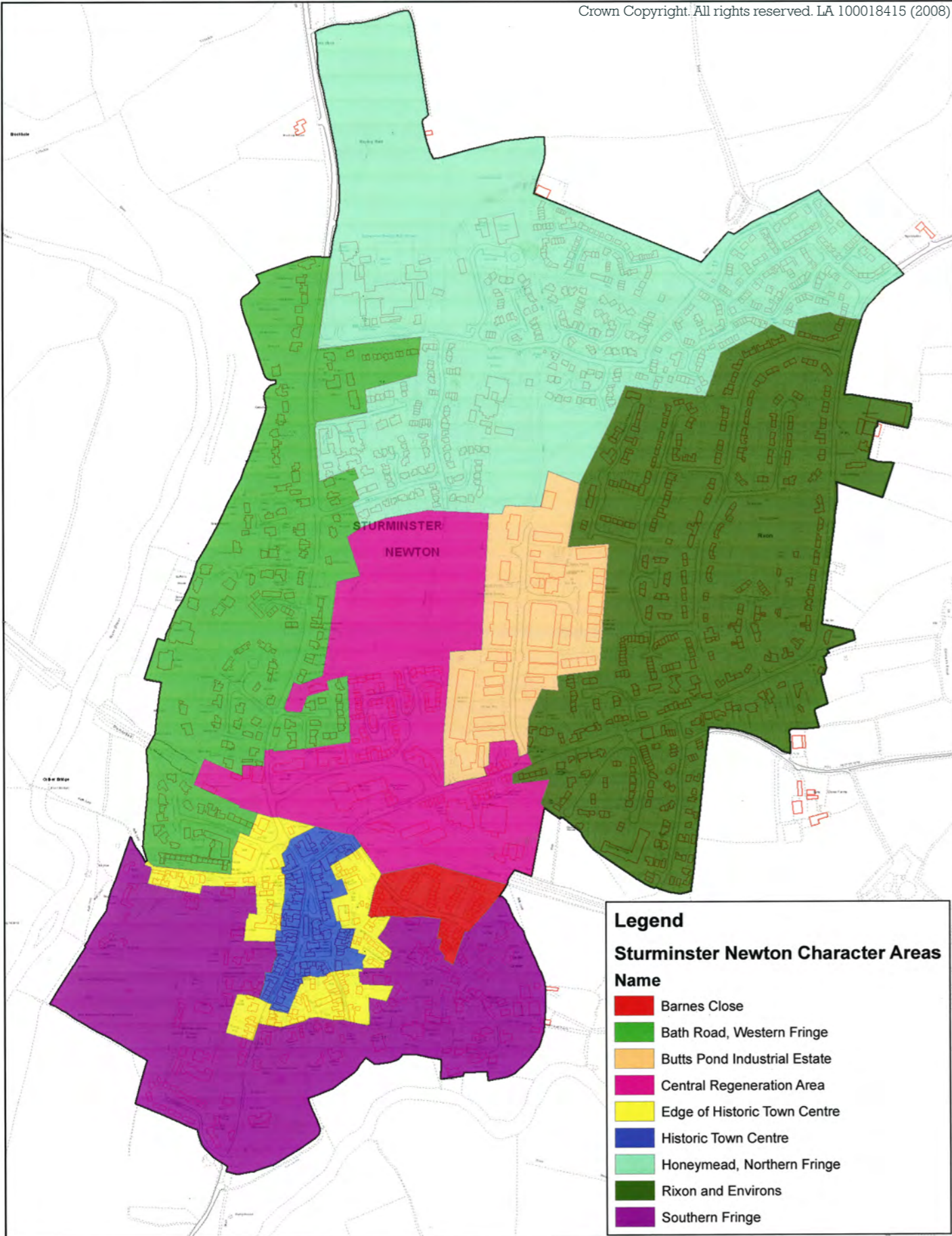
Development briefs are particularly relevant insofar that they can apply to specific areas and sites, and it is recommended as a fundamental part of this Statement that such guidelines are adopted for any significant or particularly sensitive new development sites in and around Sturminster Newton. The former creamery site and adjacent land are directly relevant in this regard.

It was found that the workshops and response forms threw up relatively few comments on the subject of the Town Design Statement, most being directed towards the Development and Design Brief for the creamery site.

The general consensus from this is that most of the features relevant to the Town Design Statement were covered in the Matrix presentation and that there was little additional relevant information to add, although some interesting background information was noted.

Design Guidelines

The final part of the study provides specific design guidance that identifies key issues relevant to the Town Design Statement, and they are intended as a useful tool in directing future development in the town. The guidelines are covered through a clear and easily referenced methodology with accompanying references to the relevant Planning Policy Statements and Local Plan policies which they are supplemental to.



Sturminster Newton Character Areas



Design Guidelines

06.02

Introduction to Design Guidelines

This part of the Town Design Statement defines a series of guidelines that indicate a range of constraints and considerations that will be applicable to new development in different parts of Sturminster Newton.

The Statement has already identified a range of existing features that are considered to be of importance in defining the character of the town, and these are the basis for the Design Guidelines, the general aim being to ensure that any new development should retain, incorporate and be sensitive to features that give the town character and local distinctiveness.

The guidelines listed here are not for the most part intended as absolute constraints that must be rigorously followed in each and every instance. To do this could strangle the very design responsiveness and flair that the Government seeks to foster through its PPS1 and PPS3 guidance. Rather, the proposals are identified as guidelines, but ones that should require very clear reasons and justification if they are not to be followed.

It is accepted that such an approach will demand a high level of site assessment and design input on the side of the would-be developer, and also a high level of design assessment on behalf of the Local Planning Authority in advising on and determining planning applications. Each site and application must be assessed on its own merits as well as its compliance with relevant planning policies, the Design Guidelines and any subsequent Development Briefs.

The Design Guidelines for Sturminster Newton are related to the different Character Areas defined in the NDDC Character Area map, repeated opposite. This allows a more sensitive and specific application of the guidelines appropriate to the particular circumstances and features of each part of the town.

Design Guidelines

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The Design Guidelines

The Development Guidelines listed here identify a range of features of the built environment that are important and which any new development will need to acknowledge. These include scale, height, mass, building line etc..

It should be noted that the essential character of the historic old town is one of individual developments of single residences, with the exception of terraced houses, and comprehensive estate developments are not historically part of its character and should be avoided. Although there may well be pressure to redevelop some spacious existing sites at increased density, new infill developments should be handled with particular care in order to avoid the appearance of a comprehensive development or should be avoided altogether.

Development-related guidelines

D1 SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

All new development should be substantially of the same or lesser scale, height and mass of adjacent buildings, unless proposed as a key feature or landmark building.
(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), 1.23, 1.24, 2.11, SN1, SN3)

Applies: All areas.

Comment:
Existing buildings across the town are broadly of the same scale and height. With the exception of some town centre buildings that reach 3 storeys and some recent development near the northern fringes of the town, almost all development is of 2 storeys. Although a proportion of accommodation may be provided in roof space, subject to the effect of dormer windows and height of ridge line, and the like, development should not exceed 3 storeys. Exceptions may occur, subject to other considerations, where a key feature is required, such as at the northern entrance to the Market Place, although strictly dependent on merit.

D2 BUILDING LINES

In locations where a clear historic building line has been established, new development should generally follow the existing line of development.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), 1.23, SN1, SN3)

Applies: All areas.

Comment:
Building lines vary considerably around Sturminster Newton, but any new development should normally seek to respect and reinforce established building lines whether they be along the edge of pavement or well set back.

D3 BUILDING FRONTAGE

Any new development should acknowledge road frontage in a manner appropriate to the locality.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iv), 1.23, 1.24, SN1, SN3)

Applies: All areas.

Comment:
Normally throughout Sturminster Newton traditional development faces directly onto roads, and this pattern should normally be followed. However in some parts of the old town some buildings in 'backland' areas do not directly face the road and therefore this feature may be permissible if sensitively handled. However inward facing cul-de-sac developments are not appropriate and should not be permitted.

D4 DEVELOPMENT DENSITY

Whilst the density of residential development should normally fall within the range defined by Government guidance (30-50 dph), it should also respect its setting and context. Lower densities may be appropriate in certain areas as given below.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iv), 1.23, 1.24, 2.10, 2.11, SN1, SN3. Also see PPS3)

Areas where densities below 30 dwellings per ha may be acceptable:

Edge of Historic Town Centre
Southern Fringe
Barnes Close
Bath Road, Western Fringe

Areas where densities should usually be in the range of 30-50 dph:

Historic Town Centre
Rixon and Environs
Honeymead, Northern Fringe
Central Regeneration Area

Comment:
Openness is an important quality of parts of the old town outside the high density historic town centre, and it is important that new development should not undermine this characteristic. Vegetation is an important element of the old town and inadequate in newer parts of the town, so it is important that no new development should impinge on existing trees in any way that might imperil their health and future growth.

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The Design Guidelines

D5 RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Any new residential development in the Character Areas listed below should be domestic in appearance and character, rather than having the appearance of apartment blocks or flats.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iv), 1.23, 1.24, 2.11, SN1, SN3)

Applies:

Historic Town Centre
Edge of Historic Town Centre
Southern Fringe
Barnes Close
Bath Road, Western Fringe

Comment:

The development of flats or apartments are not a feature of the old town and should therefore be avoided in these areas. It is important that any new development in the old town should reflect the form and character of domestic buildings, avoiding the more typical features of flats such as large mass, bulky proportions and repetition in the treatment of facades. However where the conversion of former industrial buildings to flats is acceptable in other respects, this may be an appropriate design solution.

D6 VIEWS OF COUNTRYSIDE

Development should not adversely affect important views of the countryside including the principal and rural views shown on the Town analysis map in Part 03.07.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iii), (v), SN1, SN3)

Applies:

Edge of Historic Town Centre
Southern Fringe
Bath Road, Western Fringe
Central Regeneration Area

Comment:

General guidance is already provided by Local Plan Policy 1.8(v), but particular attention is drawn here to important views from Railway Gardens south-east towards open countryside. This issue is likely to affect any future development in this locality. Other important views are shown on the Town analysis map in Part 03.07.

D7 ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT

New development should be of high quality, raising the standard of architectural treatment, and respecting the qualities of any nearby buildings and notable trees and other landscape features.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iv), 1.23, 1.24, 1.26, 1.27, 2.11, 3.20, SN1, SN3)

Applies: All areas

Comment:

This guidance closely follows government guidance that requires high standards of building design and for new development to respect features that provide local distinctiveness. Attention to architectural detail is considered to be an important ingredient of high quality design, and development proposals would normally be expected to provide information on such details. The Synopsis of Character Areas in Part 05.02 highlights those features that give the different parts of the town their character and local distinctiveness.

D8 FRONT AREAS/ENTRANCES

Any new development or redevelopment should not result in frontages being dominated by hard surfacing and parked cars. Site entrances should be designed to be as discrete as possible. (The conversion of front gardens in the old town should be avoided if possible)

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi), 2.10, 2.11, 5.6, 5.7, SN1, SN3)

Applies: All areas

Comment:

Parking associated with new development can be highly intrusive, resulting in a general lowering of townscape quality. Intrusive parking should therefore be avoided.

D9 SHOPFRONTS

Shopfronts are an important part of the historic town centre. New and replacement shop fronts should contribute to the character of the area or buildings in terms of their scale and style and should not lead to the loss of existing shop fronts (or parts of shop fronts) of historic or architectural value. Alterations to traditional shop fronts should incorporate traditional elements and materials.

(Supplements Policies 3.15, 3.16, 3.17))

Applies:

Historic Town Centre
Edge of Historic Town Centre

Comment:

The District Council has produced a 'Guide to Shopfront Design' which provides more detailed advice on shop fronts. This advice should be followed in any proposals for new or replacement shopfronts in the town.

Design Guidelines

06.03

The Design Guidelines

Landscape-related guidelines

L1 DEVELOPMENT ADJOINING COUNTRYSIDE
Any new development adjoining or close to rural edges of the town should be planned and designed to create a sensitive transition between town and country.
(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iii), (iv), (viii), 1.23, 1.24, SN1, SN3, SN4)

Applies: Edge of Historic Town Centre
Southern Fringe
Bath Road, Western Fringe
Rixon and Environs
Honeymead, Northern Fringe
Central Regeneration Area

Comment:
The treatment of urban edges around Sturminster Newton exhibits some very marked contrasts. Whilst the transition from town to country in the old town is exemplary, the situation in parts of the new town is hard and insensitive. Any new development or redevelopment on or close to town edges must respond to this issue, through the inclusion of green space and vegetation, the encouragement of footpath links and, if necessary, through the adoption of reduced development densities.

L2 TREES
Works which are likely to have a detrimental impact on important trees within the town will be resisted. All development proposals should consider the amenity value of trees and an assessment of their contribution to their immediate and wider setting and the character of the town should be included in the development proposals. The likely impact of development on trees should be considered at the very start of the development process.
(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iii), 1.23, 1.24, 1.39, 1.40)

Applies: All areas.

Comment:
1. Tree cover is of great importance in Sturminster Newton. In the old town, vegetation is an important part of the overall environment, integrating the town into the surrounding countryside, giving the town character and diversity and containing the scale of development below a higher tree canopy.
2. In the newer parts of the town, the relative paucity of vegetation means that the larger trees that do exist have a greater importance in relieving what is often a rather mundane and unexciting skyline.
3. In any redevelopment proposal, it is important that a proper assessment is made of the value and contribution of trees within each site to the immediate locality and the overall character of the town, rather than just in terms of tree size, species, health etc.. Whilst some tree loss may be acceptable as part of a redevelopment proposal, it will be important to identify and protect if necessary, trees that make an important contribution to the townscape.
4. Whilst the old town has some high quality tree cover, it is often weak in the newer parts of the town. New development proposals should therefore be encouraged to make some contribution, appropriate to the size of the site and its context, to additional tree cover.
5. Policies 1.39, 1.40, and 1.41 of the Local Plan seek to protect trees and encourage new planting. The Council has also produced detailed 'Trees and Development Guidelines' which should be followed in any development proposals where trees may be affected.

L3 LANDSCAPE DESIGN
Hard and soft landscape should be provided where appropriate to enable development to integrate successfully into the local environment.
(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), 1.23, 1.24, 1.40, 1.41)

Applies: All areas.

Comment:
As a sound general design principle, hard and soft landscape should be fully integrated into the overall design concept of a site, including proper consideration for the potential use of public and private spaces. Open space and planting should not be used as a convenient filler for left over spaces. (Extensive planting of shrubs to fill residual space should be avoided in particular)

L6 BOUNDARIES
New boundaries and changes to existing boundaries between properties should make close reference to the traditional treatment of similar boundaries in the locality and be of high quality.
(Supplements policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (iii), 1.23, 1.24, SN1, SN3)

Applies: Historic Town Centre
Edge of Historic Town Centre
Southern Fringe
Bath Road, Western Fringe

Comment:
Detail is a very important aspect of quality environments, not just on buildings but also in a range of associated features, including boundaries. Boundaries, including hedges, fences and walls in a variety of materials should take reference from established examples with particular reference to such aspects as height, species, building materials and style.

Design Guidelines

06.03

The Design Guidelines

Transport-related Guidelines

T1 TRAFFIC EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The impact of any increased traffic resulting from new developments should be assessed in terms of its effect on townscape character.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (ii), (vi), (viii), 1.23, 1.24, SN1, SN3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14)

Applies:

Historic Town Centre
Edge of Historic Town Centre
Southern Fringe
Bath Road, Western Fringe
Central Regeneration Area

Comment:

New roads and increased traffic can have a significant effect on the character of urban areas, and these guidelines require that these effects should be carefully considered as an essential part of any development proposals.

Of particular concern is the effect of road 'improvements' and increased traffic on smaller roads and lanes in the old town. This should be carefully considered. Many of these routes, that are often shared surfaces, are both important recreational routes between town and country and important in defining much of the quiet and attractive character of these 'backland' areas. Any proposals that undermine the character of these routes in terms of their townscape character or quietness should be resisted.

T2 FOOTPATH CONNECTIONS

New development proposals should seek to incorporate new pedestrian and cycle links to create greater permeability around the town.

(Supplements Policies 1.7, 1.8 (viii), SN4, SN10, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10)

Applies:

Bath Road, Western Fringe
Rixon and Environs
Honeymead, Northern Fringe
Butts Pond Industrial Estate
Central Regeneration Area

Comment:

Public opinion at the July 2007 consultation event revealed very little enthusiasm for any new public open space in the town, and indeed there seems to be very little opportunity for this. However footpath and cycle connections within the newer, northern part of the town are limited, as well as connections to open countryside and to the old town. Better provision for pedestrian and cycle access should be encouraged as appropriate as part of development proposals.

Design Guidelines

06.04

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX

Relevant Local Plan Policies

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

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

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

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

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

(b) Protecting the Environment

Policy 1.8
Standard Assessment Criteria

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

All applications will be assessed against the following criteria;

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) Conservation of the Historic Environment

Policy 1.21;
Alterations to Listed Buildings

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

Policy 1.23
Setting of Listed Buildings

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

Policy 1.24
Character of Conservation Areas

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

Policy 1.27
Shopfronts in Conservation Areas

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

APPENDIX

Relevant Local Plan Policies

(d) Landscape Protection and Ecology

Policy 1.39

Tree Preservation Orders

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

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

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

Policy 1.40

Landscaping of New Development

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

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

Policy 1.41

Amenity Tree Planning

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

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

(iii) create new woodlands

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

(e) Housing

Policy 2.10

Density of New Development

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

Policy 2.11

Extension to Dwellings

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

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

(f) Local Area Policies - Sturminster Newton

Policy SN1

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

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

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

Policy SN3

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

Policy SN4

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

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

Policy SN10

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

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