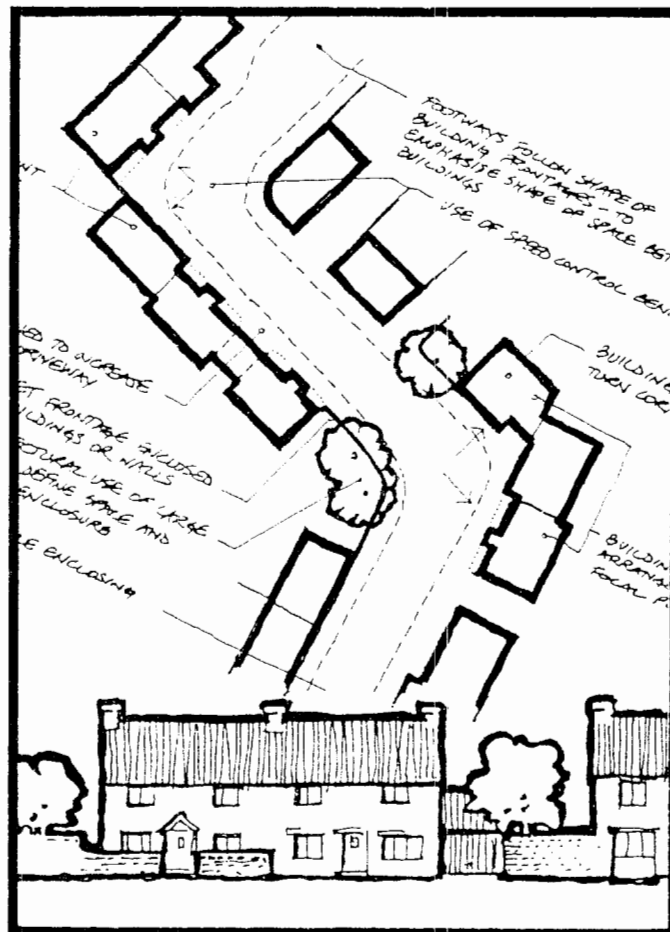




# THE DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS



**South Somerset District Council**

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*Conservation and Environment Unit*

# **THE DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Guide has been prepared to illustrate the approach to design which the district council advocates for new residential development in South Somerset. It does not form a blueprint for housing design but sets out to offer ways of achieving housing layouts which will:-

- integrate with their surroundings
- add to the distinctiveness of their locality
- provide individuality and a sense of place
- be legible to users.

The Guide has been prepared in support of the policies contained in the South Somerset Local Plan and, having been subject to consultation with a wide range of interest groups, carries the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance in the terms of Planning Policy Guidance Note 12.

The two Guides, Design of Residential Areas and Landscape Design - A Guide to Good Practice, aim to raise awareness of what contributes to a well-designed development. They address both the process and the end product but are not pattern-books. They intend to deal with principles and their local application leaving scope for individuality and creativity which will preserve and enhance the local distinctiveness of South Somerset.

<b>The Site in its Context</b>
--------------------------------

Before any design work can begin the site must be fully surveyed, analysed and understood.

Each site has its own opportunities and limitations and no design responsive to its setting will be possible without taking into account all these constraints.

This process is essential for the production of a development which will respond properly to its context and is described more fully in South Somerset District Council's Landscape Design - A Guide to Good Practice.

A skilled and experienced designer will intuitively be able to handle these varied factors as part of an initial conceptual stage in the design.

***Initial Steps***

The design of a residential area must begin with the wider context of the site. Rushing into a detailed layout will not result in a scheme which responds to its locality.

***Views of the Site***

Many sites are visible from some distance away. The site should be viewed and photographed from all significant viewpoints and the impact and appearance of the development on the setting considered first at this distance. From here broad requirements for a landscape framework and the overall form and massing of the buildings can be decided upon.

***A Landscape Framework***

The form of the landscape design and planting plays a major part in the way the development relates to its setting and how it fits into the existing landscape. The principal theme should be decided upon at this early stage so that it can influence and inform the design as it evolves.

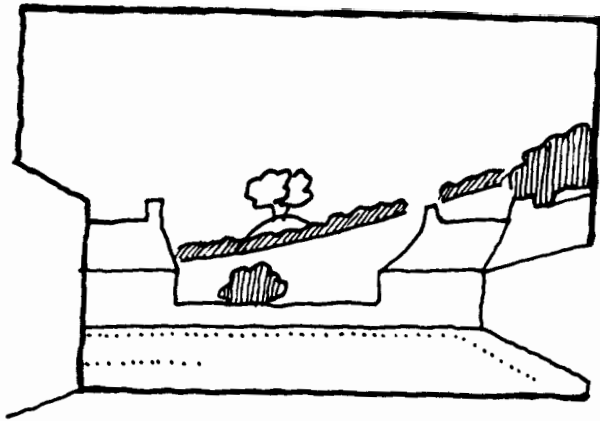
***A Concept for the Built Form***

Without a properly formulated concept for the built form, the way the buildings will fit into the landforms of the site and their general shape and massing, the development is likely to end up visually confused; a sprawl of elements which do not relate to the site, its setting or existing development, and will become an intrusion into the wider landscape.

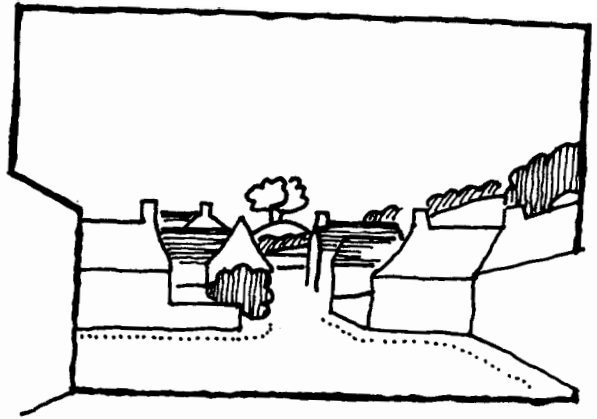
***Views through the site***

Sometimes a view through the site is important to an existing settlement. Blocking a view will have significant impact which can be reduced by retaining a gap in the new development to preserve the view line.

The view could also be used as a focal point in the design.



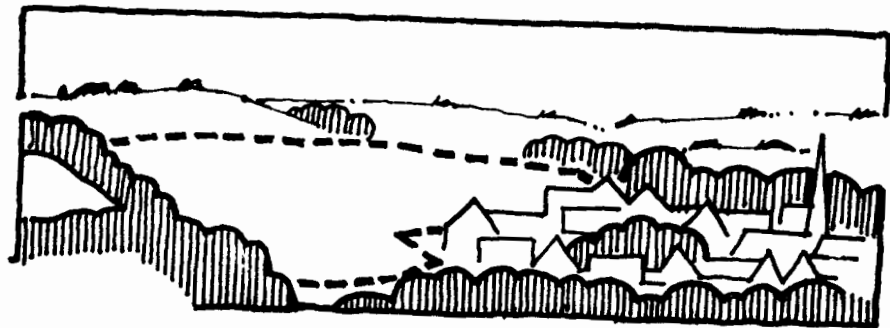
VIEWS THROUGH THE SITE MAY BE LOCALLY IMPORTANT.....



MAINTAIN THEM WHEREVER POSSIBLE



AIM TO RETAIN THE EXISTING SETTING - PROMINENT LANDSCAPE FEATURES MAY HELP THE NEW TO INTEGRATE WITH WHAT IS THERE ALREADY



REMOVAL OF HEDGES, TREES AND OTHER FEATURES CAN DESTROY THE SETTING BEFORE ANY BUILDING WORK STARTS

## ***Colour***

Colour plays a part in the appearance and degree of visual intrusion a new development may have. Consider colour in the context of the wider landscape or townscape.

Compare colours of existing settlements when seen at a distance.

Colour is a part of the quality of local distinctiveness. Regional character is partly the product of the character and colour of local building materials and must be acknowledged in the design of a new development.

## ***Linking Back***

Visual continuity, adding the new to the existing in a sensitive way helps its integration.

Adding to existing patterns in landscape or built forms rather than ignoring them will help the new development to relate comfortably and naturally with its context. These patterns can provide an overall form for the development which will give it meaning in a local context.

Try to retain and re-use existing buildings and structures within a site - it will help to give a sense of continuity to a development. Existing buildings can often be turned into a new use while boundary walls can continue to function.

## ***Skylines***

Development on the skyline in rural surroundings should always be avoided because of the way groups of buildings interrupt the visual continuity of the landscape. Keep buildings below the skyline; they will fit more comfortably into their setting this way and the dominance of the landscape can be better maintained.

## ***Boundaries***

Consider carefully boundary constraints and adjoining land-uses which may not be compatible with the new housing, and design-in suitable measures to respond to requirements. Sound buffers and visual screening can be incorporated and used as elements in the landscape framework.

Existing boundaries may be worthwhile features themselves; walls, hedges or belts of trees which, retained, can be beneficial to the development. Special steps may be needed early in the design stage of the layout to accommodate such features.

## ***Contours***

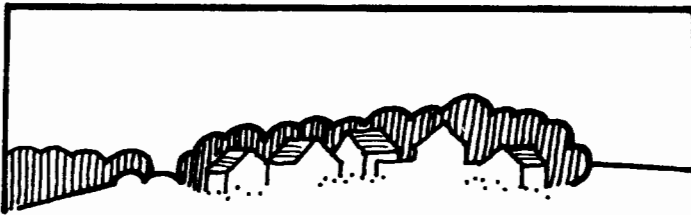
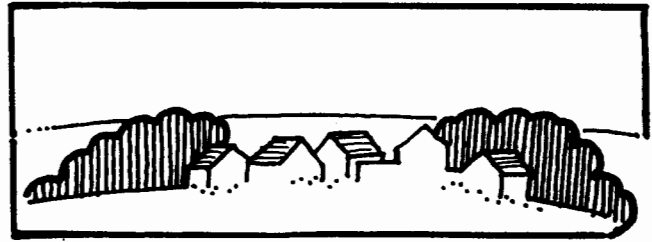
On sloping sites buildings arranged parallel and at right angles to the contours sit more comfortably in the landscape than a random arrangement where buildings at many different angles and levels present a disordered appearance.



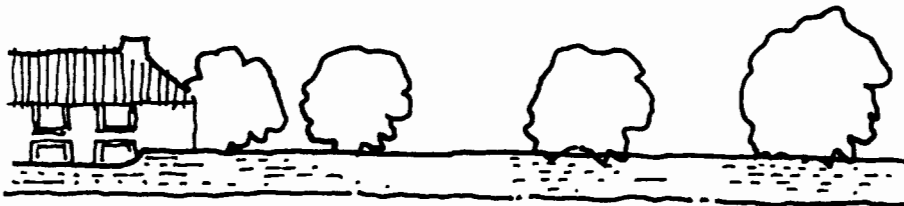
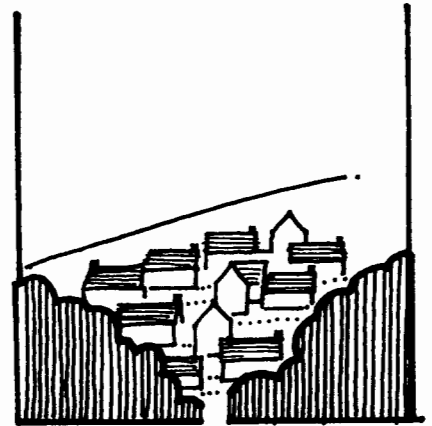
BUILDINGS ON THE SKYLINE ARE OFTEN TOO PROMINENT

KEEP BUILDINGS BELOW THE SKYLINE - USE PLANTING TO INTEGRATE THEM VISUALLY TO THEIR SETTING

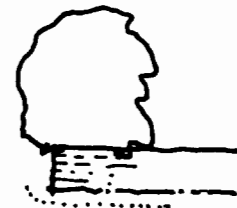
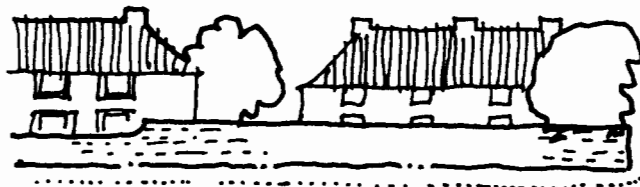
TREES AS A BACKDROP INTRUDE LESS THAN BUILDINGS ON THE SKYLINE



BUILDINGS SITED PARALLEL AND AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THE CONTOURS USUALLY SIT MORE COMFORTABLY IN THE LANDSCAPE



MAKE USE OF EXISTING FEATURES TO GIVE STRUCTURE AND CONTINUITY AND TO RETAIN LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS



WALL + TREES RETAINED, NEW BUILDING FOLLOWS LOCAL FORM



OUT OF PLACE DESIGN AND LOSS OF LOCAL FEATURES ..... UNSYMPATHETIC SOLUTION

## Developing a Layout

A thorough analysis of the site and its surroundings will have equipped the designer with most of the information needed to help integrate the new development into its physical context.

The next stage is to consider the physical and psychological needs of the users of the development - their convenience, relationship and feelings about the new place being created for them. We can examine these needs under four headings:

- Legibility
- Permeability
- Local Distinctiveness and
- Accessibility

### *Legibility*

Many modern housing developments have produced a monotonous, characterless environment. This is the result of the uniformity in the siting of the buildings and the treatment of the spaces between them, a lack of variation in density or character and an absence of particular individual features.

Because of this uniformity there is little sense of the identity of individual parts; each is indistinguishable from the next. Such a site can be said to lack legibility. This is the quality which is produced by unique places; places which people recognise as individual and can therefore easily find their way around.

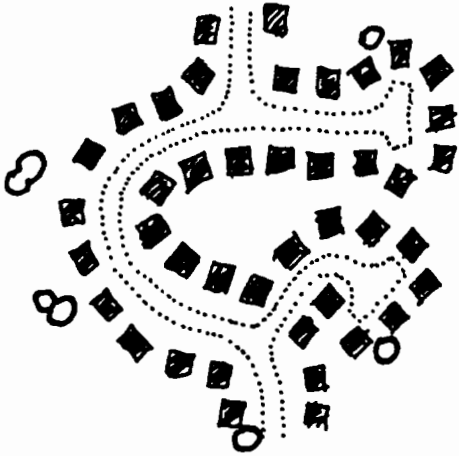
All new housing areas need to possess a sense of identity. The layout should be designed to produce separate areas or places with their own sense of identity.

Small developments - a dozen or so houses in a village - do not have problems with legibility, but larger developments need to be deliberately designed to incorporate contrasts between areas so that each is a recognisable, unique place.

Sites often contain existing features which will help legibility and it pays to study all the aspects of the site survey to see if there is anything on the site which may be retained and used for this purpose. Existing buildings, streams, ponds and significant trees are all obvious examples but even quite small features can function in a similar way - an old boundary stone, a stone stile or old wall retained on the site will help to identify that place as particular.

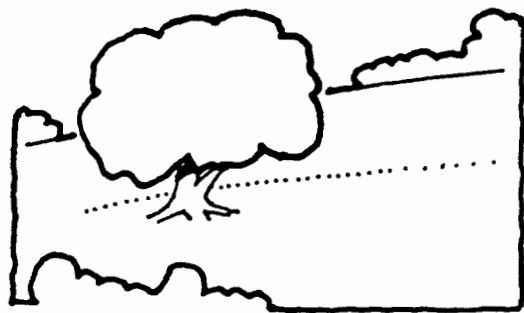
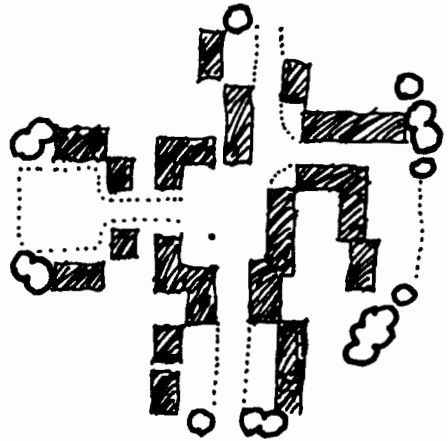
Where landscape features cannot be used, focal points must be created - a public open space or significant planting scheme, or if it is called for, a school or community centre.





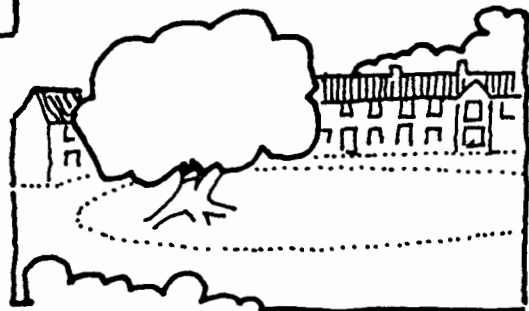
A TYPICAL LAYOUT WHICH FAILS TO CREATE SEPARATELY IDENTIFIABLE PLACES WITHIN IT

SEPARATE PLACES CREATED WITHIN AN OVERALL ORDERED STRUCTURE



AN EXISTING FEATURE CAN BE RETAINED TO ADD LEGIBILITY TO A LAYOUT

A MATURE TREE RETAINED AS A FOCAL POINT IN THE LAYOUT



The most important component of legibility, however, is the creation of separate areas, neighbourhoods or groups of buildings, with individual themes or focal points which make each area recognisable and distinct from others nearby. Legibility is the experience of moving through a sequence of spaces, with sufficient reference points so that you always know where you are!

### **Permeability**

Permeability is a quality which offers a choice of routes through a place. The cul-de-sac is not part of the traditional town or village - in pedestrian terms at least.

In designing a layout consider all the opportunities for accommodating or extending routes and networks of paths. This may well coincide with landscape structure planting. Do not relegate a path to the back of the dwellings to become an uninviting and litter strewn alley. Provided that there is vehicle access to one side, there is no reason why houses cannot face onto a public footpath or green space with a right of way through it. Such arrangements exist in many traditional settlements to the benefit of both resident and path-user alike.

Consider opportunities for journeys by foot and cycle wherever possible. Not all journeys need be by car but the offer of alternatives needs to be provided in an attractive and convenient form. It may be possible to provide a foot or cycle route which is much shorter than the route required by the road layout. The longer term environmental effects of designing - in a need for cars must be considered.

The separation of pedestrian routes from roads can be detrimental to legibility and permeability and can be disorientating unless they are treated carefully - perhaps as part of a strong landscape zone running through the area, which is easily recognised and understood.

### **Local Distinctiveness**

All pieces of land have a history and usually some local significance which may provide the means to retain their distinctiveness after development.

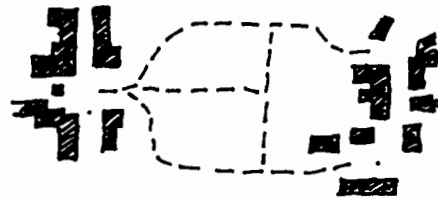
All parts of our countryside, towns and villages have things about them which make them unique. Modern housing development, until very recently has ignored local distinctiveness and housing estates look much the same all over the country.

Greater efforts must be made to continue local styles, so that the richness and variety of our country is maintained. Much of this depends on details like materials and colours, but there may also be regional subtleties in types of road layout, building orientation, architectural style and so on which should be researched and acknowledged.

SEEK TO ENHANCE  
PERMEABILITY  
WHEREVER POSSIBLE



...LINK THROUGH  
TO PROVIDE A CHOICE  
OF ROUTES



DO NOT IMPOSE ALIEN STYLES ON A PLACE.....



..... FOLLOW LOCAL FORMS TO REINFORCE LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS



## Accessibility

Most people must have experienced the frustration of seeking an address in a housing estate or seeing a landmark building but not being able to get to it.

In traditional settlements most roads lead somewhere and link back into a general route network at more than one point. Repeating such a pattern can help the integration of new developments into older settlements where the cul-de-sac might be out of place. By using a network or grid road pattern rather than a tree-like form it is possible to maximise the number of buildings with a road frontage and make accessibility convenient and logical.

<b>Creating Character and Legibility</b>
--

The suburban character of many housing areas does not relate to local traditions of urban form. The suburban area does not possess the richness of older towns or villages nor the dispersed and landscape-dominated qualities of a really rural setting. It falls somewhere between the two. This is not just a matter of density but about the form of the layout and kinds of places it creates.

## Density

The concept of density of dwellings, that is number per hectare, is frequently applied to a site in advance of any other considerations. It is a popular misconception that the higher the density, the worse will be the quality and amenity of the development. Low density has been equated with good and high density bad development. This is not necessarily the case. Many historic areas illustrate this point where closely related buildings create interesting, intimate spaces and privacy is not necessarily compromised.

New development with good enclosure of spaces and an appropriate urban quality will often be easier to achieve with a higher density.

More compact settlements also reduce the need for so much travel, especially car travel, and this contributes towards a more sustainable type of development.

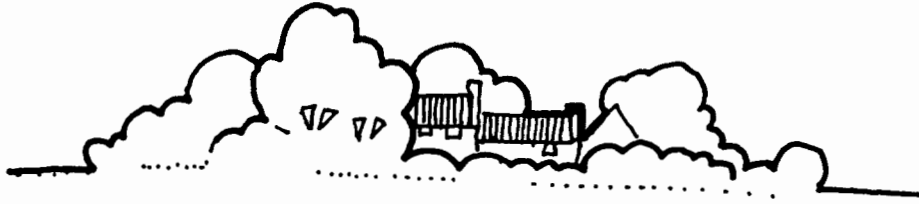
## Form of Residential Areas

Most residential areas will be attached to and become part of an existing settlement. These settlements are areas made up of the elements of buildings, roads and streets.

A new development will be an extension to this area and will need to relate to it in an appropriate way. An overall character must be chosen and this character will, at usual development densities, be building-dominated rather than landscape-dominated. Few sites will be developed at the very low density required to allow the strength of the landscape to really take precedence over the buildings.



SUBURBAN CHARACTER LACKS  
STRENGTH OF LANDSCAPE AND  
STRENGTH OF ARCHITECTURAL  
FORM -

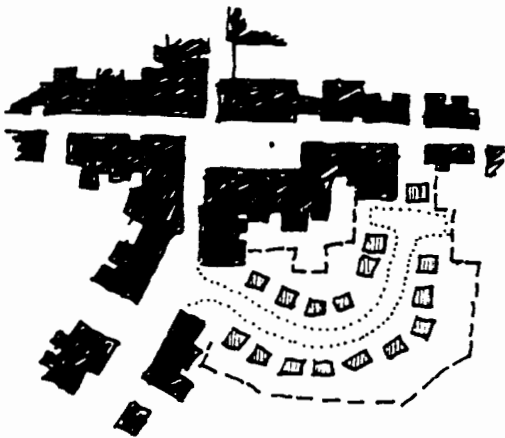


LANDSCAPE DOMINATED -  
STRONG LANDSCAPE



BUILDING DOMINATED -  
STRONG ARCHITECTURAL FORM

THE FORM OF NEW DEVELOPMENT MUST RELATE TO ITS SETTING



UNRELATED



RELATED

The idea of building-dominated character however need not be the very high density of a town centre. It can be the character found in many South Somerset villages. Many of these are made up of forms such as:

- buildings closely defining streets
- a mixture of terraces and detached houses
- linked together by walls
- interspersed by gardens
- spaces enclosed by buildings and walls to form streets and squares
- hard materials dominating but with a place for grass, trees, shrubs and hedges.

All these elements provide a palette of forms which can be used to create places which both reflect local character and are legible too.

## **Structure**

The layout must have a planned concept to act as a framework around which the more detailed aspects of the design will develop. The larger the size of the development the more crucial becomes the need for a coherent structure.

Structure can be introduced in a number of ways:

- A strong landscape framework achieved by structure planting.
- Sub-division of the housing into recognisable areas or neighbourhoods each with its own distinctive character.
- Use of natural features and landforms to shape the development.
- Use of formal urban design patterns.
- Use of a hierarchial pattern.

## **Hierarchy of Buildings and Spaces**

Places are more legible when there is an easily understood relationship between one part and another.

It is possible to use this idea to improve legibility. It can be done by the creation of a 'centre' perhaps containing a school or community facility, central park or group of shops. This will then be the principle space and group of buildings in the hierarchy. Other spaces and groups will relate it to according to the urban design significance given to them.

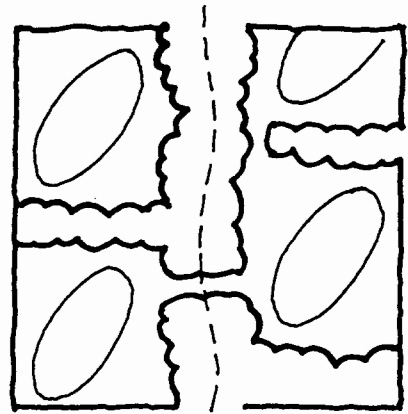
Separate parts within the hierarchy of the layout will need to be separately identifiable. This is particularly important in large developments to maintain legibility.

Separate identity can be built in by maintaining specific design themes within one area and changing the theme in the next one to emphasise its individuality.

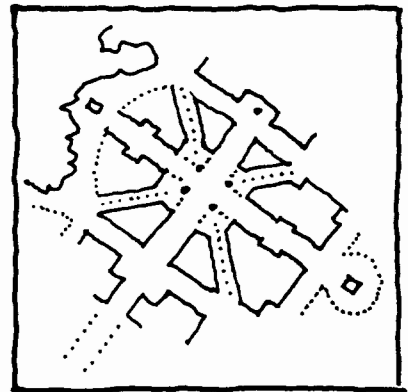


..... BUILDINGS CLOSELY DEFINING STREETS..... A MIXTURE OF TERRACES AND DETACHED.....  
 ..... LINKED TOGETHER BY WALLS..... INTERSPERSED BY GARDENS.....

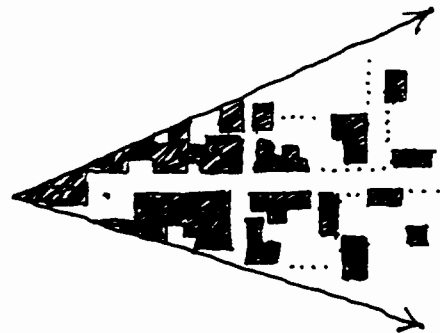
A STRONG LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK  
 SEPARATING AREAS OF HOUSING



FORMAL URBAN DESIGN PATTERN  
 USED TO GIVE STRUCTURE TO THE  
 LAYOUT



HIERARCHIAL PATTERN DENSEST AT  
 THE CENTRE RADIATING OUT



***Spatial  
Characteristics***

Themes can be based upon the type of spaces created by the housing

- tree-lined avenues with squares at inter-sections
- houses facing around open spaces or village greens
- close-knit groupings of high density interspersed with open space and green areas
- low density housing in an "arcadian" setting
- terraced houses forming streets and squares

***Building  
Characteristics***

Character can be established by the buildings themselves

- types of materials and colours can provide a unifying theme
- the use of particular building forms such as terraces or villas especially if used to produce a strong architectural composition
- a particular architectural style can provide the basis for local character
- the use of special building styles, forms and materials will not be appropriate on all sites especially where contextual considerations are more important and a need exists to maintain local distinctiveness.

***Separation of Areas  
or Neighbourhoods***

Whatever devices are used it is essential that there is sufficient demarkation between one area and the next so that it is clear when one area is left and another reached.

In order that separate areas can be seen to be separate specific features must be used to make their separation clear. Separating devices include:

***Open Space***

Parkland, playing fields, common amenity areas will identify the separation of areas. All larger developments will require the provision of play areas and larger areas of open space.

***Entrances***

The separation of one area from another has traditionally been marked by entrances featuring gates or gateways, lodges or pavilions.

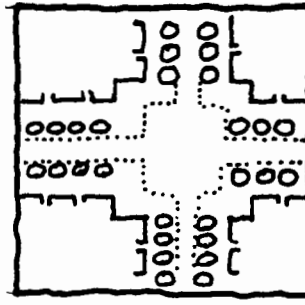
These devices may be used as markers to identify the entrance to a particular area.

Gateways can be expressed by distinctive buildings creating a visual constriction in the roadway, by walls or gate piers or even by distinctive planting on either side of the road.

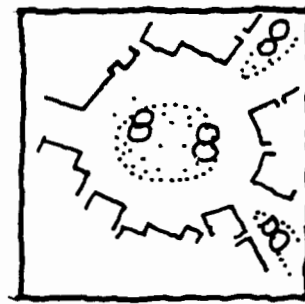


SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS

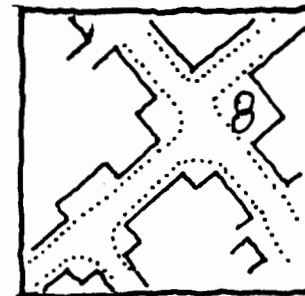
AVENUES WITH SQUARES AT INTERSECTIONS



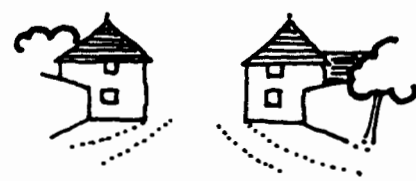
HOUSES FACING OPEN SPACES OR VILLAGE GREENS



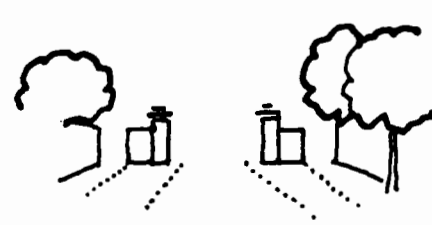
TERRACED HOUSING FORMING STREETS AND SQUARES



SEPARATION OF AREAS USING  
ENTRANCES FORMED BY  
BUILDINGS



A GATEWAY



TREES + SHRUBS  
FORMING A GATE



Entrance features must be designed to contrast with the spaces either side and emphasise the act of passing through.

Use these types of features as "traffic calming" in the context of a wider scheme.

### ***Landmarks***

The individuality of an area or a single space can be expressed by a landmark. These must be individually distinctive : a prominent building or a natural feature arranged within the layout to act as a focus at the point of entry or perhaps at the centre of an area to identify a sense of arrival.

Landmarks can be created by other architectural features, artworks or by planting substantial trees.

Landmarks may be situated in another part of the site or off-site altogether but used as focal points within the arrangement of the layout.

### ***Views***

On some sites the view may be used to provide individuality for an area:

- framing a view with carefully sited buildings
- arranging the approach so that the view is suddenly revealed on arrival
- setting the houses out in a single orientation to take advantage of a view.

### ***Natural Features***

A sense of individuality for an area or the separation of areas can be provided by natural features present on the site.

Groups of trees, hedgerows, ponds and distinctive landforms can all be used in this way.

Features can be enhanced and strengthened by careful design of the landscape structure planting.

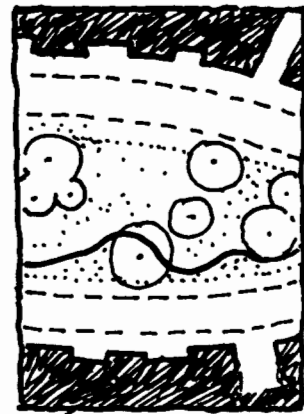
### ***Other Types of Development***

Where sites need to incorporate community facilities, a local shopping or sports centre, this could be utilised as means of separation between areas.

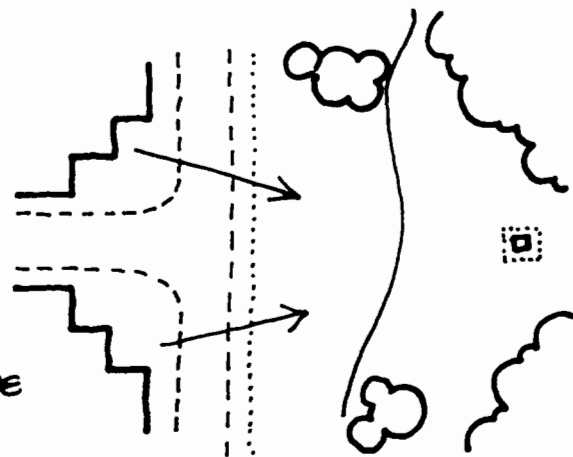
USE LANDMARK BUILDINGS TO GIVE INDIVIDUALITY TO AN AREA



OPEN SPACE USED TO SEPARATE ONE DISTINCTIVE AREA FROM ANOTHER



A VIEW PERHAPS TO A LANDMARK FEATURE CAN BE EXPLOITED TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALITY TO A PLACE



## Spaces and Places

The design of a residential area is an exercise in the organisation of space to create a place or series of places.

Isolated buildings do not make a place but grouping the buildings together into an ordered relationship with each other to enclose a shared space makes it possible to create individual places.

In a residential layout it is the creation of such specific places which is of principal importance in the formation of a successful design and it is the character of these spaces which make the place memorable, distinctive and interesting. No amount of tinkering with the appearance of the individual buildings will make up for deficiencies in the layout or failure to design the spaces satisfactorily. A successful design will be based upon the creation of easily understood, carefully designed spaces.

In all but the smallest schemes there will be a series of spaces which must be arranged to link to each other while maintaining the enclosure which creates the definition of each individual space.

In the same way that internal spaces are formed by walls, floors and ceilings, external spaces will be created by the houses, garages and other buildings, boundary walls, hedges, trees, shrub planting areas and other physical components of the layout.

The creation of spaces requires the design of three elements:

- Scale and proportion.
- Enclosure and edges.
- Surfaces.

## Scale and Proportion

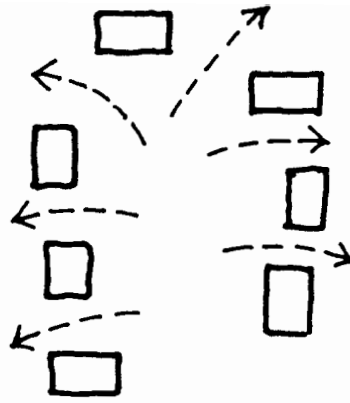
Many suburban areas fail as places because they are too open. They lack sufficient enclosure to define spaces properly and the spaces are too large.

Residential areas are essentially places for people and they should be designed to be suitably intimate and homely by the arrangement of the layout and the design of the spaces created within them.

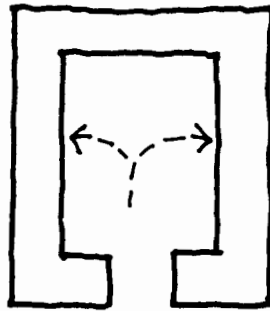
To do this the scale of each space needs to be considered.

Different spaces produce different feelings in people. Large urban squares on a grand scale can make an individual feel small and insignificant. Small, narrow spaces can seem claustrophobic. For residential areas a homely scale is needed.

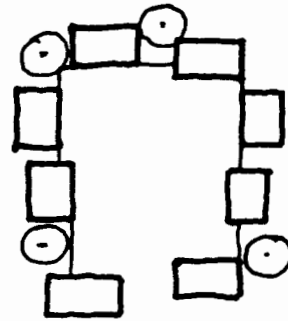
BUILDINGS TOO FAR APART  
TO ENCLOSE SPACE. SPACE  
LEAKS AWAY



VERY STRONG ENCLOSURE  
OF SPACE



ENCLOSURE OF SPACE WITH  
BUILDINGS WALLS AND TREES



PROPORTION OF SPACE  
AFFECTS ITS QUALITY OF  
ENCLOSURE



PROPORTION 1:1.5 HEIGHT  
TO WIDTH



PROPORTION 1:10

Residential areas require:

- Spaces of reasonably intimate scale.
- Variety in the spaces to differentiate one from another.

Spaces can be different shapes and perform different functions within the layout. Their character will depend upon their proportions. They can be linear spaces - spaces that lead you on; directional spaces. They can be small scale; a country lane or large scale; The Mall in London.

Spaces can be static - spaces which say you have arrived somewhere. Again different scale will produce different effects. Designing spaces requires consideration of proportions; height of enclosure to width of space. Variations of either will change the nature of the space.

Linear spaces can be designed as traditional streets with strong enclosure and direction. A proportion of 1:1 or 1:2, height to width will be needed. Linear spaces can be wider but will appear more open unless the enclosure height is increased. Wider spaces lose some of their directional quality and become more static. Variations can be used to add character to different parts of the layout.

Variety may be needed to reduce the apparent length of a space:

- by widening an area on one side to produce a more static interval
- by separating into shorter spaces with narrow "gates" between
- by introducing intermediate focal points to punctuate the length and add legibility
- by placing focal points at ends of spaces
- by closing the line of sight with buildings or features to make the place more static.

Static spaces in residential areas will tend to be small scale except perhaps when related to extensive areas of public open space. A proportion of about 1:4 height to width will produce a comfortable feeling.

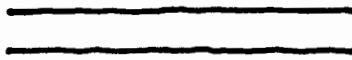
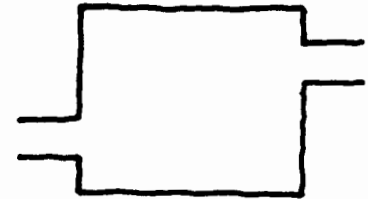
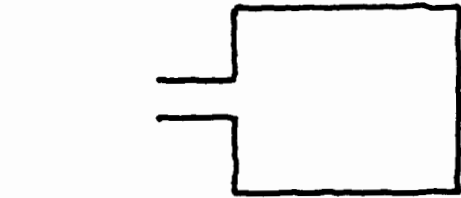
Increase the static nature of these places by:

- having only one entrance/exit
- arranging entrances off-set from each other to close off the view out
- arranging the entrances away from corners.

STATIC SPACE

STATIC QUALITY DECREASED BY INTRODUCTION OF MORE THAN ONE ENTRANCE

STATIC QUALITY INCREASED BY OFFSETTING ENTRANCES



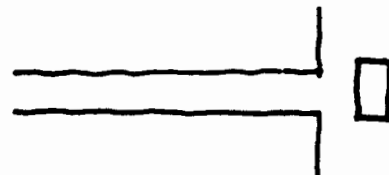
LINEAR SPACE



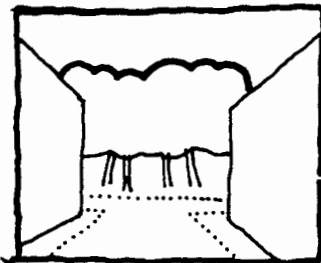
LINEAR SPACE PUNCTUATED TO FORM SUB-SPACES WITH 'GATES' BETWEEN



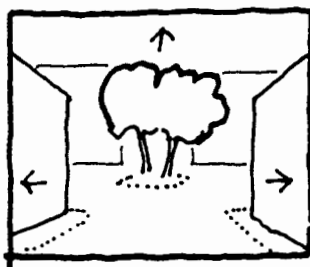
MADE MORE STATIC BY WIDENING ON ONE SIDE. ENTRANCES OPPOSITE EACH OTHER



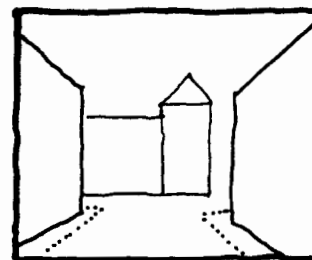
LINEAR SPACE TERMINATED BY FEATURE TO CLOSE OFF END OR ACT AS A FOCAL POINT



TREES TO CLOSE OFF VIEW



TREES AS FOCAL POINT BUT SPACE CAN BE SEEN TO LEAD ON IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS



PROMINENT BUILDING AS A LANDMARK WHICH TERMINATES SPACE, MARKS A JUNCTION AND ACTS AS A FOCAL POINT

Legibility can be increased by the use of prominent features to identify the space as individual.

It is sometimes difficult to create spaces of similar proportions to those found in older streets because the height of buildings is usually limited and the width of the space dictated by traffic requirements. However by the reduction of front gardens to minimal widths or their complete omission it is possible to reach proportions of between 1:1.5 and 1:2.5 which will produce a reasonable street character with good enclosure.

## Enclosure

All spaces need to be clearly defined by edges or boundaries each of which must be designed carefully to provide the degree of enclosure required. A low wall will not provide enclosure; the space will leak away beyond it in a way not possible with a wall 2 metres high.

The relatively small and separate nature of many of the components of a residential area sometimes make enclosure difficult to achieve. Detached houses alone will not define and enclose space satisfactorily. It is necessary to strengthen their architectural form by linking them to boundary walls, garages, storage areas, porches, trees and hedges so that together their ability to enclose space is enhanced.

Make use of changes of level to add to space enclosure and interest in the shape of the layout. Level changes can help in the provision of privacy to dwellings and private areas.

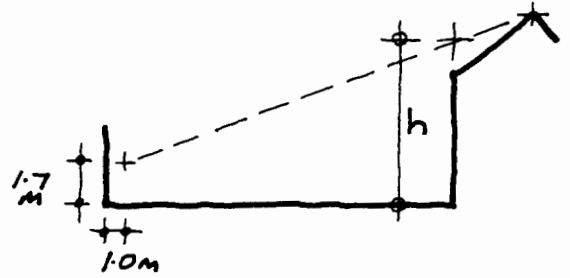
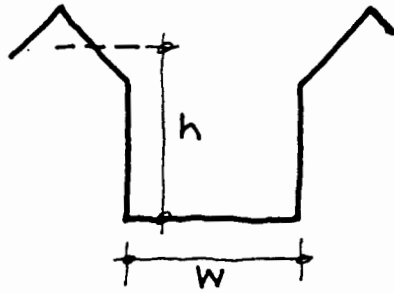
The quality of a space will be affected by the nature of its enclosure.

Extensive blank surfaces will be dull and oppressive. A residential area needs activity and interest in its spaces and the enclosing buildings will need to relate to the space they help to form and give it life.

Doors, entrances and gardens in use, trees and the activities of people all help to animate spaces and will need to be provided in the design of the enclosure of the spaces.

- Enclosure will only be achieved by features which are higher than eye-level.
- The quality of enclosure depends upon the solidity of the feature. It is not always necessary for a feature to be solid to have an enclosing effect.
  - Trees will provide enclosure strongly when in leaf and to a lesser extent in winter.
  - The height of clear stem on the trees will influence their enclosing effect.





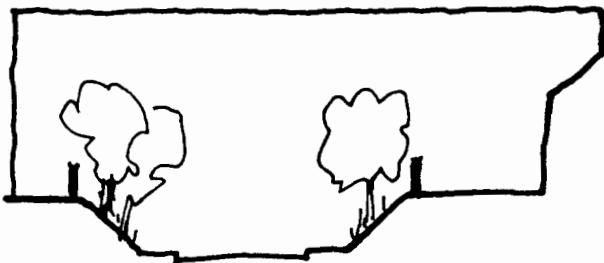
ONE METHOD OF DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVE HEIGHT OF ENCLOSURE WHICH TAKES ACCOUNT OF THE ROOF FORM OF THE ENCLOSING BUILDINGS.



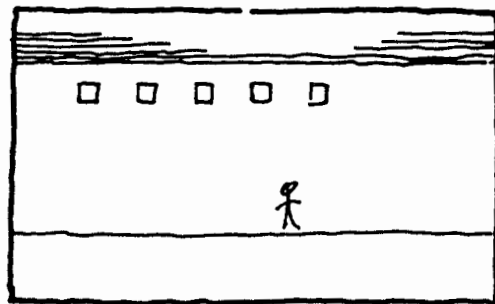
DETACHED HOUSES ALONE DO NOT ENCLOSE SPACE SATISFACTORILY



LINKING TOGETHER TO CREATE STRONGER ARCHITECTURAL FORM



CHANGES IN LEVEL CAN ADD TO ENCLOSURE



THE QUALITY OF A SPACE WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE NATURE OF ITS ENCLOSURE

- A belt of trees will still provide strong enclosure even in winter.
- Hedges can provide all year round enclosure of a softer nature than walls.
- Trellis work screens can provide enclosure without solidity and be varied by growing creepers over them.
- Even a line of posts will have the ability to define a space.

Enclosures can be enhanced by adding height to boundaries:

- Trellis work can be added to walls.
- Trees pruned to induce height and prevent bushy side growth.
- Gables have greater effective height than roofs which run parallel to the edge of a space.

Adding special features to visually narrow the space:

- Avenue tree planting along a street one or both sides.
- Tree planting around the edges of a static space.
- Bringing gables forward.

## Surfaces

The nature and appearance of the surfacing of a space strongly influences its character.

A confusion of different materials or a patchwork of grass and tarmac can clutter a space and negate much of what the proportion and enclosure may have achieved.

Design the surfaces to compliment the space.

The shape of a space can be emphasised if the arrangement of surfaces relates to it and is designed to echo its shape.

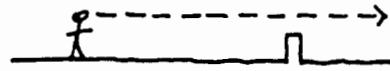
Kerbs defining a carriageway are visually prominent and their layout may need to be arranged to suit the shape of the space rather than responding only to the highway engineering requirements of the situation. A carriageway need not always be defined by parallel kerbs. Many spaces are not parallel sided and their visual quality can be strengthened by arranging the shape of the carriageway to reflect the shape of the space.

The footway and its relationship to the edges of the space can be used as the means to reflect the shape of the space where other factors do not allow the carriageway shape to do this. Running footways separate to the carriageway in this situation may help.

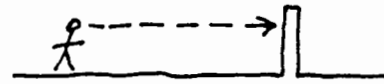
Always try to avoid leaving awkward "left over" spaces of no real function.

MEANS OF ENCLOSURE

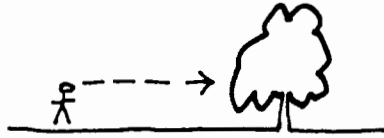
A LOW WALL NOT ENCLOSE SPACE ...



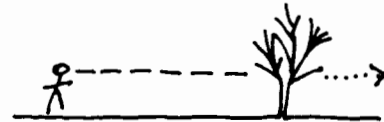
... IN THE WAY A HIGH ONE WILL



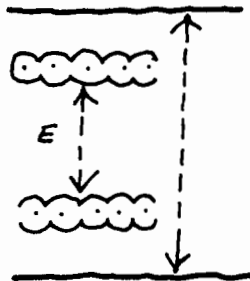
TREES IN LEAF WILL ENCLOSE A SPACE



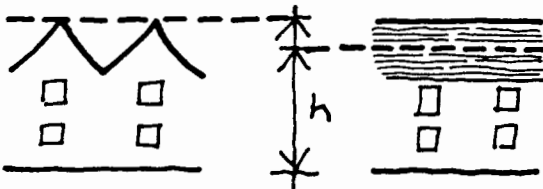
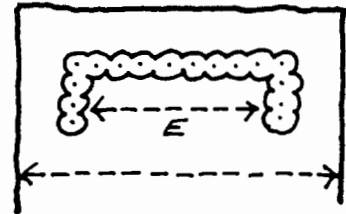
THEIR EFFECT IS LESS ENCLOSING IN WINTER



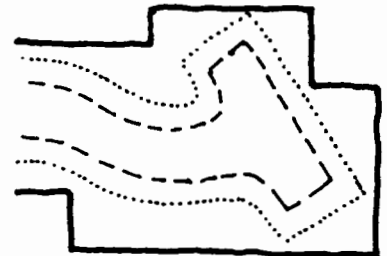
TALLER TREES WILL MARK OUT SPACE WITHOUT CLOSING OFF THE VIEW OUT.



EFFECTIVE WIDTH OF A SPACE CAN BE REDUCED BY USE OF TREES

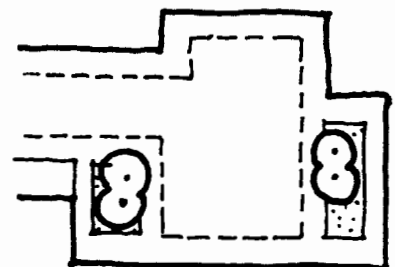


GABLES CAN INCREASE EFFECTIVE HEIGHT OF ENCLOSING BUILDINGS



UNRELATED

SURFACE TREATMENT SHOULD RELATE TO THE FORM OF THE SPACE



RELATED

**Organisation of Space**

Many residential areas are wasteful of land, containing areas which serve no clear function. The result is an uninteresting openness and lack of spatial definition. Coherent organisation should be the aim with all spaces defined as positive volumes with proper material means of enclosure.

If a system based on the following categories is applied to the layout design all areas will have a clear function and the layout as a whole will benefit from a greater sense of order and be more legible.

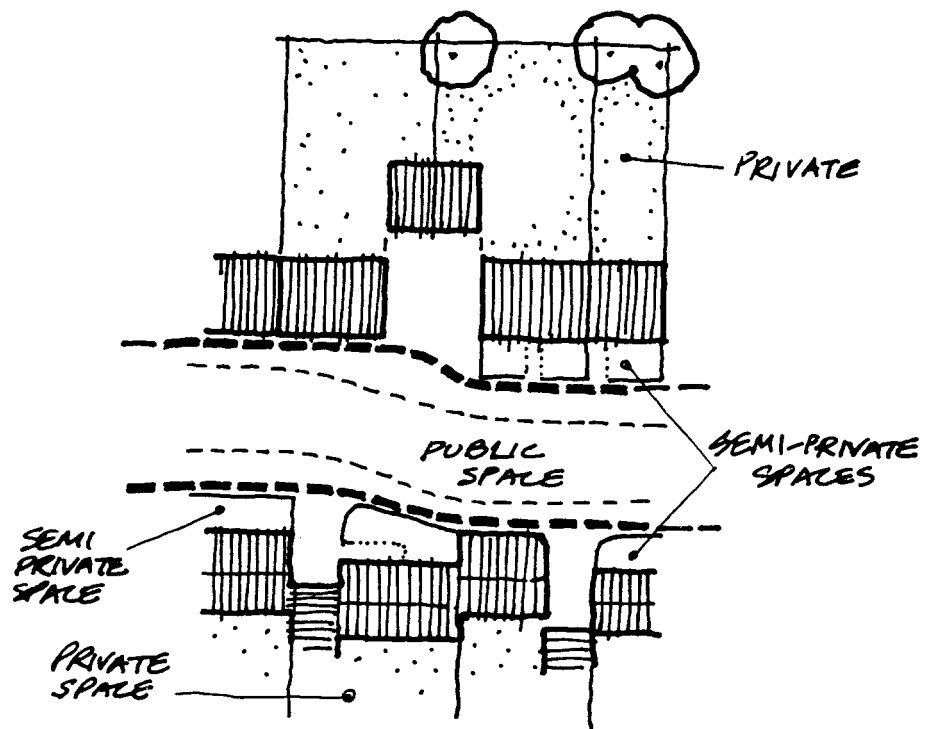
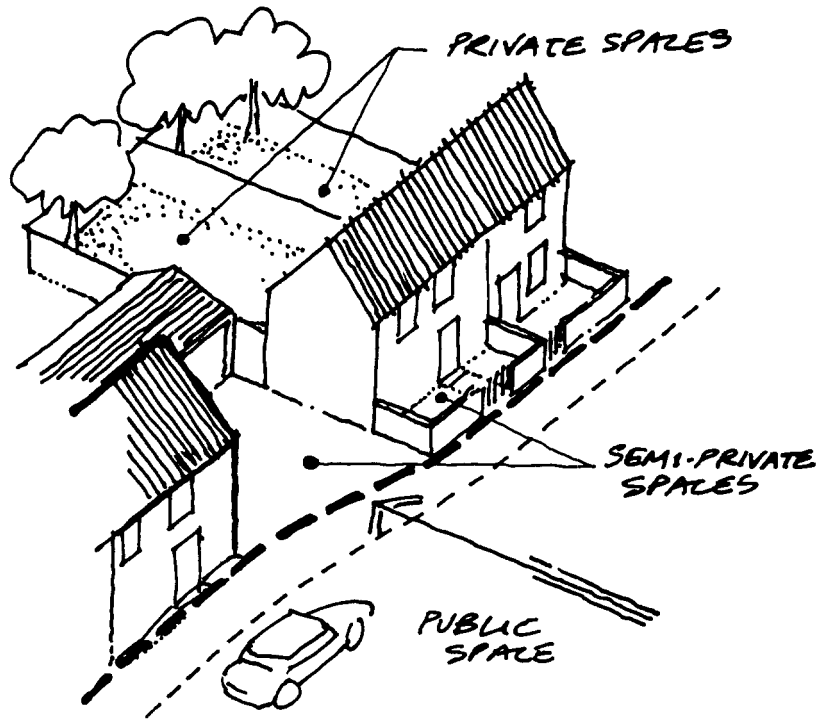
<b>CATEGORIES OF SPACE</b>	
<b>Private</b>	An area within the curtilage of an individual dwelling screened from view so as to be literally private e.g. a well-enclosed rear garden not overlooked by adjacent houses. In practice screening of 2 metres high will be needed to achieve this.
<b>Semi-private</b>	An area within the curtilage of an individual dwelling but open to public view. The area is technically private in terms of use and control but public in its relationship with public space which limits the way it can be used e.g. a front garden unenclosed by above eye-level screening.
<b>Semi-public</b>	An area under the control of a group of residents but accessible to the public e.g. hallways in multi-occupancy flats, private parking courts etc.
<b>Public</b>	All that area which is accessible to and for the use of the general public. Principally this will be the roads, footways, footpaths, road verges, recreational spaces and planted areas maintained collectively. Open landscape should also be treated as public space for the purpose of this procedure.

**Relationship of Spaces and Boundary Treatment**

The boundary between one category of space and another is vitally important to the appearance, function and visual order of the layout.

To achieve good enclosure of public spaces, semi-private areas should be limited. It is often useful to restrict semi-private space to the function of "elbow room"; an area of defensible space between the public realm and the private dwelling. This may be a garden to provide privacy to front windows or an area for parking and garage access.

Fully private areas are most useful to the householder and should be maximised at the expense of semi-private areas.



The following rules should be applied to the inter-relationship of the categories of space:

- No **private** space should share a boundary with any public space unless the boundary is formed by a 2.0 metre high wall or a hedge bank and fence (a fence alone is not adequate). As a general principle the layout should try to minimise the incidence of this public-private interface. Public spaces and open landscape beyond the site are to be included in this principle.

Reason:

- to ensure privacy on the private side;
- to prevent "domestic clutter" in private areas impinging upon the appearance of public spaces.

- **Private** space should not share a boundary with open countryside or agricultural land without the provision of a substantial impervious boundary feature. Sometimes a 2.0 metre wall will be suitable but where the development represents the edge of a settlement a substantial tree and hedge screen together with the means to protect it in the long term will be necessary. A bank and ditch or boarded fence will be required for immediate screening while the hedge and tree belt matures.

Reason:

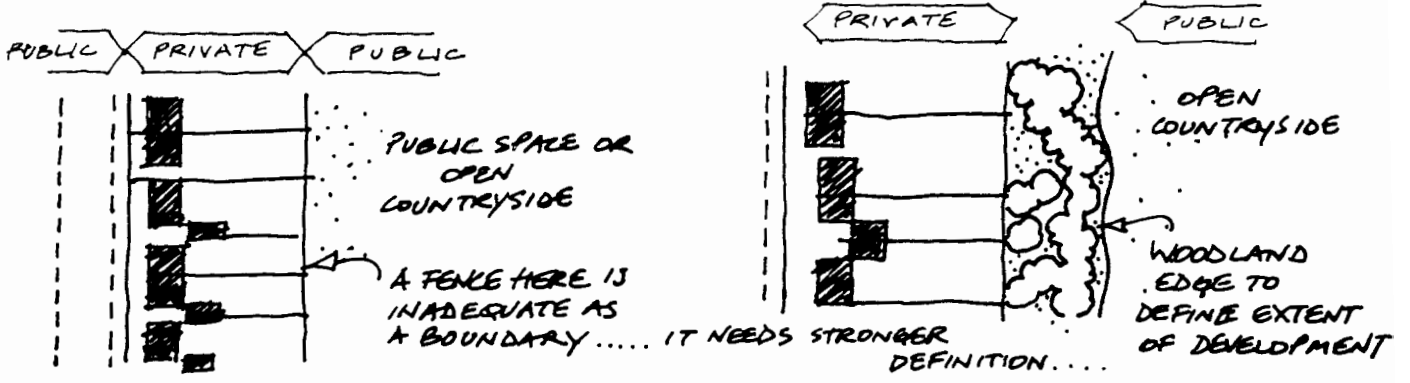
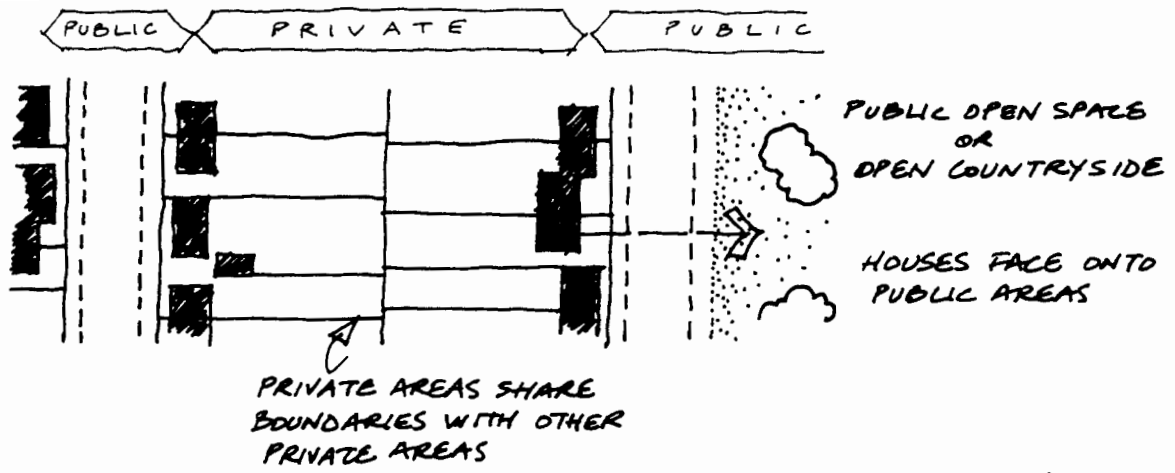
- to secure agricultural land from casual intrusion;
- to prevent the appearance of "domestic" clutter affecting the quality and character of the landscape.

If views out over the countryside are worth exploiting, the public side of the dwellings should be designed to face in the appropriate direction.

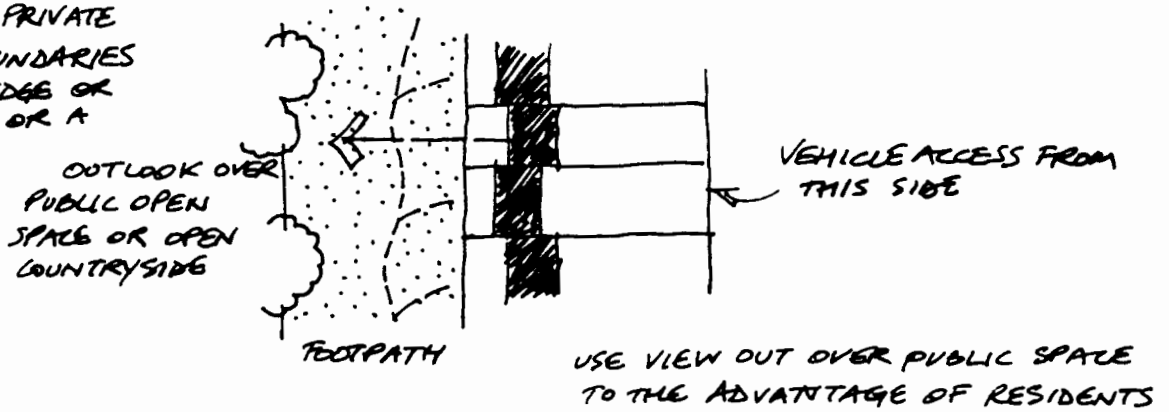
- **Semi-private** space should be defined separately from public space by appropriate means. For example, by walls, metal railings with low walls, picket or other fences and gates of durable material or other appropriate means of spatial definition. Larchlap, post and wire and chain link fences are not appropriate.

Reason:

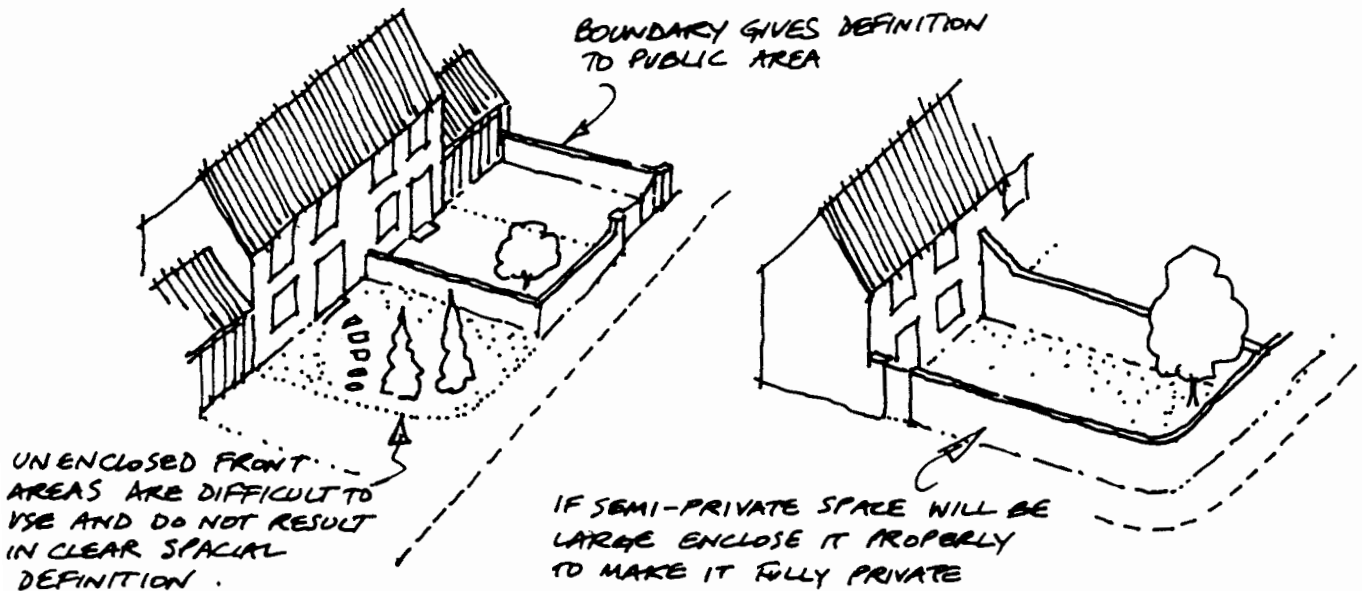
- clear definition of function;
- "defensible space".



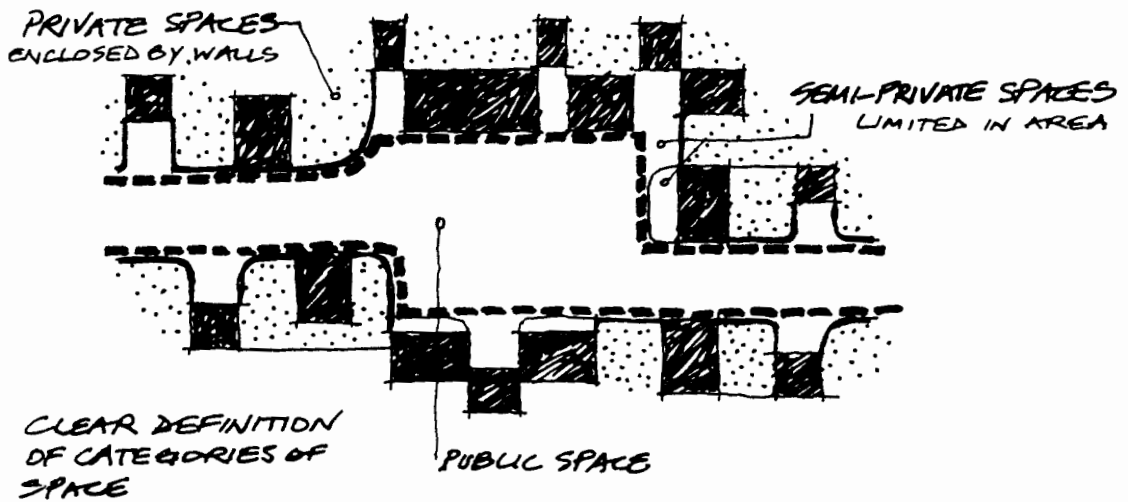
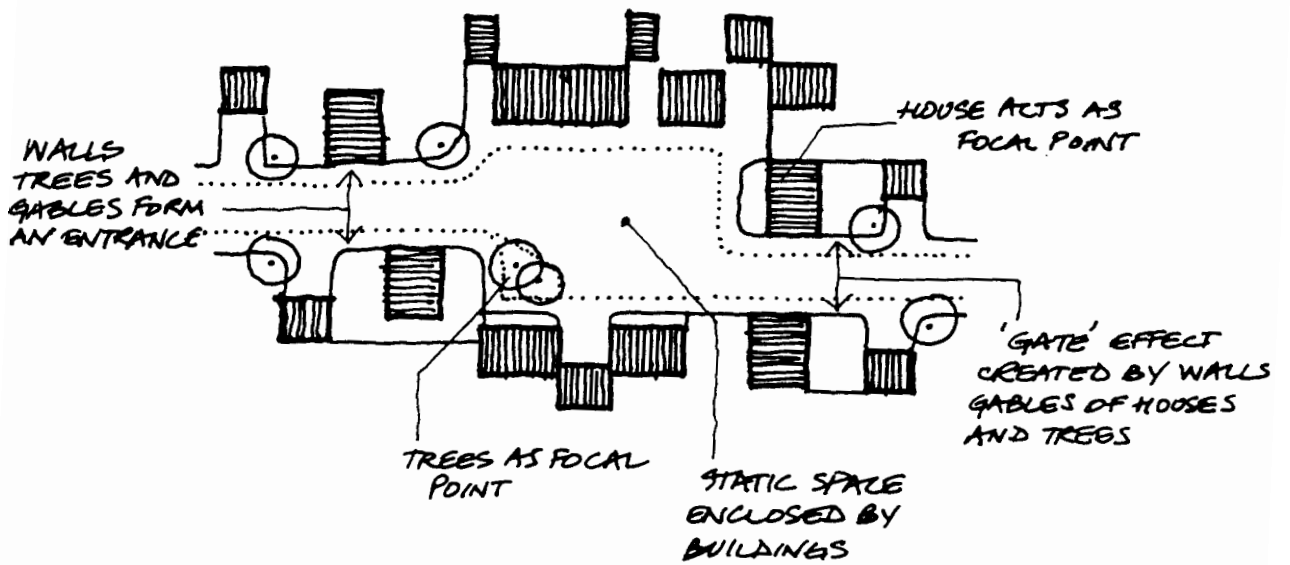
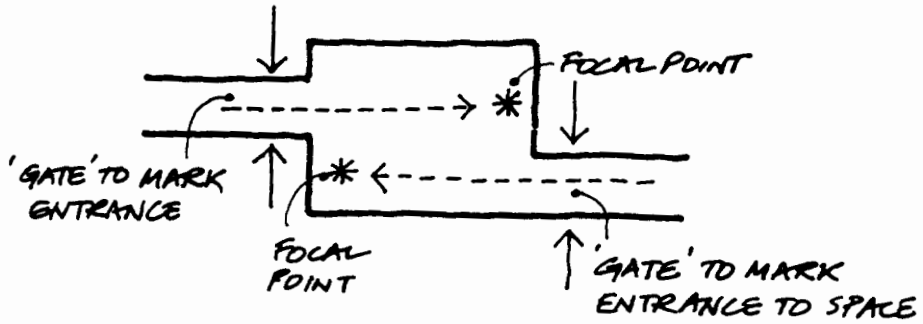
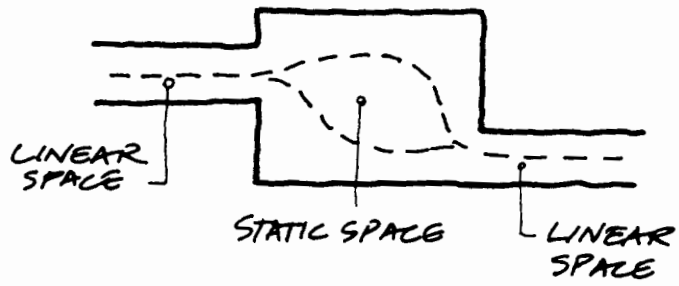
TRY TO AVOID PRIVATE TO PUBLIC BOUNDARIES WITHOUT A HEDGE OR TREE SCREEN OR A HIGH WALL.



SEMI-PRIVATE SPACES ARE BEST CLEARLY DEFINED



# DESIGNING SPACES





## The Road Network

- **Semi-public** and public spaces should be sufficiently overlooked by nearby buildings to provide for visual security.

The road network will strongly influence the form of the layout and the spaces within it but avoid letting it become the sole generator of the design.

Design the layout as a series of places first.

Some roads are only transport routes but roads in residential areas are places as well as routes. They are the places from which the area is seen and experienced and although most function as routes of travel for people on foot, bicycle and in vehicles this is not their sole function. The shape and appearance of these roads greatly affects the appearance of the whole development.

The highway is a form of public open space.

The highway area - the whole area of carriageway, footways and verges - will make up a large proportion of the space between the buildings. It is shared by the residents and forms the setting for their homes and must be designed as a complimentary part of the overall design. Visual and environmental factors will be as important as traffic engineering ones.

## Roads for Adoption

The Highway Authority requirements for adoptable roads are set out in the guide "Estate Roads in Somerset" published by Somerset County Council.

Further advice on residential road design is contained in the Departments of Environment and Transport's Design Bulletin 32 : "Residential Roads and Footpaths : Layout Considerations" 2nd Edition published by HMSO 1992.

## Estate Roads

The type of estate road used in the layout will affect the character and spatial qualities of the places served. The larger and busier the road the less "homely" this public space will be. The demands of traffic engineering such as forward visibility have a greater affects upon the spatial characteristics of a place. Design the roads to create specific types of space.

- Courtyards and housing squares will form static spaces.
- Cul-de-sacs may be static or more linear according to shape and length.
- Roads which link more static spaces will be linear spaces which need enclosure and distinct character.

Remember that it is a *public space* which is being designed not just a road.

## **Streets**

Linear spaces can be designed as streets. Many villages as well as towns are made up of streets : public spaces defined and enclosed by buildings.

These features are not part of the usual vocabulary of the residential developer but offer great opportunities for the creation of good quality, characterful, humane environments which are economical in their use of land and in many ways more sustainable than the current practice of "suburban" forms.

The street has been neglected during this century as a form of development having been discredited and associated with the poor and polluted industrial city areas of the 19th century. The influence of the Garden City movement which, for the best reasons, sought to provide healthier living areas in less over-crowded and polluted conditions has persisted since the First World War.

Today our aims are evolving through the concern for the state of the global environment and the need to conserve land, minimise energy use and pollution and to reduce the need for unnecessary travel. The reintroduction of the street for these reasons as well as the recognition of its beneficial "urbane" character is now possible.

Houses arranged on streets and around squares can provide order and structure to a development. They will often integrate well with an existing historic setting as well as producing a very legible environment.

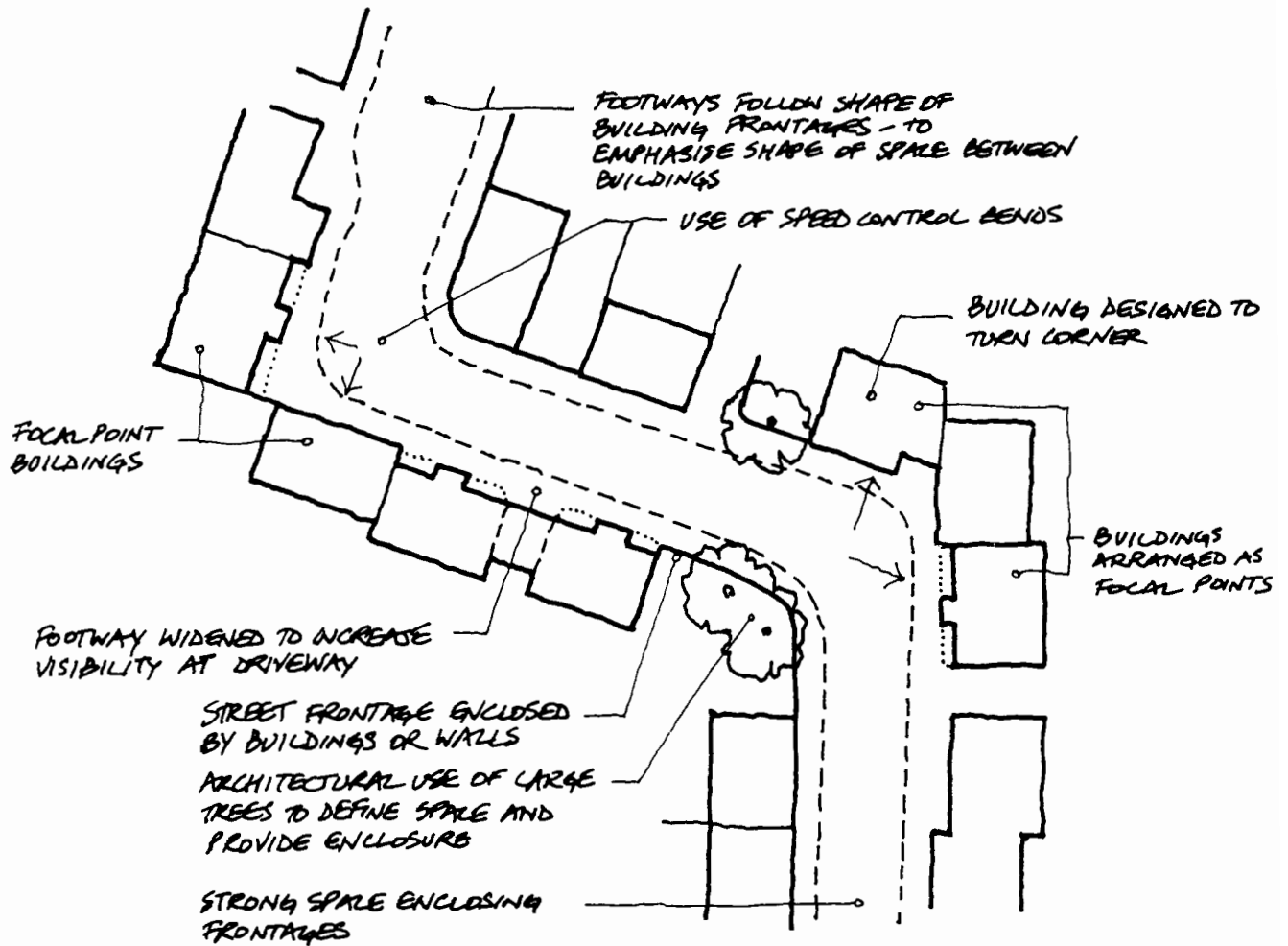
Much of the character of villages in Somerset is based upon buildings closely defining streets and this form of development is an obvious pattern to consider in such sensitive settings. Larger developments can also benefit by trying to emulate some of the characteristics of historic towns.

## **Frontage Access**

The edges of spaces require activity and interest if they are to contribute towards legibility. This implies provision of frontage access. Roads which do not provide frontage access, distributor roads in highway terms:

- are essentially transport routes
- are difficult to design as places
- can be noisy and polluted
- are difficult to provide with surveillance for security purposes

## DESIGNING STREETS



- pose visual problems with their edges unless very generous space is allowed for extensive landscape treatment as part of the overall landscape framework.

Distributor roads are best excluded from the centre of residential areas as far as possible.

Where areas are large and numbers of dwellings high consider adopting a network approach to the road layout rather than the usual hierarchical pattern. This allows traffic volume to be handled by spreading it out not concentrating it onto distributor roads (Refer to Design Bulletin 32) and retains the possibility of a maximum number of roads with frontage access.

### ***Visibility Splays***

The requirements for visibility at road junctions can make it difficult to achieve the required degree of enclosure of spaces.

There are various devices which can be used to help reduce the undesirable qualities of these areas.

- Design of visibility splay as a positive space.
- Incorporate visibility requirements within a larger urban space.
- Arrange junction positions to minimise the effect of visibility splays e.g. siting a junction on the outside of a bend will reduce the effective length of visibility required.
- Use layout forms which reduce traffic speed.
- Reduce concentrations of traffic by adoption of a network layout where each road takes a lower proportion of the total traffic.

### ***Traffic Calming***

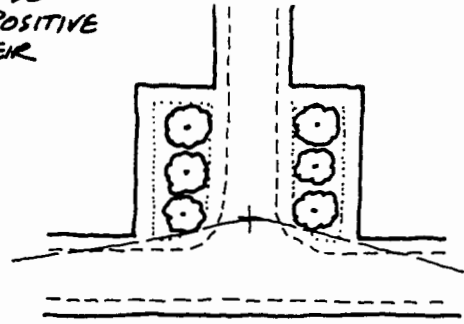
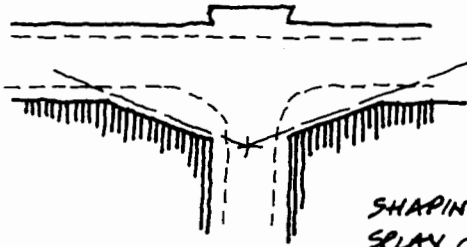
Techniques for reducing vehicle speed in residential areas should be employed wherever possible and the use of traffic calmed zones will be possible in some larger developments.

The danger and severity of traffic accidents is greatly reduced if vehicle speeds are kept below 20 mph. This can be achieved by the inclusion of features to restrain speed at intervals of between 60 and 100 metres.

Techniques which change direction are preferable to those which alter vertical alignment. These include:

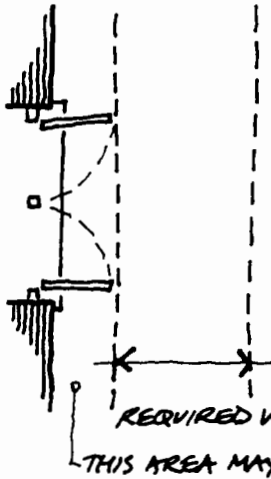
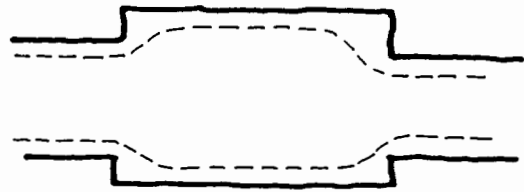
- small radius bends
- T junctions
- carriageway offsets, chicanes and islands
- carriageway narrowing and gateways
- parking areas on or adjacent to roads

VISIBILITY SPLAYS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED INTO POSITIVE SPACES TO MODIFY THEIR APPEARANCE

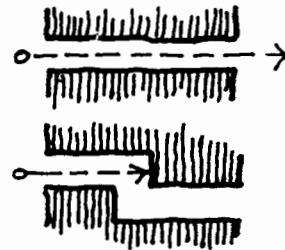


SHAPING BUILDINGS TO THE SPLAY CAN REDUCE THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE SPLAY

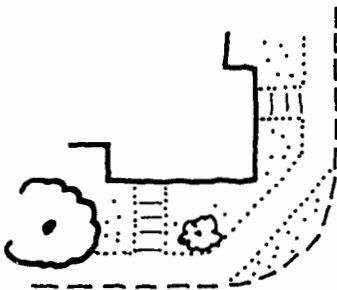
VARYING WIDTH OF FOOTWAY AND CARRIAGEWAY TO GIVE EMPHASIS TO SHAPE OF SPACE



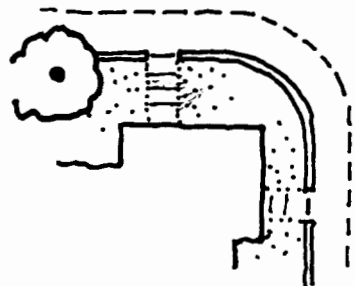
WHERE WINDOWS OPEN OVER FOOTWAYS ALLOW EXTRA WIDTH



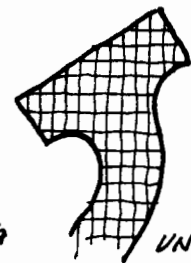
AVOID HIDDEN AREAS IN SEPARATE FOOTPATHS



AVOID TOO MANY MATERIALS TOO CLOSE TOGETHER AND SMALL PATCHES OF 'SPALE LEFT OVER' PARTICULARLY OF GRASS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN

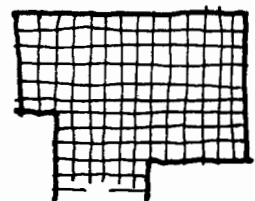


PUBLIC SPACE CLEARLY DEFINED, NO MAINTENANCE DIFFICULTIES GARDEN ACTS AS DEFENSIBLE SPACE



UNRELATED

SELECT PAVING MATERIALS TO RELATE TO THE SHAPE OF THE SPACE



RELATED

Vertical alignment techniques:

- raised tables at junctions
- raised tables in straights

The concept and details of measures for traffic calming should be discussed at an early stage in the design process with the Highway Authority.

These measures will integrate with the road layout as a network and can be used to strengthen the form of a residential area as a series of inter-connected spaces. The features used to separate areas can incorporate traffic calming features to perform a dual function as organisers of both space and traffic.

### ***Footpaths***

Legibility can suffer from the separation of roads and foot routes - keep them together where possible.

Where a separate footpath is needed consider its security:

- Surveillance
- Lighting
- Degree of enclosure
- Visibility - can the end be seen?  
- are there hidden corners?

Carriageways and footways can be varied in width to help reflect the shape of a space. This can relieve the monotonous appearance of a consistently parallel carriageway with equal footway each side.

Footways may be widened to allow space outside windows of buildings on a street. Allowance needs to be made for the projection of an opening window.

### ***Design Details and Materials***

- Consider all road and footpath design details carefully especially junctions between one material and another.
- Select materials and design within the context of the surrounding buildings.
- Avoid using too many different materials.
- Avoid small areas of 'space left over' whether of grass or other surfacing because they contribute to visual confusion.
- The use of small element paving, especially if it has a directional grain when laid, needs care. The material should be selected to suit the shape of the space to be surfaced.

## **Parking Arrangements**

The District Council sets standards for parking requirements within any development according to the type of accommodation to be provided and reference should be made to these standards when designing parking arrangements.

Generally people try to park their vehicles as near to their destination as possible and in residential areas, the preference is to park vehicles where they are within sight of the owner's home for security as well as convenience.

In practice the arrangements for parking vehicles will be provided within the individual plots or where, smaller houses or terraces are used, in communal areas. Both categories need careful design.

### ***Parking Within Plots***

Excellent for security, this method of parking can pose problems for the design and enclosure of streets and spaces because of the need for a driveway of at least 6 metres long whether a garage is provided or not.

The difficulty is most acute where houses with integral garages are used. It is important not to let the length of driveway become the main determinant in the design of the space between the houses.

Techniques to enhance enclosure:

- Use of garages set between or behind houses.
- Strong enclosure of front garden areas and driveways to emphasise form of street.
- Use of avenue tree planting to visually enclose the street.
- Use other methods to define the boundary between the public and the semi-private areas.

### ***Parking Outside Plots***

To work properly this type of provision must be convenient to users. Decide whether to provide unadopted designated spaces or communal, undesignated areas which the Highway Authority might adopt.

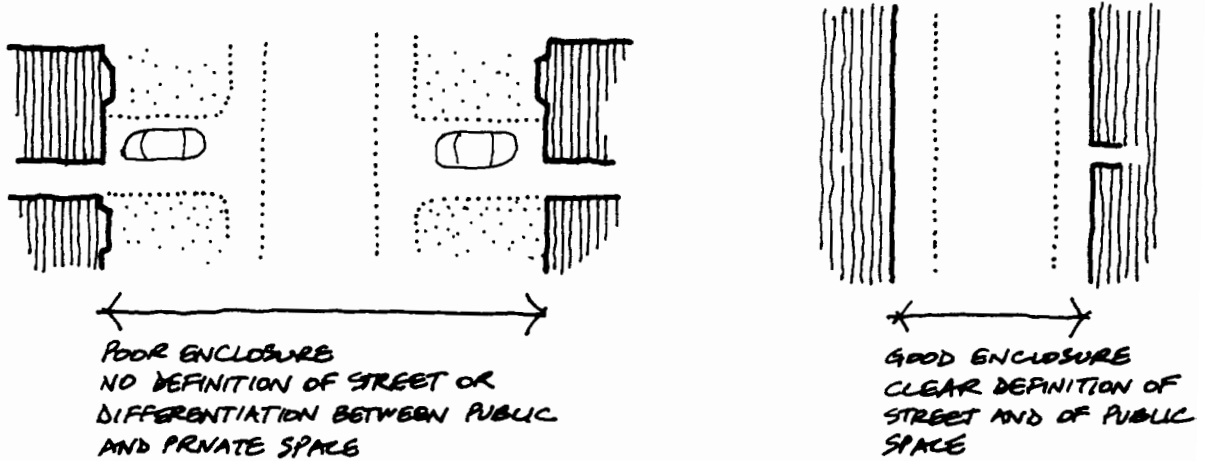
All parking areas must be:

- close to dwellings they serve
- easily overlooked by at least some of the houses
- restricted in size or carefully subdivided. Too large an area of parking will be difficult to keep under surveillance and fail to induce any feeling of ownership by the users.
- designed and sited to avoid the visual intrusion of ranks of parked vehicles.

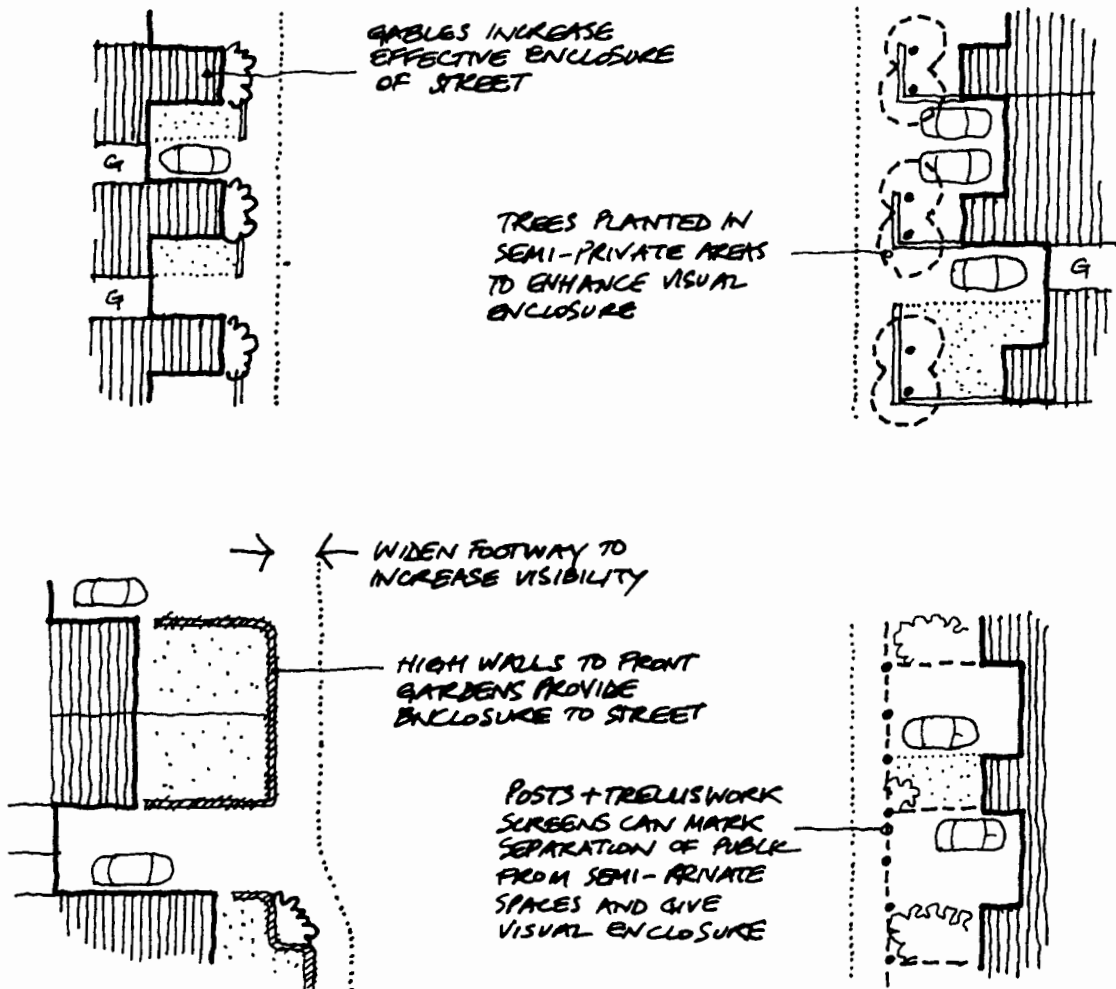
# PARKING ARRANGEMENTS

PARKING WITHIN PLOTS CAN HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE LAYOUT.... ESPECIALLY WHERE INTEGRAL GARAGE HOUSES ARE USED..... IT IS DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE ENCLOSURE OF THE STREET SPACE WITHOUT TAKING SPECIAL MEASURES

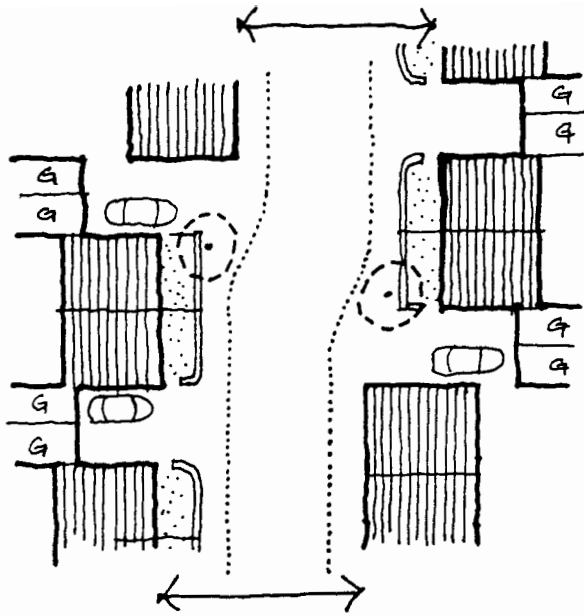
TYPICAL SUBURBAN LAYOUT.... DEGREE OF ENCLOSURE CONTRASTS WITH TRADITIONAL STREET FORM



## TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE VISUAL ENCLOSURE



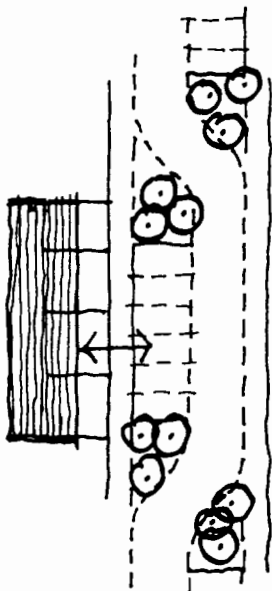




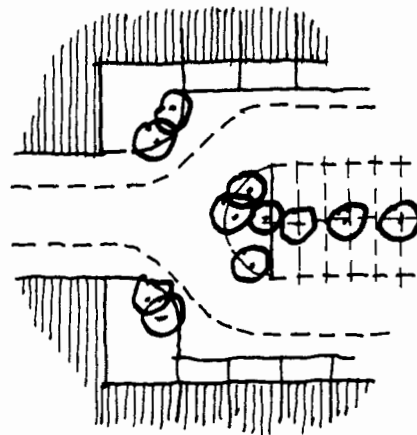
ENCLOSURE CREATED BY BUILDINGS

MINIMISE SEMI PRIVATE SPACES TO  
MAXIMISE ENCLOSURE OF STREET  
SPACE

GARAGES SET BETWEEN BUILDINGS  
ACCOMMODATE PARKING WITHOUT  
REDUCING ENCLOSURE CREATED BY  
BUILDINGS ..... AND ALSO ENABLES  
SOME BUILDINGS TO BE SITED CLOSE  
TO THE FOOTWAY INCREASING STREET  
ENCLOSURE + REAR PRIVATE SPACES .



PARKING AREAS NEED  
TO BE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED  
WITH THE HOUSES THEY  
SERVE



PARKING AS A PART OF A  
FORMAL SPACE WELL  
OVERLOOKED BY THE  
SURROUNDING HOUSES

PARKING AREAS CAN BE  
USED AS A MEANS TO  
SLOW TRAFFIC SPEED AND  
AS PART OF AN OVERALL  
TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

## Techniques

- Parking courts behind houses. These must be properly overlooked and of very restricted size.
- Parking areas as part of the public street space forming squares, islands or creating chicanes as part of a traffic calming scheme.
- Ranks of garages will look bleak and anonymous so must be arranged in small groups only.
- Incorporate entrance "gates" to emphasise semi-public nature of parking courts.

## Security

The way a development is physically planned can help to reduce the incidence of crime and vandalism.

Broad principles to note at an early stage in the design process are:

- The more compact the development the better. Extensive, sprawling developments can provide too many points of access and too much potential for concealment.
- Design to create communities where people can identify with their place and feel that it is *their* neighbourhood.
- Use a mixture of dwelling types to exploit benefit of occupation throughout the daytime period.

Local Police Architectural Liaison Officers may be available to advise on security aspects of design especially when considering large scale developments.

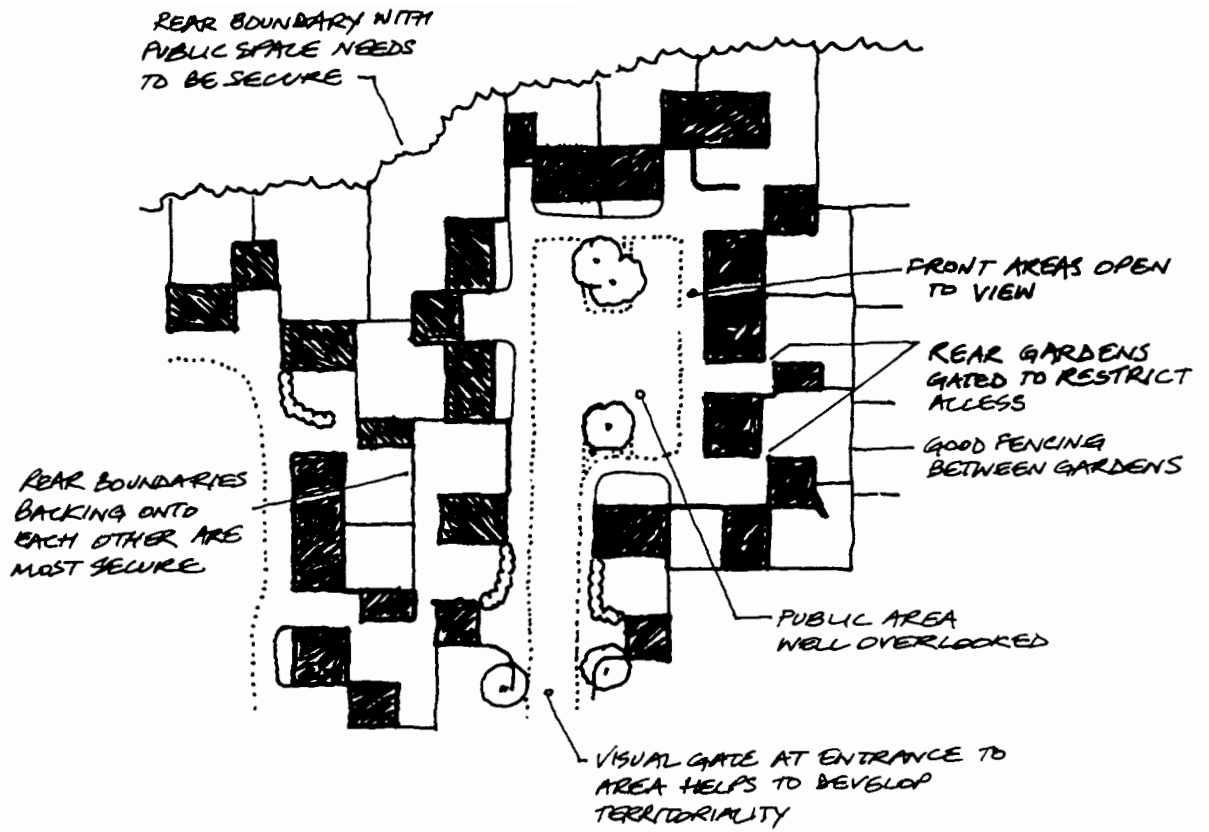
Essentially there are two security objectives to try to provide for

- Defensible space.
- Surveillance by overlooking.

## Defensible Space

Design to increase the territoriality of residents towards the spaces round their dwellings.

- External spaces need to be defined in such a way that private and semi-private spaces can be easily distinguished from public spaces. Clear definition will be provided by walls, fences and gates although symbolic features such as changes in surfaces, narrowed entrances, gate piers etc. may also achieve the objective of marking out a residents area of control.
- Rear gardens should not adjoin public spaces. If they do for unavoidable reasons the boundaries must be fully secured.



## Surveillance by Overlooking

- Private spaces such as rear gardens should be secured from semi-private areas in front of a dwelling by good fencing, walling and lockable gates in order to make access to the rear difficult.
- Beware of design features which unwittingly makes access to upper windows easy.
- Design the dwelling so that delivery people and meter readers do not need to enter the dwelling or its private areas.
- Windows should be used to provide surveillance of all public spaces. This may entail the special siting of certain dwellings to "police" some parts of a public area.
- Front entrances should be adjacent to public areas and be openly visible from surrounding dwellings and the street.
- Avoid features which provide hiding places adjacent to footpaths or in close proximity to dwellings.
- Arrange parking areas where vehicles can remain under surveillance by the vehicle owners and neighbours. If communal parking is necessary it should be in small areas and overlooked.
- Public areas need to be adequately lit at night.

## Privacy

Each dwelling should have

- adequate internal privacy from the public spaces and neighbours windows
- an area of external private space which is not overlooked by neighbours.

Privacy through physical separation is difficult to achieve. Proper privacy requires a separation of at least 40 metres. The 22 metre separation standard is inadequate for full privacy.

Instead privacy should be designed in by

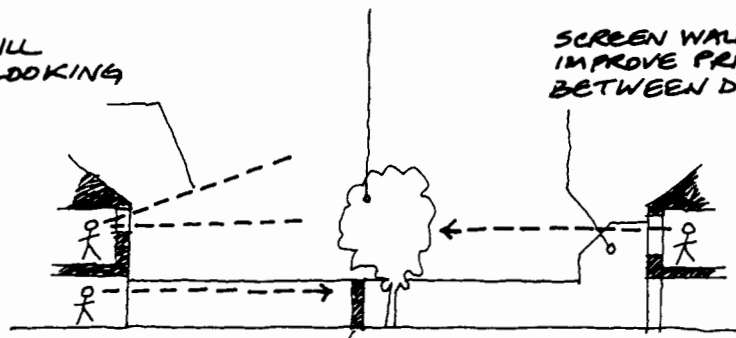
- The use of above eye level screening.
- Positioning habitable rooms and windows to avoid overlooking neighbours' private areas.
- Manipulation of floor plans and cill heights. Wide frontage plans have better privacy potential.
- Use of vertically proportioned windows which provide better visual privacy.
- Use of non-standard or variations to standard

INCREASING PRIVACY

WINDOWS WITH HIGH CILL LEVELS PREVENT OVERLOOKING FROM UPPER FLOORS

TALL SCREENING NEEDED TO PREVENT BACK TO BACK OVERLOOKING

SCREEN WALLS CAN IMPROVE PRIVACY BETWEEN DWELLINGS

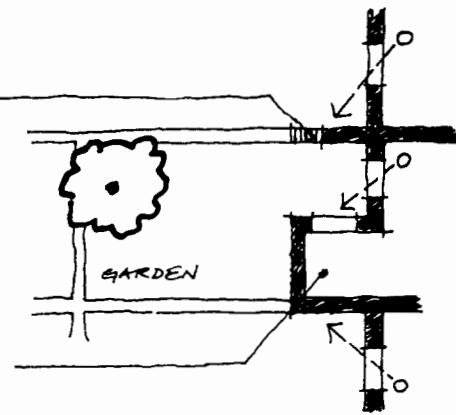


2M HIGH WALLS PROVIDE PRIVACY AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL

SECTION

SIDE SCREENING CREATES PRIVATE AREAS AT REAR OF DWELLINGS

PROJECTING WING CREATES PRIVATE AREA NOT OVERLOOKED BY NEIGHBOURS



PLAN

WIDTH OF WINDOWS AFFECTS PRIVACY INSIDE THE DWELLING

THE WIDER THE WINDOW THE WIDER THE FIELD OF VIEW

INCREASING DISTANCE OF WINDOW FROM THE PUBLIC AREA CAN INCREASE FIELD OF VIEW

NARROW FIELD OF VIEW

WIDE FIELD OF VIEW

WIDE FIELD OF VIEW

NARROW WINDOW

WIDE WINDOW

WINDOW SET BACK

OUTSIDE

INSIDE

PLAN

dwelling plans to provide differing room orientation.

### **Community**

Each dwelling in the development should have adequate privacy for its residents but at the same time be sited to allow interaction and the development of communities.

- Group dwellings around communal spaces or in streets so that front doors do not face away from each other.
- Semi-private spaces allow neighbours to interact while remaining on their own territory.
- Semi-private spaces should not be so large that the dwelling is isolated from the public area.

### **Orientation**

The orientation of individual dwellings must be considered throughout the design process with regard to prevailing wind, sunlight, views and visual privacy. All dwellings should receive sunshine during some part of the day into the principal habitable rooms and the private garden areas. Avoid north, north-east or north-west aspects for private external areas.

The design of room layout and the shading effect of surrounding structures must be taken into account. Views out are best enjoyed by kitchens and living rooms.

All new development should seek to reinforce the character of its region. This can be done at two levels:

### **Towards Local Distinctiveness**

Local distinctiveness in the layout.

- Reflect local street shapes and patterns in the external spaces.
- Try to follow the ways in which buildings in the locality sit in the landscape.
- Use appropriate materials and follow traditions of local character regions.

Local distinctiveness in the buildings and details.

- Use regional building forms and materials.
- Follow local pattern and style of land enclosure.



GARDENS ON NORTH SIDE  
NEED TO BE LONGER TO AVOID  
SHADING

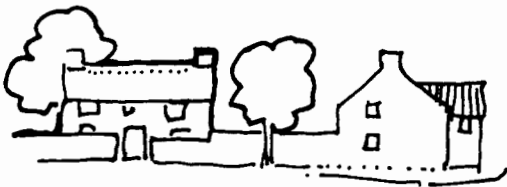


CONSIDER THE  
EFFECT OF SHADING  
BY TREES

CONSIDER THE LOCATION OF  
PRINCIPAL ROOMS IN RELATION  
TO THE ORIENTATION OF THE  
BUILDING



STANDARD SOLUTIONS WILL NOT ENHANCE LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS.....  
.....SEEK TO REINFORCE THE CHARACTER OF A PLACE BY  
CAREFUL DESIGN .....



## Local Character Regions

Building colour and character are very much the product of their local geology. Retaining local distinctiveness means continuing to use materials which have the colour and character of their own particular area.

The South Somerset area has been the subject of a landscape assessment, "The Landscape of South Somerset" (published by South Somerset District Council) which sub-divided the district into seven regions.

In terms of building character, colours and building materials we can condense these regions into four visual character regions.

### North Area

#### Langport and Somerton

The central moorland basin of the rivers Brue, Parrett, Yeo and Cary, northwards to include the Fivehead and High Ham escarpments and moors:

*Materials* Blue and white lias stone.  
Small quantities of brick and Hamstone especially as dressings.

Clay roman tiles, pantiles, slate and thatch.

*Key Colours* **Walls** Range of greys from warm white lias to cool blue lias.

**Roofs** Weathered clay colours green-brown and grey to ochre red.

### West Area

#### Chard

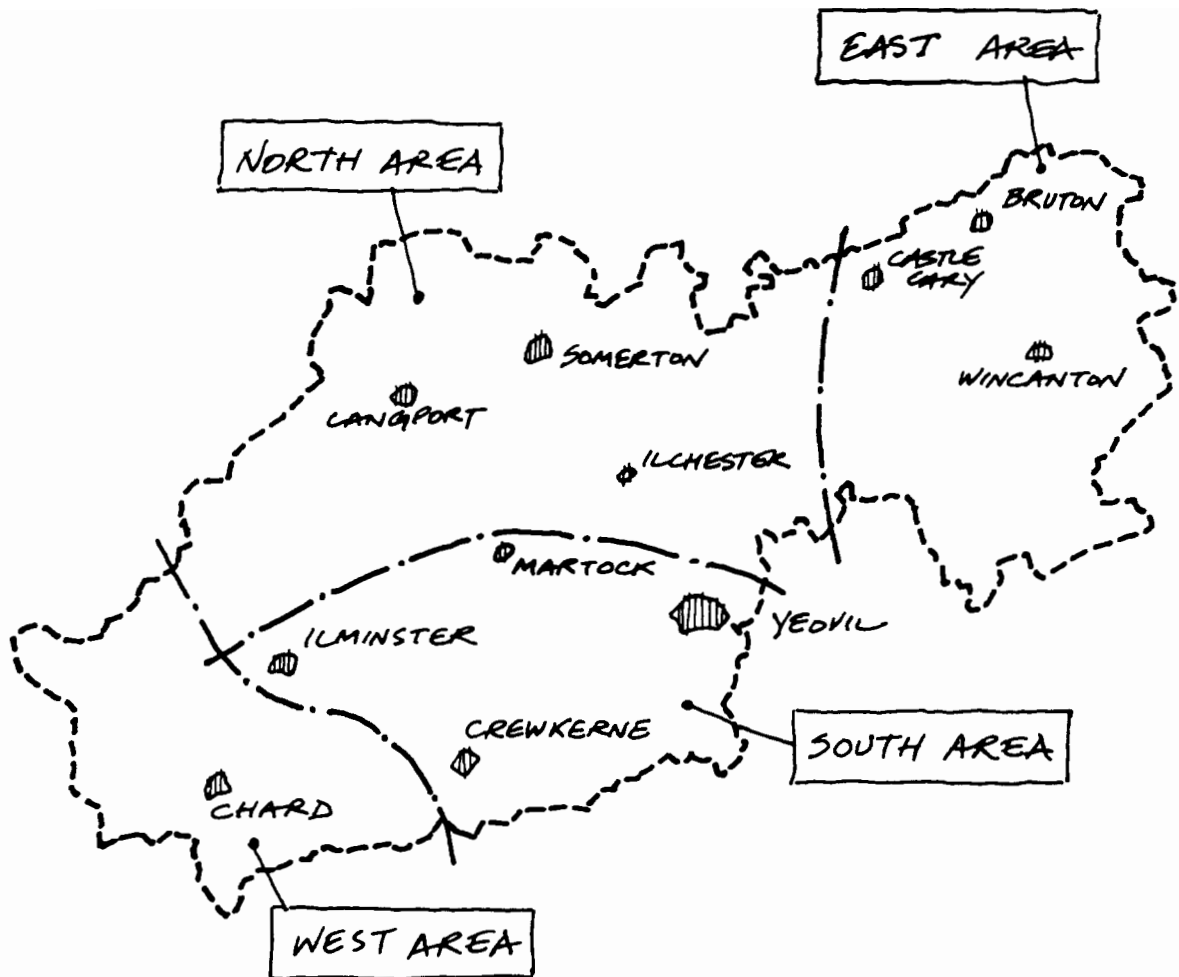
Blackdown Hills, Windwhistle ridge and associated footslopes and valleys.

*Materials* Flint and chert stone, local sandstone (naturally white but often weathers to purple), colour washed render and rough cast on cob and areas of brick particularly in Chard itself.

Thatch, slate, clay roman tiles, pantiles and plain tiles.

*Key Colours* Grey and brown of flint and chert, white or purple-brown of sandstone.  
Light colourwash on renders.  
Weathered clay tile colours, brown green of thatch.





NOTE THESE SUBDIVISIONS DO NOT  
CORRESPOND TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE  
SUBDIVISIONS OF THE DISTRICT

## South Area

### Yeovil, Crewkerne and Ilminster

Ridges and vales south and west of Yeovil.

*Materials* Hamstone, oolitic limestones, some brick.  
(Yeovil particularly).

Thatch, slate, clay roman tiles, pantiles and plain tiles.

*Key Colours* Ochre/golden-brown stone

Roof colours as West Area.

## East Area

### Castle Cary, Bruton and Wincanton

Ridges and vales east of Yeovil.

*Materials* Oolitic and forest marble limestones, some Hamstone and brick.  
Greensand at Penselwood.  
Some colourwashed renders.  
Thatch, slate and clay tiles.

*Key Colours* Ochre/golden brown oolitic limestones.  
Grey-grey brown forest marble.  
Light colours for colourwash.

Roof colours as West Area.

### Housing Design and Details

The design of the individual houses needs to:

- fulfil the requirements the layout makes in terms of space, enclosure, privacy etc.
- respond appropriately to local character in details and materials.

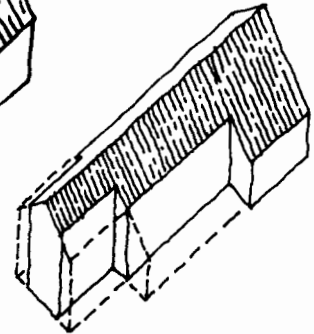
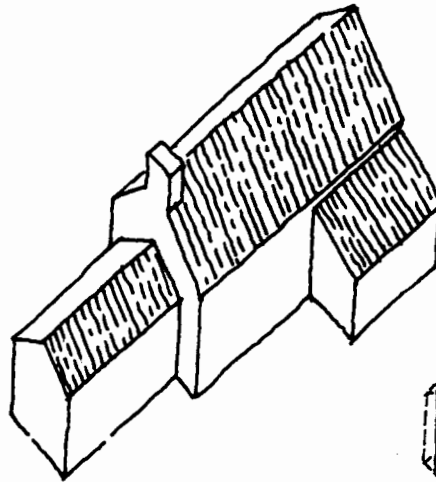
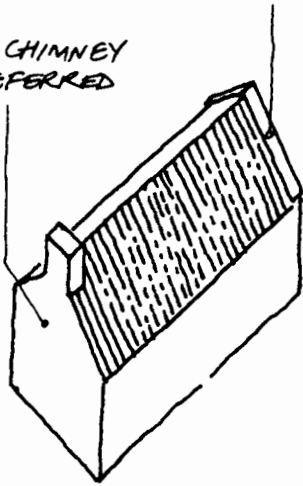
Although most developers have their own standard house types these can usually be adapted to suit differing situations and locations provided a flexible attitude is taken.

- Select plan forms appropriate to the requirements of the siting.
- Be prepared to adjust positions of windows and doors if necessary.
- Be prepared to alter roof forms, details and materials to suit the locality.
- Beware of applied styles. Simple, straightforward forms built in good quality materials are more likely to succeed than any excesses of added "styling".

# BUILDING DESIGN

USE WATER TABLING WHERE POSSIBLE

INTERNAL CHIMNEY STACK PREFERRED

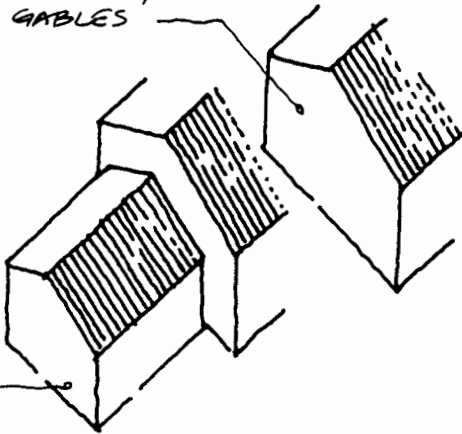


CHOOSE SIMPLE GABLED ROOF FORMS

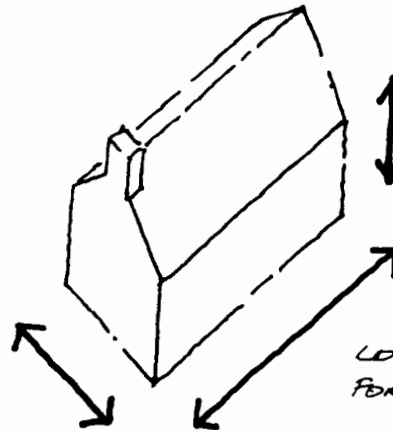
USE 'ADDITIVE' FORMS FOR SIMPLICITY AND CLARITY

'SUBTRACTIVE' FORMS ARE VISUALLY CONFUSING

NARROW FRONTAGE FORMS HAVE UNSATISFACTORY PROMINENT WIDE GABLES



GABLES CAN BE MODIFIED BY ADDITION OF NARROWER BUILDINGS



CONSIDER SCALE RESULTING FROM EYES HEIGHT

LONG FRONTAGE FORM PREFERRED

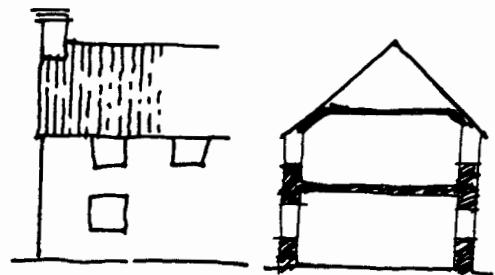
LIMIT SPAN

VISUALLY WEAKER



AVOID PRINCIPAL ELEVATION AS A GABLE EXCEPT TO TURN A CORNER OR AS A SPECIAL MARKER BUILDING.

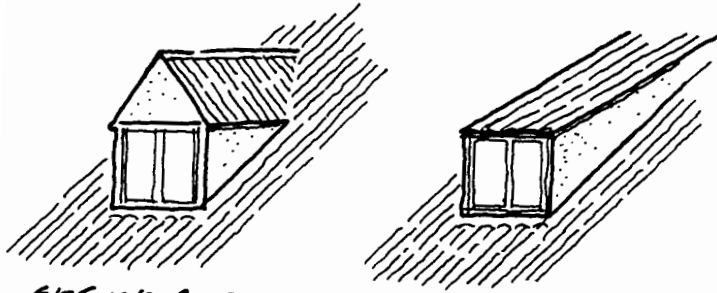
4.5m



6m

LOW EAVES AND NARROW SPAN REQUIRED TO PRODUCE COTTAGE SCALE WHERE NEEDED

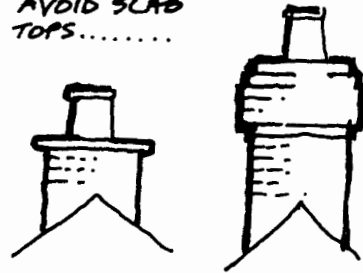
USE LOCAL STYLE OF DORMER



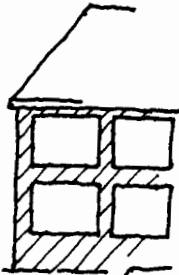
SIZE AND PARTICULARLY WIDTH OF WINDOW MUST BE LIMITED

TWO LIGHT WINDOWS PREFERRED

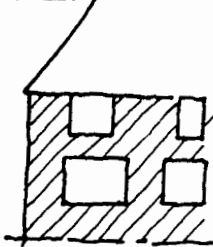
AVOID SLAB TOPS.....



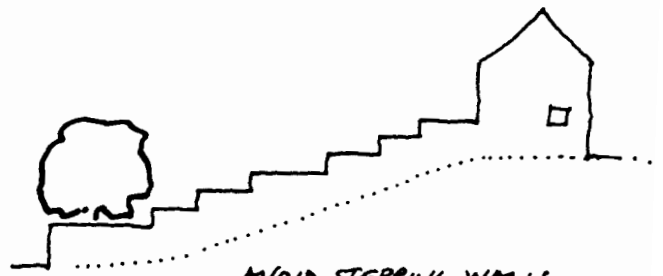
... ALWAYS INCORPORATE CORBELLING TO BRICK CHIMNEY STACKS



LOW PROPORTION OF SOLID TO VOID... VISUALLY WEAK



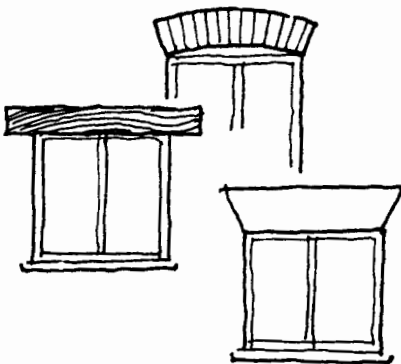
HIGHER PROPORTION OF SOLID WALL TO VOID OR WINDOW AREA RESULTS IN GREATER VISUAL STRENGTH



AVOID STEPPING WALLS DOWN SLOPES....



ALLOW THEM TO RUN WITH THE SLOPE OF THE GROUND



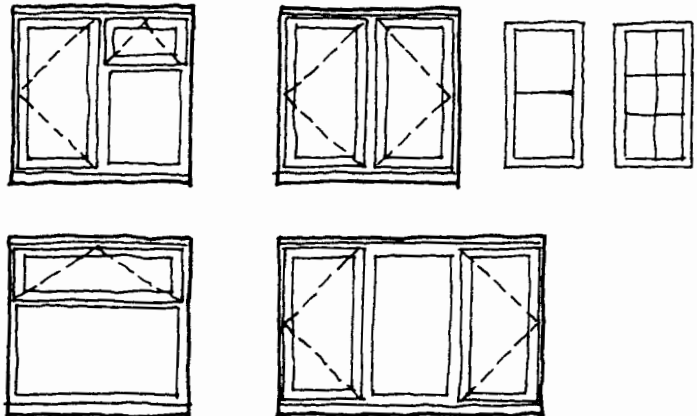
ALL OPENINGS IN WALLS SHOULD HAVE LINTELS OR ARCHES EXPRESSED ON THE EXTERIOR.

FOLLOW LOCAL PATTERNS...

- OAK LINTELS
- STONE LINTELS
- STONE ARCHES

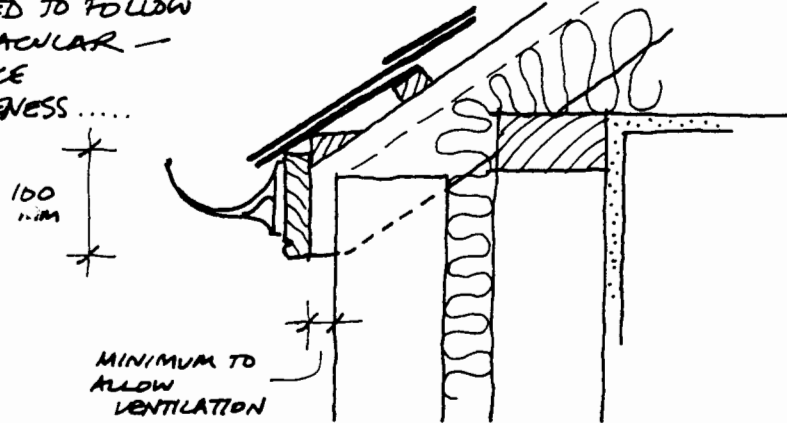
AVOID ASYMMETRICAL WINDOW PATTERNS....

USE BALANCED DESIGNS WITH GLASS SIZES EQUAL

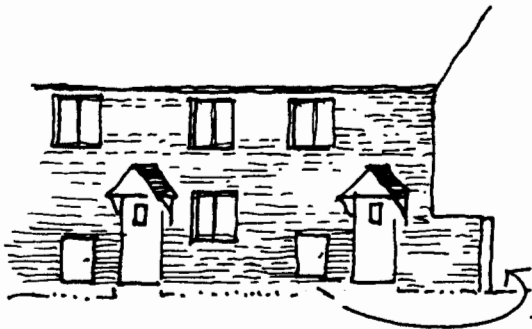


FOR PREFERENCE AVOID TOP VENT PATTERNS TOO

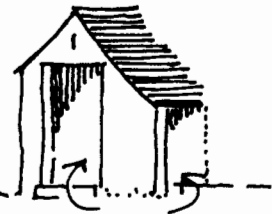
DETAILS SUCH AS A EAVES  
 CAN BE DESIGNED TO FOLLOW  
 THE LOCAL VERNACULAR —  
 THIS WILL ENHANCE  
 LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS .....



A NARROW EAVES LINE WITH  
 LITTLE OVERHANG IS A COMMON  
 TRADITIONAL DESIGN FEATURE



METER BOXES CAN BE  
 VERY PROMINENT ON  
 FACADES .... THEY SHOULD  
 BE LOCATED OUT OF  
 SIGHT BUT EASILY  
 ACCESSIBLE ....



... BEHIND SCREEN WALLS ...

.... INSIDE OPEN PORCHES ORC .

## Roofs

- Use gabled pitched roof forms generally.
- Use full hipped roofs only sparingly.
- Avoid half-hipped roofs altogether.
- Roof pitches should be 40° or more.
- Generally avoid pyramid roofs, flat roofs, free-standing monopitch roofs and other non-traditional forms unless relevant to a specific contemporary design.
- Try to use wide-frontage forms wherever possible and limit roof span to around 6 metres.
- Use locally familiar materials such as pantiles, roman tiles, slate and details such as water tabling to verges.
- Keep eaves lines cut back with little or no soffit and a narrow fascia.
- Avoid prominent barge boards to verges.
- Use black rainwater goods.
- Avoid outside dormer windows and observe local traditions.

## Walls

- Use stone wherever possible.
- Avoid half timbered effects; tile-hanging and other treatments outside the local vernacular.
- Try to keep a substantial solid to void ratio.
- Observe local practice in stone coursing, bed heights and methods even when using reconstructed stone and point nearly flush with lime mortar.
- Set chimneys internally, not projecting at gables.
- Always express lintels or arches over openings.

## Other Details

- Use windows of a balanced design without top vents.
- Use paint rather than dark-coloured stain for joinery.

Further advice about any development proposals can be obtained by contacting the Area Planning Manager at the appropriate area office.

The Design of Residential Areas has been prepared by South Somerset District Council's Conservation and Environment Unit and written and illustrated by Adron Duckworth.