

Embedding Design Quality: best practice in Neighbourhood Plans

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What is the role of design policy?

Brief overview of:

- Principles of good design & good placemaking in NPPF
- Some examples
 - Bethersden
 - Staplehurst
 - Hawkhurst

Design Policy - Objectives

- Successful places to provide a setting for social life, enhance the economy and support more sustainable lifestyles
 - Walkable; water management through public spaces; cycling; trees in streets



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Supporting a better built
environment across
London, the South East
and the East of England

Placemaking



Good design responds in a practical and creative way to both the function and identity of the place.

Views, markets, open spaces, shops.

PRINCIPLES

1 BE FUNCTIONAL

A place fit for purpose

A place that delivers the intended function and achieves value for money in terms of lifetime costs



2 SUPPORT MIXED USES & TENURES

Ease of choice

A place with variety and mix of
uses



3 INCLUDE SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC SPACES

Sense of well-being and amenity
A place with public spaces and routes that are lively and pleasant to use



4 BE ADAPTABLE & RESILIENT

A place that can change easily



5 HAVE A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

Sense of place and history

A place that responds to and
reinforces locally distinctive
patterns of development and
landscape

Character “accretion over time”

Small independent shops, local
economy, produce

6 BE ATTRACTIVE



A place that looks good

A place that makes the most of
pleasant streetscapes, landscapes,
buildings and elements within
them

7 EASE OF MOVEMENT



Connectivity and permeability

A place that is easy to get to and move through

Well defined spaces

Shared space – streets for everyone, paths useable in wet weather, room for buggys, dogs, scooters, walking to school

Easy to find your way around

Using

Levels,

Landmarks

Distant views

Street trees

Using the aspects the site gives you to suggest a route through

Using streets for everyone

- Play streets
- Overlooked parking
- Front gardens



NPPF: Requiring good design quality

NPPF Paras 56 -68, especially para 58

- Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks

Design Policy in the NPPF

NPPF has less words than the text of Hamlet!



To design or not to design – all decisions affect design.

1. Character - paras 17, 56, 58, 60, 64
2. Working with the site & its context – paras 5,8, 9,10,17, 31,51, 59, 118
3. Creating well defined streets and spaces – para 58

Para 9

“Replace poor design with better design”

Section 7 Paras 56 – 68

“high quality and inclusive design for all development”

“design review arrangements in place” - para 62

“weight to outstanding or innovative designs” – para 63



NPPF : “appropriate innovation”

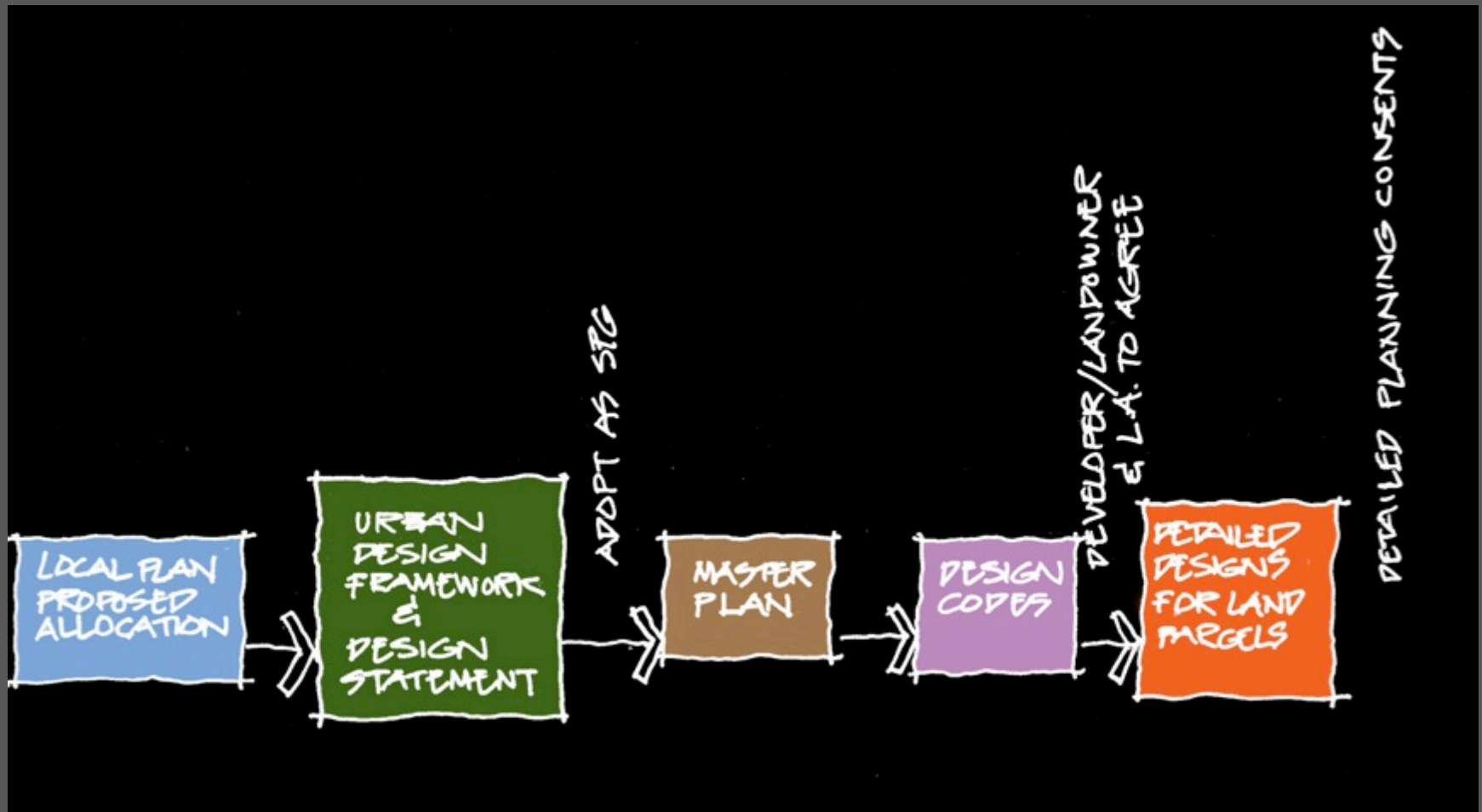
Para 58 Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, whilst not preventing or discouraging **appropriate innovation**



NPPF “safe and accessible”

Para 58 Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion

Developers use NPPF, Local Plans & Neighbourhood Plans



Examples

DESIGN POLICY IN NPs

Bethersden

- “Set in Garden of England” - Greater Ashford Local Plan

Neighbourhood Plan Policies relate to design :

- Views and village setting
- Landscape character
- Managing rural environment: fauna flora, recreation, drainage & water management
- Local Green Space

Our vision is for Bethersden to continue to thrive, by meeting the changing needs of the community whilst preserving the distinctive rural character, landscape and setting of the parish that has evolved over nine centuries

Staplehurst

- To 2031
- All places are either growing or declining, nothing stays the same
- Village centre and rail line 2 km apart, A229
- New development needs to be integrated – NPPF paras 47-55 high quality new homes

Consulting – vision – objectives – consulting – policy



Hawkhurst

- Driving through , character of Colonnade
- Derelict church by George Gilbert- Scott
ridgeway spire is landmark
- In AONB, 4 Conservation Areas, 200+ Listed Buildings
- Good Conservation and Listed Building Policy already exists nationally



Change – at a crossroads

Potential for changes at the crossroads is a major project emerging from the NP



Objective: Managing Change

- Ensuring that land made available for development will be developed in such a way as to improve people's quality of life, for both new and existing residents.
- One of 8 Objectives

Housing & Design

- 35 units allocated by TWBC to 2026, 62 approved at appeal before NP emerged.
- NP runs to 2033 so TWBC could use the NP policies in further allocations and applications
- Policy to phase development being sought... smaller site parcels of 5-10 dwellings at a time BUT how to deliver this???

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