Harlow Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted October 2011

Harlow's Local Development Framework

Harlow Council

Working together for Harlow

Contents

4   The Guidance

Urban Form

Commercial Uses

Open Space

Residential Development

Appendices

1 Introduction

1.1 Harlow: The Challenge

1.1.1 Harlow Council with Harlow Renaissance have prepared this guidance for Harlow to set out design principles to guide future development in Harlow and to encourage a design-led approach to development.

1.1.2 The challenge for this Design Guide has been to learn from what works best in Harlow, to help shape future change whilst remaining true to the distinctive features that give the town and its neighbourhoods their sense of place.

1.1.3 The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the saved policies in the adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan (2006). The guide also will support the implementation of the Core Strategy once it is adopted and any other relevant Development Plan documents. Compliance with the guidance will be a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to the Council.

1.1.4 The planning policy context in relation to the Harlow Local Plan is set out in Appendix C and is referenced throughout the Design Guide.

1.1.5 This Design Guide aims to provide general guidance on the form that new development should take. This addresses a range of development types from new urban areas through to residential extensions. It also covers the design of employment areas and strategic and local green spaces.

1.1.6 Whilst guidance for the Town Centre will be covered elsewhere, this guide will also help shape change within existing neighbourhoods, local centres and 'Hatches' including infill and redevelopment and provide guidance for householders' alterations to their homes.

1.1.7 The test of whether this Design Guide is successful will be in the quality of development that comes forward in Harlow. This Design Guide sets a challenge to developers and their designers to produce something better than the current norm. To achieve this, design must be influenced before it arrives on the development control officer's desk. The aim of this guide is to inspire designers to rise to the challenge of better design for Harlow.

1.2   The Vision

1.2.1   The development of Harlow commenced in 1947 following its designation as a new town. The town was masterplanned by Sir Frederick Gibberd creating a strong urban identity and sense of place.

1.2.2   Many of the guiding principles from Sir Frederick Gibberd's masterplan were enlightened and remain relevant today. These are described in more detail in section 3. In recent years Harlow, in common with many towns, needs to address the communities changing expectations relating to housing needs and access to facilities and services, as well the impact of rising car ownership.

1.2.3   Harlow now has an opportunity to change perceptions of the town and re-establish itself at the forefront of the urban planning agenda. Combining Sir Frederick Gibberd's founding principles with contemporary urban design ethos, Harlow should develop as:

- A place of attractive, self-sufficient, walkable neighbourhoods;

- A place shaped by its landscape and natural setting. A green place where pedestrians have easy access to well connected open spaces, areas of nature conservation importance and the countryside beyond;

- A place that benefits from an efficient, strategic movement network that is not solely dependent on private cars but makes provision for public transport, walking and cycling as viable choices;

- A place that is built to the highest standards of contemporary design and performance; and

- A place with attractive and distinctive neighbourhoods.

1.2.4   Harlow should be an attractive place in which to live, which offers a wide choice of well designed buildings and spaces that meet the lifestyle needs and choices of all the community, now and in the future.

Figure 1.1: Sir Frederick Gibberd

Figure 1.2: Photo of house interior in Harlow in 1966
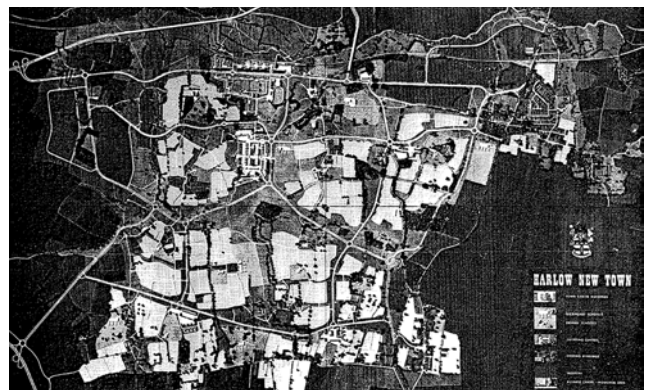
Figure 1.3: Original Harlow New Town plan (from 'The Design of Harlow', F. Gibberd, 1980)

1.3 Background

"The design and physical layout of many of the New Towns, although desirable at the time, now militate against the sustainable living communities which are required to meet current and future needs"

(Government response to the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee report: 'The New Towns: Their Problems and Future', 2002)

1.3.1 Since the founding of the post-war new towns, the urban environment has been subject to changing social, economic and political demands. Today people are more mobile, due to the increase in wealth and car ownership. This generates a complex range of trip movements, rather than people simply accessing employment, shops and services that are closest to home. Urban design needs to respond to the impacts of these changing lifestyles in order to provide well designed and attractive living environments.

1.3.2 Due to the increasing awareness of the environmental and resource impact of contemporary lifestyles, current policy and guidance focuses on sustainable environmental design as well as architectural merit.

1.3.3 The outcome is a greater understanding of the importance of place-making and the promotion of the urban design agenda. This has led to a much-improved awareness of how to create more successful, inviting, safe and distinctive places.

1.3.4 The Harlow Design Guide aims to ensure that the positive elements of the New Town vision and local distinctiveness are retained , whilst promoting appropriate contemporary urban design and securing sustainable development.

1.3.5 This guidance has been assembled through a series of stakeholder workshops involving Council officers (including representatives from neighbouring district and County authorities), plus experts and advisors covering regeneration, planning policy, architecture and urban design, development control, highways and transportation, heritage and conservation, accessibility, crime and fire prevention, landscape and biodiversity, and housing (amongst others). This means that the people who best understand the challenges facing Harlow were involved from the start in generating this guidance and this document assembles their collective wisdom on how best to guide future development (see Appendix A for a summary of the process for producing this Design Guide).

1.3.6 The language of the guidance is intended to empower users with the terminology to understand and describe the components of place and to support design appraisals of future proposals. The Guide is supported by a glossary of terms in Appendix E.

2 Using the Design Guide

2.1 Using the Guide

2.1.1 This Design Guide is a working tool. It is intended for frequent reference and will be essential for all charged with preparing or assessing the quality of planning applications.

2.1.2 The Design Guide is a contemporary framework for guiding and assessing future development across Harlow, independent of specific location, and applicable to different scales of intervention.

2.1.3 The Design Guide consists of principles (highlighted throughout the document) that development should adhere to. This is accompanied by descriptive text, general guidance and illustrations supporting these principles.

2.1.4 The Design Guide is not intended to stifle design flair or creativity, however the guidance is based on sound urban design objectives. Applicants will be required to provide a response to how all the principles of this guide have been taken into account in the design of the development proposals. Where applicants feel it is essential to go against the advice in this guide they should demonstrate how their proposals are better meeting these urban design objectives.

2.1.5 Proposals for real sites often have to work around difficult constraints or attractive features to be retained. The challenge of good design is to resolve these in a way that still complies with the principles in this guide.

2.1.6 The Design Guide is aimed at informing:

- Developers, in considering potential development sites;

- Architects, in drawing up schemes for development;

- Development control officers, as a material consideration in assessing the suitability of applications; and

- The Council, in determining planning applications and in upholding decisions at planning appeals.

2.2 Status of the Design Guide

2.2.1 The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the saved policies in the adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan (2006). Compliance with the guidance will be a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to the Council.

2.2.2 Harlow Council is currently producing its Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will eventually replace the current Harlow Local Plan. A key document of the LDF is the Core Strategy. This Design Guide will support the implementation of the Core Strategy once it is adopted and any other relevant Development Plan documents.

2.2.3 This Design Guide incorporates and updates guidance previously set out in the Harlow Common Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (2007).

2.2.4 There is a plethora of national urban design guidance and advice in the UK. Although this guide is certainly influenced by and is consistent with national guidance, it does not try to encompass all of it. This Guide focuses on those aspects of design that make most difference to outcomes – ultimately to the quality of life of the present and future residents of the town and all that work or visit there.

Figure 2.1: Harlow Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) structure

2.2.5　There is also county design advice in the form of guidance produced by the Essex Design Initiative. This takes a character-based approach, centered on more traditional design specific to Essex. Although some of the principles in this guide conform to the Essex Design Initiative's guidance, this guide is specific to Harlow and the character of its new town identity.

2.2.6　The Harlow Design Guide SPD has been produced because there is a need to provide design guidance which is more reflective of Harlow's context and character as a New Town, which is distinct from the character of much of Essex.

2.2.7　In general terms, this Design Guide replaces the 1997 Essex Design Guide as Harlow Council's adopted design guidance. The Essex's Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (2009) remains adopted Council policy on parking matters. Applicants will also be required to consult with the Highways Authority Essex County Council on all highways matters. In this regard, applicants will need to ensure their compliance with Essex County Council's Adopted Development Management Policies. They should also have regard to the services and access chapter of the Essex Design Guide, which provides detailed highways design guidance, in addition to current best practice guidance, including Manual for Streets 1 and 2.
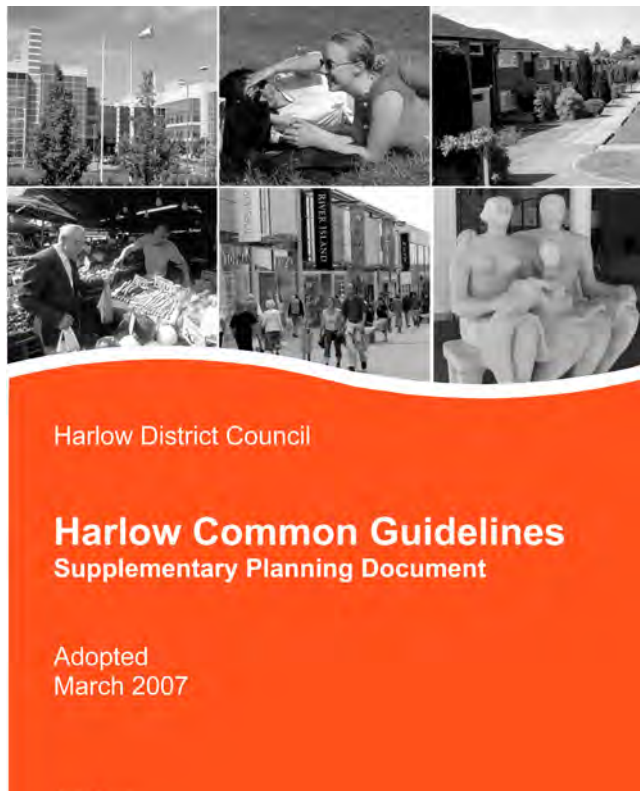
Figure 2.2: Harlow Common Guidelines (HDC, 2007)
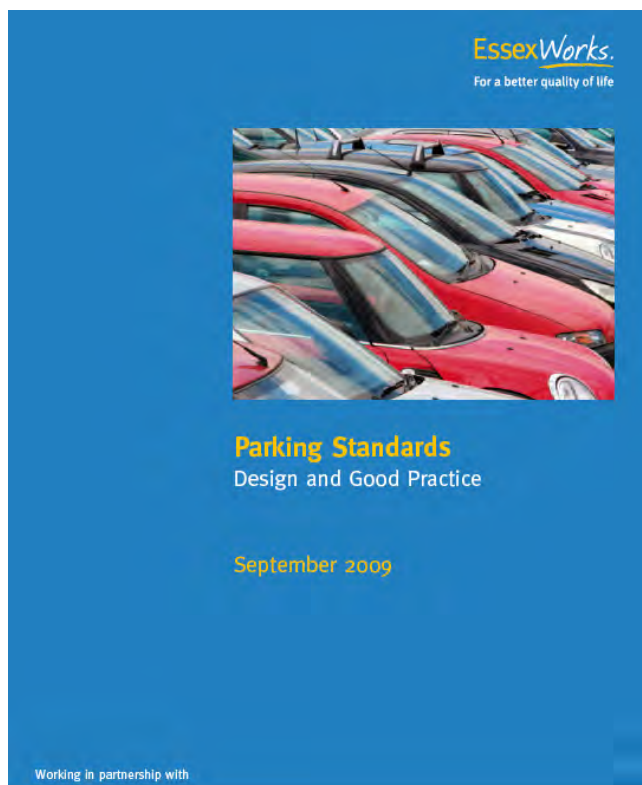
Figure 2.3: The Essex Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (ECC, 2009)

2.3 Applicability of the Design Guide

TOWN CENTRE

THE DESIGN GUIDE APPLIES TO THE WHOLE OF HARLOW (WITH EXCEPTION OF HARLOW TOWN CENTRE) INCLUDING EXTENSIONS TO THE TOWN, AS INDICATED ABOVE

Figure 2.4: Aerial photograph of Harlow

2.3.1 The guidance contained in this document applies to all areas of Harlow except for the Town Centre (defined in the Proposals Map for Harlow's Adopted Replacement Local Plan 2006).

2.3.2 This Guide covers residential neighbourhoods and their mixed-use centres and also employment areas, including The Pinnacles and Templefields.

2.3.3 This Guide applies to all development including new urban extensions, redevelopment and infill of existing urban areas and alterations to existing buildings.

2.3.4 The scope of the guide is not to recommend the locations for any future expansion of the town or areas of infill.

2.3.5 Planning and design guidance from adjoining authorities should also be considered when developers are dealing with cross-boundary sites.

2.4 Design and Access Statements

2.4.1 Design and Access Statements are required to accompany all planning applications, except those which are for a change of use or development of an existing dwelling house (or within the curtilage) unless the property is in a conservation area.

2.4.2 Design and Access Statements are documents that explain the design thinking behind a planning application. They should be used by applicants to demonstrate the design quality of the proposals and how the development incorporates the principles of inclusive design to meet the needs of users, including disabled people, older people and young children. They will also be used by the Council as the main tool in assessing the quality of proposed development.

2.4.3 Further guidance on Design and Access Statements is provided in Design and Access Statements: How to Read, Write and Use Them (CABE, 2006). This document sets out what Design and Access Statements should cover, and a useful assessment crib-sheet from the document has been included in Appendix D.

2.4.4 In Harlow, there are two specific requirements for Design and Access Statements. The first is for a characterisation study to be undertaken. This should show how the local context has been understood and how the design has responded to the context. The second is a response to the design principles which are within this document.

Characterisation Study

2.4.5 Understanding the context of a site is the first step in the design process. Harlow Council will require a characterisation study for any new development, including infill development.

2.4.6 The objective of the characterisation study is to identify, analyse and describe in a systematic and objective way those elements or combination of elements that help to form the character of a place.

2.4.7 The level of detail in the study should be related to the scale of the development proposals. So a proposal for a large scale residential development may be supported by a professional, independent study to consider the extension in the context of the town and its movement and green space network, carefully considering how the development would integrate with and enhance the town. Whereas an application for infill development may just consider the character of the street and the neighbouring properties to inform how the development can successfully complement the streetscene.

2.4.8 The characterisation study should inform subsequent design decisions including the scale and massing of proposals, appearance, and building interface and threshold details. Any uncharacteristic departures that may have already occurred to local character should not be seen to set a precedent for future development in the area.

2.4.9 Applicants might find table 1 (overleaf) useful to inform their characterisation study.

Principle DG1: Design and Access Statements

Design and Access Statements should be written in accordance with established guidance and also include (i) a characterisation study to show how the local context has been understood, and how the design has responded to the context; and (ii) a response to how the principles of this guide have been taken into account in the design of the development proposals.

FEATURE	COMPONENTS	OBJECTIVES
Landscape Character	• Topography (natural shape and form of land) • Landscape features (such as trees, other planting, water features, ecology etc.)	Has a landscape-led approach been considered to mitigate the potential impact of development on the open countryside and to ensure the protection of natural features, and existing areas of woodland? Have landscape elements that provide the setting for development been considered in developing the scheme? Have they been retained in the submitted scheme where possible and appropriate?
Historic Character	• Historic development patterns • Historic buildings • Historic features	Have elements of historic character that provide the setting and context for development been considered in developing the scheme? Have they been retained in the submitted scheme where possible and appropriate?
Urban Structure	• Street pattern • Street hierarchy • Street users (public transport, cyclists, pedestrians etc.) • Accessibility of the site • Barriers to movement	Urban structure is the framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and open spaces relate to one another. For large-scale developments and masterplans, has a clear and logical urban structure been established? Does it connect well into the existing urban area? For medium and small developments, does the layout of the proposed development respond to the surrounding urban structure?
Urban Grain	• Block structure • Block size • Building plot • Building height • Building scale and massing • Building interface • Building typology	Urban grain is the pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings. Has the degree to which an area's pattern of blocks and plot subdivisions is respectively small and frequent (fine grain), or large and infrequent (coarse grain) been taken into account in the scheme? Does the height, scale and massing of the building been designed to complement the streetscene and aid legibility? Has the position of the building in the plot, the building line, set back and frontage of neighbouring development (including open-fronts) been taken into account and designed to complement existing urban grain? Does the proposed building form have an appropriate typology for the proposed use?

Table 1: Framework for Characterisation Study

FEATURE	COMPONENTS	OBJECTIVES
Land Uses	• Mix of land uses in the wider area • Land uses in the vicinity of the site • Density	Have the surrounding land uses been considered to ensure that the proposed use is appropriate and there are no potential or existing bad neighbour uses? Is the mix of uses within individual schemes complementary? Does the scheme make an efficient use land without being over developed? Are the land uses at an appropriate intensification to create the anticipated vitality and viability of the scheme?
Architectural Design, Details and Materials	• Roof treatments • Fenestration • Projections • Treatment of corners • Materials	Have individual buildings within a scheme been designed to respond to the local context of a street? Are statement buildings correctly chosen and located to aid legibility and orientation, and of a sufficiently high calibre design to be worthy of standing out? Are individual buildings well designed? Do they exhibit the following characteristics: • Durability: buildings and component materials should be robust, sustainable and remain in good condition. • Utility: buildings should function well for the people using them and be capable of flexible use and future adaptation. • Beauty: buildings should delight people and raise their spirits.
Local Landmarks	• Long-range views • Short-range views	Have existing or potential long- and short-range focal points (to distinctive buildings, landmarks or landscape features) been identified and taken account of in designing development where possible? Has the visibility of any potential landmarks within the scheme on the surrounding urban environment, landscape or open countryside been considered?
Open Spaces	• Surrounding network of open space • Hierarchy of open spaces • Open space within the vicinity of the site • Public realm	Has consideration been given to opportunities to connect into a wider network of public open spaces (whether Green Wedges, Green Fingers or other local open spaces)? Has any public space or public realm within the immediate vicinity of the site been responded to, including being appropriately surveilled by proposed development? Has sufficient, well designed public and private open spaces (including playspaces) been provided in the scheme where appropriate? Are spaces appropriately related to surrounding development to ensure either natural surveillance (for public space) or privacy (for private space)? Are areas of public realm within a scheme designed to be durable, using robust materials; functional, having a clear purpose for users; and attractive, providing a welcome addition to the streetscene?

2.5 Pre-application Procedures

2.5.1 Pre-application discussions with planning officers from Harlow Council will form an integral element of the design and planning process.

2.5.2 Consultation on development proposals should be in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and where relevant pre-application consultation with the local community and other relevant stakeholders should be undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application in order to foster public involvement in the planning process.

2.6 Permitted Development

2.6.1 There are some forms of development that are classed as 'permitted development' and therefore do not need planning permission.

2.6.2 If you require any guidance in respect of what may or may not be permitted development you should contact the Council's planning department or the publication 'Permitted Development for Householders: Technical Guidance' (Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2010).

2.6.3 Even if you do not need to make a planning application, you should follow good design principles. A separate application for Covenant Consent or Building Regulations approval may be needed for permitted development.

3 Learning from the Best of Harlow

"Harlow is no longer a new town. Its history is entering a new phase which will be written by others"

(Harlow: Story of a New Town, F. Gibberd, 1980)

3.1 Local Distinctiveness

3.1.1 This guide takes as its starting point the particular character and identity of Harlow. That is not to say that the character of the town cannot be improved upon, but that the starting point must be the specifics of the place. This guidance is therefore illustrated with examples from Harlow whenever possible. These examples may not be perfect in every sense, but they show good, Harlow-specific solutions for the particular issue being addressed.

3.1.2 For this reason, we have avoided referencing impressive yet not locally-applicable projects which can often be taken out of context. Similarly, we have not assumed that a generic, best practice approach can be rolled-out in Harlow.

3.2 Guiding Principles

3.2.1 In preparing this guide with stakeholders, a clear picture has emerged of Harlow's identity and the aspirations for its development. In this section, we set out some of the overarching principles taken from Sir Frederick Gibberd's masterplan and cast them in the light of contemporary urban design thinking. These principles have informed the design guidance contained in section 4 of this document.

Figure 3.1: Compact housing groups

Figure 3.2: Natural features such as Todd Brook were protected and utilised as assets for the town (picture by PAS)

Compact Development

"We had set out to build a town, not a garden city. It was only by building compactly that the quality of urbanity can arise."
(Harlow: Story of a New Town, F. Gibberd, 1980)

"Housing is concentrated more than is usual ... The land thus saved is added to the landscape separating one area from another."
(Harlow: Story of a New Town, F. Gibberd, 1980)

3.2.2 Gibberd's masterplan created a pattern of compact neighbourhoods focused around local shopping facilities that remain a distinctive feature of Harlow.

3.2.3 The compact neighbourhood principle creates a structure of clearly defined neighbourhoods separated by green spaces which are within easy walking distance. It helps to reduce the reliance on private vehicles and assists access to local amenities. This is a current policy objective for sustainable communities.

3.2.4 Indeed, Gibberd's population figures for a neighbourhood unit are not dissimilar to the Government's eco-town standard of at least 5,000 units, or recognised research of 6,000 units (Shaping Places, Barton, 2003), which are likely to generate a sufficient population to support local shops and services. Whilst minimum density targets have now been abolished the compact nature of many of Harlow's neighbourhoods would fit well with planning guidance on achieving an efficient use of land set out in Government policy.

3.2.5 Compact development should be supported by a network of safe and well-connected local walking and cycling routes to encourage people to ensure neighbourhoods are walkable.

Integrating Natural and Historic Environments

"The plan for the new town ... seeks to preserve the form of the landscape and all buildings of any worth, to integrate them with the new buildings"
(Harlow New Town: A Plan, Second Edition, F. Gibberd, 1952)

3.2.6 The Gibberd masterplan took a landscape-led approach where the urban structure was formed around the protection of natural features, primarily the Todd Brook valley and existing areas of woodland. This initiated the creation of distinct neighbourhoods, clustered on higher ground, each defined by clear areas of greenspace.

3.2.7 The spaces between neighbourhoods function as a 'Green Wedge', a strip of greenspace that enabled the countryside to flow through the town.

3.2.8 The protection of and design response to natural assets and the historic environment is a prevailing issue in the sustainable communities agenda and a important tool in fostering a sense of place and character for new development.

Role of Green Wedges

3.2.9 Harlow's Green Wedges, an enduring legacy from the Gibberd masterplan, provide a substantial amount of green space adjacent to neighbourhoods, whilst significantly contributing to the town's identity.

3.2.10 Green Wedges are not merely a buffer between incompatible uses, they provide usable open landscape between neighbourhoods that connects out to the countryside. Green Wedges have reinforced the founding principles of a strong contrast between urban and natural environments, whilst providing direct, open access to the rural hinterland.
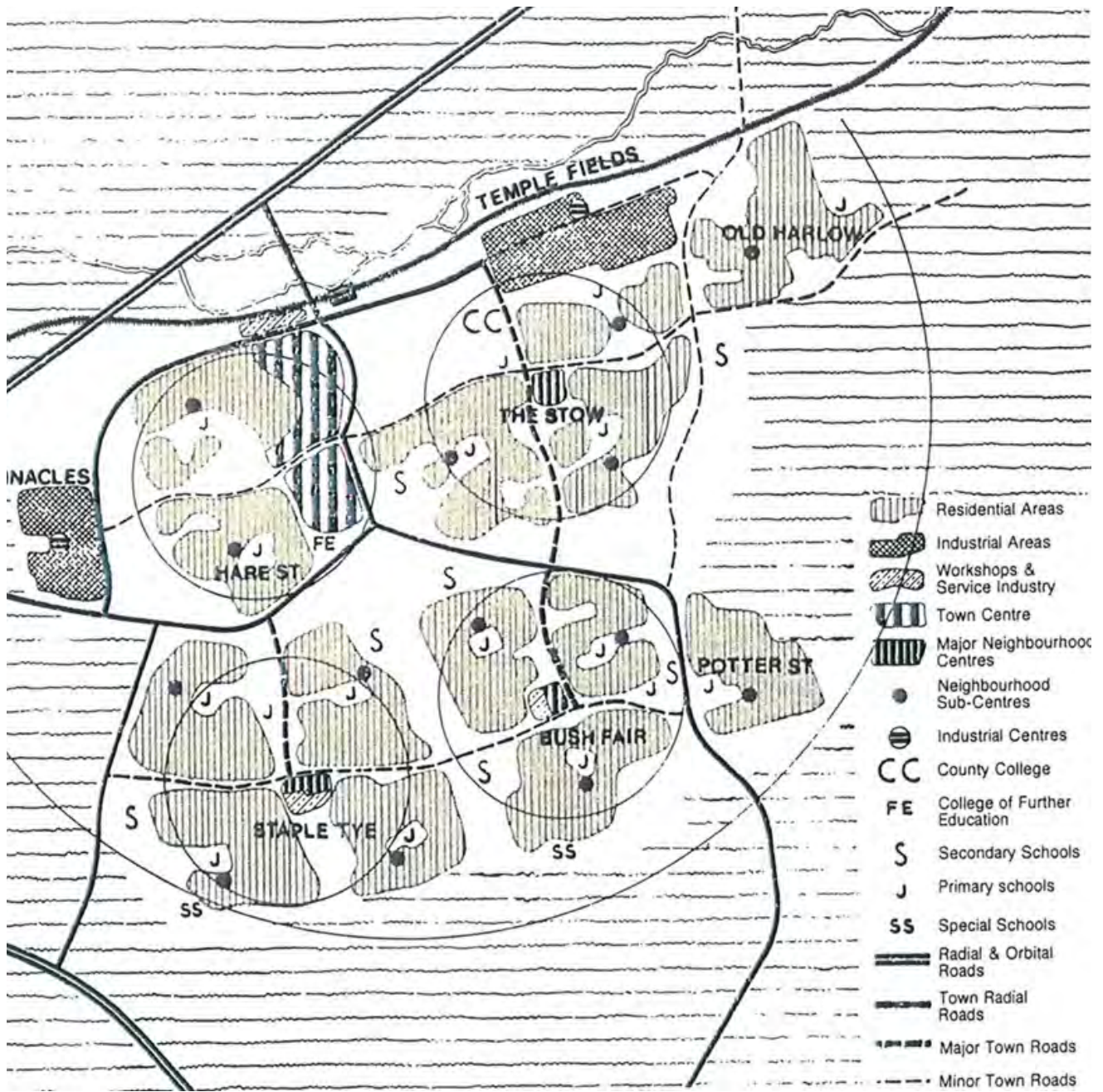
Figure 3.3: Spatial arrangement of Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches (indicated as Neighbourhood Sub-Centres) (from 'The Design of Harlow', F. Gibberd, 1980)

Legend:

- Residential Areas
- Industrial Areas
- Workshops & Service Industry
- Town Centre
- Major Neighbourhood Centres
- Neighbourhood Sub-Centres
- Industrial Centres
- CC County College
- FE College of Further Education
- S Secondary Schools
- J Primary schools
- SS Special Schools
- Radial & Orbital Roads
- Town Radial Roads
- Major Town Roads
- Minor Town Roads

Circulation

3.2.11 The character of street types is integral to sense of place. Harlow has a movement network based on orbital and radial routes designed to free neighbourhoods from traffic. This means that many of the roads in Harlow have a heavily movement-focused design.

3.2.12 Whilst this is appropriate and will remain the case for the existing major routes, a more contemporary approach is needed for new development, that promotes streets as places set within a movement hierarchy and with a different design approach for each street type. Harlow should have a clear hierarchy of street types to aid legibility and provide high quality street designs that match their role and function.

3.2.13 The seamless movement of cyclists and pedestrians was a founding principle of Harlow and its infrastructure exhibits this aspiration, particularly on the inter-neighbourhood scale. This Design Guide builds upon this approach, promoting better connected, more legible, safer and attractive routes.

> **Legibility:** The degree to which a place can be easily understood and travelled through.

Role and Form of Neighbourhood Centres

3.2.14 Harlow was built with residential neighbourhoods grouped around the Town Centre and three major Neighbourhood Centres (The Stow, Staple Tye and Bush Fair) to serve weekly needs. Today, the pattern of Neighbourhood Centres form an important focus and destination for each distinct neighbourhood providing local services and convenience retail within approximately a ten minute walk (800 metres) of homes.

3.2.15 Gibberd proposed that each Neighbourhood Centre should have a recreation area within or adjacent to it, with larger centres including a small employment area. Today, design solutions, particularly when redevelopment is proposed, should ensure that the Neighbourhood Centres are well integrated with residential areas.

3.2.16 Given today's increased mobility and the changing dynamics of the retail and service industries, there may not be sufficient consumer demand (nor retailer interest) to support Neighbourhood Centres at the scale Gibberd proposed (50 to 60 units). However, they still have a vital role in the provision of retail and social infrastructure within walking distance of homes.

Role and Form of Hatches

3.2.17 The Gibberd masterplan also envisaged that each sub-neighbourhood area would have a centre, called a 'Hatch' which would cater for daily needs and include four or five shops, a public house and community facility. Each sub-neighbourhood area would also include a primary school.

3.2.18 The Hatch would be within approximately a five minute walk (400 metres) of homes.

3.2.19 Although in the current retail climate Hatches may not be viable at the scale envisaged by Gibberd, the provision of shops, services and social infrastructure within easy walking and cycling distance to homes is seen as a key element of sustainable urban design.

Figure 3.4: Local Hatch providing local facilities, play space and access to public transport

Figure 3.5: Distinctive design contributing to a strong sense of place in Stewards, Harlow

Housing Quality

3.2.20 Housing in Harlow has been developed in housing groups each with approximately 150 to 500 dwellings, each with a distinctive style. This pattern of development created a variety of innovative, architectural solutions but avoided creating an architecturally disjointed composition due to the selection of architect and the choice of materials, and predominant post war architecture and social rules.

3.2.21 Aspirational housing and innovative design was encouraged from the first phases of the new town. Architectural freedom was encouraged in response to the masterplan which set a framework and set of rules for housing groups. The result was a set of consistent qualities of place, such as compact, fairly dense development with open fronts, set within a diverse range of distinctive and identifiable housing designs.

3.2.22 A principle of mixed development was applied to each housing group to accommodate a combination of dwellings for different sized households.

3.2.23 Existing residential tower blocks have been located as part of the town's overall scene. Today, if taller buildings are required, they should be sited in relation to the local context. They should relate to the movement network and land use, aiding legibility and supporting an active and overlooked public realm.

Well Defined Urban Spaces

"In Architecture we are primarily concerned with the spaces occupied by buildings – the rooms – in Civic Design the spaces between the buildings ... We have in our two-dimensional paper planning to be thinking always of three-dimensional buildings or groups of buildings, and the volumes that are created between them".

(Harlow New Town: A Plan, Second Edition, F. Gibberd, 1952)

3.2.24 Gibberd's aspiration for a three-dimensional approach to streets and public open spaces is clear within many areas of Harlow including in housing groups and centres, such as Potter Street and the Stow.

3.2.25 This is demonstrated in clearly defined frontages and well-enclosed public spaces, that are overlooked by the buildings that frame them. This is a principle in line with much contemporary guidance.

3.2.26 This principle has not always been applied consistently, particularly in the areas surrounding or between housing groups and Neighbourhood Centres. Opportunities to improve the definition of public spaces, such as through regeneration, should be encouraged to bring greater cohesion within each neighborhood, enhance legibility and ease of movement and to avoid creating uninviting and confusing routes.

3.2.27 This principle also applies to public open space. Open spaces should be safe and accessible and have a specific purpose. They should be set within an urban environment which will encourages passive surveillance and legibility.

Public Art

3.2.28 Harlow has a wealth of public art, produced by distinguished artists, which forms an integral part of the public realm. This approach is aligned with current best practice. Therefore, future development should continue this principle, integrating public art in a variety of imaginative and creative forms to help enhance the quality of place and identity of Harlow.

Passive Surveillance: The discouragement of wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen from surrounding windows

Figure 3.6: Local amenity spaces described as "outdoor rooms" by Gibberd offer places to stop, play and interact

4 The Guidance
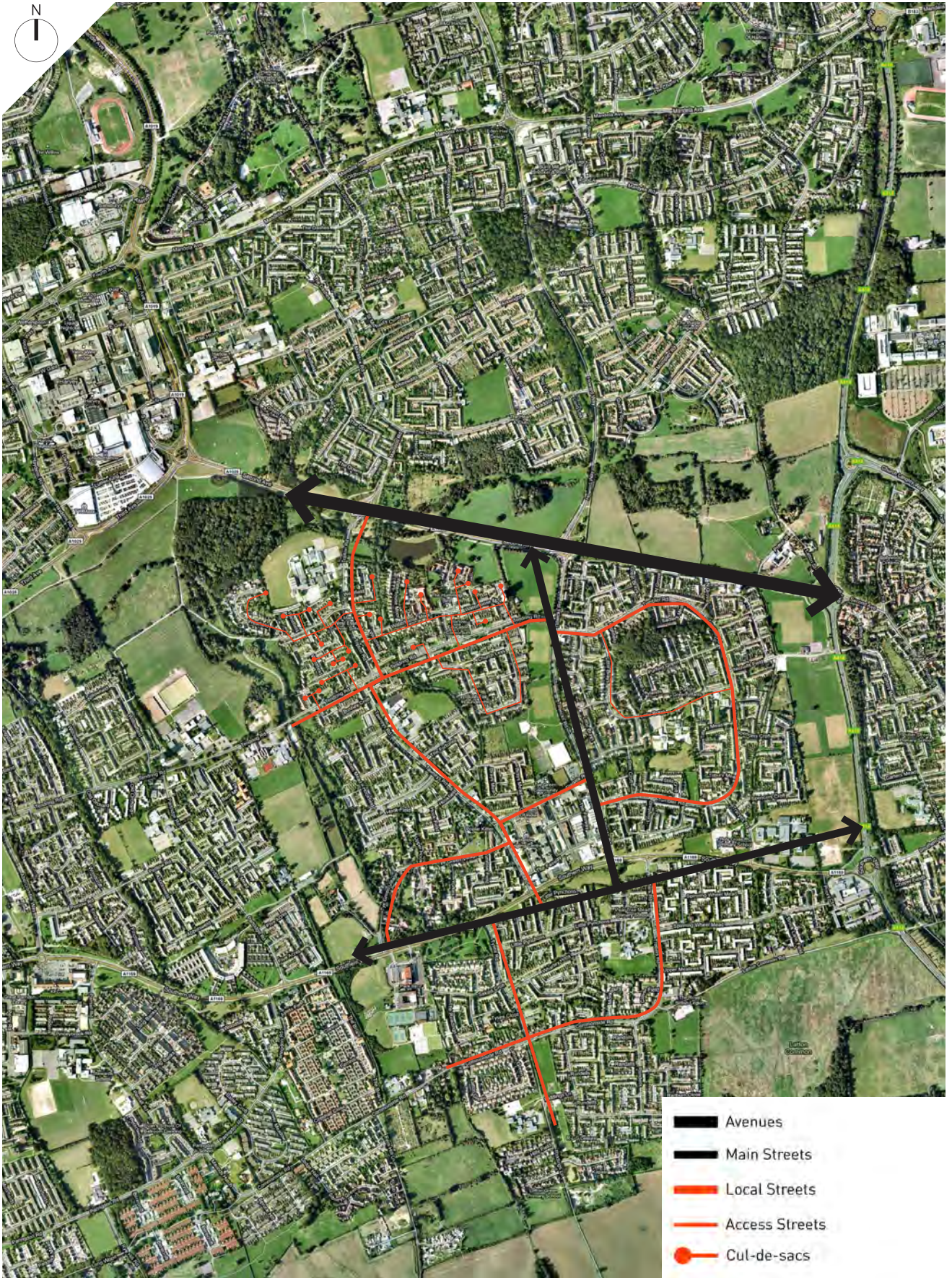
Figure 4.1: Existing street network

Legend:
- Avenues
- Main Streets
- Local Streets
- Access Streets
- Cul-de-sacs

4.1 Urban Structure

4.1.1 Getting the structure of a place right, in terms of a network of streets and open spaces, location of land uses and density is critical to the quality of the overall development in terms of finding your way around easily, being able to walk to shops and services, developing a sense of community and contributing to making people feel safe.

General Placemaking Principles

4.1.2 Better design does not have to be either ostentatious or expensive. Dramatic architecture might be appropriate for a few, landmark sites but the major parts of the fabric of any town are the residential neighbourhoods that make up the backdrop to everyday life. To improve the quality of these places, the most important resource required is not necessarily more money but rather intelligence and creativity.

4.1.3 The following are a set of generic placemaking principles that can be applied to help create places that work, that are easy and pleasant to use, that are safe and that will support a range of uses.

4.1.4 They are adapted from By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice (DETR, 2000) which is a companion Guide to National Planning Policy Statements and aims to encourage better urban design practice.

4.1.5 While this Design Guide provides a set of design principles to ensure that the places created are functional in urban design terms, it requires creativity and imagination to produce buildings and spaces that are truly special. Those which are a pleasurable to use and move through and which contribute significantly to quality of life.

4.1.6 Harlow Council will always encourage and support outstanding design. This Design Guide is not intended to be a barrier for exceptional schemes.

Principle DG2:
General Placemaking Principles

The following core objectives of urban design should be taken into account in proposals:

For all schemes:

Character: All schemes should respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture to create places with their own identity.

Continuity and enclosure: All schemes should promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space to clearly distinguish public and private spaces. The following principles should be taken into account:

- Building line: Building frontages should relate to a common building line, except where there are sound design reasons to depart from this principle.

- Active frontages: Continuous active building frontages should be provided onto streets and public spaces to support an active environment and natural surveillance.

- Building heights: Building heights should respond to the places they enclose, whether this is a street or public space, to ensure appropriate solar access, reasonable privacy and space enclosure that suits the character of the space.

Quality of the public realm: Streets and public spaces should be designed to be attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all, including those with mobility needs, children and the elderly, to ensure outdoor spaces are successful.

Accessibility: Schemes should be designed so that buildings and spaces are accessible and inclusive to all users. Further guidance on inclusive design is provided in The Principles of Inclusive Design (CABE, 2006), Inclusive Mobility (Department for Transport, 2005) and Designing for Accessibility (RIBA Publishing, 2004).

Adaptability: Schemes should be designed so that buildings and spaces can respond to changing social, environmental, economic and technological conditions to ensure their longevity and sustainability.

Delight: Within the framework of this Design Guide, creative and imaginative high quality design will be encouraged and supported.

Particularly for medium and larger schemes:

Ease of Movement: Schemes should ensure they connect into the existing urban environment in the placement of routes and the orientation and design of buildings to ensure places are easy to move through; putting pedestrian and cycle movement before private vehicular traffic and integrating land uses and transport. This principle should particularly be considered when masterplanning schemes.

Legibility: Schemes should provide recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around to ensure places have a clear image and are easy to understand. Buildings in prominent corner locations should be emphasised in their design.

Diversity: Schemes should promote diversity and choice through a compatible mix of uses, buildings and spaces that work together to create viable places that offer variety and respond to local needs.

URBAN FORM

Compact Development

4.1.7 Compact development is development that uses land efficiently. This can be in terms of optimising the number of buildings developed on the land and making the layout of surrounding streets efficient.

4.1.8 The density of development is one measure of compactness. Ensuring an efficient disposition of land uses, with shops and amenities centrally located is also important, as well as ensuring neighbourhoods are not fragmented, impermeable nor severed by highways or other infrastructure.

4.1.9 Compact neighbourhoods are more likely to be walkable, and have a sufficient population to support local services, than those which represent urban sprawl. The masterplanning of medium and large development sites can help to ensure that they are compact.

4.1.10 The principle of developing compact neighbourhoods is one of Gibberd's founding principles for Harlow Town (refer to page 21) and is supported by the Design Guide. This is a principle of Harlow's founding masterplan and reflects national planning policy guidance in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing.

4.1.11 Guidance on the density of new development is currently provided in the Harlow Local Plan (policy BE3).

Principle DG3: Compact Development

Neighbourhoods should continue to be developed in a compact, well-defined pattern, supported by an identifiable and accessible centre.

New development should maintain the pattern of separate, distinct neighbourhoods, building on Harlow's existing character and avoiding the creation of continuous extensions to existing neighbourhoods (urban sprawl).

Figure 4.2: Consider how best the site can be connected with nearby main routes and public transport facilities

Figure 4.3: A cul-de-sac response can create an introverted layout, which fails to integrate with the surroundings

Figure 4.4: A more pedestrian-friendly approach that integrates with the surrounding community, links existing and proposed streets, and provides direct links to local facilities and bus stops

Figure 4.5: This street pattern, which forms the basis for perimeter blocks, ensures that buildings contribute positively to the public realm

Movement Network

4.1.12 For the compact neighbourhood to succeed, with a population to effectively support services within walkable distances, a permeable network of safe, well-connected and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes must exist.

4.1.13 Harlow's existing strategic movement network is relatively successful because its permeable grid like structure offers a choice of routes to travel across Harlow. Yet this network becomes more convoluted at a local level, because the design and character of local streets tends to be very similar and therefore less legible.

4.1.14 It is important to recognise that some residential layouts typical to Harlow including cul-de-sacs, particularly when they are accessed of long spine roads, are less 'walkable' than a more connected street network which offers shorter distances and many more connections.

4.1.15 The design of Harlow's strategic network of roads should be distinct from the design of lower order urban streets because it is primarily for connections to surrounding settlements and to carry through traffic, while the complementary network of urban streets should be designed primarily with people and communities in mind.

4.1.16 Development should be based on an integrated and permeable movement network at all levels, providing a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces. The urban structure must support the development of adjacent sites and contribute to an interconnected network of streets. Street layouts should therefore provide connections to the boundaries of adjacent sites to allow for future expansion (subject to highway design). Retained areas of land (so-called "ransom strips" because of their potential commercial value to an adjoining owner) will not be permitted.

4.1.17 Where different modes (for example pedestrians and cars on a street) cross one-another, they should do so at-grade (on the same level). This should be in the form of junctions that are permeable and legible for all users (for example a signalised pedestrian crossing).

Principle DG4: Movement Network

The movement network should:

- integrate into the established movement network, to ensure that new development has good access to existing facilities;

- be developed with an emphasis on landscaping and a desire to respond to the natural environment;

- provide a strong hierarchy of routes, each with a distinct character;

- establish a well connected, direct pedestrian and cycle network that integrates with the street network; and

- be developed with consideration of future growth, allowing for easy connection into future developments.

URBAN FORM

Inclusive design

4.1.18 The aim of Inclusive design is to ensure that buildings and public spaces are accessible and inclusive to all users, to remove the barriers that create undue effort and separation.

4.1.19 An inclusive approach to design enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities.

4.1.20 The five key principles of inclusive design as set out by CABE include:

- placing people at the heart of the design process;

- aknowleging diversity and difference;

- offering choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users;

- providing for flexibility in use; and

- providing buildings and environments that are convienient and enjoyable to use for everyone.

4.1.21 The principles of inclusive design should be incorporate from the outset, rather than at the end of the design process as an afterthought. These principles are not intended to stifle creativity, indeed creativty and lateral thinking should be applied to find innovative and individual solutions

4.1.22 Further guidance on inclusive design is provided in The Principles of Inclusive Design (CABE, 2006), Inclusive Mobility (Department for Transport, 2005) and Designing for Accessibility (RIBA Publishing, 2004).

Principle DG5: Inclusive Design

Streets and public spaces should be designed so that they:

- reflect the diversity of people using spaces;

- are convenient, safe and easy to use for all people without having to experience undue effort, barriers to access or separation;

- enable everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities irrespective of a person's mobility, age, gender or ethnicity;

- are welcoming and remove real and imagined barriers;

- meet the needs of wheelchair users, mobility impaired people and people with pushchairs;

- ensure that street furniture, signage, lighting and visual and textural contrast in the paving materials are carefully designed and reflect the needs of all potential users;

- provide sufficient levels of accessibility for all potential users in terms of parking, pavement space and access to public transport; and

- encourage social interaction and do not purposely design-out the activities of young people or other groups.

The principles of inclusive design should be incorporate from the outset, rather than at the end of the design process as an afterthought. Inclusive design principles will need to be clearly set out in applicant's Design and Access Statements.

Public Transport

4.1.23 Public transport should be an option for all residents, made viable through designing residential areas at sufficient densities to support a bus service, and locating developments within walking distance of well-located bus stops.

4.1.24 The street network should facilitate an easily understood bus service that efficiently links neighbourhoods with the Town Centre and other key destinations.

4.1.25 By supporting the public transport network and making it easy and convenient to use, a practicable alternative to the private car is provided.

Principle DG6: Public Transport

Major new developments should provide direct corridors for the public transport and integrate with the existing network. These routes should be identified at an early stage in the design process.

Access to the bus network should be facilitated by ensuring bus stops are within walking distance of destinations and are conveniently-located in residential areas to serve as many properties as possible.

Where required by the Highway Authority, bus stops and bus shelters should be provided to approved designs and may need to incorporate real-time passenger information (telematics). Facilities should be integrated into the streetscene so that they are safe and pleasant to use. For example, they should be prominent, well-overlooked and well-lit.

URBAN FORM

Cycling and Walking

4.1.26 Harlow has the right topography to achieve high levels of cycling. As cycling is both a sustainable mode of travel and can help achieve healthy lifestyles, it is important that both leisure and commuter cycling should be considered. These groups have different requirements and these should be understood and taken into account.

4.1.27 Harlow town's founding principles promoted pleasant and unobstructed walking and cycle routes to run between local centres. These were delivered as a separate network independent of the street network, often along the Green Wedges, but still providing safe and direct access to key destinations.

4.1.28 These routes should be maintained and improved where possible. For example, by completing gaps in the network and ensuring there are routes along major desire lines. The introduction of signposting where walking and cycle routes are not legible can also help usability.

4.1.29 For new developments, where cycle routes pass through built-up areas cycling routes should form an integral part of the street.

4.1.30 Existing walking and cycling routes often incorporate subways. Whilst this is positive in terms of providing a traffic-free crossing, subways are often perceived as unsafe with pedestrians and cyclist often preferring to cross informally at ground level. The creation of new subways should therefore be avoided.

Principle DG7: Cycling and Walking

In new development, cycling and walking routes should provide safe and direct access to the Town Centre and between neighbourhoods.

Cycling and walking routes should be integrated into the local street network and well overlooked by development.

The creation of subways will be discouraged.

New developments should provide or contribute to the provision of at-grade pedestrian crossing facilities in legible and convenient locations.

Figure 4.6: Harlow's cycle network through the Green Wedges can provide an inviting environment for recreational cycling. Mark Hall, Harlow

Figure 4.7: A parallel network integrated into the local street network provides alternative cycling routes which are overlooked and safe at all times of the day. Newhall, Harlow

URBAN FORM

4.2 Streets

4.2.1 The increase in car ownership since Harlow was first designed has resulted in unexpected challenges to the movement network, and therefore there is a need for new streets to be designed with regard to contemporary standards and practice.

4.2.2 Harlow's street network consists of five major street types that can be combined to form a permeable and legible movement network. This guide does not provide detailed information on each of these street types, as this will vary according to their context. Rather, it provides general guidance on the role and design characteristics that future streets should adopt.

4.2.3 The network consists of the following street types:

   a   Avenues

   b   Primary Routes – Main Streets

   c   Secondary Routes – Local Streets

   d   Access Streets

   e   Mews and Cul-de-Sacs

4.2.4 Streets should be considered as places rather than simply routes, and all but the most strategic level streets (Avenues) should put people and communities first to create successful and attractive places and to encourage walking and cycling.

4.2.5 Essex County Council are the Highways Authority and planning officers rely on assessments made by external highways specialists when considering planning applications.

Principle DG8: Streets

All new streets should integrate with and enhance the existing network.

When masterplanning large areas, a network and hierarchy of streets should be designed, selecting from the street types identified in this section.

New streets should be designed in accordance with the guidance provided in this section. The design of a street should clearly communicate to users (whether pedestrians, cyclists or motorists) how to behave appropriately and safely by influencing where in the street they travel, how fast to travel, and where enhanced attention is necessary. This varies with each type of street in this section and the guidance given should be used to influence travel behaviour.

Streets should maintain a pedestrian movement zone free from obstructions such as street furniture, tree planting and lighting.

The needs of cyclists should be an integral part of street design.

Safety and inclusivity should be integral principles in designing streets.

All streets should have development fronting onto them where the prevailing character is urban and where development frontage could contribute to public safety.

URBAN FORM

Avenues

4.2.6 **Role:** The Avenues provide a strategic grid of streets, aligned through the Green Wedges and, hence, separate from the more built-up areas of Harlow. This segregation means that residential areas are not blighted by the negative effects of through traffic. In turn, the Avenues do not suffer from the usual delays associated with travelling through an urban environment. Nevertheless, the existence of Avenues affects the viability of the Neighbourhood Centres which loose out on potential passing trade.

4.2.7 Therefore the extension or introduction of new sections of Avenue should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that Main Streets cannot meet strategic network requirements.

4.2.8 **Type of journey:** The Avenues are primarily designed to accommodate through traffic intending to access the trunk road network. However, as they are also used for inter-neighbourhood travel as well as access to the Town Centre, they should also accommodate pedestrian and cycle movement, although this should generally be segregated from the vehicular carriageway.

4.2.9 **Character:** These routes do not need to have development frontage, and instead should run through the town's Green Wedges and be lined with planting and green verges.

4.2.10 **Frontage:** Building frontage may be acceptable on avenues where the prevailing character is more urban and/or where development frontage could contribute to public safety.

4.2.11 **Public Transport:** Where Avenue routes run through Green Wedges they do not generally provide suitable locations for bus stops given the lack of frontage and therefore convenient access for people to access the network. Where the Avenues can play an important role for public transport is in providing direct, high-speed and reliable routes between neighbourhoods, the Town Centre and other destinations.

4.2.12 **Parking:** On-street parking should not be permitted on the Avenues.

4.2.13 **Tree Planting:** Tree planting and landscaping can either be informal, in-line with the adjacent context of the Green Wedges or can be in formal rows of trees. Trees and shrubs should not be planted over the route of sewers and tree planting should not impede access required for the maintenance of sewers.

4.2.14 **Other Design Requirements:** The presence of the Avenues through the Green Wedges reduces the connectivity of these open spaces. Therefore, safe at-grade crossings across the Avenues at strategic locations should be considered to connect pedestrian and cycle routes.

Figure 4.8: Diagram illustrating Avenue within hierarchy

Figure 4.9: An example of an Avenue, Harlow

Primary Route Network (Main Streets)

4.2.15 **Role:** Main Streets should increasingly adopt the role of accommodating strategic trips in addition to more local movement, thereby focusing activity on those streets that contain Neighbourhood Centres.

4.2.16 This will help to support the viability of existing and proposed centres by creating passing trade and will reduce the need to locate strategic routes through the Green Wedges.

4.2.17 **Type of Journey:** Main Streets should be thought of as true mixed priority routes, performing a number of roles that include accommodating through traffic and local trips as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

4.2.18 **Character:** Main Streets should be the focus of public life in each neighbourhood. They should be rich, engaging and vibrant places where no one mode is allowed to dominate and all users are made aware, through the local context, of how to behave and what to expect.

4.2.19 **Frontage:** Main Streets should be lined with consistent, continuous building frontage of a sufficient scale (3 - 4 storeys) to reflect its civic importance and provide an appropriate level of enclosure.

4.2.20 **Public Transport:** Bus stops and the alignment of the routes that serve them should be focused on the network of Main Streets, providing neighbourhoods with access to the public transport network by serving key nodes and junctions, local centres and other community infrastructure.

4.2.21 **Parking:** On-street parking should be allowed in designated bays.

4.2.22 **Tree Planting:** The opportunity to integrate trees to Main Streets should be taken wherever reasonable and appropriate. Trees and shrubs should not be planted over the route of sewers and furthermore tree planting should not impede access required for the maintenance of sewers.

4.2.23 **Other Design Requirements:** Cycling routes and parking should be incorporated into the street design, with the form of cycle facilities responding to local context. Generally on-carriageway formal cycle lanes are encouraged.

4.2.24 Facilities to aid pedestrian crossing should be designed-in. This may include formal signalised crossings or central medians that aid informal crossing movements.

Figure 4.10: Diagram illustrating Main Street within hierarchy

Figure 4.11: An example of a Main Street

URBAN FORM

Secondary Route Network (Local Streets)

4.2.25 **Role:** Local Streets help to achieve Gibberd's principle for encouraging movement within the neighbourhoods by providing a spine road that connects the Hatches to the housing groups. Local streets should provide direct, legible routes for all modes.

4.2.26 **Type of Journeys:** Local Streets should primarily be used for movement at a neighbourhood level and for neighbourhood traffic to access higher-order streets.

4.2.27 **Character:** The Local Streets should create spaces in which car drivers can no longer rely on the regulated environment of higher-order streets where traffic and pedestrians are segregated, and instead must rely on local context to inform road user behaviour. Although pedestrians and cyclists should not necessarily feel that they can dominate the street, their movement should be prioritised. The design of the street should limit vehicular speeds to 20 mph without the need for dedicated traffic calming features.

4.2.28 **Frontage:** Local Streets should be lined with building frontage of a sufficient scale (2 - 3 storeys) to provide an appropriate level of enclosure.

4.2.29 **Public Transport:** Although the bus network should primarily be focused on the Main Streets, Local Streets are likely to provide key opportunities to access potential users, particularly by locating bus stops at Hatches.

4.2.30 **Parking:** On-street parking should be permitted unless there is a reason why this would not be appropriate.

4.2.31 **Other Design Requirements:** Cyclists will generally be accommodated on-carriageway, either with formal cycle lanes or as part of the general traffic lane.

4.2.32 Pedestrian crossing facilities are most likely to take the form of Zebra crossings and informal islands.

Figure 4.12: An example of a Local Street – The Chase, Newhall, Harlow

Figure 4.13: Diagram illustrating Local Streets within hierarchy

URBAN FORM

Access Streets

4.2.33 **Role:** Access Streets should connect to the wider network at either end, but do not necessarily have to form a gridded vehicular network. These street types are likely to have lower levels of connectivity for vehicles. The layout of development should accommodate further connections for pedestrians and cyclists to encourage a permeable, and walkable network.

4.2.34 **Type of Journey:** Access Streets should only be used by traffic with a local origin and/or destination.

4.2.35 **Character:** As these streets will be lightly used by vehicular traffic pedestrians should feel comfortable moving freely across the street. In some instances the use of shared surface treatments may be appropriate. The design of the street should limit vehicular speeds to 20 mph, without the need for active traffic calming measures.

4.2.36 **Frontage:** Access Streets should be lined with building frontage of a sufficient scale (2 - 3 storeys) to provide an appropriate level of enclosure.

4.2.37 **Public Transport:** Bus services should not use Access Streets other than in exceptional circumstances.

4.2.38 **Parking:** On-street parking should be allowed unless there is a local reason why this may not be appropriate.

4.2.39 **Other Design Requirements:** Cyclists should be accommodated on-carriageway.

Figure 4.14: Diagram illustrating Access Streets within hierarchy

Figure 4.15: An example of a Access Street, Harlow

Mews and Cul-de-Sacs

4.2.40 **Role:** To provide access to homes, not for use by through traffic.

4.2.41 **Type of Journey:** The lowest-order of street should only be used by traffic with a local origin and/or destination.

4.2.42 **Character:** This lowest-order street should be designed so that drivers feel like guests in an environment that clearly articulates that pedestrians are prioritised. This street type is least likely to rely on standard highway engineering solutions, such as signage, to inform drivers about context. Techniques such are shared surfaces can be used to convey this message. The design of the street should limit vehicular speeds to 10 mph without the need for active traffic calming measures.

4.2.43 **Frontage:** The informal nature of these streets can be reflected in the adjacent development with varying building line, massing and orientation. The scale of development should provide an appropriate level of enclosure and reflect the intimate nature of these street types.

4.2.44 **Public Transport:** Bus services should not use the lowest order of streets.

4.2.45 **Parking:** On-street parking should be allowed unless there is a reason why this is not appropriate. Opportunities for casual parking that may block the carriageway should be designed out to avoid a streetscene that is dominated by parked cars.

4.2.46 **Other Design Requirements:** Tree planting can be used to help define spaces within the street.

Figure 4.16: An example of an informal, shared surface, mews – Newhall, Harlow

Figure 4.17: An example of an informal, shared surface space – Old Harlow

Figure 4.18: Diagram illustrating Mews within hierarchy

Street Furniture

4.2.47 Street furniture such as lighting, benches and refuse bins should be located within a clearly defined furniture zone at the kerbside of the footway, thereby maintaining a pedestrian movement zone free from obstructions.

4.2.48 Wherever possible the amount of street furniture used should be minimised and functions should be combined to avoid clutter. (such as mounting bins on traffic signals or lighting columns).

4.2.49 Pedestrian guardrailing should only be used where it can be shown to provide a road safety benefit and all other options have been exhausted

Principle DG9: Street Furniture

Street furniture should be high quality, well-designed and robust. It should be located within a defined zone at the kerbside of the footway. Street furniture should be restricted to essential items and functions should be combined where possible.

Signs should be kept clear of sight lines so they do not obstruct visibility.

URBAN FORM

On-Street Parking

4.2.50 The Council's vision for sustainable travel choices and walkable environments should be a consideration in the allocation and design of parking.

4.2.51 Parking on-street remains the simplest and most successful way to supplement on-plot parking and to achieve the levels of parking that car ownership levels demand. Parking on the street is an efficient use of space and people understand how it works. Unlike rear parking courts, on-street parking increases activity on the street and between the street and the house.

4.2.52 Parking options to the rear of blocks in rear parking courts should only be considered once on-street and on-plot options have been exhausted. Guidance on on-plot parking, front parking courts and rear parking courts is provided in section 4.10.

4.2.53 On-street parking should be designed into the streetscene from the outset. It may be parallel to the kerb, angled to the kerb, or within a central reservation; however, it should not be allowed to dominate the environment or to negatively impact on the character of a street. All solutions for integrating parking with the street benefit from landscaping and the materials used should be of the highest quality.

Principle DG10: On-Street Parking

Parking should be accommodated on-street where possible.

The parking standards set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (Harlow Local Plan policy T9) should be followed.

The quality of the street should be paramount in designing parking spaces into the street. The inclusion of landscaping should be integral to the design of the street.

Figure 4.19: Parking successfully integrated into the streetscene – Freiburg, Germany. See also figure 4.15

Street Trees

4.2.54 In Harlow most tree planting and landscaping usually takes the form of naturalistic groups rather than formal avenues. Street trees should contribute to the local character of streets and spaces, for example the selection of a native blossom tree to define a particular street.

4.2.55 The selection of tree variety should be influenced by the desired role or function, the hierarchy of street and adjacent building heights. For example a large variety of tree with substantial stature may be appropriate along main streets to provide enclosure and canopy cover whilst small decorative varieties may be appropriate to break up on street parking.

4.2.56 Trees and shrubs should not be planted over the route of sewers and furthermore tree planting should not impede access required for the maintenance of sewers.

4.2.57 Protective measures such as root barriers should be incorporated to reduce potential damage to the street fabric and underground services.

4.2.58 Street trees should be located to ensure they do not obstruct visibility at road junctions and vehicular assesses.

Principle DG11: Street Trees

Street trees and associated landscaping are encouraged in street design and should reflect and reinforce Harlow's character.

As part of the development design process consideration will need to be given to the final height of the trees, their placement within the development and their nature (i.e. deciduous or evergreen) to ensure that they do not block daylight from elevations containing habitable room windows as trees mature'.

The use of semi-mature trees in planting schemes is encouraged.

URBAN FORM

Principle DG11: Street Trees

Street trees and associated landscaping are encouraged in street design and should reflect and reinforce Harlow's character.

As part of the development design process consideration will need to be given to the final height of the trees, their placement within the development and their nature (i.e. deciduous or evergreen) to ensure that they do not block daylight from elevations containing habitable room windows as trees mature'.

The use of semi-mature trees in planting schemes is encouraged.

Principle DG10: On-Street Parking

Parking should be accommodated on-street where possible.

The parking standards set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (Harlow Local Plan policy T9) should be followed.

The quality of the street should be paramount in designing parking spaces into the street. The inclusion of landscaping should be integral to the design of the street.

Principle DG32: Residential Parking

On-plot parking should be designed to ensure that the visual impact of the parked car is mitigated and blank frontages are not created.

The design of the street clearly articulates that pedestrians are prioritised and vehicular speeds are limited to a minimum without the need for active traffic calming measures.
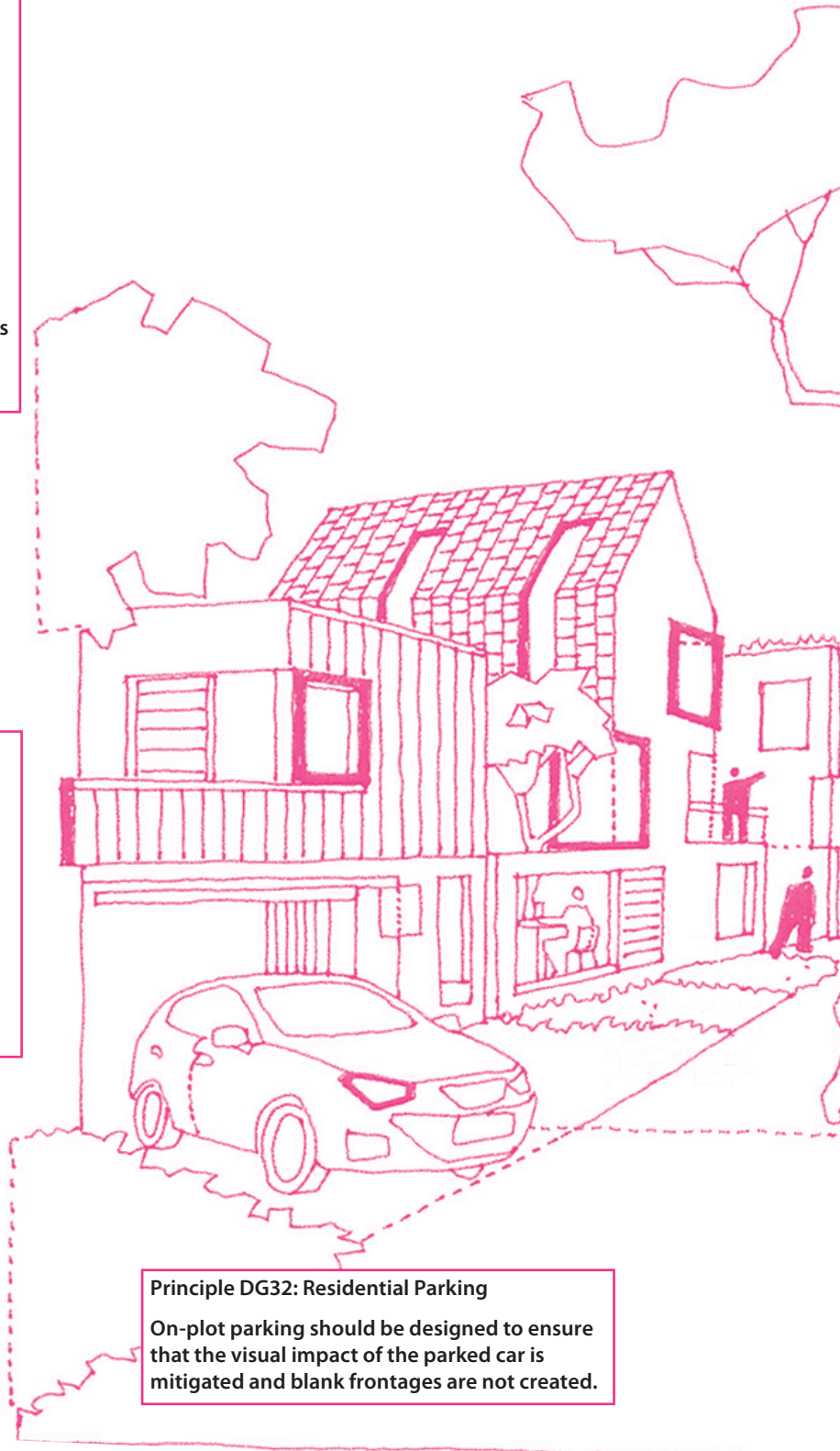
Principle DG36: Entrances

Main entrances to all residential development should be welcoming, easily identifiable, accessed from the street and be easily visible from the public realm.

Principle DG8: Streets

All streets should have development fronting onto them where the prevailing character is urban and where development frontage could contribute to public safety.

Principle DG35: Open Fronts

The principle of open fronts should be applied particularly where this is the prevailing New Town character. This can be achieved through a range of solutions and the approach adopted should be appropriate to the building design as well as the character of the street. The design of open fronts should clearly distinguish private front gardens from other areas of the public realm. When designing open fronts applicants should also comply with principle DG37 and ensure that refuse and recycling facilities are designed in a way which is consistent with original character and purpose of open fronts.

4.3 Commercial Uses

Context

4.3.1 A founding principle of Gibberd's masterplan was the accessibility of commercial uses to residents in order to create self sufficient, walkable neighbourhoods.

4.3.2 The location of employment areas and the Town Centre were carefully considered to maximise their accessibility within the town and to strategic transport routes.

4.3.3 Residential neighbourhoods are grouped around Neighbourhood Centres to serve weekly needs, providing local services and convience retail within a ten minute walk. Whilst at a sub-neighbourhood level each area has a lower order centre, called a 'Hatch' which would cater for daily needs.

4.3.4 These commercial uses still play a vital role in the provision of jobs, retail and social infrastructure within Harlow.

Figure 4.20: Existing Neighbourhood Centres

4.4 Neighbourhood Centres

Context

4.4.1 Gibberd's vision for the Neighbourhood Centres and how their role has changed over time is considered in section 3 of this document.

4.4.2 The Harlow Local Plan states that Neighbourhood Centres are still considered to have an important role to play in providing local facilities within walking distance for residents.

4.4.3 Therefore, where large areas of new development are proposed, the provision of new Neighbourhood Centres should be considered to serve an appropriate population.

4.4.4 Neighbourhood Centres are most successful when they are mixed use, incorporating a range of local facilities, health centres, businesses and convenience retail and avoid an over dependence on retail use. Incorporating other uses, such as residential development can help to ensure activity and surveillance throughout the day and night.

Figure 4.21: Neighbourhood Centre at The Stow

Figure 4.22: Potter Street Hatch's scale, massing, location and quantum of retail is a good example of a local centre.

Legend:
- ■ Neighbourhood centre
- ---- 5 minute walking distance from centre
- ── Residential neighbourhood
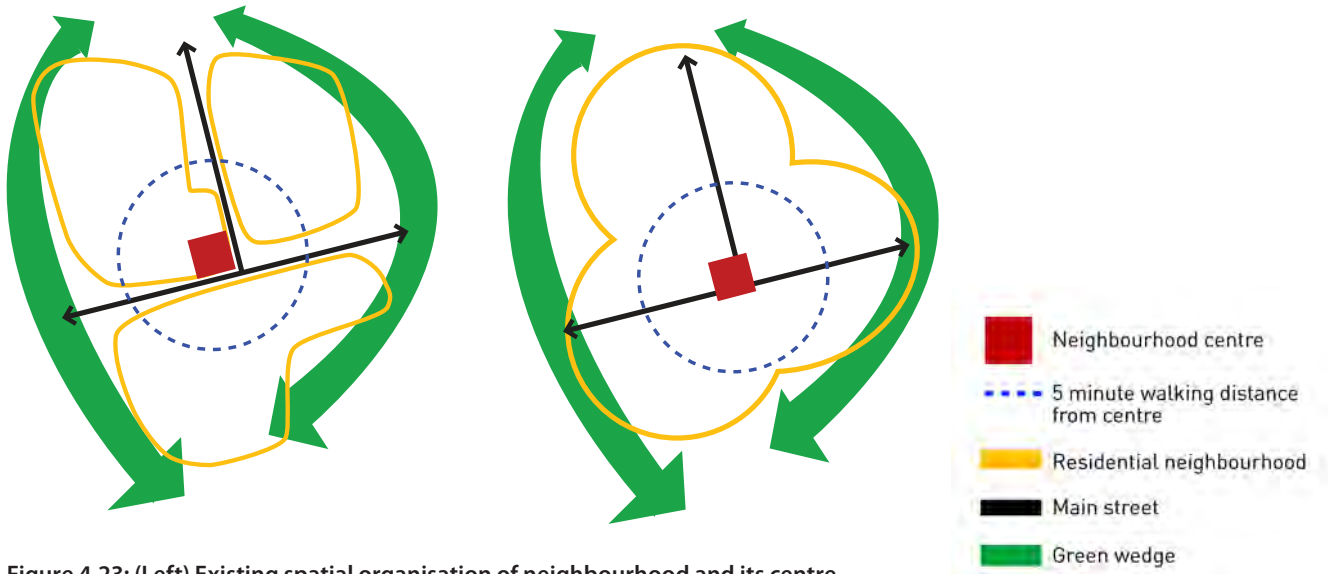- ── Main street
- ── Green wedge

Figure 4.23: (Left) Existing spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its centre. Connections between residential neighbourhoods are sometimes disjointed or indirect. (Right) Recommended spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its centre. Locating residential development within the five-minute walkband is prioritised

Layout and Access

4.4.5 Earlier centres were designed for through traffic but this was subsequently removed. This left the centres disconnected from the surrounding residential areas with pedestrians having to circumnavigate parking and service areas. It also resulted in any vehicle passing trade by-passing the centre.

4.4.6 Neighbourhood Centres should be located on the intersection of key routes (Main Streets, see section 4.2) through the neighbourhood in a legible, central position. This makes them easier to access by foot, cycle, public transport and private vehicle and therefore more likely to benefit from passing trade.

4.4.7 A frequent bus route should serve the Neighbourhood Centre with bus stops conveniently located and well-overlooked to encourage patronage.

4.4.8 Existing Neighbourhood Centres should try to overcome issues of dead frontage and poor connectivity by incorporating the principles set out here through selective new infill redevelopment.

4.4.9 Accessibility for all users should be integrated into the design of the centre, with particular consideration given to how the elderly and disabled will access and use the centre.

4.4.10 A limited number of visitor/short stay parking spaces should be integrated into the streetscape with convenient access into the centre for passing trade.

4.4.11 Longer stay parking should be located in well-designed, overlooked parking areas to minimise visual intrusion into the streetscene and improve the security of vehicles.

4.4.12 Secure cycle parking should be provided and incorporated into the public realm within an area of high surveillance.

4.4.13 Servicing areas must not visually dominate the streetscene and dead frontage overlooking the public realm must be avoided. One approach to achieve this is to internalise servicing in a yard enclosed by development to maintain frontage onto the surrounding public spaces.

Design

4.4.14 The design of the Neighbourhood Centre should include a high quality public space as a central focus. This should provide an attractive and identifiable environment, supported by high quality public realm treatment including street furniture, materials, lighting and planting. All development within the centre should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance, identity and legibility.

4.4.15 Providing a public space will also be encouraged to create a more welcoming pedestrian environment suitable for pavement cafés and a place for people to linger. Setting the public space back from the road will reduce the intrusion of vehicles.

4.4.16 The scale and massing of the Neighbourhood Centre should contribute to their legibility. Building scale should be sufficient to accommodate mixed-use buildings with office or residential accommodation over shops. A building height of predominantly four storeys is considered appropriate for Neighbourhood Centres. This will reflect the importance in the urban form, aiding legibility and supporting the mix of uses and densities to create an active and well-overlooked environment.

- Neighbourhood centre building
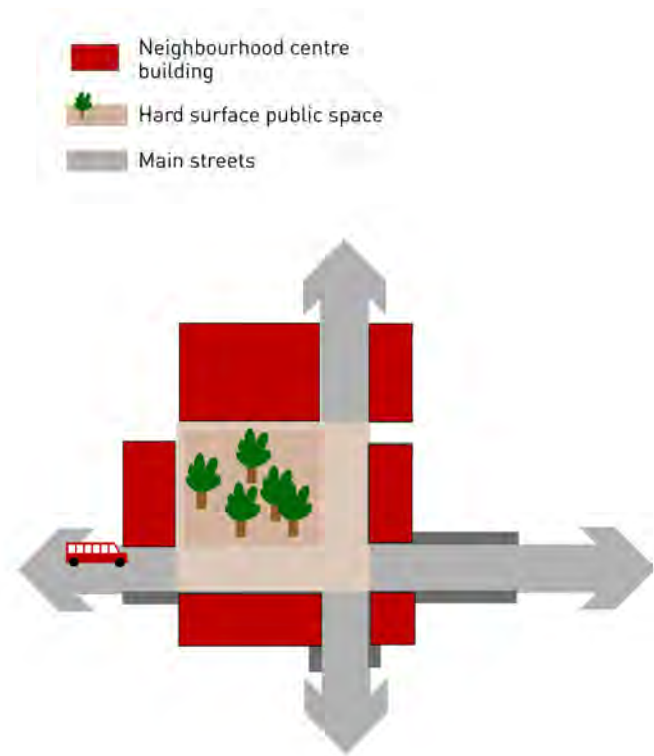- Hard surface public space
- Main streets

Figure 4.24: Diagram indicates recommended general arrangement of Neighbourhood Centres

Figure 4.25: Public space located on key routes, overlooked and enclosed – Temple Bar, Dublin

Figure 4.26: The use of materials and lighting creates a distinctive character – Gilbert Square, Hackney

COMMERCIAL USES

4.4.17 Neighbourhood Centres are considered appropriate areas for locating a limited number of taller buildings, where they create a landmark to signify the location of the centre. Taller buildings, where appropriate, should be located on key routes to maximise this legibility benefit. The visibility of taller landmark elements across the neighbourhood and their relationship to its landscape setting should be carefully considered. The aim is to create dramatic focal points but landmarks should not compete with each other and should be subordinate to the scale of Harlow's Town Centre.

4.4.18 Each Neighbourhood Centre should be distinctive in character from one another to promote a local identity. This should be achieved through engaging the community from an early stage in the design process.

Principle DG12: Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood Centres should be part of the movement network, located at the intersections of main roads and visible from the street. Parking and servicing should not dominate the streetscene and cycling facilities should be incorporated.

Each Neighbourhood Centre should be distinctive, accessible and inviting, providing a centre public space in which activity and socialising can be promoted and accommodated.

The size of public spaces created in neighbourhood centres should be related to the height of enclosing development to provide enclosure and a sense of place.

Taller buildings should be incorporated into the design of Neighbourhood Centres where they assist legibility and wayfinding.

Principle DG13: Improvement of Existing Neighbourhood Centres

The improvement and enhancement of existing Neighbourhood Centres should:

- reinforce the existing character of a Neighbourhood Centre and promote local identity;

- be of an appropriate scale and massing;

- enhance the legibility of a centre by providing a limited number of taller buildings in appropriate locations;

- generate activity and surveillance through the day and night by providing mixed use buildings, with residential accommodation above commercial units on the ground floor;

- address issues relating to dead frontage by providing active frontages at ground floor level which overlook public spaces and car and cycle parking areas;

- the size of public spaces created in neighbourhood centres should be related to the height of enclosing development to provide enclosure and a sense of place;

- reconnect centres with surrounding neighbourhoods and address issues of poor connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists;

- ensure that parking areas and service areas do not dominate the street scene; and

- enhance the public realm by providing high quality street furniture, landscaping and pavement materials in appropriate locations.

Design of Shop Frontages

4.4.19 There are several matters to take into account when designing individual retail and commercial units.

4.4.20 **Layout:** Ground floor units should be flexible and easily adaptable to respond to the changing needs of the neighbourhood and reduce the likelihood of vacant units.

4.4.21 **Shop frontages:** The principal purpose of a shopfront is the advertisement and display of goods and services provided inside the building. Retail frontage should reinforce the shop's identity and its location in the Neighbourhood Centre or Hatch whilst forming an integral part of the whole building and street frontage. This can be achieved by considering the style of the whole building and that of its neighbours.

4.4.22 **Canopies:** The integration of canopies within shopfronts will be encouraged to provide shelter, colour and interest and reflect the spirit of Harlow New Town. It is important that these canopies are consistently applied and are made of a non-reflective material so that they do not adversely affect the appearance of the street scene.

4.4.23 Structural canopies that form part of the building and colonnades are characteristic of Harlow's architectural style in both the town and local centres, and are therefore encouraged. As well as providing a dry environment for shoppers they also clearly define a zone for signage.

Figure 4.27: Structural canopy providing shelter and defining signage zone

Figure 4.28: Canopy contributing to the appearance of the streetscene

COMMERCIAL USES

4.4.24 **Security:** Security measures for retail and commercial units should be considered at the design stage and not 'added on' as an afterthought. A balance must be struck between ensuring that units are safe and secure while considering their impact on the appearance of the street. Solid external shutters can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment and should therefore be avoided. The preferred solution of light mesh grilles or lattice roller shutters allow shopfronts to maintain an 'open' feel and appearance but maintain a high degree of security.

Figure 4.29: Solid external metal roller shutters can create an unwelcoming and hostile environment and should therefore be avoided

4.4.25 **Signage:** The impact of external signage on the street scene can be significant. When carefully considered signage can aid legibility and contribute positively to the streetscene. Poorly sited, overlarge or badly designed signage however can clutter the appearance of Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches. There is therefore a need to create a careful balance between satisfying commercial needs of advertising and protecting the amenity and character of shopping areas.

Figure 4.30: The visual connection from the street is lost due to excessive advertising and blanked-out panels

4.4.26 All signs should relate well in terms of size, scale and appearance to the building on which they are set and the streetscene of which they are a part.

4.4.27 The signage should generally not extend beyond the defined shopfront fascia and should avoid lurid colours and excessive backlit illumination.

4.4.28 Where adjacent shopfronts are of similar scale and appearance, designers should define a signage zone so a consistent height and scale of signage can be established across adjacent shopfronts.

Figure 4.31: Materials and glazing should be carefully considered (as above) to contribute to the overall street scene

4.4.29 **Lighting:** Modest and subtle lighting of Neighbourhood Centres, Hatches and individual shop-fronts can contribute to a lively and safer-feeling environment at night and should be encouraged. In the interest of minimising obtrusive light, projecting illuminated signs and flashing or neon signs should be avoided.

4.4.30 **Materials:** The character of the building, street and any adjoining buildings should be used to influence the choice of materials and colours. The number of different materials and colours should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid a clash with the adjoining buildings and the character of the street.

4.4.31 New shopfronts must be constructed from high quality materials and avoid lurid colours.

4.4.32 **Glazing:** Where appropriate shopfront glazing should be as extensive as possible to allow views in and out of shops.

4.4.33 Sales counters and checkout counters should be located near to glazed areas so that they provide passive surveillance of external public spaces.

4.4.34 Full height advertisements or blanked-out panels should not be included where they are detrimental to the streetscene.

4.4.35 Glazed areas should generally be sub-divided to achieve a well-proportioned shopfront and contribute to the scale and rhythm of an overall elevation.

Principle DG14: Shop Frontages

In designing individual shopfronts:

- Shopfronts should respond to the grain of individual buildings. The proportions of the shopfront should harmonise with the main building and its neighbours.

- Within new build development the shopfront should not be treated separately from the upper levels but considered as a coherent design.

- Materials should reflect the existing range within Neighbourhood Centres or a palette agreed with the Council.

- Shopfronts should not incorporate external security measures that negatively impact on the streetscene.

- Shopfronts should not display overdominant or incongruous advertising.

- Shopfronts should avoid standardisation, reflecting the diversity of a street scene.

Figure 4.32: The impact of inappropriately positioned, over-scaled signage on the street scene can be significant. Excessive use of signage (as above) should be avoided

Figure 4.33: Overly lurid colours and signage should be avoided

COMMERCIAL USES

Principle DG12: Neighbourhood Centres

Each Neighbourhood Centre should be distinctive, accessible and inviting, providing a centre public space in which activity and socialising can be promoted and accommodated.

Principle DG12: Neighbourhood Centres

Taller buildings should be incorporated into the design of Neighbourhood Centres where they assist legibility and wayfinding.

Principle DG23: Views and Landmarks

The potential to integrate views and vistas should be considered in all development proposals.

Principle DG31: Passive Surveillance

Development should be designed to ensure that streets and public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings.

Corner buildings should maintain continuity of built frontage and incorporate corner windows and entrances wrapping around the flank where appropriate.

Retail frontage should reinforce the shop's identity and its location in the Neighbourhood Centre whilst forming an integral part of the whole building and street frontage.

Principle DG11: Street Trees

Street trees and associated landscaping are encouraged in street design and should reflect and reinforce Harlow's character.

Principle DG12: Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood Centres should be part of the movement network, located at the intersections of main roads and visible from the street.

Principle DG6: Public Transport

Where required by the Highway Authority, bus stops and bus shelters should be provided to approved designs and may need to incorporate real-time passenger information (telematics). Facilities should be integrated into the streetscene so that they are safe and pleasant to use. For example, they should be prominent, well-overlooked and well-lit.

Principle DG12: Neighbourhood Centres

Parking and servicing should not dominate the streetscene and cycling facilities should be incorporated.

COMMERCIAL USES

N

Hatch

Figure 4.34: Existing Hatches

4.5 Hatches

Context

4.5.1 Gibberd's vision for the Hatches and how their role has changed over time is considered in section 3 of this document.

4.5.2 The Harlow Local Plan states that Hatches are still considered to have an important role to play in developing social networks, providing places for local people to meet and providing facilities within walking distance to meet resident's everyday needs.

4.5.3 Where new development is proposed, the provision of new Hatches should be considered where they can help provide small scale, walkable local facilities to serve an appropriate population.

4.5.4 To avoid competing with Neighbourhood Centres, new and existing Hatches should be considered as community focal points based around a primary school and a local open space and related to the Green Fingers.

Figure 4.35: Mark Hall Hatch contains a good mix of uses, including a pub, place of worship, primary school, open space (top) and limited retail units

Layout and Access

4.5.5 Hatches should be positioned on locally significant routes (Local Streets, see section 4.2) at key locations to maximise accessibility. These routes should be well connected to the wider network to optimise the number of houses within a walkable catchment area.

4.5.6 Accessibility for all users should be integrated into the design of the centre, with particular consideration given to how the elderly and disabled will access and use the centre.

4.5.7 If a bus route passes through the Hatch, a bus stop should be provided in a central location with good waiting facilities.

4.5.8 Secure cycle parking should be provided and incorporated into the public realm within an area of high surveillance.

4.5.9 Parking should be limited to a small amount of on-street spaces to capitalise on passing trade. These should be carefully designed and integrated into the public realm to avoid dominating the streetscene. Large areas of surface parking should be avoided.
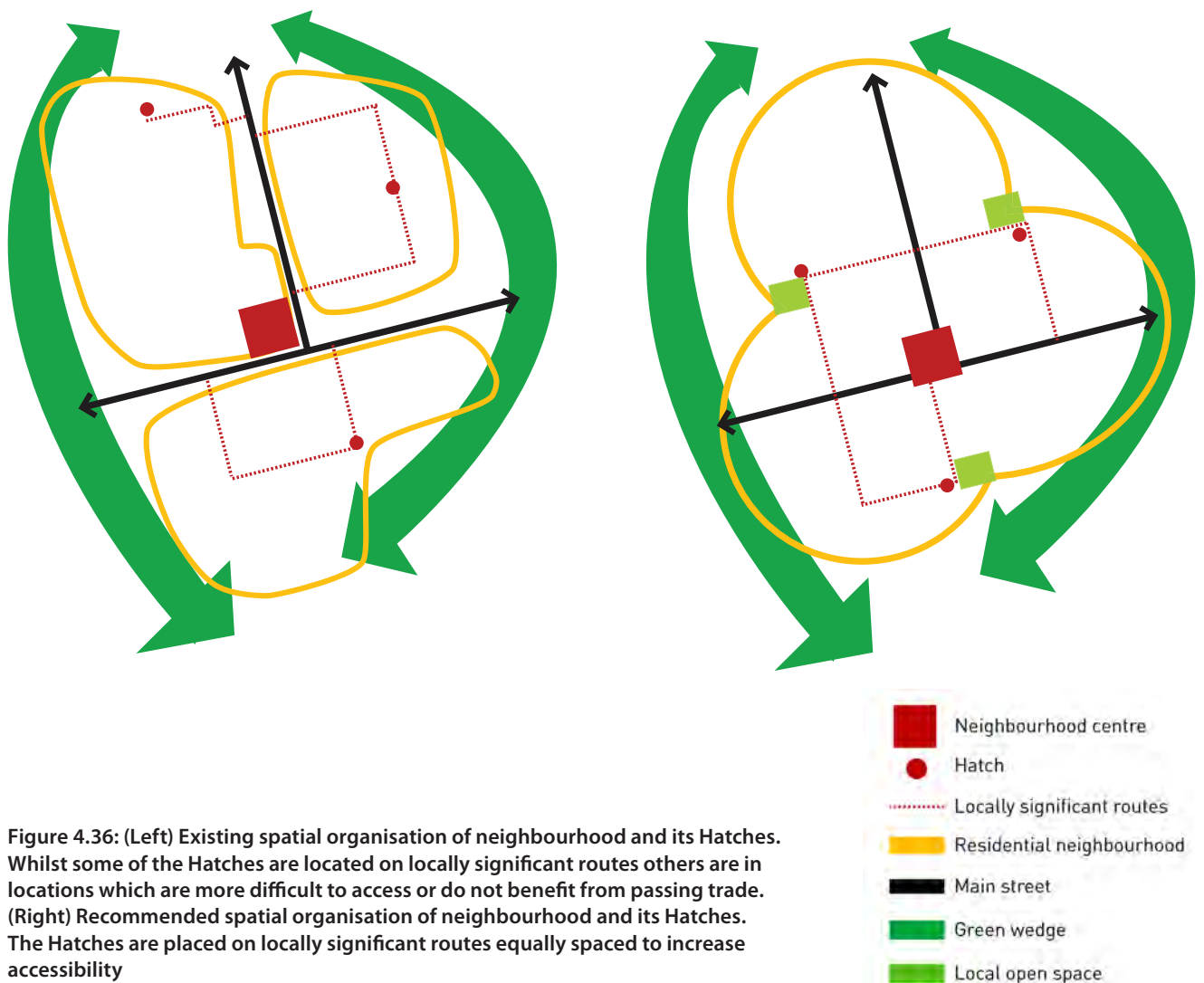
Figure 4.36: (Left) Existing spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its Hatches. Whilst some of the Hatches are located on locally significant routes others are in locations which are more difficult to access or do not benefit from passing trade. (Right) Recommended spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its Hatches. The Hatches are placed on locally significant routes equally spaced to increase accessibility

Neighbourhood centre
Hatch
Locally significant routes
Residential neighbourhood
Main street
Green wedge
Local open space

Design

4.5.10 Buildings within the Hatch should be integrated into the urban fabric and not designed as stand-alone elements. A building height of approximately three-storeys is considered to be appropriate for Hatches. Providing mixed-use buildings with residential upper floors will help to provide security and activity in the evening.

4.5.11 All development within the Hatch should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance and legibility.

4.5.12 The character of Hatches should be distinct from the Neighbourhood Centres. A design approach based upon the principles of 'village greens', where facilities are grouped around a public space will be encouraged.

4.5.13 Ground floor units should be flexible and easily adaptable to respond to the changing needs of the neighbourhood and reduce the likelihood of vacant units.

Figure 4.37: Upton, Northampton provides a local open space with community facilities and residential development adjacent

COMMERCIAL USES

4.5.14 Primary schools should be designed with playgrounds located behind buildings, as buildings and main entrances should be clearly visible from public spaces. The provision for safe arrival of children, staff and visitors requires careful consideration and the design of adjacent streets, access points and school entrance should contribute to reduce traffic speeds. Formal drop off points for cars should be discouraged in order to promote alternative, more sustainable modes of travel to and from schools. Large areas of car parking should be located to the rear of buildings.

4.5.15 Although primary schools will usually be single-storey structures, a taller element may be included to provide a locally legible marker.

4.5.16 Schools should ideally be located adjacent to public spaces which serve a wider area and consideration should be given to allowing shared use of facilities.
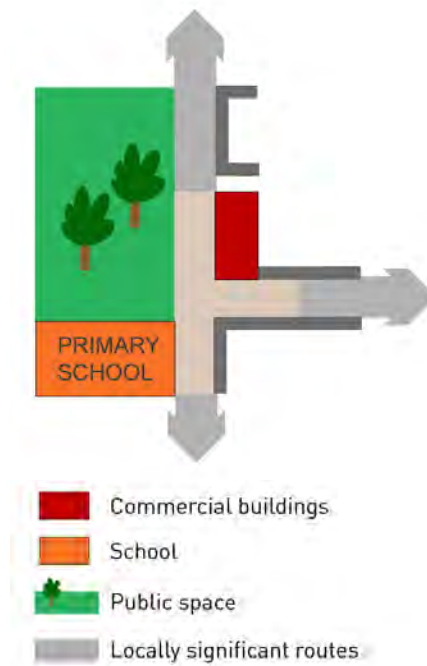

Figure 4.38: Diagram indicates recommended general arrangement of Hatches

Principle DG15: Hatches

Hatches should be positioned on locally significant routes and be accessible for local residents. The design of hatches should reinforce their role as a community hub and ensure that they are attractive and safe places to meet and a focus for the community.

Hatches should be integrated into the urban fabric and not designed as stand-alone elements. A building height of approximately three storeys is considered appropriate in order to make hatches sufficiently legible focal points for the community.

Hatches should front directly on a public space, local open space or a street.

Buildings should form a strong relationship with spaces which they front in order to provide well-defined public spaces.

Hatches should provide a mix of uses to generate activity and natural surveillance through the day and evening. Ground floor units should provide a range of adaptable commercial and community facilities with residential dwellings provided on upper floors.

The provision of community facilities such as health centres, primary schools or playspaces should also be considered in an integrated way in the design and layout of Hatches, in accordance with DG5 on Inclusive Design. Bus stops, cycle parking facilities and pedestrian areas should be provided in a central area.

Principle DG14 on shop frontages also applies to Hatches.

Principle DG16: Improvement of Existing Hatches

The improvement and enhancement of existing Hatches should:

- improve the range and quality of facilities on offer,

- be of similar scale and massing to the surrounding residential area, with the incorporation of an additional storey of development where this is appropriate;

- consider introducing residential accommodation above ground floor commercial units;

- providing active frontages at ground floor level which overlook public spaces;

- enhance the public realm by providing high quality street furniture, landscaping and pavement materials in appropriate locations; and

- reconnect centres with surrounding neighbourhoods and address issues of poor connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists where possible.

Principle DG15: Hatches

Hatches should be positioned on locally significant routes and be accessible for local residents. The design of hatches should reinforce their role as a community hub and ensure that they are attractive and safe places to meet and a focus for the community.

All development within the Hatch should front onto the public realm and make a positive contribution to natural surveillance and legibility

The built facilities of the Hatch should be integrated into the urban fabric and not designed as a stand-alone element. A building height of approximately three storeys is considered to be appropriate for Hatches. Providing mixed-use buildings with upper floors in residential use will help to provide security and activity in the evening.

The character of Hatches should be distinct from the Neighbourhood Centres. A design approach based upon the principles of the 'village green' concept, where facilities are grouped around a public space will be encouraged.
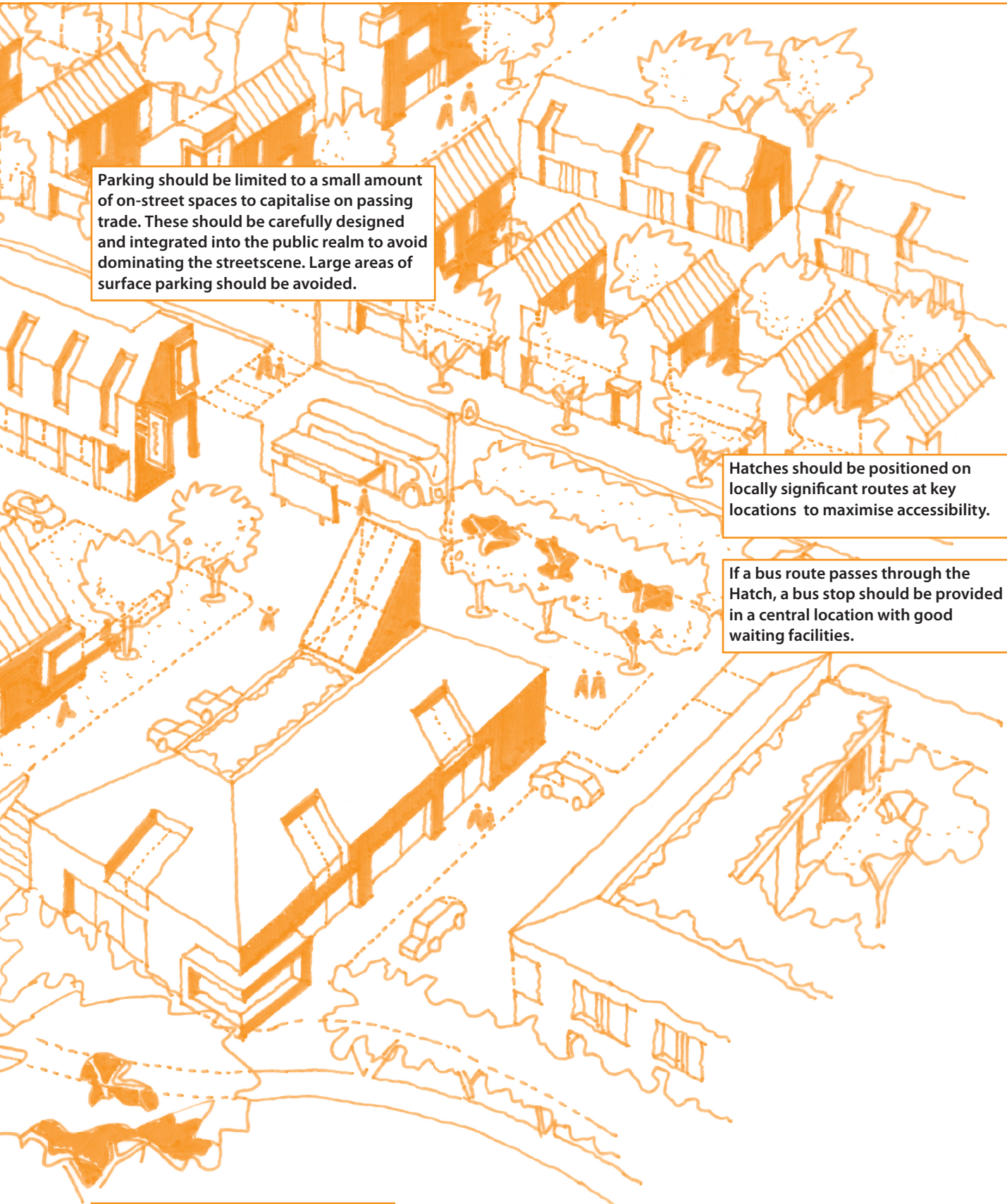
Parking should be limited to a small amount of on-street spaces to capitalise on passing trade. These should be carefully designed and integrated into the public realm to avoid dominating the streetscene. Large areas of surface parking should be avoided.

Hatches should be positioned on locally significant routes at key locations to maximise accessibility.

If a bus route passes through the Hatch, a bus stop should be provided in a central location with good waiting facilities.

Appropriate facilities can include a pub, place of worship, primary school and limited retail development.

Figure 4.39: Existing employment areas

4.6 Employment Areas

Context

4.6.1 There are two existing large-scale employment areas, Pinnacles and Templefields. The Harlow Local Plan contains a policy that aims to safeguarded land in existing general employment areas from development for other uses (policy ER6).

4.6.2 The Local Plan also encourages the regeneration, modernisation and intensification of existing employment sites, which can provide positive opportunities for improving the urban design qualities of places, encouraging new business to locate in Harlow and to raise employment densities.

Figure 4.40: Templefields structure provides active frontage onto the public realm whilst internalising the majority of servicing and car parking

Figure 4.41: West Place employment area within Templefields

Layout and Access

4.6.3 Employment areas should be well served by public transport with good pedestrian connections to residential areas to minimise car use.

4.6.4 New employment development should be structured as a network of connected streets with development fronting the street. Cycleways should be incorporated.

4.6.5 Parking levels should conform to current standards, as set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (Harlow Local Plan policy T9).

4.6.6 Service yards and large parking areas should be internalised within the block of development to avoid these spaces fronting onto public routes and landscape areas. This follows Gibberd's principle that buildings should be located so as to provide a series of 'street pictures' with untidy back areas kept out of public view.

4.6.7 Limited visitor and disabled parking may be provided on the street frontage but keeping building lines to no more than 15 metres from the highway will ensure that a good streetscene is maintained. Visitor parking should be incorporated into the landscape design with tree planting breaking up the visual impact of parked cars.

Figure 4.42: Templefields provides a grid like structure with entrances on to the public realm and servicing internalised

Design

4.6.8 New development and improvements to existing employment areas should aim to focus investment into areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment.

4.6.9 These include structuring employment areas around spine roads which are in the form of boulevards; designing landscaped areas which form focal points for workers and visitors; providing entrance forecourts for individual businesses and designing gateways to provide a strong entrance to and identity for the development. These measures will contribute to the external image and perception of the employment area.

4.6.10 Harlow has a number of physical assets, including areas of open space, natural woodlands and water which employees should be able to see from their workplaces and enjoy in their breaks. New development and improvements to existing employment areas should improve connections to the surrounding landscape and creating open, green vistas through the development to the surrounding landscape.

4.6.11 Building frontage should face the public realm, including open spaces and countryside surrounding the employment areas. This will reinforce the contrast between built form and the natural environment with a positive interface and create a better-overlooked environment.
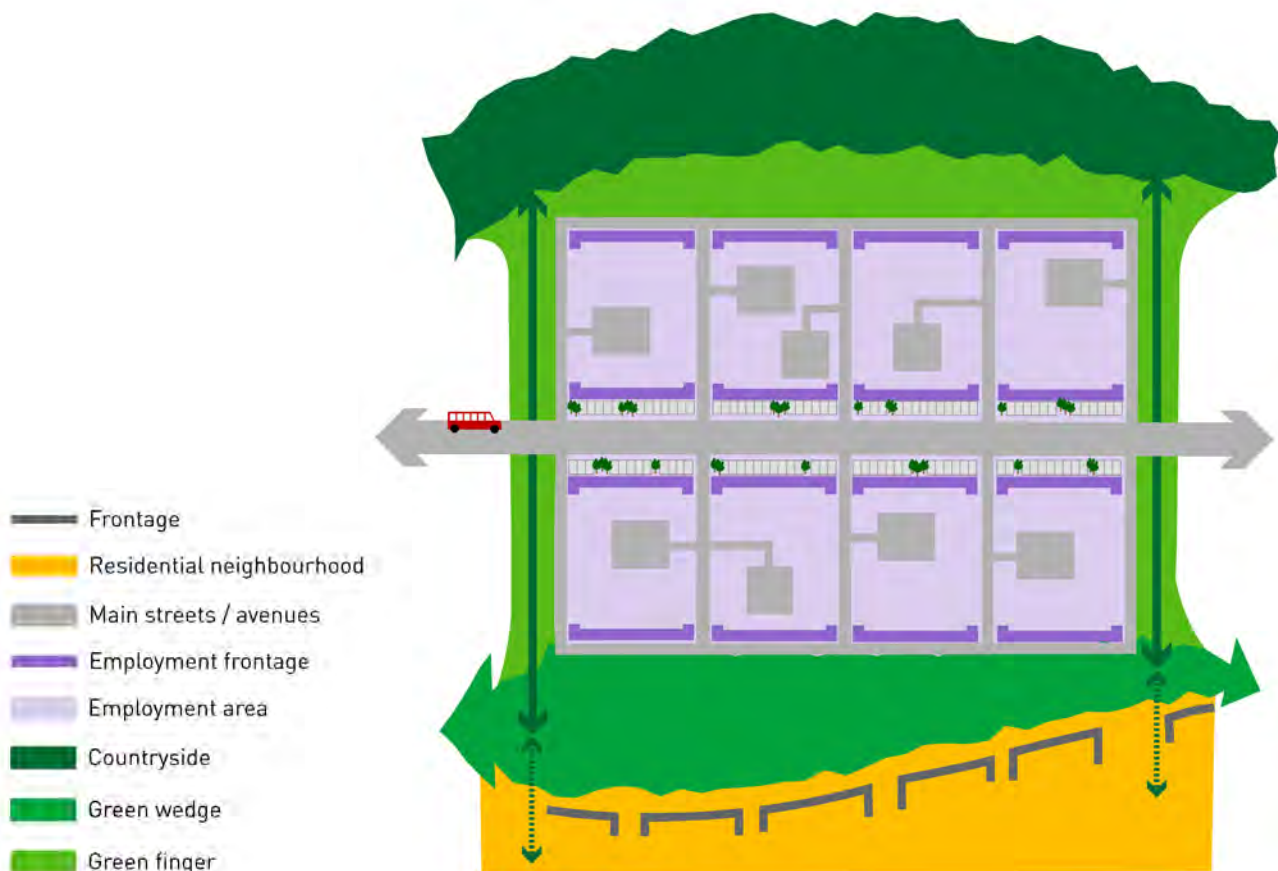

Legend:
- Frontage
- Residential neighbourhood
- Main streets / avenues
- Employment frontage
- Employment area
- Countryside
- Green wedge
- Green finger

Figure 4.43: Diagram of recommended employment area organisation

4.6.12 Whilst it is recognised that the opportunity for active frontages can be limited on large industrial or distribution buildings every effort must be made to avoid large areas of blank frontages adjacent to the public realm.

4.6.13 Building entrances should front onto streets and spaces and make a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility. Entrance areas may be recessed from main elevations in order to create generous covered entrance areas that will aid legibility and provide protection from the weather.

4.6.14 The position of reception areas and office space should be located to positively contribute to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts. Reception areas on corners overlooking entrance areas and forecourts contribute to the surveillance of those areas.

Figure 4.44: Edinburgh Way has the potential to become a higher quality Main Street providing access to business fronting onto the street

Figure 4.45: Corner glazing, entrance forecourts for visitors and entrances fronting onto the street all contribute to providing an active frontage and passive surveillance

4.6.15 Sustainable development is a key objective of the Harlow Local Plan.

4.6.16 Energy use should be minimised by maximising useful, and limiting excessive, solar gains; and by the use of highly efficient systems for space heating, hot water, ventilation (with heat recovery where suitable), and lighting; each with efficient control systems.

4.6.17 Where renewable energy installations are provided these should be integrated into the architectural and landscape design and not included as bolt on additions.

4.6.18 Materials specification should be made with reference to the Green Guide to Specification (or an equivalent). The use of 'C' rated specifications and below will be discouraged. Buildings should also seek to minimise the use of materials with high energy inputs, such as cement and concrete. Materials should be responsibly sourced, locally where this offers the best overall solution, and timber should be from sustainably managed resources. It will also be important to ensure that the materials used are robust, thus eliminating waste from premature replacement of components.

4.6.19 The material arising from demolition and construction should be re-used on site where possible, and sent for recycling or disposal off site where not, thus reducing the direct effects of waste on the environment. Construction waste should be managed in line with the Site Waste Management Plan to be prepared by contractors. Site Waste Management Plans cover general practices on site, the reduction of waste, re-use and recycling and finally waste disposal.

4.6.20 All buildings should be designed and built to provide: adaptability to allow them to be extended without fundamental restructuring or rebuilding; and flexibility to allow for subdivision, or combining, to suit a wide range of users and to cater for the natural variations in sizes of these enterprises during their lifespan. Office (B1) buildings should be designed to have simple, clear, open planned space on a regular grid to allow the maximum flexibility of fitting out. General industrial and storage and distribution uses (B2 and B8) should be capable of adaptation by the insertion of mezzanines.

4.6.21 The use of energy and/or waste strategies specific to end users will be encouraged to minimise energy use and waste.

4.6.22 The design of all buildings should be based on achieving healthy buildings that minimise the risk of allergic reactions.

Principle DG17: Improvement of Existing Employment Areas

The improvement and enhancement of existing employment areas will be encouraged. This includes improving:

• The buildings.

• The public realm surrounding the buildings.

• Connections to surrounding residential areas, open space and Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches.

• Interface between the employment areas and adjoining countryside.
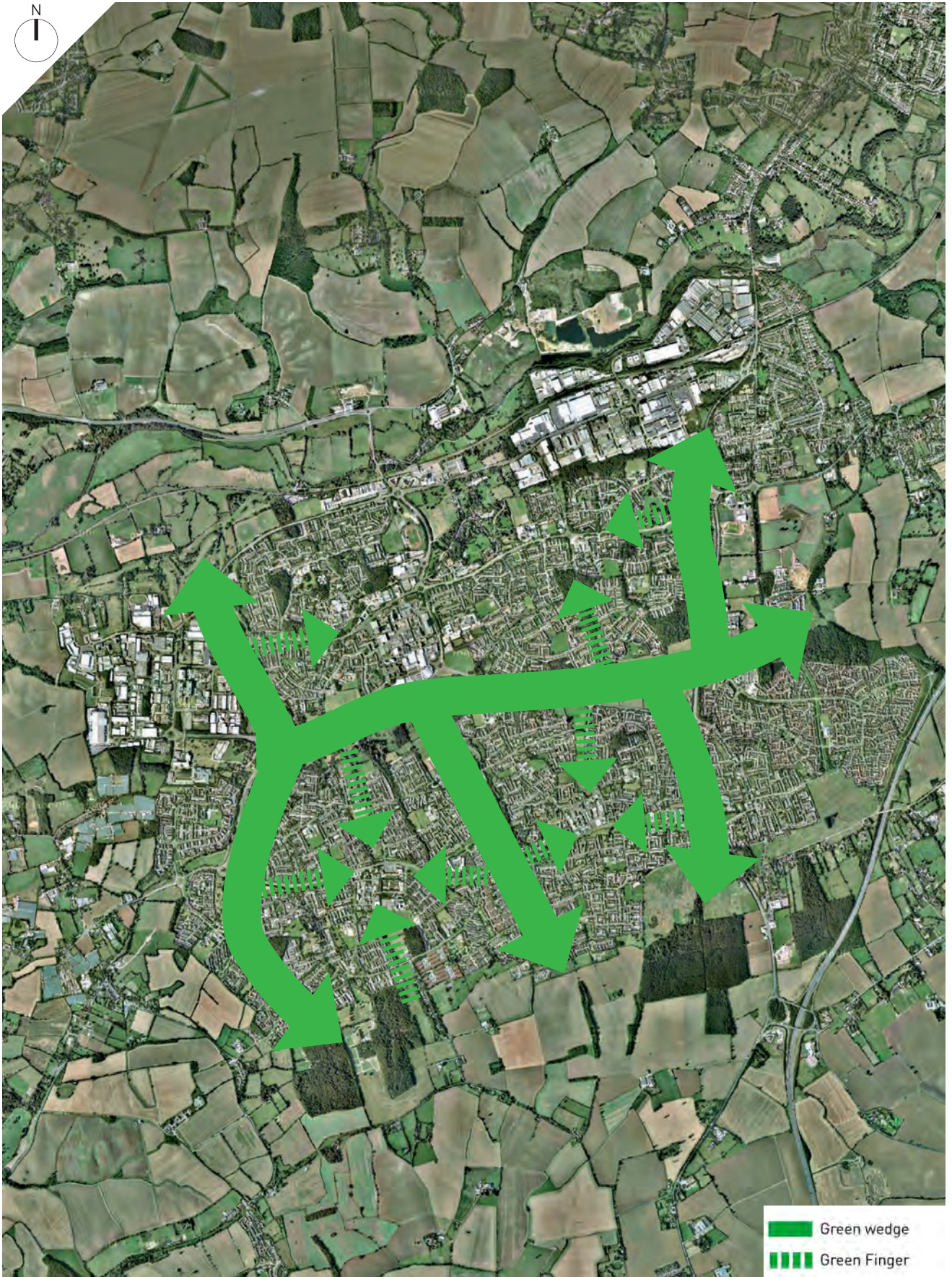
Figure 4.46: Green Wedges separating different neighbourhoods and Green Fingers linking neighbourhoods to Green Wedges

Green wedge

Green Finger

4.7 Strategic Open Space

4.7.1 Harlow was developed with a strong landscape-led approach. This has endowed the town with a generous amount of open space including extensive 'Green Wedges' and 'Green Fingers', bringing the countryside into the urban area.

4.7.2 Green Wedges are large areas of strategic open space based in part upon the valleys such as Todd Brook and Canons Brook which were retained in the original Harlow masterplan. Green Wedges are an enduring legacy from the Gibberd's masterplan (see section 3) and help define one neighbourhood from another. Green Fingers are smaller, linear open spaces that connect to the Green Wedges. For the avoidance of doubt, the Proposals Map will contain the definitive position on the status of open space, and whether it is designated as a Green Wedge

4.7.3 The existing open spaces within Harlow form a network: from larger, more informal and natural spaces as part of the Green Wedges, to playing fields and allotments, to smaller, more local spaces which are used for more defined roles, such as play areas and spaces described as "outdoor rooms" by Gibberd.

4.7.4 This section should be read in conjunction with the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Supplementary Planning Document which sets standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities for schemes of ten or more dwellings and the Green Infrastructure Plan for the Harlow area which provides guidance on how the green areas should be protected, enhanced and, where appropriate, extended.

Landscape Structure

4.7.5 The pattern of any new development should evolve from the existing topography, natural assets and ecologic features.

4.7.6 Large developments, such as urban extensions should form a consistent and positive relationship with the town and will be required to take a landscape-led approach in order to provide proposals which evolve from the existing typology natural assets and ecological features of Harlow.

4.7.7 Development adjacent to open country-side should provide a positive frontage and define a strong settlement edge.

4.7.8 To avoid open spaces being delivered on a fragmented, site by site basis, a strategic approach to the designation of new strategic open space location must be adopted.

4.7.9 The overall structure of proposed development form should establish a design which both contrasts landscape with building groups and welds them into a coherent whole. This follows Gibberd's vision for the town. In practice this means that there should be a clear definition between the built up area and the open space (by maintaining compact development and densities at the edge of the built up area) whilst the built development should have a positive relationship with the open space (by fronting onto it and connecting into it).

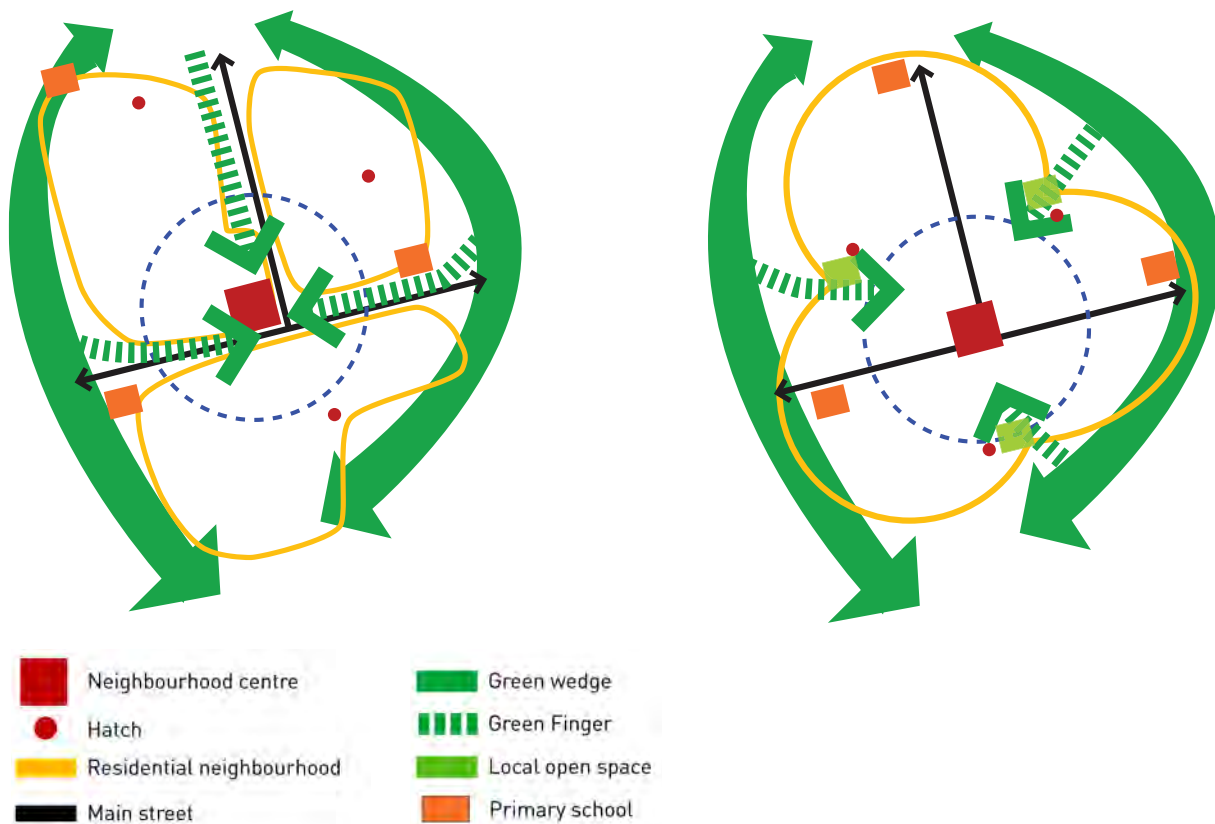|			
■ Neighbourhood centre		▦ Green wedge	
● Hatch		▥ Green Finger	
▬ Residential neighbourhood		■ Local open space	
▬ Main street		■ Primary school	

Figure 4.47: (Left) Existing spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its strategic landscape. Whilst this brings the landscape into the centre of the neighbourhood, it leads to a more dispersed urban form and residual open space. (Right) Recommended spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its strategic landscape.

4.7.10 The large areas of open space allocated for public use in the original masterplan was in compensation for a more urban neighbourhood with relatively dense, compact residential layouts. This principle is very much in line with current best practice and should be adhered to when developing new proposals.

4.7.11 Most of the strategic landscape in Harlow forms part of a successful network with a clear hierarchy offering a variety of spaces with different appearances and functions. Nevertheless there are a few areas where there are open spaces that lack permeability and connections to residential areas. There are also some areas of residual green spaces that serve little recreational or biodiversity function. Inaccessible spaces, open spaces with no surveillance and those without a clear function may risk being under used and become subject to neglect. Improvements to such spaces are encouraged by this Design Guide.

Figure 4.48: The strong landscape-led approach to development in Harlow provides good connections to and from the surrounding countryside

Figure 4.49: The Town Centre occupies a prominent location making it visible from the surrounding landscape

4.7.12 Infill development may be considered on 'leftover' green spaces that contribute little to the town's open space network. This is particularly important on streets where new development could provide positive frontage and surveillance of local routes. Please note that this does not apply to Green Wedges which are protected by policy NE1 of the Harlow Local Plan.

4.7.13 As a general principle, all open space should be fronted by development to create a well enclosed, active and overlooked environment.

4.7.14 Opportunities to improve the connectivity or function of existing green spaces will be encouraged.

Principle DG18: Landscape Features

Masterplans for new development should take into account natural landscape features when proposing locations for new built development.

Development adjacent to open countryside should provide positive frontage and define a strong settlement edge.

Principle DG19: Rural-Urban Interface

Development adjacent to the Green Belt should be responsive to its landscape setting by:

• integrating the edges of development into the surrounding landscape, in accordance with the landscape character of the area;

• mitigating the ecological impact of development by planting native trees and shrubs to provide habitats for wildlife; and

• in the case of industrial areas, making use of planting, screening developments to soften edges and the impact of tall facades of large industrial and commercial buildings.

All new development adjacent to the green belt should comply with the development edge treatment guidelines set out in the Green Infrastructure Plan for the Harlow Area – Volume 2: Guidelines.

Figure 4.50: The master plan for the new town was formed around the protection of natural landscape features and existing areas of woodland

Figure 4.51: Green Wedge with primary school

Figure 4.52: Green Wedge with secondary school

Figure 4.53: Development in Harlow providing a strong edge to a Green Wedge

Green Wedges

4.7.15 The Harlow Local Plan states that Green Wedges are fundamental to the character of Harlow. The Local Plan also establishes the principle that new Green Wedges should be created when masterplanning large-scale new development.

4.7.16 Policy NE1 controls the use of the land in existing Green Wedges. The design of new Green Wedges must ensure they are more than movement corridors for vehicles or simply landscape buffers between neighbourhoods, different uses or phases of development.

4.7.17 New Green Wedges should be of a sufficient width to provide a sense of connecting to the countryside. For example the Green Wedge to the south of Third Avenue is approximately 370m wide and the Green Wedge to the East of Pinnacles is approximately 260m wide.

4.7.18 Secondary schools should ideally be located on the intersection of public transport routes and the Green Wedge to maximise sustainable travel options and provide sufficient space for playing fields.

4.7.19 Development is expected to provide a positive interface with the Green Wedge, therefore back gardens facing onto the open space will not usually be acceptable.

Principle DG20: Green Wedges

Development should maintain the strategic landscape structure of Green Wedges which provide strategic open space for the town. This is particularly important when masterplanning new neighbourhoods, and should be considered when masterplanning new sub neighbourhoods.

New Green Wedges should:

• Be of a sufficient width to provide a sense of connecting to the countryside.

• Accommodate a range of naturalistic, productive and recreational spaces including, for example, natural landscape, woodland, allotments, community gardens/orchards and playing fields and sports facilities.

• Be well-connected to built development to permit easy access to the open space. They should also provide legible and safe walking and cycling routes between adjoining neighbourhoods.

• Provide walking and cycling access to the surrounding open countryside, linking to existing public footpaths and bridleways.

• Provide a setting for new secondary schools and accommodate playing fields and associated outdoor space.

• Provide and enhance strategic walking and cycle routes to the Town Centre and train station, existing employment areas and access to the open countryside.

• Be defined by a strong urban edge with development fronting the open space. Thus providing a positive interface between the development and the landscape and encouraging activity and natural surveillance.

OPEN SPACE

Green Fingers

4.7.20 Green Fingers form intermediate links between the larger strategic spaces (Green Wedges) and more formal local spaces.

4.7.21 Green Fingers should be created where appropriate, for example, when planning a new Hatch to provide a green link between the Hatch's 'village green' and the Green Wedge or open countryside.

4.7.22 Green Fingers should not compromise the connectivity of sub-neighbourhoods, for example, by being located in between a residential area and the Hatch that serves it.

Principle DG21: Green Fingers

Green Fingers should be created where appropriate, and particularly considered when masterplanning residential developments. Where appropriate they should provide green routes for walking and cycling. Vistas to the Green Wedge and open countryside should be considered.

Green Fingers should be multi-functional spaces and include features such as playspaces or a local park.

Green Fingers should accommodate a mix of uses that relate to the local community, and contain areas that promote biodiversity.

The spaces created should be supported be direct frontage to provide a positive interface with the built environment.

Green Fingers should be fronted by development providing a positive interface between the built form and the landscape and encouraging activity and natural surveillance.

Figure 4.54: Mark Hall Green Finger with residential development overlooking the open space and a vista to the church

Public Art

4.7.23 Public art plays a significant part in the character of Harlow's public realm, creating distinctive places as well as forming legible features.

4.7.24 Public art can be delivered in a variety of media, and it should be designed for a specific location in the landscape. The provision of public art should not only consider the art as an item within the public realm, but as a place or focus that the community can actively enjoy. It is important that provision is made for the maintenance of public art.

4.7.25 Landshaping (the use of earth to shape to form landscape mounds, ramps etc) is a notable part of the urban landscape and was supported by Gibberd. The principle of landshaping is supported by the Design Guide and it should be considered as part of the options for integrating public art in new development. Landshaping can be particularly effective when it is designed to have distinctive and identifiable features that can be used for active play.

Principle DG22: Public Art

Public art should be integrated into the public realm of new development. It should be considered at an early stage of the design process to ensure it is well related to the development proposals.

Figure 4.55: Public art within Harlow

Figure 4.56: The use of mounding within the landscape was a prevailing concept of the original Gibberd masterplan. This is a modern interpretation in Newhall.

OPEN SPACE

Views and Landmarks

4.7.26 Views, vistas and landmarks support a legible environment in which it is easy to identify areas and find your way around.

4.7.27 Where possible, the contrast between natural open space and urban environments should be enhanced by creating distinct and well-defined edges to urban areas with buildings that face out over the surrounding landscape.

4.7.28 As outlined in section 4.3, integrating taller buildings in Neighbourhood Centres can provide a visible contrast to the surrounding tree line and help to signal the location of these areas in the urban environment.

Figure 4.57: View to the countryside framed by planting

Figure 4.58: View to the Town Centre

4.7.29 Green Wedges should provide a visual and physical link to the countryside. Therefore views from the Green Wedges, and where possible, Green Fingers, should provide long views to the countryside. Tree screening should be considered to protect the rural character of some of these views.

4.7.30 Locations of potential significance for the legibility of the urban environment, such as important gateways, junctions or centres, should be identified at an early stage of the development process to enable an appropriate design response. Such locations may be suitable for a landmark. This may take the form of landscaping, public realm, public art and/or built form.

4.7.31 The frame and setting of landmarks, in particular where a building is proposed, is of additional importance in establishing a sense of place and identifiable views.

4.7.32 The potential to integrate views and vistas (of both local and strategic significance) to enhance the setting of the urban environment should be considered in all development proposals .

Principle DG23: Views and Landmarks

Potential locations for landmarks should be identified through the Local Development Framework process, through masterplanning or in pre-application discussions with the Council to ensure they are proposed in areas where they will contribute to the wider legibility of the town.

The potential to integrate views and vistas should be considered in all development proposals.

Sustainable Drainage

4.7.33 An integrated and sustainable approach should be undertaken to open space and drainage to reduce surface water run-off and potential flood risk, and to improve water quality and biodiversity.

4.7.34 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) can be successfully implemented as part of creating inviting and active places, enhancing biodiversity and providing natural environments in urban areas. Proposals for the landscape and public realm should incorporate sustainable drainage systems that will benefit of the local community as well as the environment, for example, green roofs, attractive swales, urban water features and ponds.

4.7.35 Natural watercourses can also be incorporated into the SUDS system with the addition of attenuation and filtration ponds and floodable swales.

4.7.36 Some forms of sustainable urban drainage systems may not be appropriate for use in all locations, however, the full range of potential SUDS should be considered. Provision for management and maintenance of SUDS is critical to prevent them becoming ineffective, potentially increasing overland flows and consequently having an impact on the sewerage network'

4.7.37 The inclusion of green walls and roofs within new or existing developments (as well as proposed street trees) not only increase biodiversity, they can alleviate flood risk, absorb dust, airborne pollutants and carbon dioxide, they improve visual aesthetics, regulate temperatures as well as insulating buildings and so reducing energy demand.

Figure 4.59: Sustainable urban drainage in Upton, Northampton

Principle DG24: Sustainable Drainage

Design solutions at every scale of open space provision, from Green Wedges to building design, should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

Design should aim to maximize the provision of green infrastructure within, as well as adjacent to development to contribute to a holistic sustainable drainage solution.

OPEN SPACE

Principle DG20: Green Wedges

Development should maintain the strategic landscape structure of Green Wedges which provide strategic open space for the town. This is particularly important when masterplanning new neighbourhoods, and should be considered when masterplanning new sub neighbourhoods.

Principle DG23: Views and Landmarks

The potential to integrate views and vistas should be considered in all development proposals.

Green Fingers form intermediate links between the larger strategic spaces (Green Wedges) and the more formal local spaces.

Development is expected to provide a positive interface with the Green Wedge, therefore back gardens facing onto the open space will not usually be acceptable.

Green Wedges should accommodate a range of naturalistic, productive and recreational spaces including, for example, natural landscape, woodland, allotments, community gardens/ orchards and playing fields and sports facilities.

Principle DG24: Sustainable Drainage

Design solutions at every scale of open space provision, from Green Wedges to building design, should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

Principle DG22: Public Art

Public art should be integrated into the public realm of new development. It should be considered at an early stage of the design process to ensure it is well related to the development proposals.

Green Fingers should be multi-functional spaces and include features such as playspaces or a local park.

Where possible, the contrast between natural open space and urban environments should be enhanced by creating distinct and well-defined edges to urban areas with buildings that face out over the surrounding landscape.

Green Wedges provide a setting for new secondary schools and accommodate playing fields and associated outdoor space. Secondary schools should ideally be located on the intersection of public transport routes and the Green Wedge to maximise sustainable travel options and provide sufficient space for playing fields.

Local open space

Figure 4.60: Existing local open space in Bush Fair neighbourhood

4.8 Local Open Space

4.8.1 The Harlow Local Plan defines all open areas outside the curtilage of existing buildings that are not Green Wedge, Metropolitan Green Belt or any other specified use as 'internal open spaces'. These open areas vary in nature and include playing fields, public open spaces, recreation grounds, parks, playgrounds, woodland and landscaping belts.

4.8.2 Internal, or local, open spaces have a stronger urban character, being mostly within housing areas, and facilitate recreational uses within close proximity of homes.

4.8.3 Harlow is well endowed with recreational and sporting facilities and it is important to protect this legacy in the town and to ensure new development makes an appropriate contribution to the open space network.

4.8.4 The Harlow Local Plan sets out polices for the protection of existing open space (policy L1 and L3) and the provision of open space associated with new development (policy L2).

4.8.5 The Open Space, Sport & Recreation SPD sets standards for the provision of playing fields, children's playing space, allotments and internal open space for schemes of ten or more dwellings, and should be read in conjunction with this section.

Local Open Space

4.8.6 Local open spaces (or internal open spaces as they are sometimes referred to in Harlow) should form part of the overall open space network and adhere to the principles of good urban design. These spaces must make a positive contribution towards the townscape.

4.8.7 It is important that open spaces are high quality and have a specific role or function in order to avoid residual, unused or neglected open spaces.

4.8.8 Consideration should be given to the maintenance of the local open spaces, and provision should be made for the ongoing cost of maintenance of the space
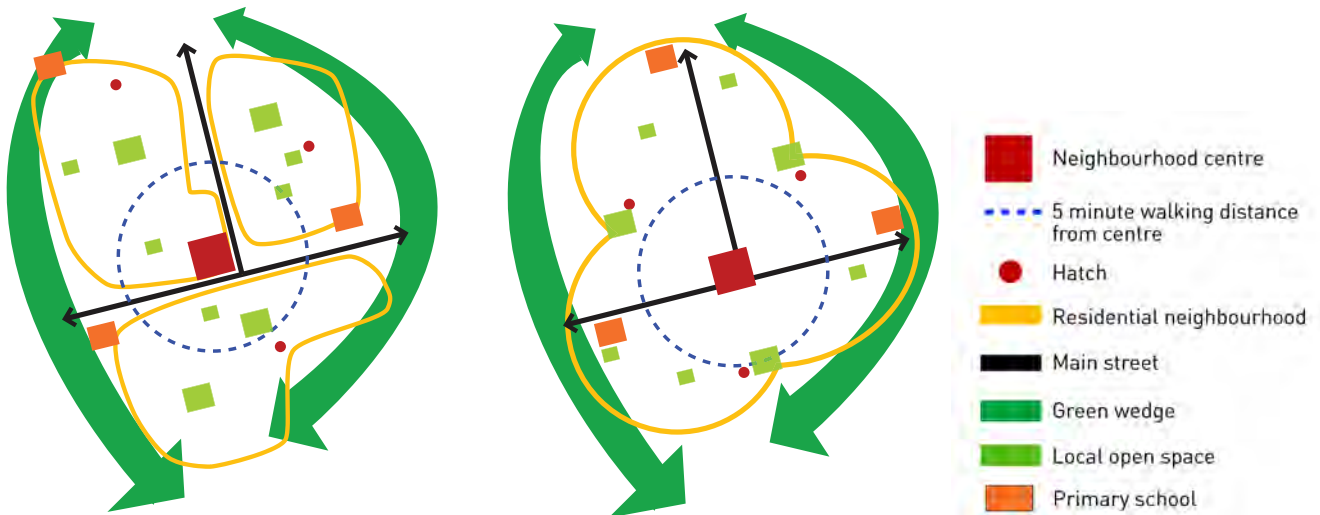
Figure 4.61: (Left) Existing spatial organisation of neighbourhood and local open space. (Right) Recommended spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its local open space. Individual residential neighbouhoods are well connected to each other and local open spaces provide a link to Green Wedges

4.8.9 Open spaces should be designed to accommodate users of different ages and the needs of adult users should be considered alongside children's needs. For example, seating areas can be provided in attractive, sheltered settings for older people; paths (especially where they connect to other open spaces) can provide routes for cycling, jogging and dog walking; picnic areas and outdoor gyms can encourage greater use of the space. The opportunity for productive open space, such as community orchards or communal gardens should also be considered.

4.8.10 The size of local open spaces should be related to the height of enclosing development to provide an appropriate sense of enclosure. Local open spaces should be fronted by development to provide natural surveillance.

4.8.11 Where furniture and equipment are provided, they should be robust and durable in their design and materials.

4.8.12 The local context should be reflected in the design of internal open space. This could be achieved through the use of landscape, materials, trees and other planting and street furniture.

4.8.13 Opportunities to improve the wildlife and biodiversity value of open spaces should be maximised.

Principle DG25: Local Open Spaces

Local open spaces should be of the highest quality. Their layout and design should relate to the wider townscape. Spaces should be overlooked by development to provide natural surveillance and a sense of enclosure.

Local open spaces should be functional and appealing to use as well as being attractive and related to local context. Potential users of the space should be identified and space, equipment, furniture and landscaping to meet the needs of these users should be designed in from the outset. Adults as well as children's needs should be accommodated in internal open spaces.

The size of local open spaces should be related to the height of enclosing development to provide an appropriate sense of enclosure. Local open spaces should be fronted by development to provide natural surveillance.

Figure 4.62: Image of well-overlooked open space at East Park, Harlow with mature trees providing local amenity space

Figure 4.63: Small, incidental local open spaces in an historic image of Harlow

Principle DG26: Playspaces

Playspaces in Harlow should be designed to inspire children. They should be of the highest quality and provide safe, inclusive, attractive, interesting and creative spaces. They should incorporate natural landscape features as well as formal play equipment. Playspaces in Harlow should be of a bespoke design and relevant to their local context.

Playspaces

4.8.14 The siting of playspaces needs to take into account the surrounding context to ensure that disturbance to surrounding residential properties is minimised. Factors to consider will be the intended age of the children using the playspace, the size of the playspace facility and the proximity to existing residential properties.

4.8.15 Playing is important to children's well being. It helps to develop their physical abilities and their emotional responses. Where play is collaborative, it can improve their interpersonal skills. Where it involves exploration and creativity, it can help children think in a flexible manner and develop learning and problem solving skills.

4.8.16 Playspace should be provided within housing areas, and accessed without the need to cross main roads or busy streets. It should be overlooked by development to help provide a well-surveilled space.

4.8.17 The broad specification of LEAPs and NEAPs is prescribed in terms of their size, the age groups they cater for and the number of items of manufactured play equipment they should accommodate. Nevertheless, it is important to also ensure these spaces incorporate learning environments and natural landscape to enable contact with nature.

4.8.18 Playspaces should be accessible to all children. Reference should be made to existing national guidance on inclusive play, Including Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces (Play England, August 2008) and Public Space Lessons: Designing and planning for play (CABE, October 2008).

Figure 4.64: Well-overlooked playspace in Newhall, Harlow

Figure 4.65: A well-overlooked playspace in Upton, Northampton

Principle DG25: Local Open Spaces

Local open spaces should be of the highest quality. Their layout and design should relate to the wider townscape. Spaces should be overlooked by development to provide natural surveillance and a sense of enclosure.
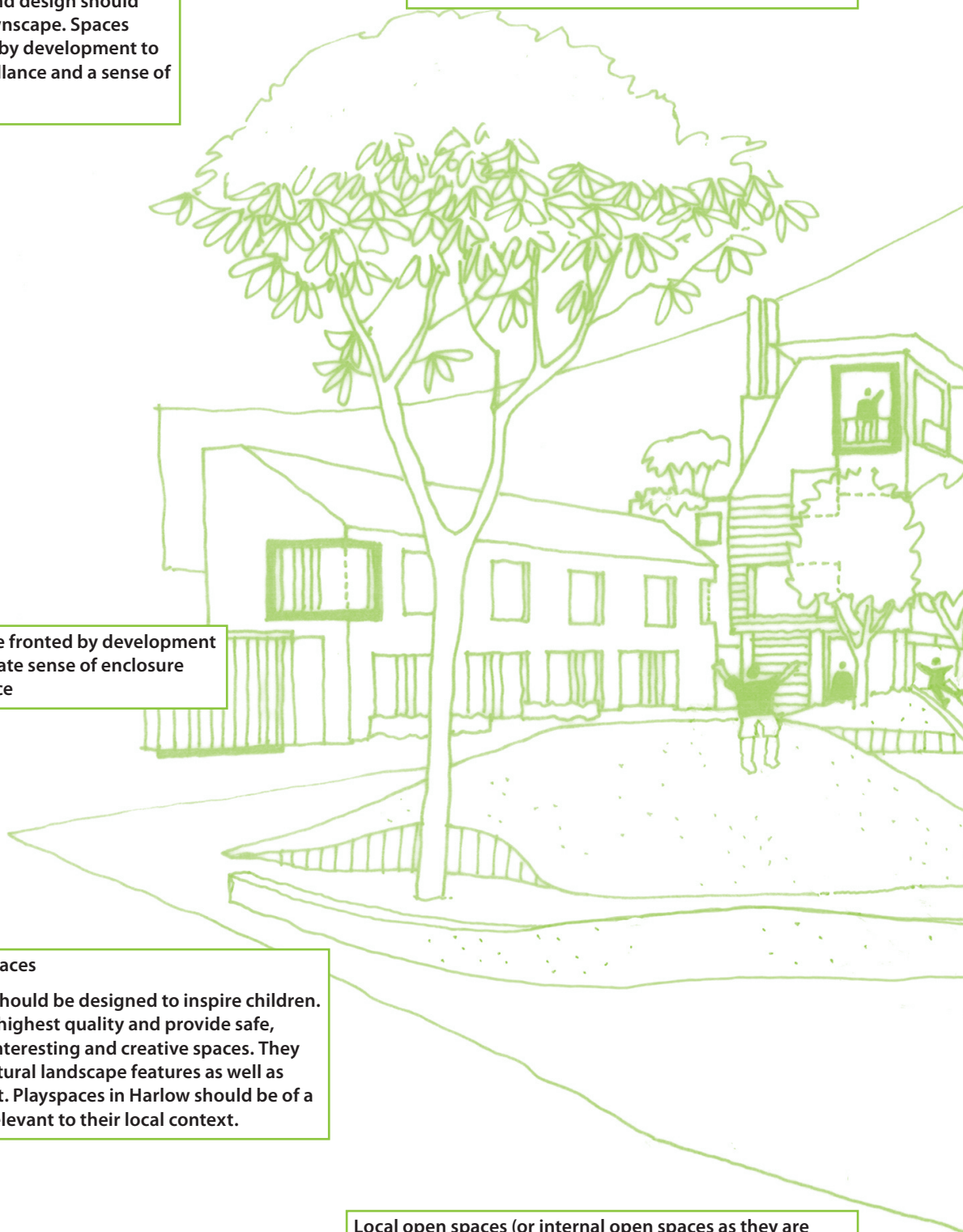
Playspace should be provided within housing areas, and accessed without the need to cross main roads or busy streets.

Open spaces should be fronted by development providing an appropriate sense of enclosure and natural surveillance

Principle DG26: Playspaces

Playspaces in Harlow should be designed to inspire children. They should be of the highest quality and provide safe, inclusive, attractive, interesting and creative spaces. They should incorporate natural landscape features as well as formal play equipment. Playspaces in Harlow should be of a bespoke design and relevant to their local context.

Local open spaces (or internal open spaces as they are sometimes referred to in Harlow) should form part of the overall open space network and adhere to the principles of good urban design. These spaces must make a positive contribution towards the townscape.

Principle DG35: Open Fronts

The principle of open fronts should be applied particularly where this is the prevailing New Town character. This can be achieved through a range of solutions and the approach adopted should be appropriate to the building design as well as the character of the street. The design of open fronts should clearly distinguish private front gardens from other areas of the public realm. When designing open fronts applicants should also comply with principle DG37 and ensure that refuse and recycling facilities are designed in a way which is consistent with original character and purpose of open fronts.

THIS AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS HARLOW'S DISTINCTIVE HOUSING GROUPS

4.9 Building Design

4.9.1   Whilst building design was not prescriptively drawn up in the founding principles for Harlow, there are established criteria that permits a structured approach to the design of buildings.

4.9.2   Masterplans must make possible great places through considering how groups of buildings sit within the landscape; how groups of buildings relate to each other and how individual buildings within the groups relate to each other.

4.9.3   Policy BE1 of the Harlow Local Plan requires that all new buildings should relate to their setting to strengthen, enhance or protect local character.

Figure 4.66: Distinctive architectural design contributing to the character of the place, Harlow

Figure 4.67: Distinctive architectural design providing a strong edge to the landscape, Harlow

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Housing Groups

4.9.4 Housing in Harlow has been developed in housing groups each with approximately 150 to 500 dwellings, each with a distinctive style. This pattern of development created a variety of innovative, architectural solutions but avoided creating an architecturally disjointed composition due to the selection of architects, the use of materials (usually brick with some render or timber features) and the prevailing architectural style of the 1950s maintaining a coherent language throughout.

4.9.5 Large scale new development will be expected to create 'housing groups' with distinct characters. Variety should be provided within the context of creating a cohesive sense of place. This can be achieved by establishing a palette of materials from the outset and/or a consistent architectural approach. In addition, ensuring that the design of streets and streetscape elements are treated consistently can help to visually link different styles of development.

4.9.6 Excessive or tokenistic variety, should be avoided as it will form an incoherent character. Housing groups which are too large and result in the replication of bland architectural styles on a mass scale should be avoided as this reduces the sense of place and can result in monotonous urban sprawl lacking in character or identity.

4.9.7 Variety in the types of properties provided, in terms of, for example, their typology, unit size and layout is encouraged to provide a range of living spaces to suit different family sizes and needs in Harlow. This is encouraged by Local Plan policy H4. The layout and arrangement of buildings within a housing area and the provision of appropriately designed landmarks should improve legibility.

Figure 4.68: Housing areas should avoid variety for variety's sake. Varying the style, colour, scale etc. of every building can sometimes lead to a confused aesthetic and become visually distracting

Figure 4.69: Image of Newhall development, Harlow. Housing groups of approximately 50 units with similar architectural style . It is important that in large scale developments, designers avoid creating excessive architectural variety across housing groups. This can be achieved by establishing a palette of material from the outset and/or taking a consistent design approach

Figure 4.70: Image of original Harlow housing. Larger housing groups with a consistent architectural style created coherent streets but allowed individual expression through colour and materials

4.9.8 Guidance on the tenure of new development is provided in the Harlow Local Plan and the Local Development Framework. From a design perspective, mixed tenure developments are preferable to single tenure developments to create mixed and balanced communities. Separation by circulation core can be an effective way to make mixed tenure blocks of flats work.

4.9.9 Much of Harlow has been laid out at densities slightly higher than was typical in other post-war New Towns. The result is a distinctive pattern of housing, which often incorporates terraces of two or sometimes three storey houses. Guidance on the density of new development is provided in the Harlow Local Plan and the Local Development Framework.

4.9.10 From a design perspective, the relationship of building plot and frontage width is important to achieving more efficient land use. Narrower plot widths can be used to create a more elegant, vertical proportion for front elevations and a fine grain of building frontage, which maximises the number of entrances onto the street. Control over plot widths should be considered when masterplanning new development.

Figure 4.71: Example of a common building line, clearly defining a local open space

Building frontage relates to a common building line

4.9.11 This includes the arrangement or layout of the buildings, and how they enclose a space. The general placemaking principles in design principle DG2 on building lines, active building frontage and building heights should also be adhered to in respect of new housing development.
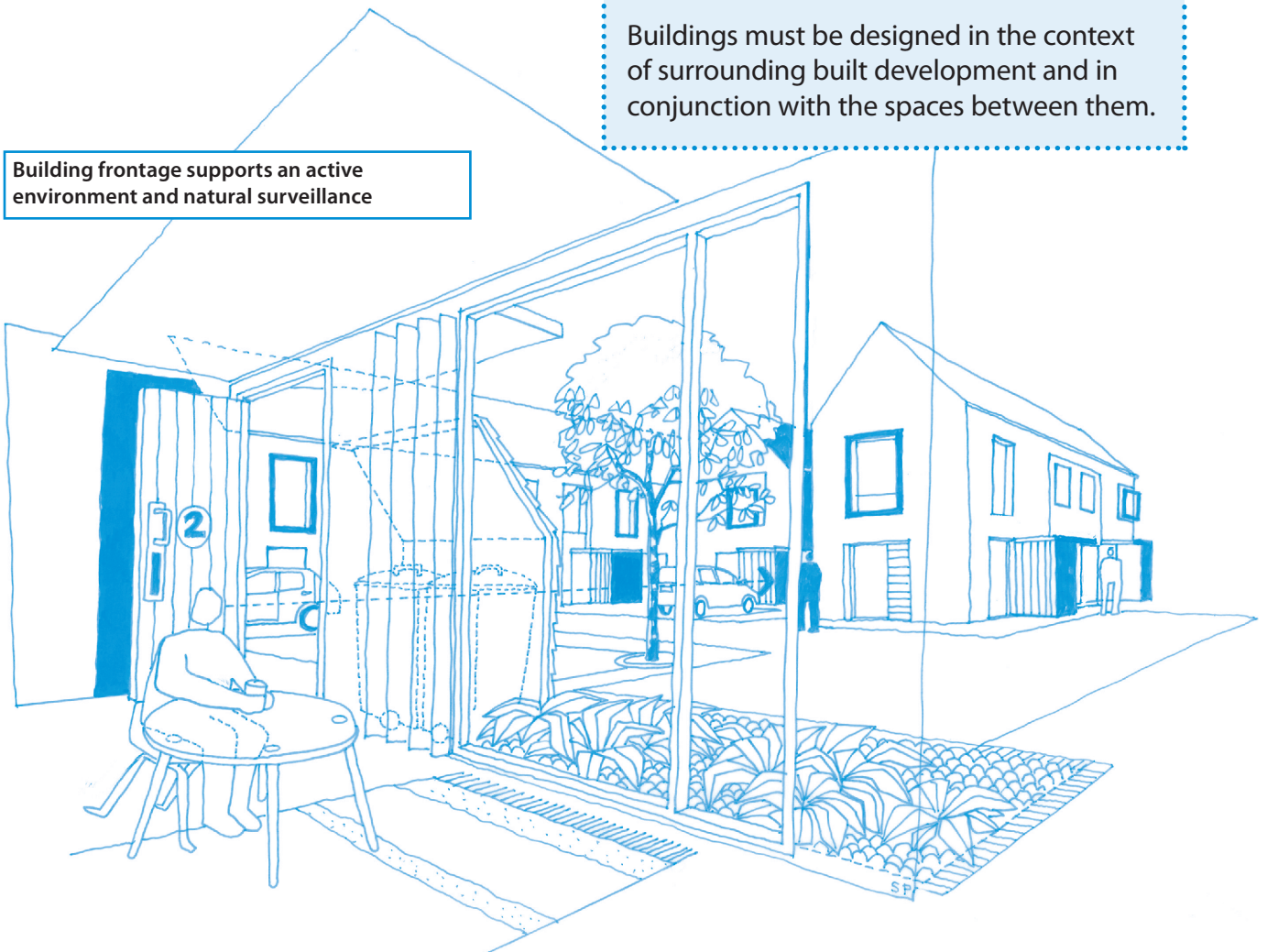
Building frontage supports an active environment and natural surveillance

Infill Development

4.9.12 In addition to the principles outlined above on housing groups, infill development must respect and respond to the character within the existing housing groups. This character is normally manifested in the grain of development, plot widths, interface conditions, rooflines, projections and other design features.

4.9.13 The framework for a characterisation study provided in section 2 (table 1) may help shape proposals for infill development.

Appearance and Materials

4.9.14 In keeping with the spirit of Harlow, new development must demonstrate high quality, contemporary design and building form. Progressive contemporary architecture should be embraced as part of Harlow's ongoing tradition of design evolution.

4.9.15 The external appearance of residential development should develop from its internal arrangement and not as "bolt-ons" to standard house types.

Principle DG28: Infill Development

Small-scale residential infill development will be considered against the following criteria. The development should positively respond to the prevailing character of the area by being appropriately designed with regard to:

• Intensification: The development should not represent an overdevelopment of the plot. This includes not developing in the gardens of existing dwellings where the result would present an over-intensification of the plot. The distance between buildings, the prevalent building line and typical garden sizes will be taken into account in assessing this. The privacy, outlook and daylight and sunlight exposure of existing and proposed dwellings will also be considered.

• Scale: The new buildings should be of a similar scale, massing and height to surrounding buildings. The plot width should also be similar to the surrounding precedent.

• Design: The design of rooflines, projections, entrances and the building materials used should follow the prevailing character of the area, unless (i) exceptionally high quality design is proposed and (ii) the location of development is suited to an exceptional building.

• Front boundary: The front boundary treatment should be consistent with neighbouring properties (including where there are open fronts) and any landscaping and vegetation provided should be complementary.

• Access: There should be sufficient space for users (including those with mobility needs) to safely and conveniently access the new dwellings without adversely affecting neighbours.

• Parking: There should be sufficient car parking spaces provided for the proposed development, either on-street or on-plot, using the parking levels set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards as required by Harlow Local Plan policy T9. Insufficient parking may be used as a reason for refusal if this Local Plan policy is not met. Refer to Principle DG32 on residential parking.

4.9.16   In general, the use of generic, nationally-applied standard house types will be discouraged where they are proposed for large numbers of properties.

4.9.17   All properties should be tenure blind. This means that there should be no difference in external appearance between affordable housing and private housing.

4.9.18   Where housing overlooks public space, there should be a focus on creating attractive and visually interesting facades. For example, where there are terraced properties overlooking public spaces, first floor balconies can be introduced to create a strongly expressed horizontal datum line that provides a unifying element to the terrace. This can provide visual interest and additional modeling to otherwise flat facades.

4.9.19   The more successful housing groups in Harlow use a limited palette of natural materials – notably brick and clay roof tiles to create bold massing and compositions with unfussy lines. At its best, the simplicity of detailing many of these houses can create a timeless and robust appearance that transcends architectural fads or fashions.

Privacy

4.9.20   The specification of minimum distances between buildings can often lead to standardised layouts which can compromise the principles of compact urban neighbourhoods.

4.9.21   In addition to the distance between properties, there are a number of solutions that can be employed to maintain privacy including: use of opaque glazing or louvres; detailed design measures such as appropriate positioning of windows (staggered or otherwise), arrangement of habitable rooms to reduce direct views; and creating varied floor levels. Infill development (such as mews typologies) can incorporating single aspect dwellings to maintain privacy.

4.9.22   Guidance on boundary conditions and privacy strips is covered in section 4.10.

Principle DG30: Privacy

New development should demonstrate how privacy will be maintained whilst designing to the principles of a compact urban neighbourhood.

Principle DG29: Residential Design

Contemporary and innovative housing design will continue to be encouraged in Harlow.

There should be no difference in external appearance between affordable housing and private housing.

A context-appropriate palette of good quality materials should be used for new residential development with a preference for local materials and/or materials with low embodied energy. The durability and resistance to weathering of materials is also an important concern. For larger new development a palette of materials should be developed from a characterisation study of the area and agreed with the Council.

Passive Surveillance

4.9.23 "Secured by Design" is an initiative run by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) supporting the principles of 'designing out crime'. There are many similarities between the core principles of "Secured by Design" and contemporary urban design principles.

4.9.24 The foundations of both approaches are based upon:

- Clearly defining public and private spaces

- Ensuring that all public areas are overlooked by adjacent buildings, to increase 'eyes on the street'

- Ensuring private spaces are secure and also well overlooked

4.9.25 Passive surveillance can be achieved by ensuring streets and spaces are overlooked by ground floor habitable rooms, upper floor windows and avoiding the creation of 'dead spots'.

4.9.26 'Blank' gable ends (those devoid of windows or doors) should be avoided where they face onto public streets or spaces.

4.9.27 In order to avoid blank gable ends, corner building should 'turn' the corner, providing an active frontage to both streets.

Principle DG31: Passive Surveillance

Development should be designed to ensure that streets and public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings.

Private spaces should be clearly defined and secured where they are to the side and rear of properties.

4.9.28 Corner locations are particularly suitable for flatted blocks, 'L' shaped buildings, and single aspect dwellings, maintaining continuity of built frontage and incorporating corner windows and entrances wrapping around the flank.

4.9.29 Designers are encouraged to develop innovative solutions for the treatment of corners that incorporate this and other solutions such as upper floor projections, balconies, varied roof and ridge levels that aid legibility, improve the surveillance of the street and contribute to the overall character.

4.9.30 Access points to the rear of buildings should be controlled, for example by means of lockable gates. Property boundaries, particularly those at the side and rear, which adjoin public land, need to be secure. Windows should not provide easy access from public land.

Figure 4.72: Newhall, Harlow. Corner building with fenestration 'turning the corner'

Off-Street Parking and Parking Courts

OFF-STREET PARKING

4.9.31 When designing off-street (on-plot) parking, it is important that the visual impact of the parked car is mitigated either by ensuring vehicles are not situated forward of building line where an open front is required and screened by planting where front gardens are acceptable. Where off-street parking is integrated within the frontage of the building, it should be carefully designed to avoid blank frontages.

4.9.32 Garages and carports are best incorporated within wide frontage dwellings, which enables 'active rooms', such as living rooms and kitchens, to be provided fronting the street at ground floor level. Where car parking is incorporated in narrow frontage dwellings, balconies or bays at first floor level are one useful means of creating interest and activating the frontage.

4.9.33 When designing carports, the use of visually transparent gates, rather than garage doors, can be beneficial in ensuring the car and the rear of the properties are secure, whilst allowing glimpses into rear gardens and avoiding the spaces being used for general storage.

4.9.34 Further guidance on parking is provided in the Essex's Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (2009)

Figure 4.73: The Essex Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (ECC, 2009)

Figure 4.74: Garage integrated into the design of the dwelling, minimising dead frontage

Figure 4.75: Carports integrated into the design of a two storey terrace in Newhall

FRONT PARKING COURTS / SQUARES

4.9.35 Front parking courts (or parking squares) can be efficient solutions, where they double up as shared surface, pedestrian-friendly spaces. Front parking courts require careful design, including the integration of landscape features to avoid vehicles dominating the public realm.

4.9.36 Where front parking courts are proposed, they should be designed as attractively landscaped, safe public spaces which are overlooked by development.

REAR PARKING COURTS

4.9.37 Parking options to the rear of blocks in rear parking courts should only considered once on-street and on-plot options have been exhausted. Guidance on on-street parking is provided in section 4.2. Best practice guidance in Car Parking, What Works Where (English Partnerships, 2006) suggests that rear courts should serve no more than six homes.

4.9.38 Where rear block parking is necessary, it should be small scale, immediately adjacent to properties and naturally surveilled. On-plot parking should be designed to ensure that the visual impact of the parked car is mitigated and blank frontages are not created.

4.9.39 Where rear parking courts are proposed, it should be small scale, immediately adjacent to properties and naturally surveilled.

4.9.40 Where parking is provided to the rear of apartment buildings, entrances from the parking area should not substitute for the main entrance(s) to the building (which should be to the front of the building, visible from the public realm). If an entrance from the car parking area is necessary, it should ideally provide access into the main entrance hall.

Figure 4.76: Parking courts at Newhall are used sparingly to provide additional parking capacity

Principle DG32: Residential Parking

A comprehensive car parking strategy should be produced for new developments which should contain a combination of parking solutions, including on-street parking (see section 4.2) to meet the parking standards set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (Harlow Local Plan policy T9).

On-plot parking should be designed to ensure that the visual impact of the parked car is mitigated and blank frontages are not created.

Where front parking courts are proposed, they should be designed as attractively landscaped, safe public spaces which are overlooked by development.

Where rear parking courts are proposed, it should be small scale, immediately adjacent to properties and naturally surveilled.

Private Open Space

4.9.41 One of Gibberd's founding principles was the condition of 'urbanity'. Housing is concentrated more than is usual in urban areas, and the land thus saved is added to the landscape between neighbourhoods in the form of Green Wedges.

4.9.42 Developing land efficiently by designing to higher densities is a current housing objective and the Harlow Local Plan and the Local Development Framework provide guidance on appropriate densities to use when designing residential development.

4.9.43 All dwellings should preferably have private outdoor space provision. This open space should be appropriate to both the type and the size of accommodation.

4.9.44 For example, large detached or semi-detached family houses should have larger gardens which can accommodate outdoor seating for the family, space for play and space for drying clothes. There should also be sufficient space for a small shed or greenhouse. Smaller houses and terraced properties should have smaller gardens which can still accommodate either seating or playing space and space to dry clothes. Flats should also accommodate private open space where possible. This can be in the form of private balconies, roof terraces or ground-floor patios. Private balconies should ideally be of a sufficient size to accommodate a table and seating for the number of occupants of the flat as a minimum.

4.9.45 Rear private gardens should be treated as an extension of the living space of the house. They should not front onto the public realm as this presents a poor interface to open space and can present a security risk to the property.

4.9.46 Front gardens are not characteristically associated with Harlow. Gibberd's principle of 'open fronts' meant that the front of a property was classed as part of the public realm rather than a private space. Guidance on boundary conditions at the front of properties and privacy strips are dealt with in section 4.9.

Principle DG33: Private Open Spaces

All development should have some private open space. This can be provided in the form of a private garden, patio or balcony, dependent on the type of dwellings being provided.

Where no ground floor gardens are proposed, communal gardens should be provided, with balconies provided on higher floors. Communal gardens should be designed in accordance with DG34.

Where no private space is provided within a new development, applicants will be expected to justify why private open space cannot be provided.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Communal Gardens

4.9.47 When designing flats, communal gardens should be incorporated to the rear of blocks to provide visual amenity and outdoor space for residents. Soft landscaping should be prioritised over areas of hard standing and consideration should be given to designing in outdoor seating, eating, drying and growing space. Research undertaken by Urban Initiatives in 2009 has shown that residents of communal apartment blocks appreciate communal space, particularly when it has a clear function.

Principle DG34: Communal Gardens

Communal gardens should provide visual amenity and outdoor space for residents.

Soft landscaping should be prioritised over areas of hard standing and areas should not be dominated by vehicle parking.

Consideration should be given to including in outdoor seating, eating and playing areas. Communal gardens should be well-defined spaces which have a clear function and purpose. They should require low levels of maintenance and not result in dead or unused spaces.

Communal gardens should be overlooked by habitable rooms in order to provide natural surveillance and a sense of ownership. A clear distinction should be made between private plots and communal areas.

Where neither private open space or communal gardens are provided, applicants should justify why this is not achievable.

4.10 Building Interface

Boundary Conditions

4.10.1 The Harlow principle of 'open fronts' is based on creating a sense of place and means that the ground immediately in front of dwellings is left open as a space common to all instead of being enclosed by a private front garden.

4.10.2 Instead of a solid boundary, such as a wall or fence in front of properties, a transitional approach to separating the private from the public realm using planting and contrasting materials is used to mark out a privacy strip between the building line and the public realm. This principle should be applied to future development.

4.10.3 At a functional level, the privacy strip can provide access to a building, and could provide a potential location for outdoor seating, planting and utility meters. At a visual level, it should aide privacy, provide interest and variety through floor treatment, landscaping and usage and therefore, contribute to the character of a street. 25% of the privacy strip should be maintained as soft landscaping.

4.10.4 Parking on the privacy strip should be avoided to maintain the strong visual contrast between open public spaces and building frontage.

4.10.5 A layered approach can help define a more private threshold space whilst maintaining the open front concept. The definition of space between street and front door can be created through a range of measures, such as:

- Ground surface materials

- Landscaping

- Projections in building elevations

- Recessions in building elevations

Principle DG35: Open Fronts

The principle of open fronts should be applied particularly where this is the prevailing New Town character. This can be achieved through a range of solutions and the approach adopted should be appropriate to the building design as well as the character of the street. The design of open fronts should clearly distinguish private front gardens from other areas of the public realm. When designing open fronts applicants should also comply with principle DG37 and ensure that refuse and recycling facilities are designed in a way which is consistent with original character and purpose of open fronts.

Figure 4.77: Example of open fronts in Harlow New Town

Figure 4.78: Example of open fronts in Newhall Harlow

Entry

4.10.6 All building entrances should be welcoming and easily identifiable to help improve legibility. The scale and style of an entrance should relate to its function. The more important the function of the building, the more impressive the entrance should be. For example a public building will have a larger and more prominent entrance than a house.

4.10.7 To add animation to the streetscape and create active street frontages, main entrances to houses, ground floor flats and maisonettes, houses-over-houses, communal entrances for flats and non residential uses should directly face onto the street or public mews and be easily visible from the public realm.

4.10.8 Entrances should make a positive contribution to the street in respect of surveillance and legibility and provide protection from the weather.

Figure 4.79: Legible covered entrance, Newhall Harlow

Figure 4.80: Apartment entrance articulated to add animation to the streetscape

> **Principle DG36: Entrances**
>
> Main entrances to all residential development should be welcoming, easily identifiable, accessed from the street and be easily visible from the public realm.

Refuse and Recycling Storage

4.10.9 There is an inherent conflict between the integration of external features such as bin and recycling stores, cycle storage and utility services to a property and the necessity for active frontages and passive street surveillance.

4.10.10 Refuse and recycling storage and collection facilities should be designed to be convenient and easily accessible, integrate with the surrounding environment and be as unobtrusive as possible.

4.10.11 If sited at the front of the property, they should be appropriately screened visually from the public footpath or enclosed in a well-ventilated cupboard. They should be designed into developments so as to avoid large areas of blank frontages.

4.10.12 Current requirements in Harlow for low-rise properties are for two wheeled bins (approximately 600x800 millimetres footprint) and a kitchen caddy (approximately 350x400 millimetres). The best solution would be to integrate a purpose built store area, but alternative approaches may be acceptable.

4.10.13 Any solution that results in the bins potentially obstructing entrances, windows and utility services will not be acceptable. The Council seek adherence to British Standards for waste management in buildings. Discussions should be held with the Council's waste operations manager prior to submission of any application.

4.10.14 Flats and sheltered housing normally have communal refuse areas. It is important to provide sufficient, secure well-ventilated space that is readily accessible from the road for ease of collection.

Principle DG37: Refuse and Recycling

Refuse and recycling storage and collection facilities for residential development should be designed to be convenient and easily accessible. Solutions should reduce the visibility and impact of refuse bins on the street scene.

Storage facilities should integrate well with their surrounding environment and be as unobtrusive as possible. They should be located in a position where they are accessible for residents and accessed directly from the property, not via an alleyway or basement. They should be of a suitable size to accommodate all the refuse containers to meet the needs of residents for both general waste and recyclable waste and house refuse containers of a size acceptable to the refuse collection service.

Refuse storage facilities should ensure that passive surveillance of the street is maintained and entrances and utility services are not blocked. They should not result in dark recesses and should not result in a cluttered or shabby appearance.

On open fronts, the design of refuse and recycling facilities should ensure that the character and original purpose of open fronts is maintained.

Meters and Services

4.10.15 Enclosures for utility services and meters should be discreetly located so they do not provide a dominant element on principal elevations within the street scene. Such boxes should be placed where they enable meter reading without the need to access the dwelling.

4.10.16 Designers should explore the potential of integrated external storage for secure daytime deliveries (for example, local food boxes) and/or to accommodate the provision for cycle storage.

4.10.17 In apartment blocks, all flats should ideally have separate external letterboxes.

Principle DG38: Meters and Services

Enclosures for utility services and meters must not dominate the building frontage and solutions must be harmonious with the overall architectural design of the property.

Principle DG39: Satellite Dishes and Roof Fixings

Satellite dishes, antenna, aerials, lift over-runs, plant and flues should not be easily visible from the public realm.

Solar panels and wind turbines should be designed to have no detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the public realm nor on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Satellite Dishes and Roof Fixings

4.10.18 Permitted development rights for microwave antenna, such as satellite dishes, are provided in Class E of the permitted development regulations. Where satellite dishes conform to the specified size and placement conditions, and the property is not in a Conservation Area (nor is a Listed Building) they do not require planning permission.

4.10.19 Normal domestic TV and radio aerials do not need planning permission.

4.10.20 In many cases, the installation of solar thermal or photovoltaic panels to the roof of a single dwelling may not require planning permission. For this to apply, there are a number of important conditions which must be observed. Building Regulations approval will be needed before installation of the panels.

4.10.21 Installing a wind turbine (whether wall or roof mounted) will currently require planning permission regardless of the size of the turbine. Visual impact and noise intrusion should be minimised and will be assessed in consideration of the planning application. Building Regulations approval will also be needed.

4.10.22 Further information can be sought from the Council's planning department or the publication 'Permitted Development for Householders: Technical Guidance' (Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2010).

Principle DG29: Residential Design

Contemporary and innovative housing design will continue to be encouraged in Harlow.

Principle DG29: Residential Design

A context-appropriate palette of good quality, durable and sustainable materials should be used for new residential development.

Principle DG30: Privacy

New development should demonstrate how privacy will be maintained whilst designing to the principles of a compact urban neighbourhood.

Principle DG27: Housing Groups

Large scale new development will be expected to create 'housing groups', each with a distinct character. A cohesive character should be achieved through the careful use of building materials and architectural styles.

Principle DG31: Passive Surveillance

Development should be designed to ensure that streets and public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings.

Private spaces should be clearly defined and secured where they are to the side and rear of properties.
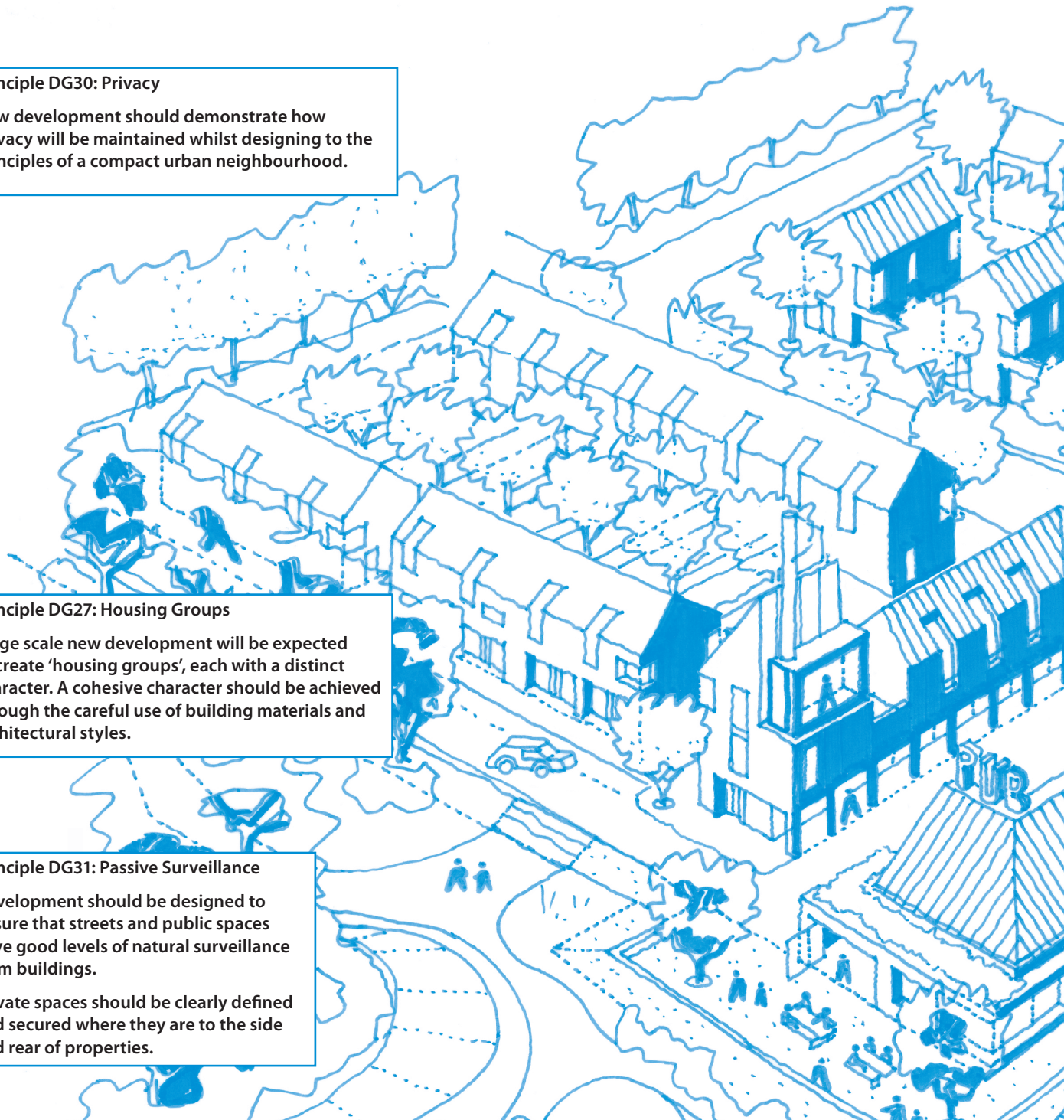
Variety in the types of properties provided, in terms of, for example, their typology, unit size and layout is encouraged to provide a range of living spaces to suit different family sizes and needs in Harlow.

Continuous building frontage should be provided to support an active environment and natural surveillance.
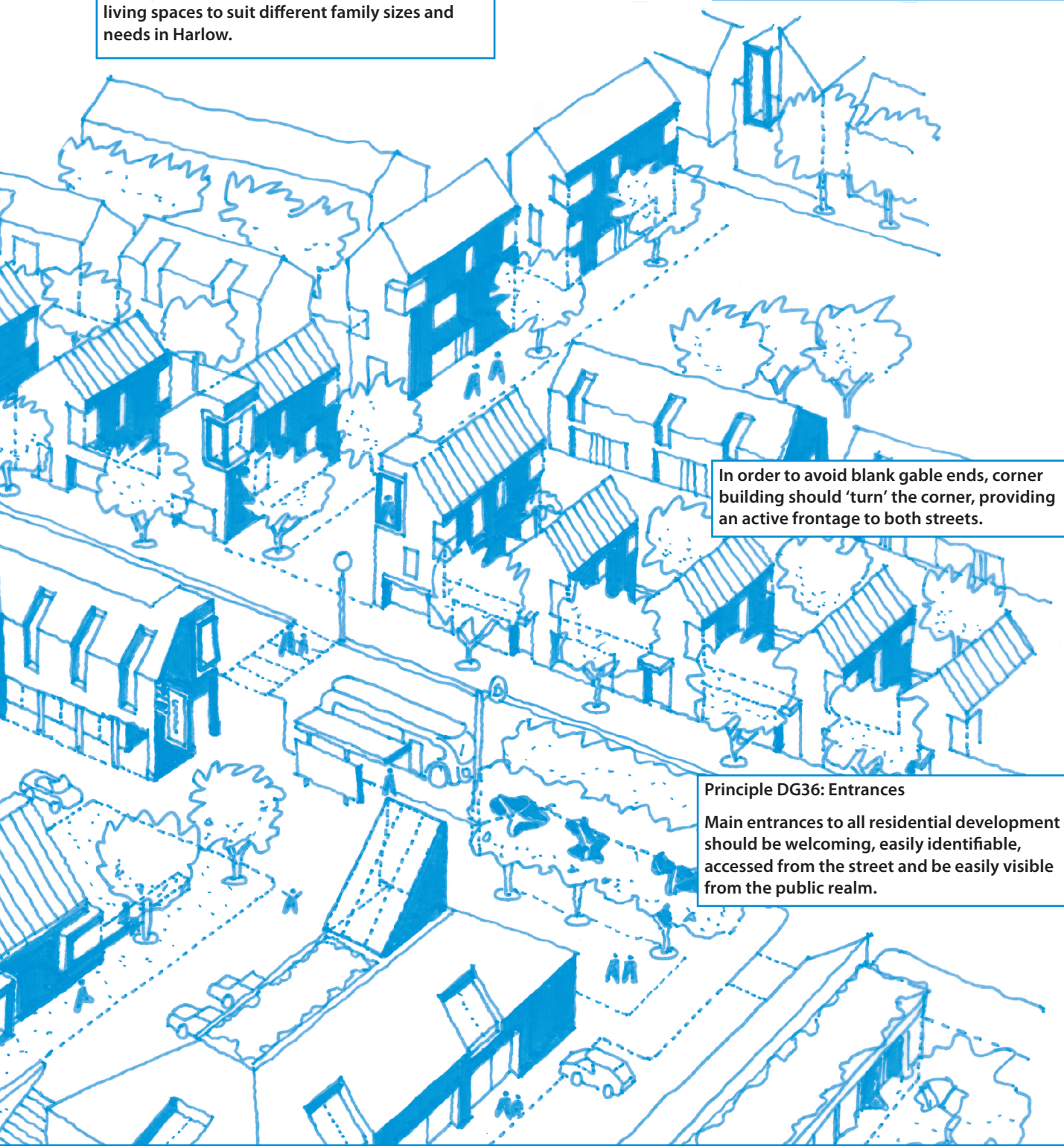
In order to avoid blank gable ends, corner building should 'turn' the corner, providing an active frontage to both streets.

Principle DG36: Entrances

Main entrances to all residential development should be welcoming, easily identifiable, accessed from the street and be easily visible from the public realm.

4.11 Building Performance

Environmental Performance

4.11.1 The Code for Sustainable Homes (the Code) is an environmental impact rating system for housing, setting new standards for energy efficiency and sustainability which are not mandatory under current building regulations but represent an important step towards limiting the environmental impact of housing.

4.11.2 The code works by awarding new homes a star rating from 1 to 6, based on their performance against nine sustainability criteria which are combined to assess the overall environmental impact. One star is entry level above building regulations, and six stars is the highest, reflecting exemplary developments in terms of sustainability.

Principle DG40: Energy-Efficient Design

To help ensure energy-efficient design:

• Homes should not be single-aspect which may cause homes to overheat (if south-facing) or create additional heating demands (if-north facing)

• South facing windows that maximise natural daylighting and warmth should be favoured for habitable rooms where possible

• Homes should be designed to facilitate cross ventilation to assist in naturally cooling properties in warm weather

• Homes should be effectively and efficiently insulated

• Skylight and patio-door windows can be considered to maximise access to natural light in properties

4.11.3 The sustainability criteria by which new homes are measured are:

• Energy and CO_2 Emissions (the operational energy demand and resulting emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere)

• Water H_2O & Surface Water Run-off (the change in surface water run-off patterns as a result of the development, the consumption of potable water)

• Materials (the environmental impact of construction materials for key construction elements)

• Waste (the waste generated as a result of the construction process and facilities encouraging recycling of domestic waste in the home)

• Pollution (the pollution resulting from the operation of the dwelling)

• Health and Well-Being (the effects that the dwelling's design and indoor environment has on its occupants)

• Management (the steps taken to allow good management of the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the home)

• Ecology (the impact of the dwelling on the local ecosystem, biodiversity and land use)

4.11.4 The Code for Sustainable Homes became operational in England in April 2007 and a Code rating for new build homes became mandatory from May 2008.

4.11.5 There is no current mandatory minimum standard of the Code for new residential development in England. However, the current Government is committed to ensuring that all new homes are zero carbon from 2016 onwards. Changes will be introduced through the Building Regulations to meet this target. Therefore, this Design Guide does not set a mandatory minimum Code level.

4.11.6 Nevertheless, the Harlow Local Plan gives support to proposals that are environmentally-sensitive. The Local Plan also supports energy-efficient design, waste minimisation and water conservation. Development proposals should therefore ensure they take account of the following policies which promote good environmental design.

Principle DG41: Water-Efficient Design

To help ensure water-efficient design:

- The use of external hard surfaces should be minimised, giving preference to permeable surfaces

- On-site sustainable drainage systems (such as attenuation and infiltration ponds, swales and strips) should be provided and should be integral to the landscaping of the scheme

- Rainwater collection schemes (for example water butts) should be incorporated and the potential to water recycling should be considered

Principle DG42: Other Environmental Design Principles

Where possible, existing mature landscape, trees and shrubs should be retained in the development of a site.

Facing materials that are natural tend to weather well and will help maintain the character of existing streets. These traditional materials can be combined with modern construction techniques to enhance building performance.

Lifetime Homes Standard

4.11.7 Policy H7 of the Harlow Local Plan states that all new housing development proposals will be required to take account of the needs of those with disabilities and special needs.

4.11.8 All buildings should be designed so that they are adaptable and flexible enough to support changing needs of users in the future. This is important for the sustainability of the properties as well as for the convenience of the occupants.

4.11.9 The design of new buildings (residential and non-residential) should demonstrate adaptability and flexibility incorporating elements such as:

- Higher than minimum floor-to-ceiling heights

- Structural party walls or widely spaced columns to allow for open plan living and flexibility in internal room and space configurations

- Use of demountable internal partitions, standardised elements and other modular components to allow for changes in internal rooms, upgrades and reuse of components

- The ability to readily extend residential properties over time through loft extensions, single storey extensions to the rear and/or the building of satellite buildings at the rear of the plot

- The incorporation of Lifetime Homes standards

4.11.10 The Lifetime Homes standard is run by the Lifetime Homes Group which consists of Help the Aged, Age Concern and Habinteg. The idea behind the standard is that homes which incorporate the 16 Lifetime Homes design criteria can be adapted at minimal cost to accommodate people who have mobility difficulties and other disabilities.

4.11.11 Wheelchair accessible homes should be designed in accordance with recognised guidance such as Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (Habinteg, 2006). These homes should be positioned in highly accessible locations.

Principle DG43: Flexible and Adaptable Homes

To permit flexible use and adaptation, all buildings should be designed to provide:

- Adaptability to allow them to change use and to be extended without fundamental restructuring or rebuilding; and

- Flexibility to allow internal layouts and rooms to be changed or expanded, again without fundamental restructuring or rebuilding work.

Principle DG44: Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Accessible Homes

Developers should develop a proportion of homes as Lifetime Homes, designed to the Lifetime Homes 2010 standards. The proportion is to be set by the Core Strategy.

Developers are encouraged to provide a proportion of homes, across all tenures, to recognised Wheelchair housing standards.

These homes should be positioned in highly accessible locations with easy access to shops, local services and public transport routes.

Space Standards

4.11.12 One of the objectives of the Harlow Local Plan is to ensure that new residential development is sustainable and of high quality.

4.11.13 Homes should be designed to be functional; meeting the demands of everyday life and providing enough space and facilities, such as privacy and storage, to enable residents to live comfortably and conveniently.

4.11.14 Whilst space standards are not currently mandatory in Harlow, the Council encourages developers to adopt the minimum space standards set out in the table below. These space standards are set at what is considered to be a minimum standard for fit-for-purpose homes.

4.11.15 The standards are organised by house type and unit occupancy. They have been developed with reference to a significant body of evidence and are designed to ensure that there will be sufficient space within the home for normal furniture requirements, storage space and activity spaces to support the home being used up to full occupancy.

Principle DG45: Functional Homes

Homes should be designed to be functional and fit-for-purpose. They should provide sufficient space and facilities (including privacy and storage), to enable homes to be occupied comfortably and conveniently at full occupancy.

Principle DG46: Space Standards

Applicants are encouraged to use the minimum space standards for new residential development set out in table 2.

Where these are not meet, applicants should justify why these cannot be achieved.

Unit Type	1B 2P (Flat)	2B 3P (Flat or bungalow)	2B 3P (House)	2B 4P (Flat or Bungalow)	2B 4P (House)	3B 5P (Flat or Bungalow)	3B 5P (House)	3B 5P (House)	4B 6P (Flat of Bungalow)	4B 6P (House)	4B 6P (House)
No. of people	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
No. of bedrooms	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
No. of bathrooms	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
No. of additional WC's / shower rooms to bathroom	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
No. of storeys	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3
Minimum GIA (Floor Area) m²	48	61	71	70	80	86	96	101	99	109	114

Unit Type:
- 1 storey home
- 2 storey home
- 3 storey home

Table 2: Space standards (from Design and Sustainability Standards: Supporting Evidence Base, Homes and Communities Agency, March 2010)

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

4.12 Residential Extensions

4.12.1 Some extensions and alterations to residential property are classed as 'permitted development', that is, it does not require planning permission. All other extensions and alterations will require planning permission. Guidance on whether permission is needed can be sought from the Council's planning department or the publication 'Permitted Development for Householders: Technical Guidance' (Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2010).

4.12.2 Policy BE1 of the Harlow Local Plan requires that all extended buildings should relate to their setting to strengthen, enhance and protect local character.

4.12.3 For the purpose of this document, extensions include conservatories, garages, loft conversions and porches.

4.12.4 Verandas, balconies (with the exception of 'Juliet' balconies with no platform) and raised platforms (any platform with a height greater than 300 millimetres, including roof terraces) are not permitted development and will require planning permission.

Covenants

4.12.5 Most homes in the former Harlow New Town have covenants contained in their transfer documents. This means that approval (from the Landlord/Council) will be required to release the covenants for various works and activities, including the installation of windows of altered proportions, the installation of a dish antennae, the conversion of a garage, removal/alteration of lawn areas, trees and shrubs affected by covenants and running a business from home.

Figure 4.83: Side extension subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic window detail

Figure 4.84: Side extension with unsympathetic window detail

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

General Principles

4.12.6 All planning applications for extensions and alterations will be considered on their individual merits.

4.12.7 In general, proposals for the extension of properties should take into account the following principles:

- The design of any extension should be well integrated with the existing dwelling, being of an appropriate size and height, a similar grain and having similar features (such as roof type and windows).

- The extension should be visually subservient to the original dwelling. This can be achieved through reduced ridge and eaves height and stepping the elevation back so the proportions of the original dwelling remain legible. This is particularly important where dwellings are in a consistent housing group and where the proportion and rhythm of the dwellings contribute to the character of the streetscape.

- Roof types should be determined by the form of the main roof of the original dwelling.

- Extensions should be constructed with materials similar to the existing dwelling and, where possible, incorporate energy efficiency measures.

- There should be no material overlooking or overshadowing of adjoining properties and the effect on visual amenity for neighbours should be minimised.

4.12.8 There may be other policies within the Harlow Local Plan or this Design Guide which may be relevant to the proposed extension, for example, if the proposal occurs in a Conservation Area or in or near a Green Wedge. The policies in sections 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 of this Design Guide also apply to extensions where relevant.

Principle DG47: Residential Extensions

Proposals for the extension of properties should respect the size, grain, height, materials, features and layout of the building to be extended, as well as the surrounding buildings. Overshadowing of neighbouring properties should be minimised and consideration should be given to their visual amenity in developing proposals.

Principle DG48: Rear, Side and Front Extensions

Rear, side and front extensions will be assessed in terms of:

- The general principles for extensions

- Their appearance in relation to the main dwelling

- Their appearance in the street scene (if relevant)

- Their effects upon the neighbouring property (if relevant)

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Rear extensions

4.12.9 Rear extensions will generally not be visible from the street. Where this is not the case, for example, if the house is on a corner, the scale and form of the extension needs careful consideration to ensure it does not negatively impact on the streetscene.

4.12.10 Since rear extensions are most likely to affect neighbouring properties, particularly if they are two storey, it is necessary to ensure that all rear extensions do not have a significant impact upon adjacent properties in terms of privacy, overshadowing, loss of daylight and sunlight, overlooking, visual impact or loss of visual amenity.

4.12.11 Roof types should be determined by the form of the main roof of the original dwelling.

Figure 4.85: Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including the use of contemporary architecture and materials

SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION FOR TERRACED AND SEMI-DETACHED PROPERTIES

4.12.12 Extensions should ensure that there is no adverse effect on adjacent residents by way of overlooking or overshadowing.

SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION FOR DETACHED PROPERTIES

4.12.13 Extensions should ensure that there is no detrimental effect in terms of overshadowing or overlooking on nearby properties.

TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION FOR TERRACED AND SEMI-DETACHED PROPERTIES

4.12.14 Applications for such extensions to flat backed rear elevations will normally be refused as such applications are likely to result in material overshadowing. However, subject to aspect, proposals may be acceptable if the adjoining neighbour has a similar extension or if the rear elevations of the dwellings have different projecting elevations. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, side windows will be discouraged.

4.12.15 In all cases, the 45 degree rule (see figure 4.88) will be applied to avoid the overshadowing effect which determines the overall depth of the extension.

TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION FOR DETACHED DWELLINGS

4.12.16 Applications will be considered on their merits subject to the general design principles and provided there are no detrimental effects in terms of overshadowing or overlooking on nearby properties. The 45 degree rule should be applied at the second level.

Side Extensions

4.12.17 Extensions should be of a width no greater than two-thirds of the width of the existing dwelling, should aim to be coherent and in-line with the front elevation and should be integrated by the use of matching or similar materials.

4.12.18 In sensitive areas, such as Conservation Areas, extensions should be set back by at least one metre from the front elevation so that they do not detract from the façade of the dwelling unless there is a clear design rationale for not doing this.

4.12.19 Unless there are exceptional circumstances side windows will be discouraged to avoid overlooking into the adjoining property. Where the side extension adjoins the public realm, side windows are encouraged to support passive surveillance.

4.12.20 The extension should appear subservient to the original dwelling, roof types should be determined by the form of the main roof of the original dwelling and windows should generally match those of existing dwelling.
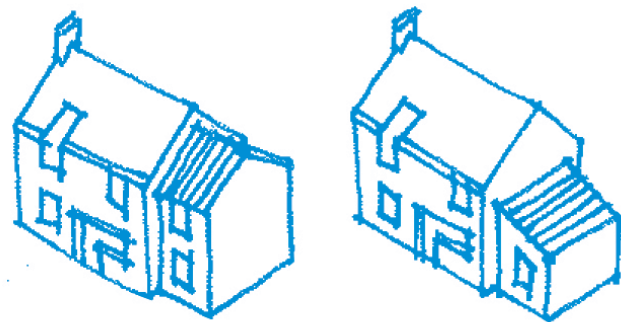
Figure 4.86: Extensions subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic roof and window details
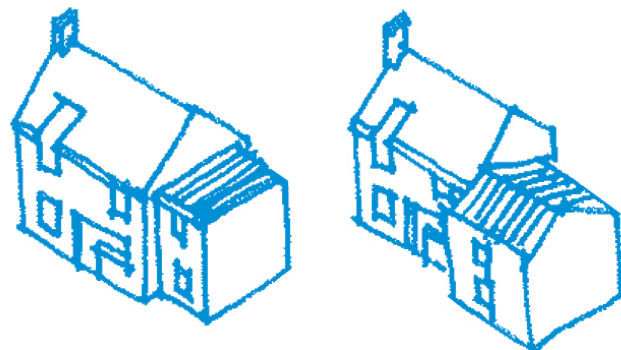

Figure 4.87: Flat roof on extension (left) does not sit well with the original ridged roof. Extension (right) is not subservient to, nor seamless with, the original dwelling. The extension also projects forward of the established building line

Mid-point of nearest habitable room window

45°

Proposed extension
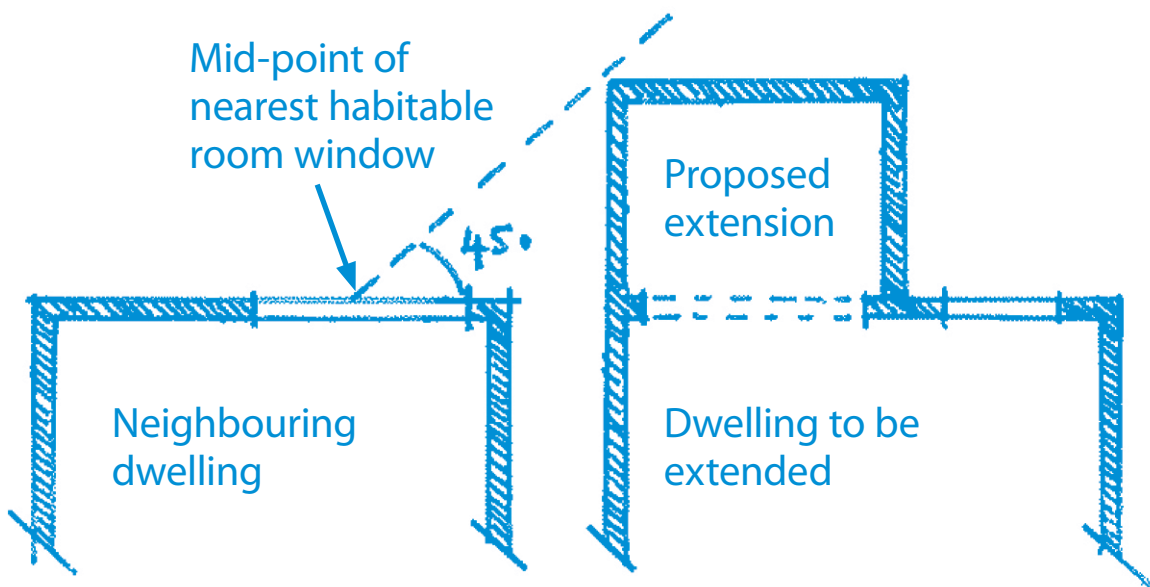
Neighbouring dwelling

Dwelling to be extended

Figure 4.88: The 45 degree rule: The proposed extension should not project beyond the '45 degree line' (indicated by the dashed line) into the neighbours protected area

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

SIDE EXTENSIONS ON END OF TERRACE PROPERTIES

4.12.21 For terraces with a continuous linear frontage, the existing building line should be continued to provide continuity and symmetry. For staggered terraces, a subordinate approach is best so that the extension is not overbearing.

SIDE EXTENSIONS ON SEMI-DETACHED AND DETACHED PROPERTIES

4.12.22 The extension should be set in at least one metre from the side boundary to maintain their open design and to avoid a terracing effect. A break between properties also allows for external access to the rear of properties and for periodic maintenance of side elevations such as the roof and gutter without needing to gain access via the neighbouring property. Rooflines should be subordinate to that of the main building.

Figure 4.89: The above example shows an extension within the permitted size parameters and which generally compliments the style and appearance of the main dwelling
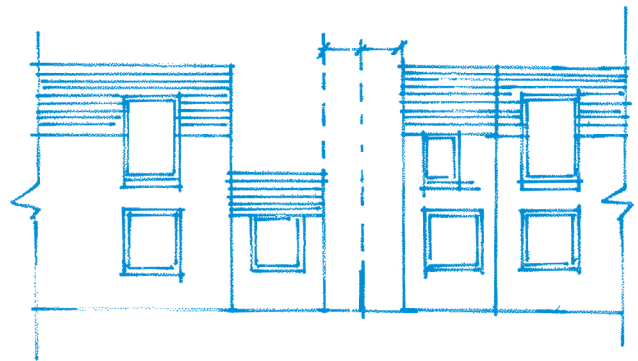

Figure 4.90: A minimum of 1 metre must normally be retained between the new side wall of the extension and the boundary of the site to prevent a terracing effect

Front Extensions

4.12.23 Permitted development rights (Class D) permit the erection of a porch outside any external door of a house for porch structures which have a ground area of no more than three square meters, a height above ground level of no more than three meters and where they are more than two meters away from of any boundary of the house with a highway.

4.12.24 Nevertheless, in general, front extensions and porches are not a prevailing feature of the character of Harlow's residential areas. They should only be permitted where applicants can demonstrate through the characterisation studies that these features are a prevailing feature of the original housing within their area. They are unlikely to be permitted where there is a precedent of uncharacteristic front extensions. Where permissible, porches should generally not exceed 1.5m in depth and should use of matching or similar materials.

4.12.25 The 45 degree rule (figure 4.88) should be applied to protect light to habitable rooms and kitchens of neighbouring properties.

4.12.26 Roof types should be determined by the form of the main roof of the original dwelling and any windows should generally match those of existing.

Figure 4.91: A front extension in the form of a porch that is not in-keeping with the prevailing character. As such the appearance of the curved elevation is diminished

Figure 4.92: Where front extensions are deemed permissible they should match the existing form, roof type and materials to create a coherent elevation to avoid situations such as this

Figure 4.93: Extensions where side elevations face the street should incorporate windows to provide passive surveillance

Dormer Windows and Roof Forms

4.12.27 Outside Old Harlow, dormer windows are not characteristic of Harlow's residential areas and therefore are not likely to be permitted where they are visible from the public realm.

4.12.28 No alteration to a roof will be allowed to alter the existing ridge unless the property can be viewed in isolation. Proposed roof alterations that diverge from the prevailing roofline should not be visible from the public realm. Velux windows may be acceptable on front elevations provided the materials are sympathetic with existing roof finishes.

4.12.29 Dormer roof extensions should be set within the roof slope. Where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows.
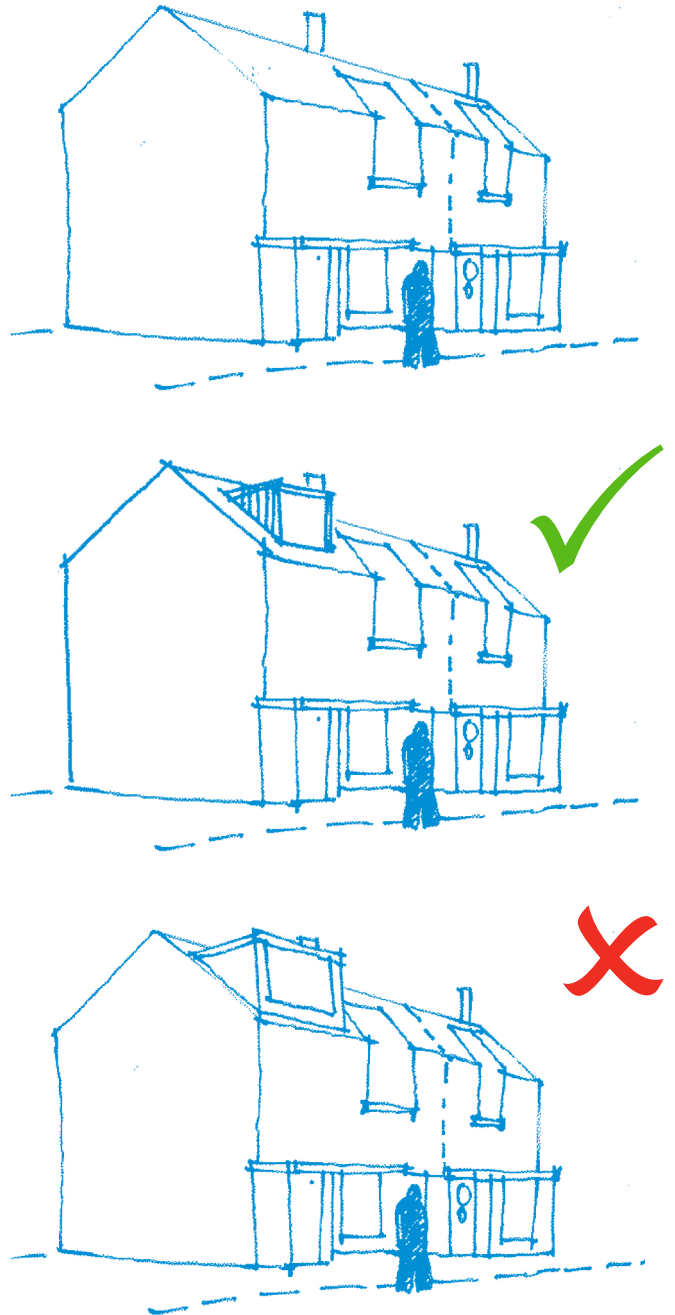
Figure 4.94: The dormer arrangement set into the roof (middle) is considered acceptable , whereas the bottom example would not be considered acceptable as the extension significantly alters the roof form of the original dwelling (top) and is obtrusive when viewed from the street

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Figure 4.95: If dormer roof extensions are acceptable in their context, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows
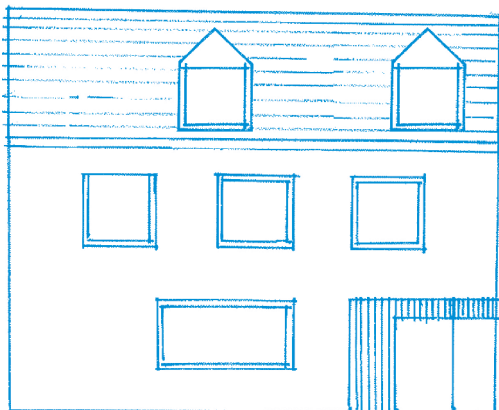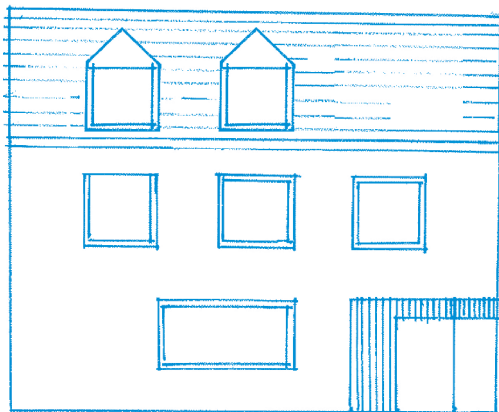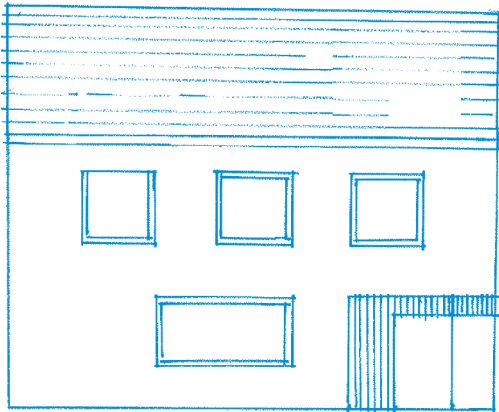
Garden Structures

4.12.30 Permitted development rights for buildings and enclosures within the area surrounding the house (the curtilage) are provided in Class E of the permitted development regulations. In most cases, sheds, outbuildings and garages do not require planning permission where they adhere to size and placement conditions set out in the regulations. Further information can be sought from the Council's planning department or the publication 'Permitted Development for Householders: Technical Guidance' (Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2010). Building Regulations approval will be needed for garages, and for sheds and outbuildings (where no sleeping accommodation is proposed) over 15 square metres.

4.12.31 Where it is proposed to exceed what is permitted in the regulations, as a general guide, proposals for sheds, outbuildings and garages should not exceed the size of an average double garage (26 square metres). Such structures should cause as little visual intrusion to neighbours as possible.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Appendices

A Process For Producing the Harlow Design Guide SPD

In order to construct a robust piece of design guidance the project went through three stages, each presented to and reviewed by the client group, consisting of Harlow Council and Harlow Renaissance:

i) **Inception and Baseline:** This stage incorporated a set of site visits and an extensive review of existing information that began with a review of national, regional and local planning and design policy.

A review of Sir Frederick Gibberd's masterplan and design principles was undertaken to establish what extent these were realised and to identify any resultant issues in how Harlow functions as a place today.

The Essex Design Guide and Urban Place Supplement were also reviewed. The former has limited relevance to Harlow as it provides more of a rural context to development, and its companion guide, the Urban Place Supplement, also has limited relevance as it does not provide a new town design context which is important In Harlow.

Finally contemporary urban design guidance and best practice publications were reviewed, such as By Design (DETR, 2000), Manual for Streets (DFT, 2007), Car Parking, What Works Where (English Partnerships, 2006), Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM, 2004) and the Urban Design Compendium (English Partnerships, 2007).

ii) **Initial Stakeholder Consultation:** A broad range of stakeholders were sought to help to determine which of the design principles that have informed the development of Harlow are fundamental to its identity, and to what extent they can be adapted to form a contemporary version that addresses current design issues.

These discussions were facilitated in five workshops attended by a range of individuals including Council officers, representatives from neighbouring district and county authorities), plus experts and advisors covering planning policy, architecture and urban design, development control, highways and transportation, heritage and conservation, accessibility, crime and fire prevention, landscape and biodiversity, and housing (amongst others).

The Initial Stakeholder Workshop was a half-day interactive workshop to set the overall direction of the project. It brought together interested parties to establish a common understanding of the design guidance's role and to develop a set of defining principles that should be taken forward into the next stage of developing the Design Guide.

The workshop included a presentation of the project, a review of design in Harlow and a presentation on the principles of successful placemaking.

The outcome of this workshop was summarised into key areas for the design guidance to consider. This was compared with the relevant policy, guidance and the founding principles to establish areas of conformity and conflict.

i) **Detailed Stakeholder Consultation:**

Four further workshops were then undertaken. These were called Design Workshops, and built upon the outcomes of the initial stakeholder workshop. They were structured into four categories: Neighbourhood Centres, Local Centres and Employment Areas; Movement and Streets; Open Space and Green Infrastructure; and Residential Design.

The Design Workshops were a core part of developing the Design Guide. These workshops considered the topics for which design guidance as to be prepared, and included a presentation on best practice in design and relevant Gibberd principles. Participants were then asked to discuss and debate Harlow-specific design solutions for the topics, which would form the basis of the guidance that would be developed by the consultants.

This design guide also draws upon the report of the 'Tomorrow's Harlow' symposium which took place at Harlow Civic Centre on 18 June 2010 and brought together 66 experts on development in Harlow.

B Key National Policy Supporting this Planning Guidance

There is a general direction in current design policy and guidance that leans towards an integrated approach to achieving sustainable yet distinctive built environments. There is a wealth of information that guides a broad spectrum of design issues, from creating livable environments and distinctive, safe and attractive places, to the need to provide walkable open space and social infrastructure whilst protecting and enhancing the character of natural and built environments. In terms of contemporary guidance for development, many of Gibberd's original principles are still relevant. Nevertheless, they require updating to conform to current policy guidance, such as:

* Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) (ODPM, 2005) which states that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning.

* By Design, Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice (DETR, 2000) which supports the need for better urban design quality and standards, highlighted through seven key criteria: character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity.

* Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing) (CLG, 2010), which requires new development takes in account appropriate densities, the need to cut carbon emissions and ensure access to community facilities.

- Planning Policy Statement 4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth) (CLG 2009), which reinforces the importance of economic centres improving their viability through the provision of a range of services set within an attractive and safe environment. Centres should be invested as a focus for economic development, whilst a sequential test is required to limit the amount of out-of-centre developments.

- Manual for Streets (DFT, 2007) which promotes high quality residential streets that form an integrated part of a well-connected street network, create safe and attractive places, provide for all users and promote and strengthen communities.

It is not the objective of this design guidance to duplicate the design guidance that already exists, nor to set out an intricate set of guidelines that goes into extensive detail. The Design Guide is intended to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and has been formed to encourage high quality development, steering new development in the right direction in terms of addressing what is special about Harlow.

C Policy Context: Harlow Local Plan

Harlow Replacement Local Plan

The Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan was published in July 2006 and those policies 'saved' by the Secretary of State's Direction (dated 12 May 2009) currently guide development management in Harlow.

The vision of the Local Plan supports a strong emphasis on sustainability in social, environmental and economic terms. It aims for Harlow to become a more walkable environment where people are able to 'live near work, leisure and community facilities'. This is encouraged through higher density and mixed use housing and locating employment uses near to public transport connections. The Local Plan aims for sustainable development are supported by a prioritisation of sustainable transport modes, the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and provision of housing for all sectors of the community.

Environmental protection sits highly within the document, which seeks the maintenance of the character of the Green Wedges, Green Belt and areas of heritage and wildlife value (policies NE12, NE17, NE18 and NE19). Policy NE11 also seeks the preservation of trees and hedges. The benefit of a positive edge to open spaces is supported through Policy NE1, which makes the exception for small scale developments that do not adversely effect the ecological or character value and contribute towards local amenities. Major development is expected to be of high quality design, to minimise waste materials, soil loss/damage (SD9) and to accommodate recycling storage and facilities.

The guidance for new development is that height massing, layout, appearance and landscape is conscious of the context in terms of grain, scale, material and details (policies BE1 and H10), yet this does not necessitate replicating local character. The urban form has to accommodate high standards of design that address security, clearly distinguish public space from private areas (BE2), provide frontage onto the street and collectively create a sense of enclosure (BE5).

Policy encourages an integrated approach to development, transport, employment, education and cultural facilities (ER1), with higher densities promoted in areas of public transport accessibility and in close proximity to services and employment (BE3). This primarily relates to the Neighbourhood Centres, where mixed use development of retail, cultural and residential uses is supported (SD4). Mixed use is generally supported, inside and outside of employment areas (ER11, SD5) where it is in an accessible location and compatible in terms of function, amenity and character.

Apart from reducing the need to travel, sustainable modes of travel should be promoted. New developments are expected to provide footpaths and cycleways that connect to the existing network (T6) and provide better access to the countryside (L13).

Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework will eventually replace the Harlow Local Plan to provide the future spatial development strategy for Harlow. The Core Strategy is currently being prepared, and the first stage will be consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options document.

Other Documents

HARLOW 2020 VISION

The Community Strategy reinforces a set of priorities that aim to promote a high quality of life for the people of Harlow. Those priorities which relate to the Design Guide include the need to improve the local neighbourhood street scene and enhance the green environment, develop a safe and convenient movement network, reduce waste and maximise recycling, enhance public open space and increase the potential for active lifestyles.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Green Infrastructure Plan provides guidance on the Green Infrastructure Network which aims to promote an attractive, distinctive, accessible, diverse and multi-functional network of green spaces. The guidelines support a new high quality urban edge and the creation of an improved sense of place for urban fringes, gateways and transport corridors. In terms of urban fringe, it seeks that active frontages from new buildings make a positive contribution to the experience of urban-edge landscapes.

D Design and Access Statement Assessment Crib Sheet

This crib sheet has been adapted from Design and Access Statements: How to Read, Write and Use Them (CABE, 2006) which provides further guidance on the application process and how Design and Access Statements can be used to support applications for development.

THE PROCESS

Does the statement show that the applicant has assessed the site's full context, including physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies?

Has the applicant demonstrated how they have taken account of the results of any community involvement?

Does the statement show that the scheme has emerged from a rigorous assessment-involvement-evaluation-design process rather than trying to justify retrospectively a pre-determined solution?

USE

Would the application help to create an appropriate mix of uses in the area?

Would different uses work together well, or would they cause unacceptable annoyance?

AMOUNT

Is the density appropriate?

Could the neighbourhood's services support the amount of development planned?

LAYOUT

Do all spaces have a purpose?

Will public spaces be practical, safe, overlooked and inclusive?

Will private spaces be adaptable, secure and inviting?

SCALE

Will the buildings sit comfortably with their surroundings?

Will they, and parts like doors and windows, be of a comfortable scale for people?

LANDSCAPING

Has landscaping been properly considered from the start?

Will it help to make the place look good and

work well, and will it meet any specific aims for the site?

APPEARANCE

How will the development visually relate to its surroundings?

Will it look attractive?

ACCESS

Will the place be safe and easy for everyone to move around?

Will it make the most of the surrounding movement network?

Has the applicant clearly described their policy approach and consultation process, whether carried out or planned?

E Glossary

Accessibility: The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

Active frontages: Street elevations that are enlivened by visible activity either within or outside the building.

Adaptability: The capacity of a building or space to be changed so as to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

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

Character (of an Area): This is influenced by the qualities that affect our experience of a place. In combination, buildings and their component elements (forms, detailing, materials etc.) can create strong character through uniformity or variety. The influence of the character of the surrounding area on the consideration of extension proposals at a property is limited to that part of the street or neighbourhood visible from the site, i.e. the immediate vicinity.

Context: The setting of a site or area, including factors such as the street, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

Density: The floorspace of a building or buildings or some other unit measure in relation to a given area of land. Density is expressed as number of units per hectare for residential development.

Design standards: Specific, usually quantifiable measures of amenity and safety in residential areas.

Design and access statement: Submitted with a planning application, the statement sets out the design principles that the planning applicant has adopted in relation to the site and its wider context, as required by PPS1.

Elevation: The facade of a building, or the drawing of a facade.

Enclosure: The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

Form: The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

Green Finger: Landscape corridors that form intermediate links between the larger strategic spaces (Green Wedges) and more formal local spaces.

Green Wedge: Green Wedges are an enduring legacy from the Gibberd's masterplan, providing usable open landscape between neighbourhoods that connects out to the countryside.

Hatch: A community hub at the heart of a collection of homes.

Height: The height of a building can be expressed in terms of a maximum number of floors; a maximum height of parapet or ridge; a maximum overall height; any of these maximum heights in combination with a maximum number of floors; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

Inter-Urban Network: This is also known as the trunk road network, and its purpose is to provide high speed, direct connections between urban areas. Motorways represent the most extreme example of this type of road, where many users are not permitted and those that remain are segregated where possible (by space and/or time). It is because of these restrictions that journey times can be reduced while maintaining acceptable levels of road safety.

Landmark: A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

Legibility: The degree to which a place can be easily understood and travelled through.

Local distinctiveness: The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

Massing: The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

Mixed uses: A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'Vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

Modal Integration: This represents the degree of separation (by space and/or time) of road users travelling by different modes. Modes may be separated, where for example, where pedestrians are not permitted to walk on motorways; or integrated, where, for example, cycle lanes are provided on roads.

Neighbourhood centre: A centre at the heart of each neighbourhood providing local services and convenience retail within approximately a ten minute walk (800 metres) of homes.

Natural surveillance: The discouragement of wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

Open Fronts: Front gardens open to the street with no fences, walls or intrusions.

Original Dwelling: This means the dwelling as it was first built, or as it was on the 1 July 1948. Although you may not have built an extension to the dwelling, a previous owner may have done so. Therefore, any extension proposal must also be considered in light of any previous extensions to the dwelling.

Permeability: Also known as connectivity, this refers to the directness of links and the numbers of connections in a place. A highly permeable network has many short links, numerous route options, and minimal dead-ends.

Privacy strips: The distance from the edge of the street to the front of the building.

Public realm: The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks.

Public/private interface: The point at which public areas and buildings meet private ones.

Scale: The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person.

Sense of place: Local characteristics which give a place identity.

Vista: An enclosed view, usually a long and narrow one.

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