



## QD1 Delivering high quality design in Lewisham

### Using the design-led approach

- A Development proposals must follow a design-led approach to contribute to delivering high quality, inclusive, safe, healthy, liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods in Lewisham. This requires the consideration of design options at the early stage of the development process informed by an understanding of the site and its local context, including through effective engagement with the local community. These design options should then be used to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds positively to the local context, along with the optimal use of land to support the delivery of the spatial strategy for the Borough.

### Distinctive and valued places

- B Development proposals must demonstrate an understanding of the site context and respond positively to Lewisham's local distinctiveness by providing for buildings, spaces and places that reinforce and enhance local character. This includes the special and distinctive visual, historical, environmental, social and functional qualities of places that contribute to local character, identity, sense of community and belonging.
- C To successfully respond to local distinctiveness development proposals must be designed to address:
- a. Natural features including trees, landscape, topography, open spaces and waterways;

- b. The prevailing or emerging form of development (including urban grain, building typology, morphology and the hierarchy of streets, routes and other spaces);
- c. The proportion of development (including height, scale, mass and bulk) within the site, its immediate vicinity and the surrounding area;
- d. Building lines along with the orientation of and spacing between buildings;
- e. Strategic and local views, vistas and landmarks;
- f. Townscape features;
- g. The significance of heritage assets and their setting;
- h. Architectural styles, detailing and materials that contribute to local character; and
- i. Cultural assets.

### Places for people

- D Development proposals must put people at the centre of the design-led approach, ensuring buildings and spaces are welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible to people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities. Development should be designed and built to a human scale by responding to the ways in which people move through, engage with and experience their surroundings.

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- E Development proposals must be designed to facilitate good physical and mental health, support the wellbeing of the population and foster community cohesion by providing:
- a. Buildings and spaces that are inclusive, intuitive to use, comfortable, safe and secure;
  - b. A high quality public realm that maintains and wherever possible enhances access to green and open spaces;
  - c. Positive and active frontages that generate visual interest and which have a positive relationship with the public realm, particularly at the street-level;
  - d. Well-integrated, dedicated space and equipment for relaxation, social interaction and physical activity, including where appropriate space for play and informal recreation; and
  - e. A high standard of amenity.

#### **Well-functioning and resilient places**

- F Development proposals must be well-integrated within their neighbourhood. They must provide a positive and coherent relationship with all land uses and spaces within the site and its surroundings having regard to:
- a. The compatibility of land-uses and activities within and surrounding the development;
  - b. The need to ensure that neighbourhoods are well-connected both by encouraging and enabling movement by walking, cycling and the use of public transport; and
  - c. The efficient servicing and effective management of buildings and the public realm, including for delivery and servicing vehicles.

- G Development must be appropriately supported by infrastructure. Development proposals will be expected to consider, and be linked to, the provision of future planned levels of infrastructure along with the timing of the delivery of this infrastructure. Where there is insufficient capacity of existing infrastructure to support a development proposal, applicants will be required to work with infrastructure providers to ensure sufficient capacity will exist at the appropriate time, including through the phasing of development.
- H Development proposals must be designed to mitigate climate change and integrate adaptation measures to make neighbourhoods and properties more resilient to its impacts, including by maximising opportunities for urban greening, with reference to other Local Plan policies.

#### **Delivering high quality development**

- I Development proposals must include a Design and Access Statement to demonstrate how the design-led approach has been applied to deliver high quality development.
- J Development proposals will be expected to have regard to and address:
- a. Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance published by the Council and the Mayor of London respectively, along with other good practice guidance; and
  - b. Feedback from the Council including through its Pre-application Advice Service and where appropriate, Lewisham's independent Design Review Panel.
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- K Applicants should work closely with local communities and others likely to be affected by new development to understand the local and distinctive context of the site, as well as to consider design options that respond positively to this context. Development proposals that can demonstrate early, proactive, inclusive and effective engagement with the local community and other key stakeholders will be considered more favourably than those that cannot.





Faircharm Creative Quarter, Deptford Creekside



Catford Broadway



Laban Dance Centre

## Explanation

- 5.1 To realise the Vision for Lewisham and address the Local Plan's strategic objectives it is imperative that all new development is designed, built and managed to a high quality standard, using the design-led approach.
- 5.2 The design-led approach requires that, from the very start of the planning and design process, careful consideration is given to the distinctive features of Lewisham's neighbourhoods, buildings and other spaces that shape local character and contribute positively to people's sense of place and belonging. It also requires new development to respond to the ways in which people use and experience buildings and spaces, along with the impacts the built environment has on the health and wellbeing of the population. Finally, the design-led approach requires development to function effectively both on its own and in relation to the buildings and spaces around it.
- 5.3 The design-led approach must begin with an understanding of the development site's local context. This includes the distinctive character of the site and its wider setting. The Lewisham Characterisation Study (2019) has informed the preparation of the Local Plan and will support its implementation. It should be referred to as a useful starting point for development proposals as it provides insight into the key features of the Borough's historical, built and natural environment. This is only one point of reference, however, and proposals will be expected to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the site context and clearly articulate how the development has been designed to respond positively to this. This includes consideration of the evolving character of an area and opportunities to carefully manage change in a way that supports Good Growth. Development proposals should therefore address their relationship to the spatial strategy, site allocations and where relevant, development which has been consented but not yet unimplemented.
- 5.4 The successful delivery of the spatial strategy will require that new developments optimise the capacity of sites. There is a need to accommodate a significant amount of growth within the Borough over the plan period, which must be carefully managed. The design-led approach is integral to ensuring that the optimal capacity of development sites is realised. Further details are set out in Policy QD6 (Optimising site capacity).

### **Delivering high quality development**

5.5 We will publish a package of planning guidance to support implementation of the Local Plan, and to ensure clarity in our expectations for new development. Key guidance documents are signposted throughout the Local Plan. They should be read in conjunction with the suite of London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance and other sources of good practice guidance, where appropriate, including the Government's National Design Guide and that published by Historic England.

5.6 Pre-application meetings are a useful way to establish the land use principles for development sites, and to identify and discuss any key matters that need to be addressed within a particular scheme. This includes the consideration of routes to resolving planning issues or other potential conflicts prior to the formal submission of a planning application. Pre-application meetings are also useful information sharing exercises, and provide the Council with opportunities to support development industry partners in linking up with other corporate services and service areas. For instance, we can flag resources available to help with sourcing local labour for construction projects, including apprenticeships, as well as funding opportunities to boost the delivery of genuinely affordable housing.

5.7 We are proud to support an independent Design Review Panel (DRP) in Lewisham as part of our positive approach to working with delivery partners. The DRP is formed of professional design experts who meet regularly to review schemes and provide feedback to applicants. While the panel does not have decision-making powers, it serves as an advisory body helping to achieve positive outcomes for the built environment and Lewisham's communities. Comments from the panel are fed into the assessment of pre-application schemes, planning applications and appeals. Proposals for major developments and other developments likely to have significant local impacts should be brought to the panel at the early stage in the planning process. Further information about the DRP is available on the Council's planning webpage.



- 5.8 Applicants should work closely with local communities and others likely to be affected by new development to understand the local and distinctive context of the site and its setting, as well as to consider design options that respond positively to this context. Community consensus and agreement on proposals is not in itself a reason for granting planning consent, as all proposals will need to demonstrate compliance with the Local Plan policies. However applicants working with the community through the design-led approach are more likely to arrive at development proposals that respond to the distinctive qualities of neighbourhoods and places, based on a more thorough understanding of the local context, and therefore support the delivery of the spatial strategy. Development proposals that can demonstrate early, proactive, inclusive and effective engagement with the local community and other key stakeholders will be considered more favourably than those that cannot.



Consultation undertaken for the Lewisham Characterisation Study