

SLYFIELD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
Design Guidance for
Guildford Borough Council

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Status of Slyfield Design Guidance

Status

Guildford Borough Council has formally adopted this Planning Guidance, which is supplementary to the policies in the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003. In this respect the Supplementary Guidance has the status of a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by this Authority and in its defence of its decisions at appeal.

Statement of Public Consultation

In accordance with the advice set out in Annexe A (A3) of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) on General Policies and Principles, the Supplementary Planning Guidance has been the subject of wide public consultation.

Local residents associations, Councillors, businesses on Slyfield Industrial Estate and other interested parties were sent copies of the draft Design Guidance and invited to comment. Copies were also available on the Council Website and for inspection and collection from the Planning Reception at the Council Offices. A notice and press article in the Surrey Advertiser further publicised the consultation, and copies were available to view at local libraries.

A public consultation exercise was carried out over a six week period between 19th April and 31st May 2004 allowing comments to be received on the Draft Design Guidance. Four responses were received during this period, and after careful consideration of these representations the Guidance was amended to address the valid points of concern. These amendments were considered at the Council's Environment and Scrutiny Committee on the 5th July and at Executive Committee on 15th July 2004, when the guidance was formally adopted. Full details of the representations made to the Council, together with the Council's response can be obtained on request by contacting 01483-444672.

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1. Introduction

Slyfield Industrial Estate is located to the north of Guildford, within the urban area (Figure 1). Access is from the A320 Woking Road, which acts as the western edge of the site. The Estate has an internal circulation system that is part public highway and part un-adopted.

The Council retains the freehold of most of the land and is responsible for the management of the Estate (Figure 2). The Estate comprises mixed use businesses, many of which are vehicle related either in the form of maintenance activities or in the form of car showrooms. Estate has also been used for the relocation of non-conforming businesses. This has created some environmental challenges both internally for new businesses, and in relation to the adjoining residential areas.

The Estate is seen as the premier employment site in the northern part of the town, and the aspiration of the Council is to create a high quality environment. To assist this, Guildford Borough Council has undertaken an urban design audit and updated its urban design principles for this site. Through this guidance and in partnership with local businesses, the Council aims to improve the built environment of the Estate.

2. Purpose of the Design Guidance

The Design Guidance sets out the standards to be followed in new development with the aim of achieving the highest of standards of architecture and landscape. In doing so it builds on the policies set out in the Council Local Plan 2003 particularly Policy G1 General Standards of Development and the Policy G5 Design Code (see Glossary and References for more information on this.) It focuses on the current built area of the estate to assist the Council and owners of existing and new units who propose to build new, redevelop or alter existing property. The expansion of the Estate onto the landfill site (LFS) and Thames Water Utilities (TWU) land, as identified in the Local Plan, is outside the scope of this Brief. It would be expected however, that the design principles established in this Brief would set the framework for any future expansion.

The Council recognises the importance of pre-application discussions with developers to ensure the result is a high quality environment. Over time it is hoped that this Guidance will lead to an incremental improvement in the overall quality of buildings on the Estate. In order to keep the design guidance up to date it will be revised every five years or sooner to reflect new standards.

3. General Principles of Design

Urban design objectives are set out in the CABI Publication '*By Design*' published by the former DETR in 2000. This sets out sound practical advice to implement the Government's commitment to good design set out in Planning Policy Guidance 1. The urban design objectives in '*By Design*' are summarised below. The structure of this guidance incorporates these objectives and additional advice from English Partnership's Urban Design Compendium to promote:

- **Character** – A place with its own identity
- **Continuity and Enclosure** – A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished
- **Quality of the Public Realm** – A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas
- **Ease of Movement** – A place that is easy to get to and move through

- **Legibility** – A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand
- **Adaptability** – A place that can change easily
- **Diversity** – A place with variety and choice ('By Design')

4. Urban Design Issues on the Estate

As a premier employment estate great emphasis will be placed on securing an environment that benefits from high quality architecture, public realm and public art. The following section highlights a number of design related aspects that any new development needs to address. The key issues relate to:

- Implications of the role of a premier estate
- The movement network - and in particular the role of Moorfield Road
- The creation of increased visibility onto the A320 - in order to provide a positive 'gateway' to the Estate and enhance one of the major road entrances to Guildford from the North.
- The different public / private responsibilities

4.1 The Estate's Role

The role of the Estate is to act as a focus for high quality employment in an appropriate environment. The Estate currently has potentially incompatible uses that create nuisance and environmental problems.

4.2 The Movement Network

The guidance promotes an improved network that is pleasant, safe and direct.

The existing road layout emphasises the role of Moorfield Road as the key public realm determinant of the Estate. It sets the scene for the high quality development that has recently been constructed. The character of the road has been established as an urban 'Avenue', and the Council wishes to reinforce the role of 'gateway' route through additional planting, place-making, and the reduction of visual dominance of the car.

Apart from the improved Moorfield Road, the pedestrian / cycle links are poor and the aim of the Council is to improve these through upgrading existing footpaths and enhanced links with adjacent neighbourhoods, and community safety measures such as additional lighting and, as an aspiration, surveillance. It is the Council's aspiration to upgrade Westfield Road and North Moors to rationalise on-street parking, standardise and improve each entrance and bring the road up to the standards achieved in Moorfield Road.

4.3 Gateway to the Estate

The entrance to the Estate would benefit from a major physical statement to help locate it in perceptual terms as one of Guildford's premier business locations and to provide a sense of arrival and help to create a 'brand'. A 'gateway' structure could involve signage, green gateway/ landscape features, and / or public art, or any combination. The 'gateway' should help set / reinforce the landscape theme for the whole Estate.

4.4 Public and Private Responsibilities

Whilst the bulk of the Estate is owned freehold by Guildford Borough Council, significant parts are owned and controlled by others. This provides an opportunity to look at the future of the Estate in partnership with key stakeholders, and this would enable an overall approach to improvement and expansion to take place. It would also promote ideas such as joint management systems, green travel plans, and other means of securing a sense of identity for the area.

5. Urban Design Principles

A number of overarching principles have provided the basis for this guidance. These can be summarised as:

5.1 The Public Realm –

- To provide an environment which promotes the site as a premier business location and promotes a sense of arrival;
- To provide an environment, in which people can walk, cycle and meet in comfort and safety on a variety of routes, and to strengthen the public realm of streets and 'places' to ensure access to everyone;
- To provide an environment that creates a sense of enclosure, surveillance and safety both day and night by ensuring that all public spaces and routes are overseen by buildings with doors and windows looking onto those spaces. These will be the 'eyes on the street';
- To design the roads and surrounding buildings in order to provide high quality frontage development and positive activity on Moorfield Road, and to put service and storage to the rear;
- To continue the theme of high quality materials and planting.

5.2 A 'Sense of Place'

- To create a sense of identity for the estate based on good quality architectural and landscape design;
- To respond to the aspirations of local stakeholders;
- To enhance existing buildings where possible through discussion;
- To provide a variety of design solutions with a palette of materials and finishes that will assist in creating an identity for the Estate.

5.3 Access and Parking

- To improve public transport links;
- To accommodate safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links within the estate and to Jacobs Well and Slyfield Green;
- To reduce the dominance of the car and the need to travel by car – as part of the Council's promotion of an estate-based Green Travel Plan;
- To maintain and look to improve current levels of parking on the estate.

5.4 Appropriate Urban Form

- To create over time an estate of quality with a consistent built form and a series of strong architectural statements, for example, at the entrance to the Estate.
- To ensure that all buildings address the public realm have attractive and welcoming facades along all pedestrian and vehicular routes.

6. Detailed Guidance

This section sets out the more detailed aspects that developers will need to address taking into account CABE's "By Design" principles¹.

6.1 Site Layout

The large size of industrial buildings and the extensive areas of parking or hard standings have a significant impact on the surroundings, which can be mitigated with careful site planning and good architectural design. Careful orientation and placement of large buildings will help to provide visual coherence and create usable spaces. New buildings should be designed to:

- Reduce visual impacts by relating the size and colour of new buildings to existing buildings close by.
- Break up areas of hard standing and parking into smaller units divided by planting to minimise their impact on the surrounding landscape and built areas.
- Reduce the area of external parking and hard standing to the minimum necessary, by encouraging shared use as part of an overall Green Travel Plan.
- Only visitor parking should be located at the front of plots with the bulk of parking at the rear and located so that it does not interfere with service vehicles. Council parking standards will be adopted.
- Group new buildings together to create a coherent frontage to roads and public areas, form proper spaces, rather than gaps, and screen the impact of parking areas and service yards.
- Use building orientation to minimise the visual impact of built form on the landscape. Regard should be had for the views into and out of the site and the creation of focal points to provide legibility across the site.
- Building coverage will be no more than 50% to allow for parking, service areas and landscape. The building should be sited comfortably on the plot and not appear constricted.
- Building face should normally be set back 17m from the street. This will allow for landscape thresholds, visitor / VIP parking, and boundary landscape/security. Car showrooms should explore new means of displaying vehicles without the need for large areas of parked cars on wide forecourts. These might include large glazed facades, rear courts and so on.

¹ See glossary

- Locate window, doors and active uses on the parts of the buildings that overlook vehicular and pedestrian routes and public areas, thus avoiding blank walls fronting onto the public realm. Office amenity space and glazed showroom facades to face the Moorfield Road.
- Avoid large gaps between buildings that create a discordant frontage. Areas between the building and the side boundaries will provide continuity of enclosure onto the main routes and be used for parking, access and landscaping.
- Locate service yards and unsightly features, such as storage areas, refuse collection points or machinery, within or to the rear of the building, though this will need to take into account any impact on the amenities of adjacent properties particularly dwellings.
- Where double plots are created, access should be central or at both boundary edges.

6.2 Building Form and Scale

Building form should be broken up into a number of smaller elements as much as possible to avoid excessively large overbearing forms.

- Break up large areas of roof and walls with well-designed and positioned elements such as doors, fenestration and façade treatment.
- Eaves height to be limited to between 8m and 10m maximum. Additional height could be considered for buildings at key locations where exciting and attractive architectural features or roof forms may be appropriate.

6.3 Appearance, Materials, Colour and Cladding

The use of high quality durable materials requiring low maintenance will maintain the high standard set for Slyfield Estate.

- Wherever possible, use materials that will weather well over time and are self-cleaning.
- Use colour and detailing on buildings to limit apparent bulk and height.
- Use different profiles of sheeting, of the same colour to break up large areas.
- Avoid bright intense colours and use a limited colour palette. Several tones of grey, grey green, dark green and blue are recessive colours in the landscape and may be appropriate – especially if viewed from afar.
- Generally roofs should be darker than walls. The use of dark grey roofs, except where buildings are unavoidably set against the skyline when a paler grey could be less obtrusive.
- At the edges of the site, materials will need to be more sensitive to reflect the adjacent open landscape. The use of timber cladding should be considered.

6.4 Landscape and External Areas

Typical landscape areas around industrial, office and commercial building can have a very stark appearance. These guidelines encourage a more sensitive approach to the treatment of external areas around these large buildings, favouring well designed hard and soft landscape treatments.

- Ensure landscape / planting along Moorfield Road reinforces the role as 'gateway' avenue.
- Ensure that landscaping features connect with one another within and between neighbouring development plots and sites - to provide continuity.
- Ensure that the 'left-over' space for landscape is useable and does not form a strip around the site which serves no useful function.
- Protect landscape verges from abuse by HGV traffic and informal parking through use of species and change in vertical alignment.
- Avoid small lengths of wall or fence. The landscape design should be of a complementary scale to the buildings.
- Where entrance gates are used for security, ensure they are designed to be simple and match them with the style of adjacent boundaries.
- Where planting is intended to act as a screen, make it substantial, i.e. not less than 3m wide.
- Retain and reinforce existing belts and groups of trees to soften the outline of new buildings. Allow existing trees to act as an effective screen or as a backdrop.
- Use native trees and hedge species. Planting should be designed as part of the wider landscape strategy.
- Use planting for climate control, providing shading where needed.
- Improve biodiversity across the site and create green corridors to improve air quality.
- The landscape setting for the entrance could reflect the design and planting using evergreen ground cover, palms and ornamental grasses already established along Moorfield Road.

6.5 Hard Areas

Soften the impact of hard areas by avoiding large exposed areas of tarmac or concrete hard standings. Where possible, screen or break up the apparent area with hedges, tree planting or changes in level.

- Emphasise key locations by using alternative materials such as high quality 'Tegula' blocks or similar, and lighting to help make the Estate legible.
- Protect kerbs from HGV abuse by raising kerbs
- Use surface dressing of a natural aggregate to provide a more informal finish.
- Adopt Sustainable Urban Drainage SUDS principles and use porous materials for car parking and service yards, such as open textured tarmac or gravel.
- Where unit paving is required, use high quality natural materials such as stone or brick.

6.6 Boundaries

- Make boundary treatments consistent both within and between neighbouring development sites and built areas. In order to create a tidy and unified impression, boundary treatments should be of a consistent style, height and colour throughout the development.
- Link new hedgerows and boundaries with existing features within the wider landscape/townscape
- Where the use of security fencing is essential it should not be adjacent to any public road, unless it is hidden behind planting. Good quality green (RAL 6005) coated pallisade can be acceptable.
- Boundary fencing to car showrooms and other 'open frontage' developments should employ grey coated knee rails of the type used at 52-54 Moorfield Road.
- Screen walls of materials, design and proportion reflecting the main building can be used to screen service areas from the street
- Community security issues such as CCTV should be considered as part of any new estate-based management regime.

6.7 Street Furniture and Lighting

- Avoid visual clutter by keeping outdoor furniture, signage and lighting to the minimum necessary to fulfil its outdoor function.
- Incorporate special touches and unique features into the design of external areas to create a distinctive identity or house style for the development.
- Avoid the use of bright tower or gantry lighting or any lighting over 10m high which potentially cannot be filtered by mature vegetation.
- Use low level lighting and recessed down-lighting to avoid glare and light pollution – especially along pedestrian and cycle routes.

6.8 Signage

For signs to be effective it is important that they are not obscured by traffic, illegally parked vehicles and poorly managed planting.

6.9 Landfill Control Area

The majority of the landfill area lies outside this Design Guidance. However part of the land within the guidance is former landfill and a gas barrier crosses the site. Developers will need to take this into account and take advice from the Council's Property Manager on the implications of this. The location of the gas barrier is shown on Fig 3.

7.0 Sustainability

Buildings should benefit from the solar orientation of the site. The Council wishes to promote energy resource efficiency in all new development. This could include:

- Solar glazing / pv panels
- Rainwater harvesting and recycling

- Grey water recycling and dual-flush sanitaryware
- A high standard of insulation
- Internal flexibility of use
- A series of targets to achieve embedded energy and carbon neutral development within the next 25 years. This will enhance the Estate as an exemplar of sustainable industrial development, and
- Encourage assessment against BREEAM rating.

8.0 Design Management

The Council will encourage the establishment of an estate-based forum that will comprise landowners and operators in order to foster greater involvement in the quality of management and maintenance of the environment. As part of this long-term initiative the Council will encourage the management of public areas through local partnerships and management companies, and over time the compatibility of uses within the Estate.

The management of design quality will involve a number of tools including

- This guidance together with evolving Council policy
- Enhanced tendering procedures
- Limited design competitions where appropriate
- Evaluation, design review and advice
- Covenants and other legal mechanisms.

Glossary and References

Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 – approved January 2003 and provides the framework for planning decisions made by the Council. The Plan can be viewed on www.guildford.gov.uk and is available for purchase from the Council.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) – government statements of Planning Policy. Available on www.odpm.gov.uk/planning

CABE 'By Design' (2000) – design advice published by the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)