Conwy Local Development Plan
2007 - 2022

Supplementary Planning Guidance

LDP09 - Design
Adopted July 2015

www.conwy.gov.uk

CONWY
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Statement of Consultation

This Supplementary Planning Guidance document was issued for a period of six weeks public consultation between 16 March 2015 and 24 April 2015

It was adopted by Cabinet on 14 July 2015

Copies of the representations received, together with the Council's response are available to view on-line at http://conwy.jdi-consult.net/ldp/

1. Introduction and Objectives

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Conwy Local Development Plan 2007 - 2022
Key Diagram

Hierachy of Settlements

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- ⬚ Special Protection Area
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Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Towyn & Kinmel Bay, Abergele, Mochdre, Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Llanrwst, Gwynedd

0   2.5   5   10 Kilometers

1.1 This document is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents that give further advice on policies contained in the Conwy Local Development Plan (LDP).

The Design SPG aims to raise standards of building and landscape design throughout all development in Conwy. The guide provides a practical design tool to be used by all involved in the design and development process, whether or not planning permission is required. A range of local examples are used to help explain the overall aims.
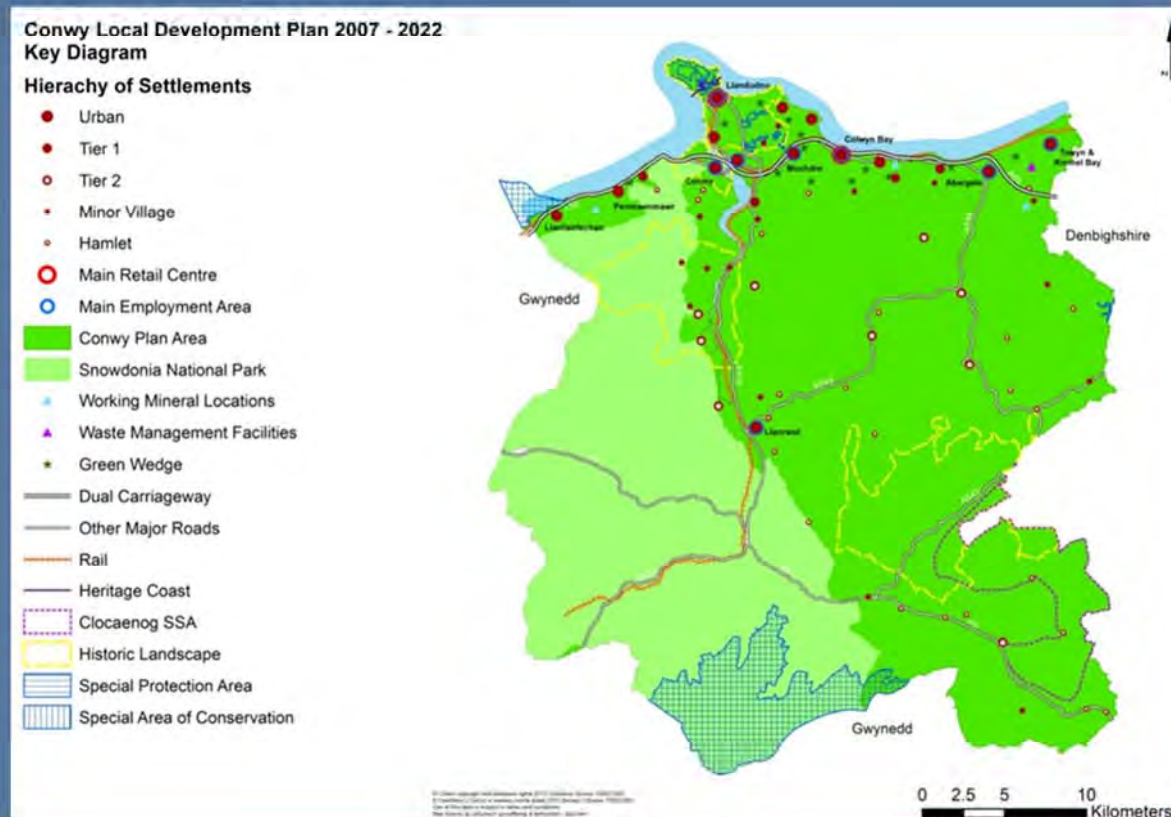
The belief underlying this Guidance is that the right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal. This does not imply that any one architectural approach is, by its nature, more likely to succeed than any other. On the contrary, it means that as soon as the application of a simple formula is attempted a project is likely to fail, whether that formula consists of 'fitting in' or 'contrasting the new with the old'.

A successful project will:

- Relate well to the context and history of the place
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it
- Respect important views
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the setting.

The right approach involves a whole process in addition to the work of design, from deciding what is needed, through appointing the architect, to early discussions with and eventual approval by the planning authority.

This document is aimed at everyone who is involved in making places, including planners, architects, designers, developers, politicians, voluntary organisations and pressure groups, politicians and members of the public who have an interest in shaping the natural and built environment in Conwy.

2. Defining Good Design

'Design is taken to mean 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.'
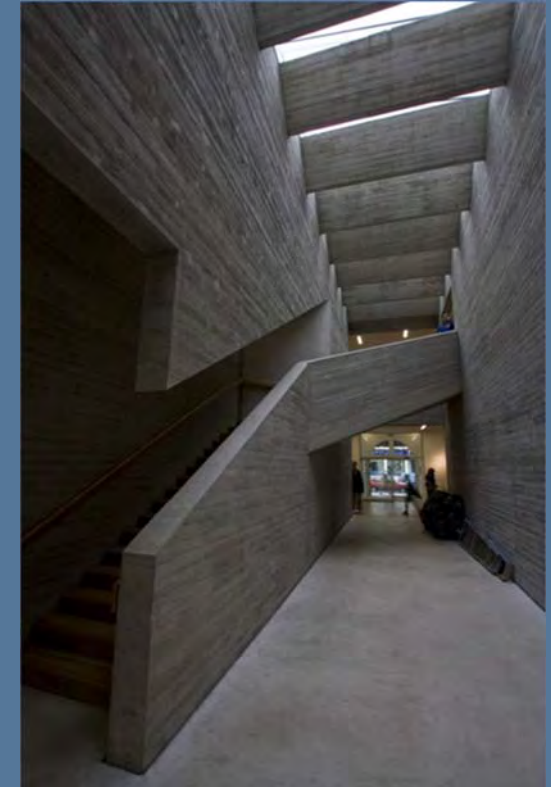
(Planning Policy Wales, para 4.10.1)

2.1

Design in Planning

The visual appearance of proposed development, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations (para 4.10.9 PPW). The Council will reject poor building and contextual designs; however, neither the LDP policy nor guidance in this SPG attempts to impose a particular architectural taste or style arbitrarily. Innovative design solutions are strongly encouraged and the guidance in this document offers design solutions.

Each town or village is distinct and has its own character and identity, shaped by the landscape and location, and comprising specific buildings, streets, layouts and plots.

How an object as a whole relates to its parts forms the basis of any design. This includes elements of a plot, for example house, garage, outbuilding and boundary, or can be how a plot relates to adjoining plots, such as in a row along a street. On a higher scale, this can also include how a settlement relates to the landscape.

Design includes the shape and **scale** of a building. It includes how a building sits relative to other buildings, against the street and as part of the urban grain (block, dispersed, low density, high and compact). These features form the **context** of a site.

Image: Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno.

2.2

Context
The setting of a site and the character of the wider surroundings – the things that makes a place special. Context in Conwy will vary greatly from the coastal main and market towns to rural villages and small clusters of buildings contained in the landscape.

2.3

Scale
Development falling within a level of scale, its position as part of a larger element (material, detail, building, plot, street, neighbourhood, settlement), its shape and size (massing), and arrangement of its components.

'Poorly designed developments are unacceptable, they can reduce the perception of safety, increase crime, discourage recycling, increase energy consumption and discourage residents from exercising and using local open spaces.'

(Conwy LDP, para 4.1.3.2)

Image: Shire of Augusta office Margaret River , WA.

3. Design in Conwy

3.1 Conwy County has a rich and varied Architectural style, varying from vernacular crofters' cottages of Snowdonia and the ready availability of stone, timber and slate influencing design in the inland and Conwy Valley areas to high Victorian seaside resorts and the influence of the Classical style in parts of Llandudno and Penmaenmawr. The Arts and Crafts style is famously evident in Llanfairfechan creating a rustic theme by using stone slates with roughcast or pebbledashed walls (see images below)

3.2 'The county is exceptionally rewarding in architecture. The medieval period has left a fine legacy, including castles of the time of Edward 1st, Monastic ruins, Country houses ranging in size and ambition such as Kinmel Hall and a host of lesser buildings, humbler but still of quality. Towns and seaside resorts all add to the pattern of styles and materials – a pattern further enriched by relics of the Industrial Revolution and the striking diversity of Vernacular styles'. (Hubbard – Clwyd Volume of Buildings in Wales)

The creation and expansion of transport links, from the historic A5 route through rural Conwy, to the north Wales railway line in the 19th Century, to the development of the A55 expressway in the 1980s, have shaped the development of Conwy and have influenced the design of settlements, from layout to design reflecting a given period.

3.3 Architecture and Building Finishes

As seen in Llanrwst, much of the early buildings, constructed from random rubble have been covered in traditional pebble dashing accompanied by a flush mounted door and windows surrounded by cement render. This is a typical practice of late 19th century modernising; a dated example can be seen on Market Street, Abergele.

The method for covering masonry continues with acres of harsh cementitious renders enveloping the facades of humbled terrace houses, irrespective of whether the underlying surface was brick or stone, plain or elaborately decorated, Georgian or Edwardian. The original surface details which give these buildings their character were obliterated, and the alteration was usually accompanied by the replacement of the sash windows with plastic or aluminium designs, often widening the openings.

3.4 Pebbledash was also an essential element in the palette of the Arts and Crafts movement (images below: Herbert Luck North buildings at the Close, Llanfairfechan (circa 1922). Concerns have been raised that more recent developments have failed to respond to a site's context by adopting materials and layouts which do not contribute to or enhance the character or local distinctiveness of a place.

3.5 **Townscape** – Built features, such as historic castles and churches, aid legibility in Conwy. Architectural styles have evolved over time. Different styles may be interpreted in a contemporary manner without resorting to pastiche replicas.

3.6

Walls

Historically North Wales has a lack of Freestone but an abundance of oak, this resulted in a strong tradition of timber framed buildings, such as Aberconwy House, and the Archbishops House, Conwy being constructed and carpenters producing more finished work than stone masons. The rarity of good quality workable stone meant that buildings were constructed with random rubble until developments in mining and masonry in the 18th century allowed builders to used squared and coursed masonry. Typical stones used in 18th century construction included Carboniferous Limestone from the Clwydian Hills, used to construct Bodelwydden Castle and Prestatyn Church. Later in the century red Sandstone was discovered near Hirwaen which was subsequently used for decorative and carved dressings and details, breaking up the mass of silver limestone used previously, this can be seen on buildings in Llandudno and Colwyn Bay.

Brick buildings were not adopted in the County until much later where it was seen as an easily adapted material for construction of a small number of farm buildings and Georgian vernacular houses, with renaissance influences such as symmetry and classical detailing. Within a short period of time the Ruabon, Buckley, and Pen-y-Bont brickworks were established and therefore bricks became easily affordable and the construction industry focused on utilising this new accessible material.

3.7

Roofs

North Wales is predominantly slate roofed, with the modern buildings, 1927 onwards, roofed in red clay tiles and very little thatched.

During the 1930's building boom buildings, especially houses, were roofed in red clay tiles and produced predominantly in the Ruabon brickworks. Large inter war housing estates can be seen throughout the county all with their original clay tiled roofs intact.

Images: Historic and contemporary materials including Ty Unnos, Dolwyddelan in Snowdonia National Park (right)

3.8

Conclusion

The developing networks of roads and railways meant that North Wales was turning its back on using locally sourced materials and shortly followed the demise of vernacular traditions and locally distinct architecture in the County. At this time well known architects were being commissioned to design large scale developments on newly acquired estate land, often in blocks and taken from the fashionable designs of the day, almost as if picking a design out of a catalogue.

3.9

The building and housing stock in North Wales comprises a majority of solid wall construction. Reuse and adaption is commonplace and preferred over loss of green field sites. In bringing these buildings forward it is critical to their maintenance that appropriate materials and techniques are used.

The Natural Building Centre, Llanrwst

Above: Traditional pegged-slate roofing which lasts centuries and can easily be repaired.

4. Objectives of Good Design

Diagram: Objectives of Good Design. Source: TAN12: Design (2014)

4.1 **Rather than setting prescriptive standards and rigid design guidelines, this document translates national planning policy and guidance down to the local level in the context of the Conwy LDP.**

4.2

Appraising Context

The diagram to the left shows the 'Objectives of Good Design' (see TAN 12: Design), a set of guiding principles that should be met in any scheme or proposal. As indicated in the diagram, meeting the five objectives requires appraising the context of a proposal, both in its local (what's 'on the ground' – the setting and characteristics) and national or wider (such as designations, policies, strategies) significance.

Many schemes will have to fit into the context of existing development, say in a Conservation Area. Others, such as an edge of settlement greenfield site or a larger sustainable urban extension scheme, may be in an area in which the surrounding context is insignificant. Typically, the surrounding area may have no distinctive character and little or no identity, in which case every effort should be made to establish a strong new pattern based on the five objectives and guidance in this document. Following the design process and completing a DAS will help to establish the context and whether proposed development should follow the existing theme or create a new character.

This is not a clear choice between choosing historic or contemporary design approaches; high quality design can be achieved by a combination of both historic and contemporary solutions.

4.3

A priority issue of the LDP is the insistence on high quality sustainable design to sustain and enhance the character of Conwy as well as providing more innovative design to encourage the younger population to remain and return to the area. Conwy CBC has applied the above objectives into a vision for the Plan Area and includes the following design related objectives:

SO10: Ensure that good, sustainable, inclusive design is delivered which includes the opportunity to design out crime, to develop strong, safe and locally distinctive communities and encourage the younger population to remain and return to the area.

SO11: Reduce energy consumption through the careful siting and design of buildings and the promotion of renewable energy developments where they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally and socially acceptable.

SO14: To promote the prudent use of resources through the minimisation of waste and assist in providing an integrated network of waste management facilities consistent with the needs of the area and the waste hierarchy.

5. A Design Vision for Conwy

Design Process

The design process should focus on meeting the objectives of good design outlined in the last section. The design process should be presented in a Design and Access Statement (DAS), where one is required with an application. The DAS will explain the principles and concepts that have been applied to the design of the development and how access issues have been dealt with.

The following stages of a design process can work at any scale, whether it is an extension to a house, a new retail development or an urban extension to an existing settlement.

> "To create sustainable development, design must include social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings" (Planning Policy Wales, 4.11.1)

Appraise Context

What do we understand about the place and its setting?
Which policies, guidance for the site and/or area?
What uses are realistic and achievable taking into account conditions?

Vision / Aim

What sort of place do we want this to be?
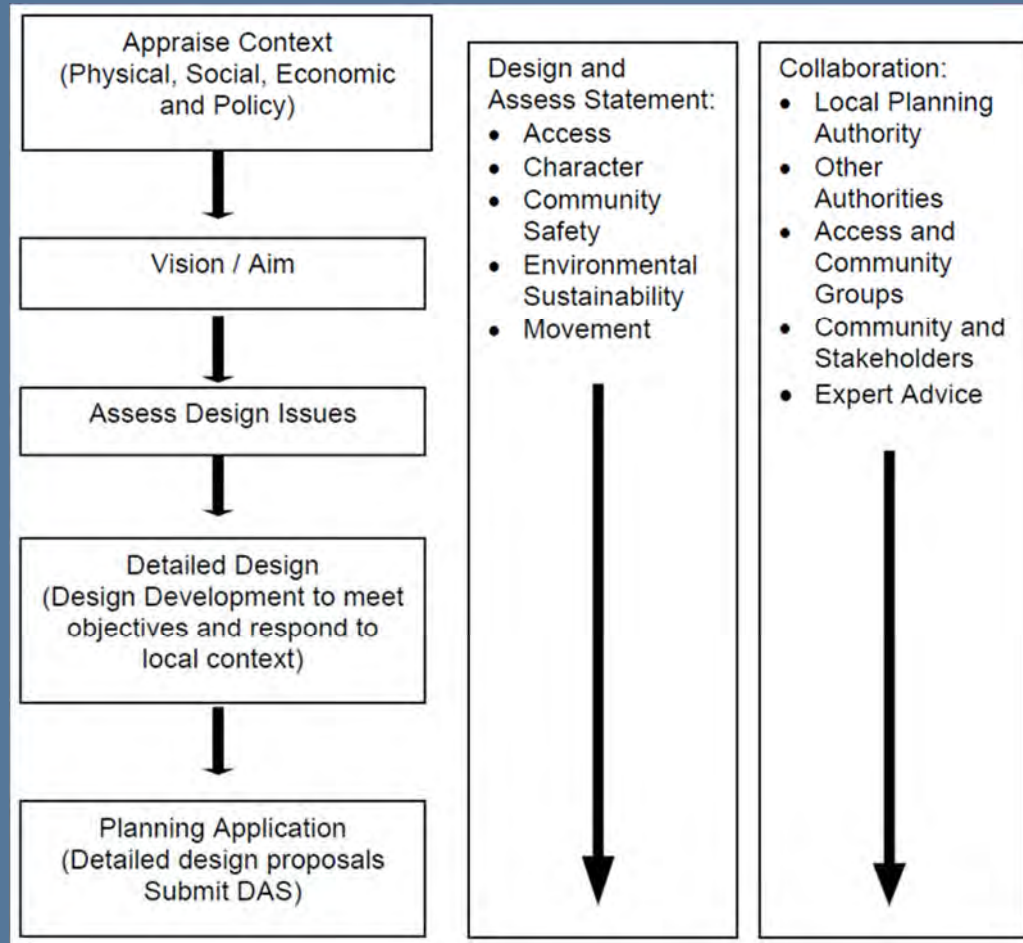On what principles should development be based?
Agree on processes to be included (consultation, stakeholders)

Assess Design Issues

Refer to policy DP/3 and the design criteria

Detailed Design

Plans, sketches and indicative layout in response to assessment of the above issues

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> 'Good design is not inevitable, it requires a collaborative, creative and inclusive, process of problem solving and innovation' (TAN12, para 2.5).

Appraise Context
(Physical, Social, Economic and Policy)

↓

Vision / Aim

↓

Assess Design Issues

↓

Detailed Design
(Design Development to meet objectives and respond to local context)

↓

Planning Application
(Detailed design proposals Submit DAS)

Design and Assess Statement:
- Access
- Character
- Community Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Movement

Collaboration:
- Local Planning Authority
- Other Authorities
- Access and Community Groups
- Community and Stakeholders
- Expert Advice

Collaboration

Good design requires a collaborative approach at each stage of the design process, involving professionals providing expert advice and end users/ stakeholders, to produce a **shared commitment** to design quality, sense of ownership and consensus. It should be demonstrated that the preferred option has been reached through a process of collaboration.

Working Together

Good design requires an early consideration of design, well before any planning application. At the outset there must be appreciation of site context, the development of a vision and the establishment of design objectives.

Engagement

The planning system should be pro-active in raising the standard of design and in raising awareness of design issues. The planning authority provides a pre-application enquiry service to assist developers in the planning and design process, with pre-application discussions and advice on preparing DASs.

Appraise Context

Consider the following physical, social, economic and policy issues:

Spaces

A 'space' is generally defined as being the gap between the built elements and can include streets, public squares, gardens and parks, green spaces etc.

A formal space is a specific element of urban design, planned to be a prominent feature and may include a town square or an architecturally uniform street.

An informal space is one that has evolved in an organic manner with no planned layout, incorporating a wide range of features that may not have a strong connection with each other and can be used in a variety of ways e.g. a space that has no rigid building lines, variety of building styles and positions, high and low walls, various materials whilst the road itself is of variable widths.

The gaps between buildings are important in terms of providing opportunities for creating glimpsed views out of the space as well as creating 'breathing spaces' within the street scene by interrupting the continuity of the built elements. Gaps between buildings can be accesses to rear spaces, alleyways leading from one space to another, etc.

Materials

When analysing streets, individual buildings do not require a detailed description, it is their collective character and contribution to the area that is being considered. Where a specific building stands out either for individual design or use of materials (good or bad), this can be mentioned. Consider the following:

- Is there a predominant building material?
- Is there a wide ranging palette of materials creating a diverse streetscape?
- Do the materials complement each other?
- Is there uniformity in the roofing materials or a range of materials?

Relationship of the space to the built elements

- What is the relationship of the space and the built elements?
- Do buildings form a key component of the space, creating a clear sense of enclosure or definition?
- Are buildings a secondary feature to the space, with the gap between the building lines being the main characteristic?
- Are there various relationships between built elements and space?

Views

What are the views into, out and through the space?

- Long e.g. along the full extent of a road
- Short
- Unfolding due to the layout of the built elements around the space.

Other Buildings

Are there any buildings in the area being assessed? How do they contribute and what is their relationship to the space?

- Continuous frontage along an urban road.
- Is the space much more open in character with only a limited relationship with the built elements?

Use

How an area is used can impact upon its overall character.

- A vibrant commercial street with lots of activity
- An academic area with students passing by
- A quiet residential road.

Many places have more than one use and the way the space is used may also change depending upon the time of day.
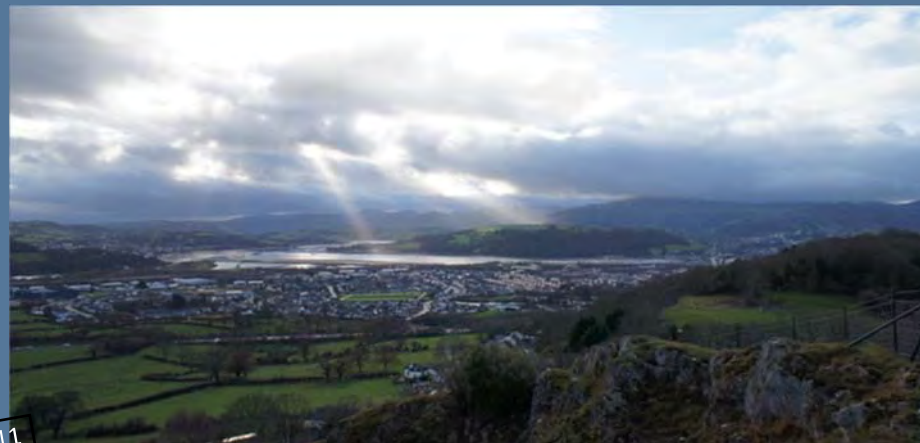
The way the buildings are used can impact upon the character and appearance of a place.

- Buildings with active frontages such as shops, cafes and evening uses including pubs and theatres can create a vibrant and bustling street scene.
- Commercial streets with a predominant office use can be busy during the day but quiet at night.
- Academic areas maybe quieter out of term or the emphasis of use may alter and they may become tourist attractions during certain times of the year.
- Residential areas have changeable characters depending on time of day, time of year, location etc.
- Is it a main traffic route or a pedestrian zone?

Appraise Context

Light/Dark

- Do buildings, trees, width of the space etc influence the amount of light that enters the space?
- A narrow road with a tight building line dominated by tall buildings creates a darker space through shadows and lack of opportunity for light to enter the space
- A wide boulevard or a garden space where light becomes a more dominant feature of the character.

Surfaces

Road and pavement surfaces may form a significant proportion of the space and can have a strong impact upon the character of an area depending on the condition and type of surface. A potholed and patched tarmac road can be negative whereas a cobbled street may be seen as a more positive element.

Greenery & Landscape Features

- Are there any specific elements of greenery that add to the character of the place e.g. an avenue of trees, a lone landmark tree in an urban setting, overhanging greenery from a private space etc.
- Are there any other features that contribute to the appearance and significance of the place e.g. river setting, rising landforms, meadow setting etc.

Usability and accessibility of the space

- How easy is the space to use?
- Is it a shared use space? e.g. New Inn Hall Street – does this impact on the way and ease with which the space is used?
- Are there obstacles along the pavements that hinder use; e.g. cycles locked to railings, advertising boards etc?
- Does the road surface preclude access to certain users e.g. wheelchairs, prams, cycles etc.
- How does this impact upon the character of a place?

Smell

- Smells can also have the same detracting and enhancing effect on an area – traffic fumes can spoil someone's experience of a street whereas the scent of flowers or the fresher air in a more rural setting can enhance an experience.

Think Design – Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales

Section 4.10

Technical Advice Notes

- 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
- 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)
- 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control (1996)
- 8: Renewable Energy (2005)
- 9 and 10: Enforcement (1997)
- 11: Noise (1997)
- 12: Design (2009)
- 13: Tourism (1997)
- 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)
- 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space (2009)
- 18: Transport (2007)
- 19: Telecommunications (2002)
- 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings (2010)

National Recognised Standards

- Secure by Design
- Manual for Streets
- Lifetime Homes Standard

There are a number of relevant LDP design related policies in addition to policy DP/3. These policies will be referenced under the relevant Objectives of Good Design in section 6: Detailed Design – Design and Access Statement

Relevant LDP Supplementary Planning Guidance

- LDP1: Householder Design Guide
- LDP2: Parking Standards
- LDP3: Shop Front Security and Design
- LDP4: Planning Obligations
- LDP5: Biodiversity in Planning
- LDP8: Buildings and Structures of Local Importance

Other planning guidance will be prepared; refer to the LDP website for the latest information

LDP Policy DP/3: Promoting Design Quality and Reducing Crime

1. All new development will be of high quality, sustainable design which provides usable, safe, durable and adaptable places, and protects local character and distinctiveness of the Plan Area's built historic and natural environment. The Council will require development to:
   a. Be appropriate to, and enhance, its locality in terms of form, scale, massing, elevation detail and use of materials;
   b. Meet the Council's approved standards of open space provision and parking;
   c. Meet required standards of accessibility, having suitable regard to the needs of people of different ages and abilities in the design of the proposal
   d. Have regard to the impact on adjacent properties and areas and habitats supporting protected species;
   e. Have regard to appropriate orientation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in design, layout, materials and technology in accordance with NTE/6 - 'Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies in New Development';
   f. Provide sustainable urban drainage systems to limit waste water and water pollution and reduce flood risk in line with national guidance and Policy NTE/8 - 'Sustainable Drainage Systems'.

2. The Council will also seek, where appropriate, to:
   a. Enhance the local character of buildings, heritage and open spaces;
   b. Provide for a compatible mix of uses, particularly in town and village centres;
   c. Incorporate landscaping within and around the development appropriate to the scale and impact of the development;
   d. Integrate with existing routes to provide linked up places connecting with the wider area, in particular public facilities and green transport routes;
   e. Provide developments that offer transport alternatives and promote walking, cycling and use of public transport;
   f. Create safe places through the adoption of 'designing-out-crime' principles to provide natural surveillance, visibility, and well lit environments and areas of public movement;
   g. Secure the retention and enhancement of features of biodiversity;
   h. Incorporate areas and facilities for waste management, rainwater harvesting/storage, grey water reuse and recycling;
   i. Have regard to the Authority's Road Adoption Guidelines in road design.

3. The Council will seek the contribution of an agreed percentage of the total development costs for the provision or commissioning of publicly accessible art or design improvement works in accordance with DP/5 'Infrastructure and New Developments' where appropriate to its location and viability.

6. Detailed Design - Design and Access Statement

6.1 The following section gives guidance on what to include in a Design and Access Statement and summarises the issues to consider under the five design objectives (see section four) as well as the relevant LDP policies to consider under each objective.

6.2

Requirement

A Design and Access Statement (DAS) is required by law for most outline and full planning applications. Applications submitted without them are invalid and cannot be registered until one is submitted. However there are a very limited number of exceptions:

- Engineering or mineral operations, such as quarrying;

- Extensions to existing dwellings or erection of buildings within the curtilage (garden) of a dwelling for private domestic use, such as garages, shed, greenhouses;

- Changes of use of land or buildings. But where it will be necessary to provide access for employees or services to members of the public, a statement dealing with access issues only is required.

A DAS is not required for applications that are not for planning permission or listed building consent (e.g. applications relating to advertisement control, works to trees affected by tree preservation orders or storage of hazardous substances). However, a DAS may well be required for concurrent applications for planning permission or listed building consent relating to such operations or uses.

There is no mandatory requirement for a DAS to be submitted with applications for the approval of reserved matters. However, a DAS is supposed to provide information about how a scheme has developed through different design stages and applications for reserved matters approval should therefore include an updated version of any DAS submitted with the outline application to reflect any changes since that one was written.

6.3

Purpose

A DAS is a report submitted with applications for planning permission and listed building consent to show how the five objectives of good design (see section 4) have been applied to a particular proposal, or where they haven't, to explain why.

Image: Floating visitor centre at Brockholes Quarry LWT reserve, Preston.

Image: Open access in Hiraethog

Your conclusions from each stage of the design process should, where relevant, be set out in the Design and Access Statement. The following three pages outline the issues to consider in your DAS in meeting the five objectives of good design.

Further guidance on the DAS is available from the Design Commission for Wales' website:
http://dcfw.org/design-and-access-statements-in-wales

Environmental Sustainability

6.4 National policies are provided in Planning Policy Wales, TAN5: Nature Conservation and Planning, TAN12: Design, TAN15: Development and Flood Risk, TAN16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space, TAN18: Transport and TAN22: Sustainable Buildings. Depending on the location of the proposal, the DAS should refer, where relevant, to the following policies:

LDP Policies

• DP/1 Sustainable Development Principles • DP/3 Promoting Design Quality and Reducing Crime • DP/4 Development Criteria • DP/5 Infrastructure and New Developments	• NTE/1 The Natural Environment and see SPG05: Biodiversity in Planning • Policies NTE/4 to NTE/10 on the Natural Environment

LDP Policy DP/3 Requirement
The Council will require development to:
'Have regard to... habitats supporting protected species.'
'Have regard to appropriate orientation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in design, layout, materials and technology in accordance with NTE/6 – 'Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies in Development.'
'Provide sustainable urban drainage systems to limit waste water and water pollution and reduce flood risk in line with national guidance and policy NTE/8 - 'Sustainable Drainage Systems.'
The Council will seek, where appropriate, to:
'Secure the retention and enhancement of features of biodiversity.'
'Incorporate areas and facilities for waste management, rainwater harvesting/storage, grey water reuse and recycling.'

6.5 Issues to address
- How will the development reduce energy use and carbon emissions?
- How will the scheme reduce water use and limit the impact of waste water upon the environment and existing drainage systems?
- Will the development use materials which are from sustainable / local sources or which are reclaimed?
- How will the development maintain or enhance natural habitats?
- Does the development promote the efficient use of land?
- How will waste be dealt with during demolition, construction and afterwards? How much waste will be generated?
- How does the development adapt to climate change?

Planning Policy Wales requires that all proposals for new dwellings meet a defined standard of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH). Non-residential buildings with a floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or on sites of 1 hectare of more, must be designed to meet a defined standard of the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). TAN22 states that before submitting planning applications, applicants should commission a Pre-Assessment to demonstrate that the proposal can be expected to meet the required CSH or BREEAM standard.
Under current legislation, this Pre-Assessment does not have to form part of the DAS. However, it is good practice for this Pre-Assessment to form part of the DAS, or to accompany it. If a Pre-Assessment is required by national policy but not submitted, it is likely that planning permission will be refused. Irrespective of whether a Pre-Assessment is required by national policy, the DAS must address the environmental sustainability impacts, and the Council will take these into account in determining the application.

Designing for waste storage in new development is covered by LDP34 - Waste Storage in new Development.

Image: Penrhynside
©MJArchitects

Environmental Sustainability

6.6 Materials and embedded energy should always be a consideration. A culture change is required away from slightly less expensive materials with high levels of embedded energy from thousands of miles away to local low embedded materials even if they are ,in the shorter term, more expensive and less easily obtained. Demand will create a reliable supply chain and in the longer term competitive costs. Renewable energy should be at the heart of any development especially in the rural areas where there are obvious transitions to be made.

Clockwise from right:

- Hydro scheme with fish-pass
- Domestic ground mounted solar
- Traditional farm outbuildings
- Green oak clad visitor centre with lathes and oak 'shakes'.
- Sustainable wall finishing options prepared by the Natural Building Centre.

Character

6.7 National policies are provided in Planning Policy Wales, TAN2: Affordable Housing, TAN5: Nature Conservation and Planning, TAN6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Development, TAN10: Trees, TAN11: Noise, TAN15: Development and Flood Risk, TAN16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space, TAN18: Transport, TAN20: Welsh language and TAN22: Sustainable Buildings. Depending on the location of the proposal, the DAS should refer, where relevant, to the following policies:

LDP Policies

- DP/1 Sustainable Development Principles
- DP/3 Promoting Design Quality and Reducing Crime
- DP/4 Development Criteria
- DP/5 Infrastructure and New Developments

- NTE/1 The Natural Environment (see LDP05: Biodiversity in Planning SPG
- Policies NTE/4 to NTE/6 and NTE/8 to NTE/10 on the Natural Environment
- Policies CTH/1 to CTH/4 on Cultural Heritage

Issues to address

- How will the development include hard and soft landscaping to protect and enhance the character of the site and surrounding area?
- How does the scale (including the height, width and length of the proposed buildings) take account of the relationship between the site and adjacent properties / land uses?
- Does the amount of development and the proposed use promote efficient use of land whilst safeguarding the character of the area and amenities of nearby occupiers?
- How does the layout of the development integrate with its surroundings as well as ensuring that buildings, open spaces and internal routes within it are well related to each other and maximise energy efficiency?
- How does the external design, including the use of materials, boundary treatments and landscaping ensure that the appearance of the development reflects, compliments and enhances the character of the area?
- In the case of housing development, how does the development contribute to the objectives of the Council's affordable housing policies? Will affordable housing be provided on site, by the developer on another site, or through a commuted sum? How will the applicant ensure that dwellings remain affordable? If the developer proposes to make no provision (or a reduced provision) of affordable housing, is there evidence to justify this approach?
- Will the scale and character of the proposal have an effect on the social character of the community, including the Welsh language?
- If the application is for a rural enterprise dwelling, is its scale and cost commensurate with the needs and viability of the rural enterprise concerned?
- Will the proposal involve the loss of an existing (or previous) employment use? If so, is there a specific justification for granting permission?

LDP Policy DP/3 Requirement
The Council will require development to:
'Be appropriate to, and enhance, its locality in terms of form, scale, massing, elevation detail and use of materials.'
'Have regard to the impact on adjacent properties and areas...'
The Council will seek, where appropriate, to:
'Enhance the local character of buildings, heritage and open spaces.'
'Provide a compatible mix of uses, particularly in town and village centres.'
'Incorporate landscaping within and around the development appropriate to the scale and impact of the development.'

"Character"

Character is a combination of qualities distinguishing a place. It could be the lay out of a town or similar detail through a series of buildings.

Main picture: Settlement pattern of Llandudno

Character

6.8 Typical materials may include:
- Welsh slate tile
- Local stone
- Lead
- Render
- Brick
- Glass including recycled
- Zinc
- Locally sourced timber
- Sheep's wool insulation
- Timber fibre board
- Cork and hemp based products
- Lime based render and mortar

6.9 The use of quality sustainable locally- sourced materials can be used in contemporary and traditional methods. Carefully used materials can sit alongside more traditional ones, e.g. incorporation of green roofs, recycled rubber slates, glass can be incorporated to reduce visual impact.

6.10 The way development layouts are designed impacts on the way places can function positively. Layouts deal with the arrangement of streets, buildings, public and private spaces. The collective design of these key elements affects the levels of activities, movement and surveillance in a positive or negative way, which ultimately impacts on the safety and security of places.

Character

"The way we perceive the environment influences how we treat it. Landscape and Design should be explored; an iterative process of questioning, function and quality."

LDP Policy DP/3 Requirement
Point 1 b, states that the Council will require development to:
'Meet the Council's approved standards of open space provision and parking, while providing for all ages, accessibility needs, and people with disabilities.'

Creating good quality open spaces in new developments - General Principles

Open spaces in new developments should be well designed having regard to their use, layout, accessibility and landscaping. The following principles apply.

Open Spaces should:
- Be easily accessible, usable by all residents, well orientated to optimise sunlight and natural surveillance.
- Preserve or where appropriate, enhance existing site features including trees, hedgerows, water features and wildlife habitats.
- Incorporate existing footpaths, public rights of way and in some cases create new rights of way for better linkages within developments.
- All open space should be 'usable'. Small, incidental pieces of land like those located in awkward corners have little value and can be difficult to maintain.
- Consideration should be given to the integration of open space within a development. It is essential that open space contributes to the character of an area and adds to the overall quality of design of the development

Play Spaces
- Play spaces should be well related to dwellings, but should not cause a nuisance to residents. Buffer zones should be provided between play spaces and the nearest residential properties for amenity purposes. 20 metres between the boundary of any dwellings and the fencing of the play area is normally sufficient for this purpose . These zones could incorporate ground cover planting or trees with thin stems to maintain natural surveillance.
- The location and visibility of play areas must be carefully considered in relation to dwellings, roads, car parks and footpaths.
- Children's play equipment should be well designed and fit for purpose, creating opportunities for toddlers and older children's play.

Landscaping

6.12 **A successful and lasting landscape scheme is more likely to be achieved when landscape is considered at the earliest stage of site planning and design process. Landscape should always be planned in conjunction with the positioning of any buildings within and adjacent to the site, rather than as a means of filling in the gaps left over.**

Key considerations:

- Site survey
- Informed siting of structures
- Landscape impact appraisal
- Appraisal of landscape character
- Integration with built form
- Impact and potential enhancement of   biodiversity
- Materials and finish
- Planting; timing, size, species and ground preparation
- Access and movement

Landscape Character

An understanding of landscape character can help ensure that development is well designed and integrated with its surroundings, taking reference from the locality to inform its siting and aspects of design such as materials and architectural detailing and plant species. A good understanding of a site, its sense of place and character, can also help ensure that development is innovative, that landscapes are appropriately restored and enhanced, are well maintained and managed and that special or important features are conserved.

For further information refer to: LDP/18 Landscape, Access and Design

6.13 Biodiversity

Sensitively designed buildings and landscape can enrich and reinforce existing wildlife habitats and improve the ecological value of sites and connectivity to their surroundings.

Biodiversity should be considered from the outset with site assessment and survey through to design and construction phases. Allowance should be made for correct survey timing which are set out in LDP05: Biodiversity .

Green networks can be aligned with blue networks (ponds, rivers, ditches) to enhance existing wildlife habitat, whilst providing for amenity, recreation and active travel. Sites protected for nature conservation are shown on the proposals map. These include international and national heritage designations such as SPAs, SACs and SSSI along with local designations such as Local Nature Reserves. There is a strong presumption against development that will adversely affect protected sites.

Key aims include to:

Create robust landscape structure as an integral component at all scales of development, which follows green infrastructure and green network principles in line with policies STR/1, STR/4 and LDP09: Design SPG

Meet the requirements of the Council's strategy for public open space and provide residential private gardens in line with policies CFS/1 and CFS/11.

Maintain the conservation status of protected sites and species, and enhance and create new habitats in line with policies NTE/1, NTE/3 and NTE/4

Protect existing trees and woodland and provide new indigenous tree planting in line with policy NTE/3 and LDP09: Design SPG

Integrate SUDS into development so that their visual, landscape and biodiversity potential is maximised in line with policies NTE/3 and NTE/8.

Ensure that hard landscape and car parking are an integral part of the overall design in line with policies STR/1, STR2, NTE/8 and LDP09: Design SPG

It is important that information gathered through the surveys influences the final proposal. Existing natural features of value should be retained in context rather than in isolated fragments. Integrated habitat management and green corridors are encouraged to enhance biodiversity and help mitigate against the effects of climate change .

For further information refer to LDP18: Landscape, Access and Design SPG and LDP05 Biodiversity in Planning SPG

6.14 Green Infrastructure and Green Networks

A key aim is to establish a robust framework of multifunctional green infrastructure in new developments of all scales and to improve connectivity to the wider network of open spaces, habitats, footpaths and cycleways within and beyond the site boundary.

Ideally a network of multifunctional green spaces should run through the urban areas, edge of settlement and connect with the wider countryside, creating high quality landscape and townscape links, supporting new access and recreational opportunities, incorporating flood management, enhanced biodiversity and habitat links and promoting healthier lifestyles. Delivery of such networks is consistent with the development of the Council's Open Space Strategy and Active Travel Bill Requirements.

A green network is formed when green infrastructure components are linked together to give additional combined benefits.
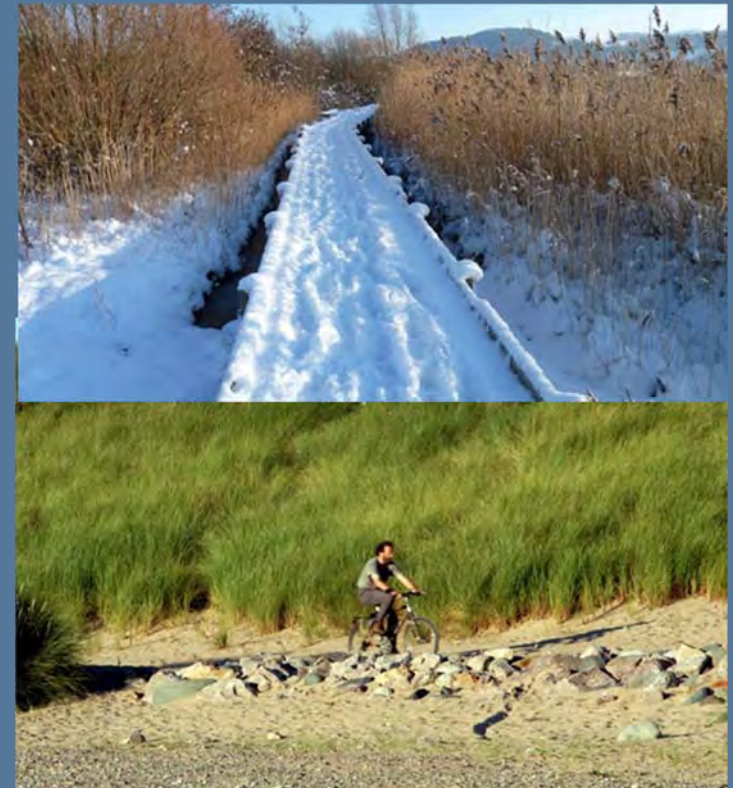
Components can include:

- Green corridors
- Water courses
- Woodland, tree belts or hedges
- Parks and play areas
- SUDS
- Green roofs
- Active travel routes
- Street trees, soft landscapes and verges

More info at:
Sustrans: www.sustrans.org.uk
LDP18: Landscape, Access and Design SPG
LDP05: Biodiversity in Planning SPG

Public Art

Public art can add value to a development, both for those who use the scheme and for visitors or passers by. It can encourage civic pride and a sense of ownership in Conwy by providing areas for local people to create art, for example mosaics on blank frontages or subways. It can add distinctiveness to a development and create a focal point for a scheme and its wider area. There are also benefits to developers in terms of commercial value and enhanced profitability.

LDP Policy DP/3 Requirement
Point 3 states:
'The Council will seek the contribution of an agreed percentage of the total development costs for the provision or commissioning of publicly accessible art or design improvement works in accordance with DP/5 – 'Infrastructure and New Developments' where appropriate to its location and viability.'


Examples of Public Art include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Sculptures / Monuments
- Street Furniture
- Lighting
- Brickwork
- Pedestrian Railings
- Access Ramps
- Signage
- Sound / aural works
- Water features

- Appointing artists as members of a development or scheme's design team
- Temporary or time-based commissions (for example, exhibitions, screenings, publications, installations, web-based media and street theatre)

Design and Process Issues
- Consider early on in the scheme – how would it relate to the scheme and surrounding area? Ensure that it is indeed public. Is the project part of the delivery process or the delivered product? Is it permanent or temporary? Is it external or interior? Is it embedded or freestanding? Is it singular or grouped / themed?
- Early dialogue between the Council, the developer and the artist(s) / craftsperson. Liaise with stakeholders, agree on documentation to be provided (this could be incorporated in the DAS)
- Ensure that the location of the public art has been developed out of the site and context appraisal (see section 5 of this document), whether it is on or off site or, as a result, part of the scheme process instead.
- Consult with the Council and the Arts Council of Wales to identify opportunities, funding mechanism.
- If it is to be provided on site, where is it best located on the scheme? (focal points, areas of interest)
- Local Distinctiveness – how does the work relate to, or enhance, the character and identity of Conwy? Consider traditional methods as well as contemporary design solutions. Public Art in sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas may require greater attention to detail, but this should not hinder attempts to produce contemporary works. Names, traditions, the Welsh language and culture can all be reflected in public art, whether as part of the process of a scheme or through the end product.
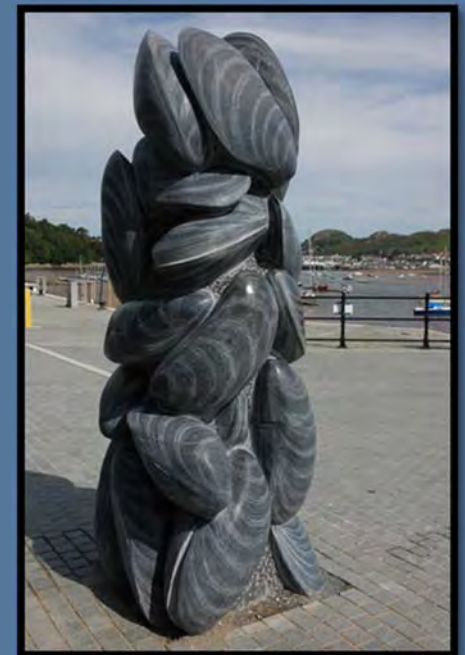
See Also: Section 5.15 of TAN 12 on Public Art, and LDP04: Planning Obligations SPG http://www.conwyartsdirectory.co.uk/index_english.asp and http://www.artswales.org.uk/

Accessibility & Movement

National policies are provided in Planning Policy Wales and TAN18: Transport. Depending on the location of the proposal, the DAS should refer, where relevant, to the following LDP policies:

LDP Policies

- DP/1 Sustainable Development Principles
- DP/3 Promoting Design Quality and Reducing Crime
- DP/4 Development Criteria
- DP/5 Infrastructure and New Developments

- DP/7 Local Planning Guidance (see SPG on Parking Standards)
- DP/9 Colwyn Bay Masterplan
- Policies STR/1 to STR/6 on Sustainable Transport

Key Aims:

- Ensure accessibility and movement is considered at the earliest stage of design

- Ensure opportunities for through routes and links outside of development sites form part of development proposals

- Maximise usage through shared surfaces by using appropriate signage and use of materials

LDP Policy DP/3 Requirement
The Council will require development to:
'Meet the Council's approved standards of open space provision and parking.'
'Meet required standards of accessibility, having regard to the needs of people of different ages and abilities in the design of the proposal.'
The Council will seek, where appropriate, to:
'Integrate with existing routes to provide linked up places connecting with the wider area, in particular public facilities and green transport routes.'
'Provide developments that offer transport alternatives and promote walking, cycling and use of public transport.'
'Have regard to the Authority's Road Adoption Guidelines in road design.'

Image: Bodnant Gardens access ramp.

Useful local case studies include the following:

- St George's Hotel, Llandudno (access ramp)

- HSBC Llandudno (access ramp)

- Bodnant Garden, Conwy (access ramp) - above

- Rhos on Sea – Upper Rhos Road, Hannover Court – courtyard development and conversion

- Colwyn Bay, apartments at corner Seaview Road and Bay View Road

- Colwyn Bay Erskine Road, access ramp on church

Accessibility and Movement

Issues to address

- How does the access take account of planning policies?
- How does the development ensure ease of access into the site as well as within it?
- How will the development overcome problems with the existing access arrangements?
- How does the development promote sustainable transport choices e.g. is the site accessible to facilities and public transport?
- How has the development taken account of requirements for parking and service vehicles?
- How does the development provide safe and clear connections, to, from and within the development, and integrate with existing transport links?

- Shared surfaces along river frontage, Lisbon.

Manual for Streets Approach	
- Apply a user hierarchy to the design process with pedestrians at the top	- Move away from hierarchies of standard road types based on traffic flows and/or the number of buildings served
- Collaborative approach to the delivery of streets	- Develop street character types on a location-specific basis with reference to both the place and movement functions for each street
- Importance of the community function of streets as spaces for social interaction	- Encourage innovation with a flexible approach to street layouts and the use of locally distinctive, durable and maintainable materials and street furniture
- Inclusive environments that recognise the needs of people of all ages and abilities	- Use quality audit systems that demonstrate how designs will meet key objectives for the local environment
- Reflect and support pedestrian desire lines in networks and detailed designs	- Design to keep vehicle speeds at or below 20mph on residential streets unless there are overriding reasons for accepting higher speeds
- Develop masterplans and prepare design codes that implement them for larger-scale developments, and using design and access statements for all scales of development	- Use the minimum of highway design features necessary to make the streets work properly
- Create networks of streets that provide permeability and connectivity to main destinations and a choice of routes	

Community Safety

Community Safety

National policies are provided in Planning Policy Wales and TAN12: Design. Depending on the location of the proposal the DAS should refer, where relevant, to the following policies:

LDP Policies

- DP/1 Sustainable Development Principles
- DP/3 Promoting Design Quality and Reducing Crime
- DP/4 Development Criteria
- DP/5 Infrastructure and New Developments
- Policies CFS/7, CFS/8 and CFS/11 on Community Facilities

- Policies NTE/1, NTE/4 and NTE/5 on Natural Environment
- Policies CTH/1 to CTH/4 on Cultural Heritage
- Also see LDP01: Householder Design Guide SPG

LDP Policy DP/3 Requirement
The Council will seek, where appropriate, to:
'Create safe places through the adoption of 'designing out crime' principles to provide natural surveillance, visibility, and well lit environments and areas of public movement.'

Key Aims are to reduce:
- Crime
- Antisocial behaviour
- Fear of crime

This can be addressed by establishing principles for the design, layout and landscaping of the built and un-built environment which creates:
- A safer and more secure environment
- Increases the risk of detection of criminal and antisocial activity
- Make crime more difficult to commit

Good urban design practice plays a vital role in delivering safe and attractive places.

Understanding context is vital to the success of a development proposal. Analysing contextual issues
informs the designer of key concerns that will not only impact on the safety and security of a new scheme but also impacts on the surrounding area.

Issues to address
- How will the layout of the site ensure that there is adequate natural surveillance of public areas such as open space, car parks or footpaths?
- Does the development improve community and individual safety by reducing conflicts between different land uses?

Further Information:
'Secured by Design' Initiative
www.securedbydesign.com

Also see: LDP03: Shop Front Security SPG

Development scenarios

The following section builds on the issues raised in the previous sections, particularly the guidance on issues to consider in the DAS. It should be read as additional guidance when considering a specific development type, whether residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural.

Replacement dwellings:
- Responding to scale, size, massing and footprint
- Replacement should be of similar scale and impact
- Extensions, new build should avoid conspicuous bulk; break down built form elements (see SPG Householder Design Guide)
- Out of place features can weaken the character of an area.
- Encourage innovative design but need to consider size, scale, footprint and impact on area character and wider landscape particularly in rural areas.
- Avoid low density cul-de-sac development as it not only is an inefficient use of scarce building land but is also not reflective of the historic layout of Conwy's towns and villages.

Image: Key issues in this photo are the high density of poorly sited static units. Note: no landscaping within site, screening or protection and also coastal processes underestimated and not accommodated for causing ongoing maintenance issues such as vandalism and damage to the statics and removal of sand from NCR5.

Building Groups in the Countryside:
- Views within the wider landscape context and ensuring attractive edges
- Density – emphasis on at least 30dph as rural building groups tend to be closer knit.
- Preference for Renewable Energy schemes especially heating schemes serving multiple buildings

A well conceived development proposal responds to its context. Past examples have shown little or no recognition of context creating isolated and inward looking developments that contribute little to the safety and security of people and properties.

The following design issues and concerns have been identified in, but are not necessarily exclusive to, Conwy:
- New development often appears to be often diminishing the quality and accessibility of the public realm and gradually eroding local character and distinctiveness
- This has often been a result of schemes which follow rigid highway design standards and do not take account of issues such as local street patterns, individual building types and materials
- Defining and meeting 'Good Design' is either reliant on prescriptive standards, or is written off as a matter of opinion or taste.
- Design of recent developments being dominated by the car, whether through the over-reliance on cul-de-sac layouts which reduce route choices and increase traffic on the access roads, or in the case of large car parks which dominate the landscape.

Image: A highways dominated layout with standard house types

Image – highway dominated scene with 'box ' detached houses.

Development scenarios

6.23

Commercial and Industrial
- Adaptability and viability – flexibility of internal layouts to enable future changes if required and allowing changeable outer finishes.
- Minimising impact of larger scale bulk through careful integration of building(s), service areas, access and parking, signage and lighting
- Landscaping – including realistic space for landscape scheme, ensuring it is not gradually reduced through redevelopment and extensions. Materials should wherever possible be locally sourced.
- Large parking areas should be broken up into smaller areas

Example types:

- Smaller roof spans have less of a visual impact

- Materials, toned, mellow.

- Alignment with existing buildings and boundaries

- Integration of Renewable Energy at design stage.

- Surrounding landscaping considered from outset

Abergele Business Park

- Important employment and mixed use site with an area of strategic regeneration.
- Site is in proximity to the Grade 1 listed wall; there is a great need for consideration of this but at the same time the design of the building has to be appropriately prominent to mark the entrance to the business park.
- The design solution has taken a palette of materials from the adjacent buildings so that it is in keeping.

- Building resembles a "pavilion" with interest on all four sides
- Design options included raising the height of the eaves on butterfly roof, render or stone plinth to south elevation and to introduce 2 or 3 narrow windows, replacing the horizontal grey cladding panels on the south elevation with grey or white render and introducing cladding panels beneath the eaves.

Below: Travelodge, Colwyn Bay

Development scenarios

The creative reuse of buildings

For environmental reasons alone, using existing buildings efficiently must be a global priority. Replacing a building demands a considerable investment of energy: the energy embodied in the old building will be lost, and further energy will be used in its demolition. To this must be added the cost of materials (including transport) and construction of the replacement building must be added.

It is well known and highly publicised that 'energy is consumed in the production of construction materials such as bricks, cement and metals and in their distribution. Over 90 per cent of non-energy minerals extracted in Great Britain are used to supply the construction industry with materials, yet each year some 70 million tonnes of construction and demolition materials and soil end up as waste' (Performance and Innovation Unit report, Resource Productivity 2000) This accounts for 24 per cent of the total waste generated by the UK.

Therefore a new building would have to be many times more energy-efficient than the old to make this equation balance over a reasonably short pay-back period. It is usually much more efficient to retain the existing building stock, particularly when its energy performance is naturally good through use of natural materials, or where it can easily be improved. The retention of the counties old buildings, and seeking to enhance their energy performance rather than replacing them is not just in line with heritage conservation but also with what is considered sustainable development.

When considering the demolition of a property to make way for development decisions must be based on a careful appraisal, taking into account:

- the embodied energy of the old building, and its whole-life energy costs
- the costs of any improvements to increase the energy efficiency of the old building
- the cultural and social significance of the existing building
- the whole-life energy costs of the proposed new building (including the energy which would be expended in demolition and rebuilding)
- the sustainability of the new building (in terms of both energy and materials);
- the likely lifespan and durability of the new building
- the adaptability of the new building to future energy improvement.

Image: Chapels and Churches are commonly left in a redundant state but offer great space potential with suitable treatment and well suited uses.

Barn and outbuilding Conversions should:
- Retain character e.g doors, openings
- Using low – impact sustainable external finishes.
- Look to local area to establish design palette/common features.
- Use sympathetic materials in restoration.

Images to right:
Architects: Communion Design
Photography: Infinity Unlimited

Design Solutions

By identifying evidence of vandalism, potential and actual criminal activity caused by poor design solutions and taking into account the following considerations will help to inform and assist subsequent design decisions that will positively impact on crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

1. Analysing existing and incorporating new patterns of movement for walking, cycling, private and public transport modes that increase activity in public areas.

   "People feel safer where there is activity"

2. Assessing ways to optimise natural surveillance of properties, streets and public spaces.

   "People feel safer when they can be seen by drivers, residents and other users"

3. Assessing how accessible community facilities and local amenities are for existing and new users.

   "Having accessible local facilities will encourage greater use and will build a greater sense of community"

4. Assessing topography, landscape and ecology that may challenge the application of the principles for community safety.

   "Developments that respond to natural features and work with the land often create innovative designs that are more robust."

5. Selecting a mix of land uses that are compatible with other surrounding land uses.

   "Variety of uses can encourage greater activity in buildings and public spaces over longer periods of time increasing passive and active observation of these places."

Talk Design
- Pre-application advice - early and open dialogue; resolve any potential conflicts earlier on; impact then on quicker planning system.
- Design review service with DCfW for certain larger or more complicated proposals.

Design Document	Description	Conwy LDP Use	Examples
Site Development Brief	To inform developers and other interested parties of site constraints and opportunities and the type of development expected or encouraged in line with relevant planning and design policy.	Policy DP/7: The Council will prepare Development Briefs for new housing sites of **50 dwellings** or more and employment sites of **5 hectares** or more.	No recent examples in Conwy.
Master Plans and Community Appraisals	A document that explains how a site or series of sites will develop and how proposals will be implemented in terms of principles (land uses), cost, and phasing. Most Masterplans are Council-led; however, developers or community groups may undertake similar exercises.	Policy DP/8: Masterplans or Community Appraisals will be supported subject to meeting LDP and national policy and guidance	See Supplementary Planning Guidance LDP10 Colwyn Bay Masterplan. Recent consultation on the Llanrwst Vision.
Design Guide	Design guides provide practical advice on a range of design topics. A design guide will expand on national and local planning guidance in the local design context.	Policy DP/7: The Council will prepare additional guidance in the form of SPG to provide further detail on policies and proposals in the LDP	See LDP1 Householder Design Guide which complements this document. Future documents proposed for development in historic environments.
Design Code	A document that sets out with precision and a high degree of skill how design and planning policy and guidance should be set out on a site.	Design Codes may be included as part of development briefs or masterplans where greater detail may be appropriate.	No examples in Conwy.

Design Solutions

6.26

Welsh Government Building, Llandudno Junction

- Large scale office development with other associated and ancillary facilities. The building comprises three main office blocks which run east to west across the site. They are linked by means of a partially open atrium towards the rear of the buildings.

- The external materials are a mixture of local slate cladding (Penrhyn) and pre-paternated copper. The building is much larger in scale than the adjacent residential properties and stands out in the street scene. It forms a dominant feature (landmark) in the area and is visible especially from the nearby expressway.

- In terms of its visual appearance., it appears as a modern office development set well into its landscape setting and is elevated enough to take advantage of the significant views to the south and west towards Conwy and Snowdonia.

- The design has incorporated many of the principles of sustainability and has a 'passive design' approach to deliver a sustainable development and has elements such as windows orientated to ensure minimum amount of solar shade, natural cross flow ventilation due to the office widths, renewable and low energy measures such as a biomass boiler, rainwater collection for use as grey water for toilets, solar thermal panels and a ground source heat pump.

- The drainage uses Sustainable Urban Drainage System principles which is a recognised sustainable method of disposal.

- The scheme has encompassed sustainability principles and is a dominant building using a palette of materials with local reference (slate/copper).

- The scheme was reported to the Design Commission for Wales who supported the principle of the scheme. Comments included undertaking a 'pause and review' approach and re-procurement retaining quality control, fully integrating public art with the development design, reviewing the landscape strategy to ensure the entrance in particular is not dominated or compromised by car parking.

7. Assessing Design in Sensitive Areas

7.1

Good design in Conservation Areas or historic settings is about much more than external appearance and aesthetics.

Developments within these sensitive areas should identify and address the following criteria:

- Character and context (local distinctiveness)
- Natural heritage
- Continuity
- Enclosure
- Variety and diversity
- Compactness
- Legibility
- Accessibility
- Public realm
- Adaptability

7.2

Key Design Factors

- Granted permission in 2004 to convert a retail unit, cinema and apartment into eight apartments with the retention of three ground floor shop units.
- Positive re-use and enhancement of an important building prominent in the streetscape
- The design enhances the Penmaenmawr Conservation Area
- Retention and enhancement of traditional canopies on retail frontage which adds to the street scene
- Widening of existing rear access to provide car parking
- Design discussions during the application stage included lowering the rear elevation dormers

Image: Oxford Buildings, Bangor Road, Penmaenmawr

The design of new buildings, or extensions, intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general it is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community. This can be done, provided that the new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials. This does not mean that new buildings have to copy their older neighbours in detail.

Some of the most interesting streets in our towns and villages include a variety of building styles, materials, and forms of construction, of many different periods, but together forming a harmonious group.

'Surf Snowdonia' site at Dolgarog (visualisation)

Left: Retail outlet in Menai Bridge . Making the most out of a small space.

The Factory, Bryn Road, Llanfairfechan

Former factory (prior to conversion)

Former factory (after conversion)

Key Design Factors

- Located within the conservation area
- Conversion of former factory to four apartments
- Building has been altered in the past
- It has a traditional shape and roof line
- There is a strong emphasis on accurately reflecting the historic function of the building
- Corrugated steel sheets for roofing
- Refurbishing existing metal for windows as their style is a "Crittle" type which gives a definite period style to the building.
- Application of keim paint to pebbledash

8. The Value of Good Design

- All successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and careful character appraisal of the context
- The best buildings result from the creative dialogue between the architect, client, local planning authority and others; pre-application discussions are essential
- The local planning authority and other consultees can insist upon good architecture and help to achieve it
- Difficult sites should generate good architecture, and are not an excuse for not achieving it
- With skill and care, it is possible to accommodate large modern uses within the grain of historic settings
- High environmental standards can help generate good architecture
- Sensitivity to context and the use of traditional materials are not incompatible with contemporary architecture
- Good design does not stop at the front door, but extends into public areas beyond the building
- High-density housing does not necessarily involve building high or disrupting the urban grain and it can be commercially highly successful
- Successful architecture can be produced either by following precedents closely, by adapting them or by contrasting with them
- In a diverse context a contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than one making a failed attempt to follow historic precedents

- Good design adds value to the proposed development and to the place where it is located. People will use and value these places.
- A clearly defined, well thought out design process (see section five) can avoid delay, resolve conflict and increase confidence. The benefits can be felt by different agents in the design process.

Above: Anglesey Abbey NT cafe and VC, Cambridge.

A Question of Cost

- Good design does not have to cost more, it will often save money: the best design will cost more at the outset but will repay the investment many times
- The economic cost can be gained through reducing the long term costs of energy use, maintenance, security and management of a place or building.
- Mediocre design is poor economics and environmentally negligent
- Investing at the start, such as appointing an architect, can avoid incurring additional costs later on through operation, efficiency and design faults

Poor design can create negative impacts long after the completion of a scheme. The impacts can range from environmental (building practices creating poor places), to economic (additional cost burdens from energy, maintenance and management) to social factors (those who designed and built a place and those who use it) reputation, costs (time and money).

Economic Value of Good Design	Environmental Value of Good Design	Social Value of Good Design
• Capital and rent values may increase • Reduced operation (life use) costs • Impact of a development on an area's image and economic performance	• Better designed built environment • Protection and/or enhancement of natural resources • Energy efficiency and reduction in pollution, eg loss of energy through a building's design	• Direct (users) and indirect (passers by; other people in an area) impact on identity • Community safety and security through careful design. Research has shown that a well designed neighbourhood will benefit from lower crime and higher house values • Improved or enhanced access and movement – legibility • Impact on users, for example there are potential health benefits as a result of the above (also, research has shown that well designed hospitals will help patients get better more quickly)
Source: adapted from Places Matter (2009) and CABE (2002)		

9. Glossary

Accessibility: the ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities. This includes movement to, from and within a site or area.

Amount: the number and/or floor space of proposed buildings.

Appearance: the aspects of a building or place within a site or area that determines the visual impression of the building or place (including external built form, architecture, features/decoration, materials, colour and texture).

Building elements/features: doors, windows, cornices and characteristics that contribute to the overall appearance of a building.

Building line: the line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street.

Built environment: that part of the environment comprising man made buildings or structures.

Bulk: the combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building.

Character: combination of qualities that distinguish a site or area.

Character appraisal: identifying distinguishing physical features of a site or area (e.g. topography, landscape character, development form, architecture, building materials, land use patterns).

Connections: the way in which a layout contributes to the framework of connecting routes, spaces and waterways.

Context: the characteristics and setting of an area in which a development is located.

Context appraisal: detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (e.g. land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics). An appraisal should identify the opportunities and constraints of the site.

Density: the number of buildings in a given area of land.

Design and Access Statement: a written document that functions as a communication tool explaining how the objectives of good design have been considered from the outset of the development process.

Energy efficiency: the extent to which the use of energy is reduced through the way in which buildings are constructed and arranged on site.

Environmental sustainability: incorporation of measures to reduce the environmental impact associated with development and minimising the demand for energy, water and materials and creation of waste.

Inclusive design: design solutions that provide access to the widest range of people.

Landscape: the character and appearance of land (e.g. shape, form, topography, ecology and natural features).

Landscape design: the way in which the land will be treated (including hard and soft landscaping).

Landscaping: the treatment of land for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of a site or area in which development is situated (e.g. screening, planting, creation of terraces, and laying out of gardens).

Layout: the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

Legibility: the degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed. This includes street patterns, views and vistas, and landmarks such as buildings or landscape features that assist with orientation.

Local distinctiveness: social and physical qualities that are particular to an area, contribute to an area's character and it's 'sense of place'.

Massing: the combined effect of the height, bulk and scale of a building.

Open space: in its widest sense this includes all undeveloped land and countryside.

Public realm: all space between buildings, streets, footways, paths, squares and parks that is accessible to people.

Scale: the extent and dimensions of the development itself and in relation to its surroundings. This includes the height, width, length and massing of buildings or parts of buildings and how buildings are seen in relation to their surroundings.

Streetscene: the appearance of a street. This is dependant upon a number of inter-related factors such as the form, scale and condition of buildings, and the expanse of open space.

Sustainable buildings: buildings with low environmental impact and carbon emissions by virtue of their design and materials.

Sustainable development: development that meets present needs whilst striving equally to allow for those of future generations.

Sustainable materials: materials with a low environmental impact, reduced energy input, sourced sustainably and the use of used, reclaimed and recycled materials.

Topography: the surface features of land (including relief, gradient, shape and vegetation).

Townscape: the appearance of the built environment in a town. It will depend on a number of factors including the form, size, style and general juxtaposition of development.

10. Relevant Framework and Further Guidance
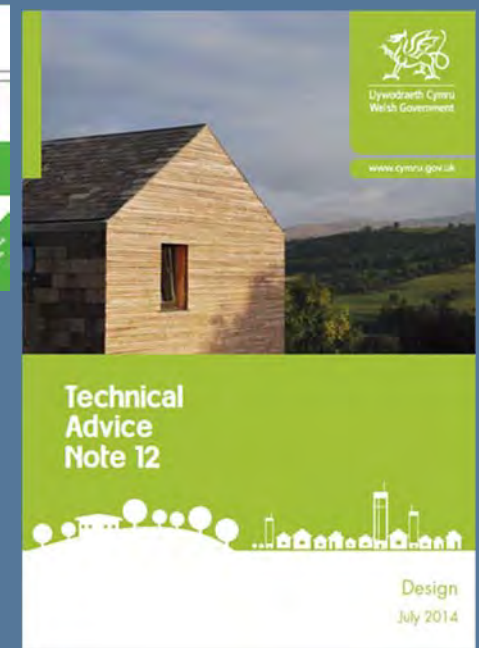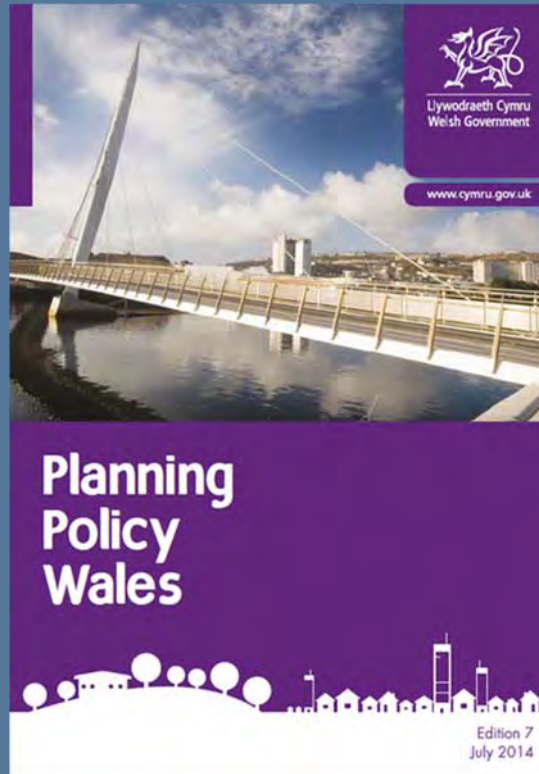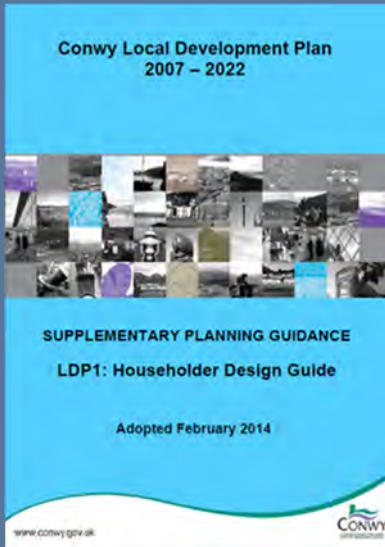
11. Contacts

Arboricultural Association (AA)
Ullenwood Court, Ullenwood, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 9QS.
Tel: 0 1242 522152
email: admin@trees.org.uk
Web: www.trees.org.uk/
Advice on trees and produces an annual directory of AA registered arboriculturists (Tree Consultants) and contractors (Tree Surgeons).

Arboricultural Advisory & Information Service
Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LH.
Tel: 09065 161147 (Premium rate) or administration 01420 22022
email: admin@treehelp.info
Web: www.treehelp.info/
Advice and guidance on tree care and issues related to trees on development sites.

BALI, British Association of Landscape Industries
Tel: 024 7669 0333
email: contact@bali.org.uk
Web: www.bali.co.uk
The British Association of Landscape Industries is established to promote, support and inspire all professional landscapers, garden designers and landscape suppliers to be leaders of an environmentally, ethically, and commercially sustainable landscape industry.

British Standards Institute
Customer Services, 389 Chiswick High Road, London, W4 4AL
Tel: 020 8996 9001
email: cservices@bsigroup.com
Web: www.bsi-global.com
Provides British Standards.

Consulting Arborist Society (CAS)
email: chairman@consultingarboristsociety.co.uk
Web: www.consultingarboristsociety.co.uk
Provides a list of CAS approved arboriculturists (Tree Consultants).

Design Commission for Wales
4th Floor Building Two, Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay, CF10 4DQ
Tel: 029 2045 1964
Web: www.dcfw.org

Institute of Chartered Foresters
59 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2JG.
Tel: 0131 2401425
Web: www.charteredforesters.org
Provides a list of chartered arboriculturists (Tree Consultants) and foresters.

International Society of Arboriculture (UK & Ireland) Chapter
148 Hydes Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 0DR, United Kingdom.
Tel: 0121 556 8302
email: enquries@isa-arboriculture.org.uk
Web: http://www.isa-arboriculture.org/
Provides guidance and books on trees and development and produces a list of ISA certified arborists (Tree Surgeons).

Landscape Institute
Charles Darwin House, 12 Roger Street, London, WC1N 2JU
Tel: 020 7685 2640
Web: www.landscapeinstitute.org

National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG)
111 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0SR.
Tel: 0207 340 8737
e-mail: info@njug.org.uk
Web: www.njug.org.uk/
Produces guidance on utilities near trees (NJUG 4).

Natural Resources Wales
Tel: 0300 065 3000 (Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm)
Web: www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
Advice on protected species and habitats

RIBA
RIBA Headquarters, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD
Tel: 0207 580 5533
email: info@riba.org
Web: www.architecture.com

Royal Town Planning Institute
The Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane
London, EC3R 8DL.
Tel: 020 7929 9494
Web: www.rtpi.org.uk

Welsh Government
Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
Tel: English: 0300 0603300 or 0845 010 3300
Welsh: 0300 0604400 or 0845 010 4400
Web: www.wales.gov.uk