NFL Memoranda 2015

Workshop Draft Issue; Draft issued for the Workshop of 15/01/15.
This is not a formal consultation draft.
**Introduction.**

I am delighted to introduce the ‘Neighbourhoods for Living – explanatory Memoranda - 2015’.

Leeds is a success story, and to help continue that through the next decades we are dedicated to supporting the delivery of high quality homes for the future. Homes that people will be proud to live in. We want to help those providing the majority of these new homes within our communities. Developers and others involved must also play their part by providing the high quality housing designs for the homes we need.

Neighbourhoods for Living was first launched and adopted by the Council in 2003, it continues to provide excellent guidance to developers for delivering quality housing designs that recognises local character and identities.

To assist in the opportunity to deliver quality housing the explanatory ‘Memoranda’ refers to key current issues of design and further explains the existing principles within the Neighbourhoods for Living document.

This document launch provides us with the opportunity to share the ‘Design Quality’ aspects of the Leeds Standard for Housing, and we are finding that using the principles contained in Neighbourhoods for Living we can prompt good quality and assess schemes against the principles. This reflects on schemes in a similar way to Building for Life (BfL12) nationally, and we are aiming for a step change in the number of schemes achieving higher quality and meeting this standard.

Leeds is open for business to developing new homes of a high quality design. I am delighted to introduce the explanatory Memoranda and look forward to further success with our partners in the delivery of new homes for our future.

**Councillor Peter Gruen**  
(Deputy Leader of the Council/ Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Personnel)  
Leeds City Council, January 2015.
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Please Note: Except for the new foreword the original ‘Neighbourhoods for Living’ remains unchanged.
Introduction / Outline 1.

The explanatory Memoranda are prepared for two key reasons. Firstly, they restate the importance of the guidance set out in Neighbourhoods for Living (NFL). Although first launched in 2003 the concepts for housing design within the document are still current and continue to illustrate a full range of quality concepts for the delivery of good housing design. It is the Council’s view that these sound concepts continue to be valid to help deliver the primary objective of good housing design. The Council sees good housing design as one of the many things contributing to the aims of becoming the best city in the country.

Secondly, the explanatory Memoranda expands on some of the main objectives and principles within Neighbourhoods for Living. As a comprehensive document, Neighbourhoods for Living gives guidance on the concepts of good housing design. It guides developers as to what the Council considers is good practice in housing design. These memoranda sheets go further in that they reiterate, expand and develop some of the original concepts: based on a number of key current issues around housing provision in Leeds. Neighbourhoods for Living, together with the explanatory Memoranda will be used to prompt, steer and assess design proposals as they develop.

The sheets are laid out to a simple format. To the outside edge of the page are the appropriate principles and references from Neighbourhoods for Living. In the centre main body of the page are the appropriate explanations and expanded notes of the principles. Explanatory sketches are included where appropriate.

The process of design is a vital component in delivering high quality housing. This process involves all the parties in housing delivery including landowners, local communities, elected members, designers, developers, landscape consultants and planners. The Council as a whole including the Local Planning Authority wants to ensure that it plays a full role in delivering quality housing but this requires that the applicants also participate in this process. To enable that, all those involved have to ensure that the housing delivery is a cohesive process and developers should include the Local Planning Authority in the design process from the outset. Subsequently the Planning Service can help a smooth process from inception to delivery on site.
Part of the design process is analysing the existing townscape and responding to the context. Understanding what is there and undertaking a responsive design is outlined in Neighbourhoods for Living starting at page 2 with the process of Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail. Using this method can lead to a strong design which answers the challenges of the respective site. The use of this method ensures comprehension of the local context and character and a suitably responsive scheme evolves with the minimum of design disruption. Subsequently all involved understand the design aspirations for the site and the response for the local communities and context is sound.

The following pages then expand on the topics from NFL, and give some further guidance in achieving housing design excellence. They deal with the issues under the general topics of: Layout and Form. Layout looks at themes relating to the plan / masterplan issues. Form looks at the issues relating to the design of houses, the three dimensional forms and context.

Schemes too often fail to reflect positive character and identity of the individual places and communities as outlined in the ‘Neighbourhoods for Living’ document which provides a guide to high quality residential design in Leeds. Recent protocols have been adopted by the Council regarding the consultation work associated with planning applications and this document provides further assistance in responding to context.

The importance of achieving positive character and design is supported by the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 64) which states that “permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions”.

Applicants should check for local character assessments at the outset of site analysis and carry this through to the scheme design proposals.
The Ten Urban Design Principles.

The Ten Urban Design Principles adopted by the Councils Executive Board in 2005 provide a strong framework for quality, and a process for place making in Leeds. The ten headline principles are:

1. Recognise that good design is good business.
2. Get the team right.
3. Make places for (and by) people.
4. Close the gap and move forward.
5. Provide for future generations.
6. Take a visionary approach.
7. Analyse and enhance the character.
8. Create visual and physical links.
9. Look after the place.
10. Improve continuously.

Relevant Background.

The current Vision for Leeds (2011-2030) and the Best Council Plan (2013-17) both continue to provide a foundation for ‘Neighbourhoods for Living’. The Vision sets out a shared understanding of the ambition for Leeds to be the best city: for children, for business, for communities, for health & wellbeing, to live. “Leeds will be a great place to live with good housing, and clean green spaces, where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life”.

The Council Plan incorporates best Council outcomes to improve the quality of life of our residents: creating ‘neighbourhoods for living’ will contribute well to that, creating an increasingly attractive city for existing (and future) residents and businesses. The Best Council Plan also identifies 6 Objectives: supporting communities & tackling poverty/ promoting sustainable & inclusive economic growth/ building a child-friendly city/ delivering better lives programme/ dealing effectively with the city’s waste/ becoming a more efficient & enterprising Council.

One of the three best Council outcomes (Best Council Plan 2013-17) is to “improve the quality of life for our residents”, and the objective of “providing housing as the city grows” gives a strong foundation to improving the quality of housing and ‘liveability’ of places delivered. The Core Strategy, linked with the site allocations process, emphasises the importance of design quality and enabling appropriate housing growth for Leeds. It states that “one of the biggest challenges Leeds faces is to provide enough quality and accessible homes to meet the city’s growing population, whilst protecting the quality of the environment and respecting community identity”.

The Core Strategy continues to explain the housing growth principles which include: “enhance the distinctiveness of existing neighbourhoods and quality of life of local communities through the design and standard of new homes (see Policies P10 and EN2)”. The over-arching National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 56) also provides a firm basis for this approach as it states: “the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”

Our current Neighbourhood Planning processes, engaging with local people in neighbourhoods across the city, together with the existing neighbourhood planning documents (such as Neighbourhood and Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals) also indicate the importance of place-making and quality of local environment to people in their neighbourhoods.
Background Issues 2.

Two key Council partnership themes have been outlined below to support the emphasis on the principles of Neighbourhoods for Living to move towards making Leeds the best city in which to live.

Health and Wellbeing.
The design of the built environment and access to natural spaces is a major influence on health and wellbeing. High quality residential design with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing can promote improved physical and mental health and reduce healthcare costs in a number of ways. These include physical activity, reducing pollution, improving access to health services, increasing energy efficiency and reducing social isolation. Well-designed buildings and public spaces generate health benefits and reduce inequalities in health both in terms of development and community wellbeing.

Neighbourhoods for Living principles can be used to prompt, steer and assess the delivery of some of the health themes enabling us to move forward collaboratively on the range of issues the Council and its partners are championing thereby benefiting all communities and neighbourhoods.

Child-friendly City
The Vision for Leeds is to be the UK’s best city by 2030 – the best for all who live and work here (our children, our communities and our businesses). An essential part of this ambition is to be the best city for children and young people to safely grow up in – to live, study, work and play. The commitment to being the best city for children and young people is founded on the global UNICEF movement of child-friendly cities (1996) and is driven by the voices of children and young people of Leeds. In 2011, thousands of children and young people told us what they thought would make the city of Leeds more child-friendly and these ideas became known as the ‘Child-Friendly City 12 Wishes’. A number of these are especially relevant to Neighbourhoods for Living, including specifically:

“Children and young people can make safe journeys and easily travel around the city/ There are places and spaces to play and things to do, in all areas and open to all”.

Children and young people consistently speak of wanting to grow up in a city that feels a safe place, where they have the space and freedom to play, socialise and have fun. Being able to travel safely and easily around the city is essential. A direct interaction with nature is also good for children’s development.

Being a child-friendly city does not simply mean that children are allotted specific areas in the city for play spaces. It means that children form an intrinsic part of the city and should be allowed space everywhere in order to thrive.
The issues regarding layout involve:
- The Plan. The overall design approach to the plan form.
- Connections and Linked Streets. (Legibility and Permeability).
- Space about Dwellings: Car Dominated Street Fronts
- Space about Dwellings: Ground Floor Treatments / Sterile Street Frontages.
- Space about Dwellings: Visual and Physical Amenity.
- Enclosure Built Edges and Streetscene

The Plan. The plan form of the housing, the ‘Masterplan’, is an important step in evolving a scheme. The plan form drives much of the finished three dimensional scheme and if it is not right then the rest of the scheme will struggle to achieve quality. Developers should involve the Planning Authority from the outset to evolve a scheme that is suitably responsive to local character and context. As with the scheme generally, use the design process of Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail which will aid a good design response to local character and context.
- Developers should involve the Planning Authority prior to the finished scheme so that the plan can evolve co-operatively.
- Developers should involve the Planning Authority at the analysis stage and not start discussions with a finished plan populated with standardised house types.

Connections and Linked Streets. (Legibility & Permeability).
The ability to rapidly understand and move around a place is important. Develop cogent masterplans that have the streets connected to other streets and the main roads. Single access ‘estates’ should be avoided. Avoid culs-de-sac and ‘dead end’ streets. Cul-de-sac arrangements create a more insular and introvert atmosphere and are more vulnerable to antisocial activity. When absolutely unavoidable culs-de-sac should be short / small and be directly off a main through road so that they can be seen and supervised. They should be observable down the full length of the culs-de-sac from the main road for safety and surveillance. Connections encourage community integration and allow links to the surroundings such as shops and local facilities. Connected streets give the...
Principles (NFL)

- design buildings to front onto streets to make the place feel safer. There should be ‘eyes on the street’ including corners and gable ends (‘active’ windows, such as living rooms and kitchens, should overlook streets especially at ground floor) (38)
- avoid car parking dominating streetscenes using a balance of in-curtilage and on-street provision (77)
- use discreet and innovative solutions for car parking, especially where high densities are required (78)
- set car parking behind the front of the dwellings (to side or rear) in lower density layouts (including detached and semidetached building patterns), where appropriate. (80).
- Refer also to NFL Principles: Pr 10. Natural Surveillance NFL. Pg 57, Distances between Dwellings

Refer to NFL references to diverse character areas throughout Leeds including ‘city centre’, ‘urban’, ‘suburban’ and ‘edge’ (p10 & p43). This memoranda focuses on suburban and edge situations

Availability for through transit with both vehicles and people. This means ‘active’ streets that are naturally supervised and offer opportunities for amenity and neighbourliness. They are also less insular and do not become ‘pseudo gated communities’ with little to offer townscape or residents.

The design of the road layout should be clear and not convoluted. It should allow people to clearly grasp the ways in, around and out of the estate. It should be based on a readily understandable hierarchy of streets that are easy to navigate for both the car and the pedestrian.

- Link streets to other streets. Provide the connections for an active and legible layout.

Space about Dwellings. Car & Parking Dominated Frontages.

The space about a dwelling is important for the physical and psychological character of a place. ‘Neighbourhoods for Living’ (NFL) requires sufficient ‘space about dwellings’. There are several reasons for having space around the home and the first is to avoid having street frontages that are dominated by car parking and cars parking on the road and kerbs. When houses are designed to have the car parking solely at the front then this considerably erodes the character of the street to the level of becoming poor design. Parking should be accommodated off the street to the side and or rear of the houses. Providing sufficient space about dwellings; to front, rear and side solves many issues. Sufficient space about houses alleviates car dominated frontages. This allows the provision of a semi private front garden and increases the positive perception of the street frontage generally. Parking off the street can also be accommodated through the use of shared drives and, if appropriate, then secure parking courts may be suitable for say flat blocks.

- Provide sufficient space to the side and rear of the dwelling in accordance with NFL so that parking can be accommodated off the street to the side and or rear of the houses. (See distances NFL page 57).
Space about Dwellings. Ground Floor Treatments / Sterile Street Frontages.

It is important to provide sufficient space about the dwelling not only to remove the car from the frontage and street but also to ensure that the benefits of this are an appropriate ground floor treatment and providing an ‘active’ street frontage. By ‘ground floor treatment’ and ‘active frontages’ we mean that the ground floor of the dwelling facing the street should have habitable, permanently used rooms on the ground floor and with the windows able to see the street. A room that is a primary living space such as a kitchen or living room would achieve this. When this is done there is that constant interaction between the residents and the street which engenders a live and active street. The homes engage the street and activity can be supervised; parents can see what is happening, people and children can feel safe.

Streets where, for example, cramped houses are too close together and have only integral garages and a front door means that there is no real interplay between the inside and outside of homes. This is not an appropriate response.

- Provide an active ground floor street frontage with habitable rooms that can view the street.


Provision of sufficient space about dwellings solves parking issues but provides other real benefits appreciated by home owners, visitors and general users alike. Once the car is not the dominant factor then other benefits are provided. The houses can be given a semi private front garden which provides amenity relief for the home as it can be set back from the road. In essence the street frontage is less intensive. In reality the street generally is viewed from the oblique angle and one detriment of having houses too close together is they all, regardless of type and quality, begin to take on the appearance of a terraced ‘wall’.

Principles (NFL)

- Maximise natural surveillance by providing a variety of house types and, where appropriate, a mix of uses to ensure people are around throughout the day (10)
- NFL. Pg 57. Distances between Dwellings
- Increasing density should not be at the expense of amenity and quality of the environment.” (NFL, pg 16)
- Prepare a landscape framework at the outset of any scheme to integrate buildings and spaces within the wider context. A quality, well considered landscape design is fundamental to the creation of distinctive and attractive surroundings that will be satisfying places in which to live (26)

See also Principles 55 & 62, relating to landscape.

Reference Also:

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- NFL pages 5, 16, 26, 27, 29, 38, 39, 46, 62. Active frontages.
- NFL pages 4, 16, 31 Amenity
- NFL pages 54 to 57. Privacy and Intrusion. (Note Distance requirements page 57).
- NFL Principles 10, 38

Leeds City Council Core Strategy

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**Layout 4.**

**ISSUES**

**Principles (NFL)**
- Use the building form and enclosure to **create spaces with a sense of local identity.** (32)
- Distinguish between private and publicly accessible space; provide appropriate enclosure for front gardens (49)
- Avoid ‘backs’ facing onto publicly accessible space; backs should be private and face each other to form secure private gardens and courtyards (50)
- Create enclosure to streets, squares, parks and other spaces by designing buildings of appropriate scale/height/massing. The dimensions, sunpath and likely use will imply the appropriate form for its enclosure (87)
- Design buildings to front onto streets to make the place feel safer. There should be ‘eyes on the street’ including corners and gable ends (‘active’ windows, such as living rooms and kitchens, should overlook streets especially at ground floor). (38)

References Also:
- NPPF s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- NFL page 6. Context & building lines
- NFL page 25 Enclosure. 27 40
- Continuity of street enclosure.

Houses should face onto the street in a consistent fashion. They should face onto squares and public places. Houses should establish a solid ‘built edge’ through having an overall consistent building line. Variations in the building line can be achieved by stepping some groups of houses back or forward of the main building line or turning the pattern at right angles. Other devices also exist to achieve some active movement down the
building line. Even subtle shifts in the building line can create a quite
dramatic effect when seen in the three dimensions, yet the overall
building line still gives a theme of consistency and enclosure.

Too many variations in the building height can also be disruptive to
the sense of a welcoming street if not done selectively and carefully.
An artificial constantly varying roof line, often done to hide design faults
and ‘add variety’ is visually disruptive as the eye does not feel comfortable.
Natural changes in building height to add a feature or accent may be
suitable. If height changes are done selectively then they often add more
impact and variety as the eye is drawn to them.

- Develop streets with a consistent building line and built edge.
- Develop streets where height changes are selective and not random.
- Develop streets where height differences are controlled and seem
  natural.

Enclosure (2). Enclosure is also about
the sense of security and privacy. It
is expected that schemes will also
accomplish these aims. Schemes should provide sufficient enclosure to
provide security to private spaces such as the rear of properties and back
gardens. Providing this security to private back gardens is important and
schemes should provide what the NFL terms ‘protected backs’. In other
words back gardens should reverse onto other back gardens and not onto
publicly accessible spaces where the rear ‘backs’ of houses can easily be
accessed for crime and vandalism. By providing these protected backs the
street frontages and the semi-private front gardens all provide a secure
frontage that protects the rear gardens from unwanted access and provides
a more private rear with a barrier to excess sound and visual intrusion
from the street.

Privacy is also important and along with
the private amenity space there should
be a sense of privacy.
- Ensure that the rears of properties are secure.
- Ensure that privacy to private areas is maintained.
Summary

- **Use the NFL Guidance**
  Use the NFL Guidance from the start with the Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail to provide a good contextual response to local character.

- Connect new development to other streets as much as is possible.

- Avoid culs-de-sac except as a limited part of a linked layout. (NFL Principle 16)

- Maximise connections. Ensure streets are connected. Ensure good access to local facilities

- Buildings should respond to the street frontage. (NFL Principle 38).

- Allow sufficient space about dwellings for amenity and parking. (NFL page 57).

- Avoid car parking and vehicular dominated street fronts.

- Set vehicle parking at side or rear of homes.

- Design schemes with active ground floor frontages to provide for natural surveillance and active street frontages.

- Allow sufficient space about dwellings to provide for visual and physical amenity to protect privacy and prevent unwanted intrusion.

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**Secured by Design.**

The Department for Communities and Local Government’s (DCLG) latest Housing Standards Review consultation indicates that the latest proposals for security standards in new homes reflect the views expressed by Secured by Design and that Secured by Design, in partnership with the academic community and others, would be best able to show how to protect homes from crime.

‘Neighbourhoods for Living’ encompassed Secured by Design and continues to do so for the secure design of housing.

References in NFL supporting this:

See also General Information in NFL page 22.
Form and Aesthetics.

It is not only the plan of the scheme that delivers a good design but the form of the housing is equally important. Form and Aesthetics covers the house designs, and what the Planning Authority would look for in the delivery of successful and good house designs. Contextual quality housing should be at the heart of schemes, with the homes built to deliver quality. Designers are expected to use the Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail method to design the homes for the particular site. Form and Aesthetics covers issues such as:

- Context and Character.
- Scale and Massing.
- Roof Forms (Eaves and Chimneys etc).
- Elevations and Elevation Composition (inc Porches and Doors).
- Elevation Details (Heads and Cills etc).
- Materials. These are looked at below.

Context and Character.

Local context and character are central themes to Neighbourhoods for Living (NFL). The importance of context and local character is paramount and supported by the Core Strategy and Policy. Houses should be designed for the particular site location and context. Standardised housing types that could be for anywhere in the country will not be encouraged. If promoters of housing schemes have a range of ‘standard’ house types then the designs should be capable of being adapted to the local contextual requirements of the particular neighbourhood of Leeds where the scheme is proposed. Design of the houses should be driven by the use of the ‘Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail’ method as described throughout the NFL. Any precedent images for designs should be contextual to the site. The designs should then derive a contextual scheme.

- Derive the design of the houses from local context through an appropriate analysis.
- House designs should respond to the local character and context and be designed to respect the layout, materials and three dimensional forms of the local context.
- Involve community consultation on the design process to ensure that new homes do not negatively challenge the local context and community.

Scale and Massing: The three dimensional massing of housing should be considered as a balanced design. The plan form is the start and this should be driven by a well-proportioned overall plan. For house design ensure that the width to length ratio is well balanced and the height to the overall plan should be considered. Avoid building forms where the ratio of length, width and height is out of proportion resulting in an unbalanced massing. If the massing is large then it can be broken down into domestic.
ISSUES

Form (and Aesthetics) 2.

scale pieces or the large elevations can be visually broken with indents or setbacks etc.

The scale and massing should be appropriate to context and should consider the grain and context of the proposed site. Scale and massing of proposals should be a balanced composition and changes should not be abrupt or of a disproportionate nature. Scale and massing of the development needs to respect the adjacent built forms (buildings or open space and views) and the topography. In responding to topography the development should be complementary to the ground form so that the scale and massing is blended into the topography to alleviate any abrupt transitions.

The scale and massing also needs to be considered in relation to the overall enclosure of streets and views. It should not be of a scale to become oppressive but should enclose the spaces and streets giving a comfortable welcoming feel. The overall height of the proposals in relation to the space enclosed needs to be considered. The plan forms should have good proportions and if necessary be broken down with suitable projections or setbacks. The use of a limited palette of varying materials can also be used to help break down the massing.

- Ensure scale and massing is designed to complement the context and character of the area.
- Ensure changes of scale and massing is not abrupt and challenging to the context.
- Ensure the scale and massing respects the scale of adjacent forms (buildings or open space and views) and the topography.

Roof forms. Eaves, Ridges and Chimney details.

The roof forms of a development are an important element particularly if the proposal is seen in its entirety from a distance. The roof forms in many cases provide the visual signature to the scheme from long distance and can do much to enhance the scheme if well designed. Roofs should be of a contextual manner and material and offer a consistency to deliver sufficient visual certainty and be a settling presence rather than be visually challenging. A strong eaves with relevant overhang to express the transition from the wall is a good design detail. The eaves overhang also provides the interest and variety by giving a strong shadow line which expresses the eaves line and delineates a visually strong roof component. Much of Leeds indigenous architecture follows this model.
The roofs themselves and the ridges to the roofline are another component where the visual composition is important. Do not use excessive changes in ridge heights and roof materials. This does not ‘add variety’ but proffers a visual confusion. Arbitrary, unnatural and unnecessary changes in roof pitch are also a design idiom that usually results in visual confusion and weakens the streetscape composition. Some variations may be necessary and these can add interest if introduced sparingly.

Roofs, like the massing, should follow the topography. The linear nature of the ridges to roofs should be broken up with vertical emphasis. The interesting element to many existing roofs is the chimney element. The chimney element provides the break to the linear elements by providing multiple small vertical visual ‘stops’ which arrest and calm the eye as it travels the roof scene. Whilst they may not be a technical necessity some form of vertical break to the roofs is essential. Some elements or percentage of the roofs to developments should provide these vertical accents or breaks. They need not necessarily be chimneys and can be formed of some other visual element that has the visual stature to achieve the visual breaks on the skyline. Simple television and ‘satellite’ dishes are not sufficient. (In cases where the housing proposal has primary flat roofs then some other elements of visual interest may be appropriate).

- Design the eaves to overhang if possible to provide a strong visual roof and shadow line.
- Design the roofs to have predominantly consistent roof lines and a consistency of contextual materials
- Avoid arbitrary changes of roof pitch and materials.
- Roofs should have a majority of roofs with some element of vertical accent or visual break such as chimneys.

Elevations 1: (Elements and Composition). The treatment of windows, doors and porches is particularly important: their form and pattern do much to determine the character of the building. Careful use of well-proportioned windows and doors creates a balanced scheme which should respond to local context.

This section covers the composition of elevations and indicates some simple design actions that can give a more balanced and harmonious contextual composition. Poor elevations are those that are simple ‘elevated plans’ or with an arbitrary placement of openings resulting in a visual incongruity which is detrimental to the scheme. Window and door openings should be considered not only in relation to the internal function but in relation to the external elevations. Do not allow elevations to respond to the context of the development in terms of scale, massing and height in relation to adjacent buildings, topography, general patterns in the area, views, vistas and landmarks (84).
Form (and Aesthetics) 4.

**Principles (NFL)**

- NFL p29. "Articulation of the front elevation, with different building elements such as porches creates a welcoming feel and offers a semi-private space for chatting”.
- respond to the context of the development in terms of scale, massing and height in relation to adjacent buildings, topography, general patterns in the area, views, vistas and landmarks (84)
- provide well-articulated elevations to break down its scale, with accommodation in the roof where appropriate, to reduce the impact of a development. This may allow increased density with minimal visual impact. (89)
- pay particular attention to the treatment of windows and doors. Careful use of well proportioned windows should create a scheme which provides a consistency and responds to local context (102)

**Issues**

- The ratio of wall to window and doors needs to be considered and usually in domestic properties the ratio should be higher for the walls, the solid element.
- In many cases the windows and doors usually form a vertical emphasis to the elevations and the proportions are important.
- As a guide a 3:5 ratio of width to height forms a good starting point for windows.
- The openings should be aligned properly. If smaller windows are above larger windows then align them down the centre line. Windows can also be aligned to the edges particularly if they are the same size.
- The window and door pattern should have an ordered consistency both along and down the elevation. The interest comes in the detailing and style of the windows. Window styles should be consistent throughout the house and the scheme generally.
- Interest can also be added to the elevations by the addition of the porches to doors and the addition of bay windows to alleviate the elevation from becoming a flat façade.
- The addition of porches and doors should be contextual or of a relatively balanced and proportional form. Over enthusiastic additions can detract from the main elevation and massing forms.

**Elevations 2: (Details).** The details of the elevation, the window and door style and associated detailing are also a strong component in the elevation. It is here that much can be done to add appropriate expression and interest. Windows and doors should have appropriate details in the form of heads, cills, and reveals. Windows and doors should also relate well to existing context and character. Windows and doors usually should have suitable depth to the reveals with the window or door set back to form the reveal. The shadow from the...
reveals helps to model the façade with the interplay of light and darker areas. Plain elevations can also be enhanced with suitable details such as string courses, indents and appropriate contextual details. Some general guides are given below:

- Window and door openings should be addressed appropriately and in most cases should have at least the appropriate head and cill details. If appropriate they may also have suitable quoin details.
- Window and door frames should be suitably set back into the opening to provide adequate reveals to the opening. Typically this should be around 75mm.
- Unnecessary and arbitrary ‘brise-soleil’ should not be used in an attempt to ‘add interest’, they often add to the visual ‘clutter’.
- If the heads and cills are stone, artificial stone or concrete then they should appear to span the opening in one single piece. Lintels with joints in are not appropriate. ‘Keystone’ pieces should only be used if they are suitably contextual.
- Stone details such as string courses when judiciously and contextually used can provide appropriate interest and style to the elevations.
- Suitable detailing to brick and stonework such as indent courses or projecting ‘base’ courses can also add interest and style if appropriate.

**Materials.** The materials chosen for a scheme significantly affect the design quality and the choices should be initially based around the NFL design guide of Analysis, Concept, Scheme and Detail. The materials used should be based on a good analysis of the contextual local character. Arbitrary introduction of non-contextual and non-domestic, commercial scale, colours and materials will not be supported. The material palette should be limited to avoid visual confusion and be ordered and consistent. Providing a limited and consistent palette of materials which can create a simple, more purposeful, character to a place would be encouraged. Even within a limited palette the materials can help articulate the massing and still provide a consistent character.

- The materials used should be contextual to the local character.
- Provide a limited palette of materials to avoid visual confusion and incongruity.
- Materials should be high quality, durable and sustainable with the need for minimum maintenance.
- Material samples should be constructed on site and be of a sufficient size to enable a reasonable judgement as to the samples suitability.

Reference Also:

- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Materials NFL p6, 25, 34 & 46.
Summary

- Derive the design of the houses from local context through an appropriate analysis.
- House designs should respond to the local character and context and be designed to complement the local character.
- Involve community consultation on the design process to ensure that new homes do not negatively challenge the local context and community.
- Ensure scale and massing is designed to complement the context and character of the area.
- Ensure the scale and massing respects the scale of adjacent forms (buildings or open space and views) and the topography.
- Design the eaves to overhang if possible to provide a strong visual roof and shadow line, responding to context and character.
- Avoid arbitrary changes of roof pitch and materials.
- Roofs should have a major percentage of roofs with some element of vertical accent or visual break such as chimneys.
- Windows usually form a vertical emphasis to the elevations and the proportions are important.
- The window openings should be aligned properly. If smaller windows are above larger then align them down the centre line.
- The window pattern should have an ordered consistency along and down the elevation. The interest comes in the detailing and style of the windows.
- Interest can also be added to the elevations by the addition of the porches to doors and the addition of bay windows to alleviate the elevation from becoming a flat façade.
- The addition of porches and doors should be contextual or of a relatively balanced and proportional form.
- Windows should have respective ‘dressing in the form of appropriate contextual ‘heads and cills’. 
- Window frames should be suitably set back into the opening to provide adequate reveals to the opening. 
- If the heads and cills are stone, artificial stone or concrete then they should appear to span the opening in one single piece.
- The materials used should be contextual to the local character.
- Provide a limited palette of materials to avoid visual confusion and incongruity.

Reference Also:
- NPPF, s7, para 63, 64 (Design)

Leeds City Council Core Strategy
Local Character 1.

Much of the ‘Neighbourhoods for Living’ document is about the design response within the ‘local character’ or context of the sites. Designing within the local character and context should be seen as a positive and vibrant exercise. Leeds has many ‘character areas’ and a wide diversity of context. The following collages serve as a reminder of some of the varying and stimulating visual character of Leeds and its surrounding settlements.

Reference Also:
- NPPF. s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
- Materials NFL p6, 25, 34 & 46.
- Leeds City Council Core Strategy
Local Character.
Collage of some of the varying and stimulating visual character of Leeds and its surrounding settlements.

Reference Also:
- NPPF s7, para 63, 64 (Design)
**Policy Update 1.**

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<td>and Spatial (SP) policies.</td>
<td>T7. Superseded by CS policies SP11 and CC3.</td>
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**Examples of associated Supplementary Planning Guidance which is used alongside NFL and to which reference can be made. They are available from the Leeds City Council website.**

- **Street Design Guide**: Advice on road and street design for housing.
- **Householder Design Guide**: Design advice to householders regarding extensions and the like.
- **Building for Tomorrow Today**: Sustainable Design and Construction Guide.
Useful Addresses

CABE at Design Council
Design Council
Angel Building
407 St John Street
London
EC1V 4AB
Tel: 020 7420 5200
Fax: 020 7420 5300
Email: info@designcouncil.org.uk
www.designcouncil.org.uk

CONCOURSE
The Green Sand Foundry
99 Water Lane
Holbeck
Leeds
LS11 5QN
Tel: 0113 283 2600 ext 23222
www.concourse.org.uk

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG)
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Tel: 030 3444 0000 (General Enquiries)
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government

DESIGN FOR HOMES
The Building Centre
26 Store Street
London
WC1E 7BT
Tel: 020 3301 3855 and 020 3301 3856
Email: info@designforhomes.org
www.designforhomes.org

HOME BUILDERS FEDERATION (HBF)
Home Builders Federation
HBF House
27 Broadwall
London
SE1 9PL
Tel: 020 7960 1600
Email: info@hbf.co.uk
www.hbf.co.uk

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS (ICE)
1 Great George Street
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SW1P 3AA
Tel: 020 7222 7722
Email: info@onegreatgeorgestreet.com
www.ice.org.uk

THE CHARTERED INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION (CIHT)
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Email: info@ciht.org.uk
www.ciht.org.uk

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12 Roger Street
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www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk
Yorkshire and Humber branch
Email: mail.yorkshirehumber@landscapeinstitute.org

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Email: Yorkshire@rtpi.org.uk

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Fax: 0207 084 8951/01
Email: acpopi@acpo.pnn.police.uk
www.securedbydesign.com

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