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HOUNSLOW CHARACTER, SUSTAINABILITY AND DESIGN CODES SPD

PART A1 INTRODUCTION



London Borough
of Hounslow

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A1 INTRODUCTION

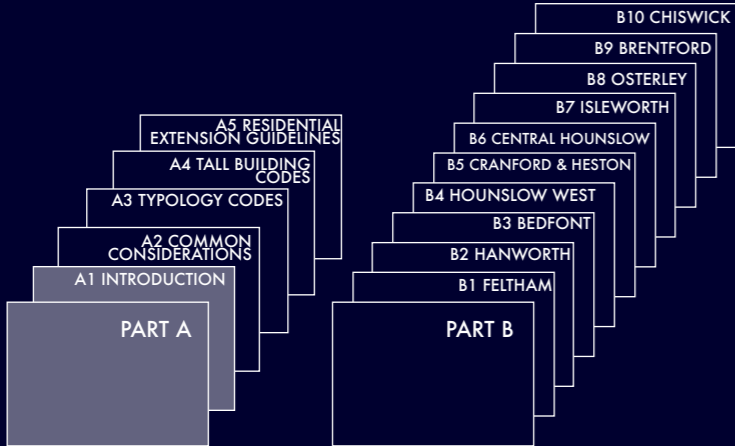
Document structure

This Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD is comprised of the following parts;

- Part A: Introduction & Design Codes
- Part B: Places

Within each part, there are individual chapters that must be opened separately to view. Use this diagram to help navigate the structure of the Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD.

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Introduction

A1.1 Hounslow Borough is full of distinctive places that together form a microcosm of London's diversity. From historic tree-lined streets in Chiswick in the east of the borough, through to London's busiest airport and major logistics operations at its western edge, and everything in between. It is, at the same time, a place of great affluence and desirability, and real adversity and challenge. Its characteristics interweave as a pattern of growth and change, from its origins as a cluster of medieval villages, farmsteads and country estates; to its transformation by Victorian development and the birth of the railways, to its position as part of London's expanding road network.

A1.2 The influx of Hounslow's south Asian communities in the 1970s and 80s brought another wave of transformation, reshaping the Borough into its present day role as a diverse outer London Borough made up of a network of neighbourhoods, all with their own unique character, vibrancy and identity.

Why do we need this study?

A1.3 Like all London boroughs, Hounslow is experiencing challenges and opportunities presented by the Mayor's good growth agenda - the drive to significantly increase the number of high-quality homes and new jobs being delivered and to ensure this creates well-designed places that function well, are sustainable and that people want to and

can afford to live and work in. The London Plan sets Hounslow a ten-year target for 17,820 homes. The 2022 Hounslow Corporate Plan commits to ensuring all the borough's neighbourhoods are pleasant and sustainable to live in, striving for a greener, healthier, cleaner, safer, thriving and liveable Hounslow.

A1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the London Plan both give design quality and character-led design guidance a more central role. The adopted London Plan calls for urban character to play a greater role in strategic planning and design for future development. Policy D3 (London Plan, 2021) sets out that an appropriate form and density of development must be established through the adoption of a design-led approach which takes full account of local character and context to optimise site capacity.

Don't we already have a character study?

A1.5 The 2014 Urban Context and Character Study was ahead of its time, recognising early on the crucial role that understanding character has in helping to manage growth. The study is a hugely thorough, robust and successful piece of work that has been used as an exemplar for characterisation studies in other London boroughs and further afield.

A1.6 Since the 2014 study was prepared, there have been some key policy shifts and changes at multiple scales that necessitates an updated study to reflect these. The adoption of this document means the 2014 guidance will be superseded.

- The Council's declaration in 2019 of a Climate Emergency and Action Plan - growing focus on the sustainability of design-led growth and the shifts needed to respond to the climate emergency and the borough's green recovery, including the ambition to create 15-minute low carbon neighbourhoods (bringing amenities people need as close to where people live as possible);
- Greater emphasis placed on design coding - the adoption of a National Design Guide (2021) and the launch of the National Model Design Code (2021) to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design;
- Council ambition to shift to innovative digital tools to support planning processes;
- The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the way we live, work and get around, and there is an increased understanding of the role of the built and natural environment in influencing/impacting population's physical and mental wellbeing.

A1.7 There is also significant planned investment in the Borough with some areas experiencing or expecting significant change:

- Heathrow Opportunity Area identified as having capacity to take a significant number of new homes, as well as critical infrastructure and new green spaces, particularly around Bedfont and Feltham;
- Great West Corridor Opportunity Area;
- Council's Transport Strategy (2019) gives a greater focus on active and sustainable travel. Alongside investment in walking and cycling there are planned transport projects being developed, including the West London Orbital Overground rail extension to Hounslow; new Golden Mile station and shuttle service to the Crossrail line at Southall; and possible Southern Access to Heathrow with potential new station at Bedfont;
- Retrofitting the private and social housing stock to create low carbon neighbourhoods whilst increasing access to services through the increase in of sustainable modes of transport;
- Transforming and stimulating a low carbon economy, building new local economies and businesses such as clean technology, energy and creating and expanding local circular economies so Hounslow is seen as a destination for green business; and



- Town centres like Brentford and Hounslow are seeing rapid change with new development and diversifying uses. Town Centre Masterplans have been prepared alongside this study to provide a holistic view for development in these areas. Both of these studies have fed into each other to ensure a joined up approach to design guidance.

planning application. Over time as design codes are developed and tested they are likely to gain greater material weight.

A1.11 The document also identifies priorities and interventions in neighbourhoods that are required to improve their character and function. These identified interventions can be prioritised for investment of future funding.

A1.12 The document should be read alongside the Local Plan as well as other Supplementary Planning Documents. The Residential Extensions Guidelines SPD (2017) and Shopfront Design Guidance (2013) are superseded by updated guidance which is included within this study in Sections A5 and A2 respectively

A1.13 Where recommendations go further than existing policy, we have made clear the existing position and given aims to what could be achieved.

What does this study include and how will it be used?

A1.14 This document proposes design guidance and codes to equip local residents, community groups, planning officers and developers to make better informed decisions in relation to high quality and sustainable design which consider the context of a site, street or neighbourhood, and that make the most of the character of different parts of the borough. Information about the Borough's character and a strategy for design-led growth, including where growth should be focused and what the nature of growth looks like for different areas can be found in the Characterisation and Growth Study.

How does this study fit in with local policy and other guidance?

A1.9 New national policy introduced in the National Planning Policy Framework expects local planning authorities to develop local design codes that set out clear design parameters that guide what good quality design looks like in each area, based on future aspirations for an area.

A1.10 This document will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This means it is intended to add further detail to the strategic and Borough wide policies in the existing Local Plan (2015) and emerging single Local Plan. As the single Local Plan goes through examination and is adopted, it will supersede the existing Local Plan, and the Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD will then support the new Local Plan. The Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD sits underneath the London Plan and Local Plan, and alongside other Council SPDs such as the emerging Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption SPD. It will be a material consideration to help development management officers make informed judgements about the quality of planning applications coming forward. The study will be considered alongside other forms of material evidence before a decision is made on a

Fitting in with other guidance

A1.15 This Supplementary Planning Document adds details and further guidance to the policies in our Development Plan Documents, (DPDs), which would be considered a material

consideration in development management decisions. Therefore applicants should take into account the guidance and design codes within this document to inform development.



- A1.16 This document provides a core set of borough design principles and design guidance and codes at the borough, place, neighbourhood and site level.
- A1.17 The design guidance and codes are a resource for many different groups. Residents can use the document if they wish to improve their property, or want to be more equipped to engage with plans for future changes in their area. Community groups who are looking to produce their own codes can use this document as the basis for more detailed coding.
- A1.18 Developers should use the document as a guide for making sure their proposals are taking into account local character. Council officers will use the guide to assess whether applications are suitable for their context and that they are meeting the Council's aspirations for good design. Council officers will also use this document to prioritise funding on interventions.

Ultimately, the aim is to raise the bar of design quality across the entire Borough, so that local people can live, work and thrive in sustainable, healthy, social, enduring and inspiring places.

How to navigate this document

- A1.19 The Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD is in two parts. **Part A** introduces the document and gives overarching principles for good design. This part is all to do with design guidance for common considerations, types of sites, tall buildings and residential extensions. **Part B** is focused on design guidance and codes for places - 10 large places and 37 smaller neighbourhoods. Some of the larger areas have detailed design guidance for specific sites within the Borough. Within this section, there are also codes for each of the town centres. There is **design guidance** at every level - Borough, area, place, and site type. Any **design codes** are highlighted in grey or coloured boxes. Definitions for these terms are explained on page 12.

Are you putting together an application?

Here is the process that you should undertake in relation to this SPD...

- 1** Identify and consider key policy documents, evidence bases and documents relating to context (e.g. Conservation Area Appraisals) to help inform decision making
- 2** Consider how the Borough-wide principles apply to your site
- 3** Identify the relevant Borough area and how your proposal can contribute to the priorities for and needs of the area
- 4** Identify the relevant neighbourhood and how your proposal can contribute to the neighbourhood's character and objectives
- 5** Identify the relevant common considerations and how to apply them to your site
- 6** Identify the relevant site type and apply the guidance and parameters set out in this section
- 7** Prepare proposals demonstrating how you have taken account of parameters, local character and optimised capacity through a design-led approach

PART A BOROUGH

A1 Introduction

This section introduces the document, sets out key terms, and outlines a set of overarching design principles for the whole Borough which are the priorities for future change.

A2 Common considerations for all sites

This chapter sets out overarching design guidance relevant to all site types. It covers topics like nature, movement, homes and buildings and shopfronts.

A3 Site types

This chapter gives design guidance for six site types- backland, residential infill, adjacent to infrastructure, arterial route, waterside and upwards extensions.

A4 Tall buildings design guidance

This section provides design guidance for tall buildings in the borough.

A5 Residential extensions design guidance

This section gives more tailored guidance for residential extensions. The Residential Extensions Guidelines SPD (2017) is superseded by the updated guidance contained in this study.

PART B PLACES

Introducing Hounslow's places

This chapter introduces the 10 large places, and the 37 neighbourhoods within them.

B1 Feltham

B2 Hanworth

B3 Bedfont

B4 Hounslow West

B5 Cranford & Heston

B6 Central Hounslow

B7 Isleworth

B8 Osterley

B9 Brentford

B10 Chiswick

Each of the ten places include a vision for each area to guide the transition towards a greener, healthier, cleaner, safer, thriving and livable Hounslow. Neighbourhood level design codes and guidance are included within each place. Town centre and site codes are also included where relevant.

Explaining key terms

How was this document made?

A1.20 The Character, Sustainability and Design Codes SPD brings together a library of data to build up a clear picture of the Borough. GIS data from the Council, GLA Datastore, Office for National Statistics and other open-sources has been used to create the plans, alongside photography, historical research and site visits. The 2014 Context and Character Study has been the bedrock to the updated study, and there are many aspects that we've taken through into this SPD.

A1.21 One of the overarching principles for good design in Hounslow, set out in this study, is that guidance is shaped by local people who have substantial knowledge to bring when making decisions about what good design looks like in their area. This piece of work has been deeply informed by extensive public engagement and conversations with residents to develop our understanding and to draw together the conclusions within this study. The following engagement activities were undertaken:

- Officer workshops to understand the main challenges faced in different parts of the Borough in relation to character and design and how the study can help to address these;
- Online survey to understand neighbourhood boundaries and identify key assets and issues;
- Stakeholder workshops - to introduce the project and test / refine the emerging visions and design guidance;
- Design codes training - a Q&A video created to inform and equip local people to be engaged in the process; and
- Emails received by locals with detail on the main issues and opportunities specific to their area of interest.
- Consultation workshops with residents, focus groups and equalities groups.
- Online consultation on the new Local Plan Maker Platform.

A1.22 **Character** - Urban character can be understood as a combination of historical, physical and social factors.

A1.23 **Design vision** - A clear articulation of what an area should be like in the future, developed with the local community (National Model Design Code, 2021). This study includes high-level design visions at the beginning of each area chapter.

A1.24 **Design guidance** - most of this report comprises design guidance. This deals with more subjective and complex aspects of design that are more difficult to codify. Design guidance helps communities and developers to define what constitutes high quality design and to help deliver that standard in practice.

A1.25 **Design codes** - a set of rules which provide specific and detailed parameters for the physical development of an area or site. Codes are used to guide development proposals to ensure they achieve agreed objectives. They are concise and focused on one specific aspect of design. In Part A3 design codes take the form of spatial considerations for each of the site types explored.

A1.26 **Urban Greening Factor** - urban greening is measured by Urban Greening Factor. This is 'a tool that evaluates and quantifies the amount and quality of urban greening that a scheme provides to inform decisions about appropriate levels of greening in new developments' (GLA, 2019). This measurement has formed the basis of the borough level codes for urban greening.

A1.27 **Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** is a good measure of density. FAR is the ratio of a building's total

floor area to the size of the piece of land upon which it is built. A higher ratio indicates a higher density environment.

A1.28 **Form Factor** Form Factor is the ratio of external surface area to net internal floor area. It is used in delivering compact building form to maximise energy efficiency

A1.29 **Gross Internal Area (GIA)** Gross Internal Area is the area of a building measured to the internal face of the perimeter walls at each floor level (Internal face -means the brick/block work or plaster coat applied to the brick/block work, not the surface of internal linings installed by the occupier of the perimeter walls at each floor level).

A1.30 **Infill Development** Development that takes place between existing groups of buildings, normally within a built-up area.

A1.31 **Local Plan** Abbreviation used to describe the statutory plan adopted by the London Borough of Hounslow.

A1.32 **Net Zero Carbon** This document uses the London Plan definitions of Net Zero Carbon. These are:

- **Whole life-cycle carbon** Whole life-cycle carbon emissions are the total greenhouse gas emissions arising from a development over its lifetime, from the emissions associated with raw material extractions, the manufacture and transport of building materials, to installation/construction, operation, maintenance, and eventual disposal.
- **Zero-carbon** Activity that causes no net release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas

"Character is as much about people as it is about buildings."

"Character and design has to be for everyone"



Learn more about design guidance and codes by watching the [Q&A video](#)

emissions into the atmosphere.

locally distinctive architectural features.

A1.33 **Public realm** The areas of city or town (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge for everyone to use or see, including streets, parks and open spaces.

A1.39 **Typology** Classification of physical characteristics commonly found in buildings and urban places, according to their association with different categories

A1.34 **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** A supplementary planning document provides advice and guidance on the implementation of policies and proposals contained in Hounslow's Local Plan. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan. Before an SPD is adopted it has to go through a six-week formal consultation process where the public can comment on the draft report. SPDs are prepared in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

A1.35 **Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs)** SuDs are often a sequence of management practices, control structures and strategies designed to efficiently and sustainably drain surface water, while minimising pollution and managing the impact on water quality of local water bodies.

A1.36 **London Plan Guidance (LPG)** London Plan Guidance explains how policies in the London Plan should be carried through into action. An LPG is a formal supplementary document to the London Plan and is an important consideration in decisions on planning applications. An LPG can also assist London Boroughs when preparing their Local Plans.

A1.37 **Streetscape** The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, street furniture, trees and open spaces, etc., that combine to form the street's character.

A1.38 **Townscape** The visual elements of a neighbourhood, including building heights, massing, street elevations, roofscapes and other

Borough-wide principles

A1.40 The National Design Guide and Model Design Code outlines the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics:

- Context - enhances its surroundings
- Identity - attractive and distinctive
- Built form - a coherent pattern of development
- Movement - accessible and easy to move around
- Nature - enhanced and optimised
- Public spaces - safe, social and inclusive
- Uses - mixed and integrated
- Homes and buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable
- Resources - efficient and resilient
- Lifespan - made to last

A1.41 We have drawn on these characteristics, as well as the commitments embedded in the Corporate Plan vision, to develop a set of overarching principles that lay the foundation for high-quality, sustainable and characterful design across the Borough that works for the whole community. These principles form the Borough-wide response to our understanding of the character of the Borough and the inequalities that exist between different parts. The principles are the basis for the transition themes which set out aspirations for greener and inclusive growth for the ten areas in the Borough. All applications will be expected to demonstrate how the 12 principles have been considered.



Fig A1.1 Diagram of the ten characteristics from National Design Guide



Brentford Lock West (by Duggan Morris) is an award-winning example of contemporary development which carries through historic threads of the canalside context in its design



Old Isleworth's Riverside Mill (Manor House Way) takes cues from its riverside setting and industrial uses formerly on site

A) Every neighbourhood in Hounslow deserves...



High-quality, design-led interventions that are health promoting and meaningfully address the climate emergency

- A1.42 In line with Local Plan policy, proposals must demonstrate strong understanding of local character and maximise opportunities to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- A1.43 Proposals must employ a contextual form of development, appropriate to location, which supports clear delineation of private and public space.
- A1.44 They should contribute positively to the site, local street (including public realm), area and community.



Exceptional parks, green spaces and public spaces that are available for everyone to use and enjoy, with opportunities for recreation, children's play and social interaction and health improvements.

- A1.45 Every intervention in the urban environment should contribute to increasing the area's urban greening and public spaces and green the grey, supporting positive impacts on mental health.
- A1.46 Proposals should show how nature is enhanced on the site and how these enhancements support the wider ambition for connected green and blue networks that deliver biodiversity net gain.
- A1.47 Proposals should seek to deliver an uplift in urban greening on a site regardless of existing condition.



A well-connected network of streets and spaces which prioritise safe and easy walking and cycling routes to encourage healthy lifestyles.

- A1.48 Proposals should seek to address local barriers to walking and cycling and support new active travel routes and interventions that improve connectivity between places and to Hounslow's existing streets, green spaces, centres and transport nodes. Proposals should help promote healthy behaviours to reduce significant health inequalities.
- A1.49 Ample space should be given for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users along streets and sufficient space provided to accommodate other vehicles. Proposals that can demonstrate how they can improve air quality will be encouraged.

B) Future growth in Hounslow should be sustainable by making the most out of its assets:



Inspiring and resilient local centres that meet the needs of Hounslow’s residents and workers.

A1.50 Design proposals should help to enhance, revitalise and diversify local centres. This will help to ensure the local community has easy access within 15mins by foot or bike to facilities such as shops, workplaces, schools, health clinics, gyms, leisure and community facilities, cafés, pubs and restaurants.

A1.51 Proposals that can demonstrate how they will enhance the local centre offer in the near term while embedding flexibility for its potential role in the long-term will be actively encouraged.



A good mix of home tenures, types and sizes to meet the needs of local people.

A1.52 Design proposals must provide a good mix of home tenures, types and sizes for Hounslow’s existing and future residents as set out in the Local Plan and Local Plan reviews. Applications must be informed by local housing needs, including understanding the needs of different ethnic groups across the borough.

A1.53 This will help to contribute to more socially inclusive communities in Hounslow and support the economic and social success of a neighbourhood and contribute to positive mental health.



Buildings and places that are fit for purpose and made to last.

A1.54 Design proposals should demonstrate how buildings are comfortable, safe and relate well to their environment, designed in a way that maximises resilience and adaptability in the face of the climate emergency. This includes providing a good standard and quality of internal space e.g. room sizes, floor-to-ceiling heights, sunlight, storage, daylight and ventilation as well as minimal energy demand, incorporating features that encourage communities to develop sustainable net zero lifestyles, and making sure buildings are carefully integrated into their external space.



Hounslow’s oldest routes should continue to be the focus for diverse activities and be invested in as vibrant and well-connected places.

A1.55 The Council will actively encourage proposals for sites along Hounslow’s arterial routes that can demonstrate how they complement their environs with appropriately dense, mixed-use and sustainable development which makes optimal use of land. Developments should improve provision for active travel on these routes.



Hounslow’s rivers and watercourses are a great asset and should be recognised and supported.

A1.56 Where applicable, design proposals should reinforce what is unique about its section of the water including directly adjoining areas and help contribute to the quality, accessibility, wildness and resilience of its waterside environment. Proposals should help to preserve and enhance views to / from waterways.



Hounslow’s existing assets, from its historic gems to its everyday heritage, should be retained, re-used and enhanced.

A1.57 Developments involving existing buildings, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets, should first consider retention, re-use and enhancement, informed by whole life carbon assessment. Existing greenery should be retained and enhanced. Modern high-quality proposals that provide a thoughtful and sensitive response to retaining and enhancing the existing historic fabric will be supported.

C) Every application should...

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Meaningfully involve Hounslow’s residents as part of an inclusive design process to develop a vision and evolve design options for sites.

A1.58 Local people should feel equipped to contribute to the preparation of design guidance and codes and be confident that their ideas will make a difference. The final design proposal will be much better for it too.

A1.59 Where design codes are prepared for developments, it is important that the community is involved throughout the design process. Engagement should be proportionate to the scale and location of the development and the form and approach to engagement should be co-designed with community groups. Successful engagement approaches should refer to this SPD and other evidence bases to identify all community groups, including those that are harder to reach, in addition to occupants of new development.

11

Demonstrate a good understanding of context.

A1.60 This includes how proposals respond to local features and the distinctiveness of their neighbourhoods.
A1.61 Proposals should be evidenced-based and demonstrate how they will address the issues raised by the evidence to help reduce inequalities across the Borough.

12

Show the steps that have been taken to reach the final design outcome, including how the Council’s sustainability objectives have informed the design process.

A1.62 This includes setting out the different design options tested and presenting the design criteria which have informed the scheme. The overall contribution to sustainability objectives must inform the design process and be clearly set out.
A1.63 Applicants should refer to the Council’s Green Recovery Strategy for further information, in particular the Green by Design principles and how these have been considered.

Steps you should take when putting together an application

- 1** Identify and consider key policy documents, evidence bases and documents relating to context (e.g. Conservation Area Appraisals) to help inform decision making
- 2** Consider how the Borough-wide principles apply to your site
- 3** Identify the relevant Borough area and how your proposal can contribute to the priorities for and needs of the area
- 4** Identify the relevant neighbourhood and how your proposal can contribute to the neighbourhood’s character and objectives
- 5** Identify the relevant common considerations and how to apply them to your site
- 6** Identify the relevant site type and apply the guidance and parameters set out in this section
- 7** Prepare proposals demonstrating how you have taken account of parameters, local character and optimised capacity through a design-led approach



Reynard Mills town houses and apartments with landscaped private and communal gardens



White Bear Lane, Hounslow - mix of architectural styles and typologies



Brentford Lock West



Turnham Green Terrace Mews is an example of backland intensification, now providing workspace, food and retail

