

QD1 Design - quality of development and design statements

All proposals for new buildings must demonstrate a high standard of design and make a positive contribution to the visual quality of the environment. In areas of drab and uninteresting character, the planning authority will expect the opportunity to be taken to create new buildings and areas of distinction on suitable sites.

Unless a development proposal is within an area featuring a distinctive historic style of architecture, replication of existing styles and pastiche designs will be discouraged. The following design aspects will be taken into account in all developments:-

- a. scale and height of development;
- b. architectural detailing;
- c. quality of materials;
- d. visual interest particularly at street level; and
- e. appropriate levels and type of landscaping.

A 'Design Statement' will be required for all large scale* development proposals; sites in prominent locations; significant smaller sites in conservation areas or sensitive sites within the setting of major or listed buildings. The statement should address the criteria in policies QD2-QD5.

***Large scale developments in this policy are defined as a residential scheme of 10 or more units or a commercial proposal for 1000 sq m and above**

- 3.3 This Plan seeks to raise the overall standard of design and aims to encourage more innovative and distinctive design. The 'Urban Task Force' report 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' highlighted that well designed buildings, streets and neighbourhoods are essential for successful social, economic and environmental regeneration. New urban developments must be designed to much higher standards if they are to attract people back into our towns and cities and priority should be given to high architectural standards and to the design of public spaces between buildings.
- 3.4 Policy QD1 and the others that follow do not seek to restrict creative design provided that new development can still be integrated successfully into its context. Modern designs using contemporary and sustainable materials will be welcomed particularly in areas of characteristically drab and uninteresting design and architects and developers will have much more creative freedom to originate new design solutions. It is possible to integrate modern developments whilst respecting the character of areas that are attractive and worthy of preservation.
- 3.5 The preparation of design statements, which firstly describe the physical characteristics of a site and the wider context and secondly, set out the design principles adopted and how the development relates to its context with illustrative material is recommended. The planning authority will not accept 'off the shelf' or corporate design solutions which have taken little or no account of local characteristics. The thresholds used for determining whether an application is a major or large scale application in Policy QD1, are those used by the government when classifying planning applications in statistical returns.

- 3.6 The appropriateness of the scale and height of the development should follow from the layout of the scheme and its relationship to adjoining buildings and the surrounding area. Architectural detailing should be carefully integrated into the building and not appear as 'tacked on' elements. A high standard of materials is expected. Wherever possible natural materials from local and / or sustainable sources should be used. At street level, there should be variety in the elements of the design such as the entrances and fenestration and materials. Landscaping should be an integral and functional component of the development and not used to treat left over spaces. The design statement should explain how or why the design of the development has been arrived at with reference to the above design aspects and other contextual considerations contained in the other design policies in this Plan.
- 3.7 Architects who took part in urban design visioning workshops to inform this Plan supported the view that architects should develop individual design solutions suited to the locality rather than rely on standard design solutions. Local people who participated in urban design visioning workshops described some residential areas as 'bland' and indicated that many would benefit from an infusion of innovative design. They also expressed concern about the impact of large bulky developments on the character of Brighton & Hove in terms of both the height of a building and how its footprint can intrude into the fine grain of the urban environment.

