

Industrial & Office Design & Layout

supplementary planning guidance

South Derbyshire District Council
Planning Services



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Purpose of the Guidelines

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 12, para. 3.15. It supplements Employment policies in the adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan and Policies ENV21 and C6 of the reviewed Local Plan, providing a greater level of detail to show how development can avoid having an adverse impact on the environmental quality and amenity of the District. The document was subject to a public consultation exercise and following consideration of responses was adopted by Environment and Development Services Committee on 30th September 2004.

The advice is intended to act as a guide to the design and layout of all new industrial and office development and redevelopment and to alterations to existing premises where planning permission is required. As well as being concerned with the general quality of design, it addresses a range of other issues of importance to industrial and business development including access, security and operational matters.

This guidance should be read alongside all relevant policies of the Development Plan and any subsequent changes to it. In all cases the policies contained in the Plan will take precedence.

Introduction

The guidance is intended to assist in meeting the following Key Aims of the Council's Corporate Strategy:

- *safeguard and enhance a sustainable environment
- *develop a vibrant and sustainable economy
- *reduce crime and disorder along with the fear of crime

As well as being of importance in its own right, the quality of the environment is closely linked to the local economy. It is a primary factor in the attraction of staff, the retention of existing businesses within the district, the attraction of inward investment and the promotion of South Derbyshire as a tourist destination.

The overriding aim of this guidance is therefore to ensure that new industrial and office development provides for the needs of occupiers,

users and visitors whilst maintaining and, where possible, enhancing local environmental quality. It will often be necessary to find an acceptable compromise between security needs and the visual appearance of the development.

Experience shows that the most successful new developments are those where there has been a dialogue between the Council and designers prior to the submission of a formal application. The Council therefore encourages this approach.

Guidance Applicable throughout the District

Site Planning & Layout

Proper consideration should be given to site planning from the outset and applicants are encouraged to employ professional advice to ensure that the development provides for the long term needs of the occupier whilst respecting and, where possible, enhancing the character of the locality. The layout of the proposed development should take account of the pattern of established and other permitted development in the area. For example, it may be possible to position buildings on neighbouring premises in such a way as to screen their respective storage and service areas from public view, as shown in Fig.1.

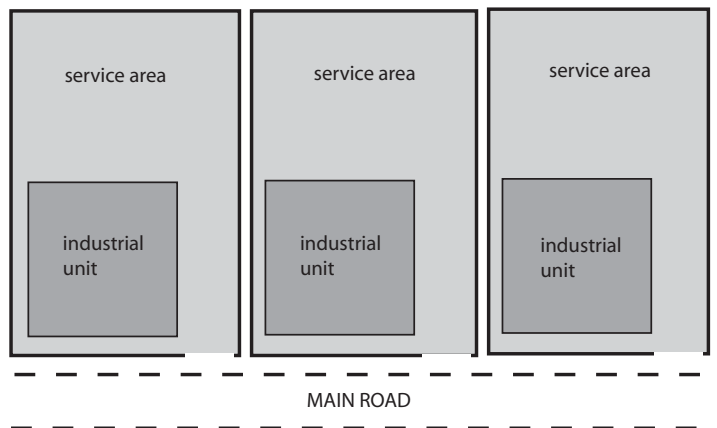


Fig.1. Thoughtful site layout can assist in screening service areas from public viewpoints.

Developments should provide sufficient on-site capacity to avoid the need for operational activity on the street, taking account of the future expansion needs of the business. Where relatively high plot ratios are proposed for new industrial buildings, consideration should be given at the outset to structural options for adding first floors or mezzanines to allow the business to grow without compromising the plot ratio.

Buildings

Due to their size and prominence, industrial and business developments can have a profound impact on the environment and it is therefore desirable that they seek to complement their surroundings in terms of design and materials. Where proposals affect listed buildings and conservation areas developments should be designed to respect their setting and special character. Within the National Forest the Council will seek to encourage imaginative design and timber construction where appropriate.

The form, massing, scale and height of the building should be designed to respond to its context and key views of the site. Consideration should be given to the impact of development from all viewpoints, both near and distant.

Buildings should be carefully planned to ensure that the internal layout allows windows and entrances to overlook public streets, public spaces, access points, car parking areas and other pedestrian routes, as shown in Fig.2. This can enhance security through natural surveillance and contribute toward the creation of an attractive public environment.



Fig.2. Office development overlooking Willington Road, Etwall.

It is recommended that windows vulnerable to access by intruders be constructed of robust materials with laminated glass of 6.4mm minimum thickness and meeting the British Standard. Ground floor windows should be fitted with anti-shatter film and should have barred protection or shutters, preferably installed internally. Also for security reasons, downpipes should ideally be either flush with the walls of the building or concealed. In unobtrusive positions where a downpipe cannot be concealed umbrella spikes could be considered.

The design of buildings should allow for the possibility of some adaptation or flexibility to accommodate the needs of future users. Ideally the design should minimise the need for maintenance to reduce the extent of future deterioration. For example, materials that weather or stain badly should normally be avoided as should structures that can easily be vandalised. Buildings that reflect these principles can be expected to have a greater life expectancy and enhanced long term value.

Potential for retaining, conserving and re-using existing buildings on a site should always be assessed as part of a sustainable approach to development.

Landscaping

Landscaping can contribute significantly to the aesthetic qualities of a development, not only for the purposes of screening as referred to under “Boundary Treatments” below, but also insofar as it can help to soften the appearance of open paved areas such as car parks and provide a pleasing contrast with the rectilinear design of buildings. Such planting will be encouraged, particularly on sites highly visible from public viewpoints. Within the National Forest landscaping schemes should give emphasis to woodland style planting.

Service Yards and Open Storage

Service yards and open storage areas, including refuse, tend to detract markedly from the environmental quality of an area and should therefore normally be screened from public view. Special fencing and landscaping such as earth bunds, where sensitively designed, can also be used to absorb noise. Where satisfactory indoor accommodation cannot be provided outdoor storage should be located where it cannot be seen from public viewpoints and should be stacked no higher than surrounding buildings, walls, fences or landscape screening. Provision should be made for the storage of refuse generated by the site in the form of bin stores or areas dedicated for the location of skips.

Waste disposal and other storage containers should normally be sited away from buildings as they can be used as climbing aids. The positioning of storage and other potential obstacles should not affect means of escape or hinder access for fire appliances.

The creation of unprotected and secluded areas should be avoided and areas vulnerable to intruders such as fire exits and loading bays should be well lit, although outdoor lighting should be limited to the minimum necessary to serve its purpose. The use of comprehensive security measures including CCTV is encouraged.

Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatments should help to assimilate the development with its surroundings and effectively screen open storage and operational areas from public view whilst providing an appropriate level of security. Care should be taken to avoid detracting significantly from the quality of the surrounding area. On industrial estates a co-ordinated approach will be encouraged as shown in Fig.3.



Fig.3. A consistent frontage boundary treatment can help to unify a series of different buildings

Visual screening can often be achieved by siting buildings along the highway frontage, with open areas located to the rear. Buildings also represent the most secure form of boundary treatment and can be very effective barriers against noise, thereby helping to reduce conflicts between neighbouring land uses.

Where the buildings themselves cannot be used, boundary treatments should wherever possible comprise natural landscaping. The type, scale and layout of planting should be related to the size and nature of the plot and buildings within their surroundings although boundary landscape belts intended to screen premises should be of sufficient depth to fulfil their purpose. Where needed to discourage intruders hawthorn hedge can provide natural protection.

Future demands for underground services, cabling and sightlines should be taken into account so as

not to prejudice the survival of new trees A Landscape Management Plan should always be prepared for significant projects to ensure that they can be sustainably maintained for the future.

Where landscaping would be impractical as a means of enclosing outdoor areas, walls or pre-painted metal weldmesh fencing should normally be used, shown in Fig.4. Although effective in security terms, palisade fencing tends to be unattractive and ideally should only be used where the aforementioned alternatives would be impractical. For security reasons use of chain link fencing should be avoided.



Fig.4. Weld mesh fence, Dove Valley Business Park

Any security fencing should be to a minimum height of 2.4m. It should be designed and coloured so as to minimise visual intrusion and should integrate fully with the overall landscaping scheme. Where possible hedge and tree planting should be used to soften the impact of stark fence lines.

Access

Development should normally be designed in such a way as to encourage access by sustainable transport modes, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Siting buildings close to site frontages can assist in encouraging access on foot or by public transport. The positioning of pedestrian entrances as close to public rights of way and bus stops as possible can further enhance accessibility.

Pedestrian routes from streets to building entrances should be clearly defined, direct and safe. Development that results in the need to walk through areas used by motor vehicles and cycles can be dangerous and intimidating to pedestrians and should thus be avoided.

Industrial and business development adjacent to public rights of way should, wherever possible, avoid detriment to the environmental quality or safety of the path, for example through the creation of potential ambush points, as this may deter use by pedestrians.

For security reasons there should normally be only one vehicular access to the premises and this should ideally have a barrier. Car parks should provide good natural surveillance and be well lit after dark. Traffic calming measures should be considered at the car park entrance. Landscaped areas adjacent to car parks should ideally comprise berberis or thorny species to discourage people from hiding in them.

Guidance Relating to Development in the Countryside or on the Edge of Urban Areas

In addition to the guidance set out above, the following should be taken into consideration in planning for new industrial and business development in the countryside or on the edge of urban areas.

Site Planning & Layout

In the countryside the protection of the character of the landscape must be accorded a high priority. Development in such locations tends to be visible over greater distances and from a wider range of viewpoints. The layout should ensure that both the buildings themselves and any open areas containing parked vehicles or open storage are adequately screened so that the quality of rural landscapes is protected and, if possible, enhanced. Account should be taken of the context provided by landscape features and any other existing or planned development in the vicinity.

Buildings

A consistency and simplicity of form will be sought in new development. High quality design will be encouraged and imaginative solutions sought to overcome any individual site constraints. The



Fig.5. Administration building, Dove Valley Business Park

colour of materials can help reduce the impact of large buildings in the landscape. More elaborate shapes should only be used at a smaller scale on the entrances to buildings and on small administration blocks where these are not highly conspicuous from outside the site, as shown in Fig.5.

Development in the countryside is at its most conspicuous where the skyline is broken, or where the landscape is substantially changed through the “cut and fill” process, although there may be instances where the latter technique can be used to lessen the visual impact of a development. Muted colours and non-reflective finishes often assist in ensuring that the development responds to its context and should normally be used. Impact can also be reduced by relating size and colour to that of nearby buildings, so that they complement each other as a group.

Landscaping

Landscaping schemes should take account of the local landscape character context. Trees, shrubs



Fig.6. Landscaping, William Nadin Way, Swadlincote.

and vegetation should be appropriate to the surrounding environment, as shown in Fig.6 and should, where practicable, include large woodland species that will contribute to the wider landscape.

Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

The general rule should be to retain the agricultural character of the buildings and their setting as far as possible, as shown in Fig.7. Existing openings should be used as far as possible, with additional ones kept to a minimum. Roof lights should be avoided where possible and kept to a minimum where needed. Particular care should be taken to avoid changes to those elevations of buildings that are visible from public viewpoints.



Fig.7. Farm diversification scheme, Barton Blount.

Planning Obligations

Where necessary, to make a proposal acceptable from a land use point of view and to meet the needs of new occupiers, planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act may be entered into either in partnership with the Council or on a unilateral basis. These obligations, which should accord with Circular 1/97, will often seek off-site works and may sometimes have the benefit of ensuring the wider aims of the Council are met. One example may be assistance in fulfilling the Council's commitment to provide an integrated cycle network.

Examples of facilities that may be secured in this way include the following:

- (i) the creation of pedestrian and/or cycle routes
- (ii) the provision of bus shelters and laybys
- (iii) the provision of roads
- (iv) the provision of street furniture or other works of art

National Forest Planting Guidelines

Additionally, much of the District lies within the National Forest. For developments that fall within its boundaries there will be a requirement that planting is carried out either on or immediately off-site or, where this is impracticable, through the provision of a financial contribution towards planting elsewhere in the Forest within South Derbyshire. Any development and associated planting should have regard to The National Forest Strategy. Details of the level of planting, or alternative provision, that will be required are contained in the National Forest publication "The National Forest: A Guide for Developers and Planners".

Further Advice

This is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents published by South Derbyshire District Council Planning Service. Other documents in the series are as follows:

Display of Advertisements

Cycling Strategy

Historic South Derbyshire

Protecting Trees

Swadlincote Walking Strategy

If you require any further advice or require clarification on any of the issues raised or other planning matters please contact:

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If you require a copy of this information in another language, braille or large print format please contact the **Customer Services Manager (01283) 595784.**

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