



Supplementary planning guidance note

Settlement Character Plan

Formby

December 2003

Sefton Council 



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1.Introduction

- a. We have produced Settlement Plans to describe the main features that make up the character of each of the five urban districts in Sefton. The districts are based on the existing settlements of Bootle, Crosby, Maghull, Formby and Southport. The Settlement Plans consist of these guidance notes and the accompanying map, available from the planning department.
- b. The Settlement Plans identifies the distinct character areas within each district, and are based on patterns of land use, building type and period of development. Physical features such as key routes, landmarks, junctions and boundaries are shown. The plans also indicate the locations where Design Statements must be prepared and submitted with a planning application.
- c. The plans should be used to develop a scheme that responds positively to its context⁶. Each plan also includes area-based design guidance that addresses specific issues relevant to that settlement area and must be taken into account when developing a scheme.
- d. This guidance note and the settlement plans are based on an Urban Design Study of Sefton. The tables below refer to information gathered by the study.
- e. Some of the technical terms in this guidance are explained in a glossary at the back of the Design SPG. These terms are indicated by a ‘^G’, the first time they appear in each section of the SPG.

2. Assessment of the Local Character of Formby

- a. Before the railway arrived, Formby, was characterised by a series of small, communities spread out along

a network of historic routes and their intersections. This has provided a framework for the subsequent growth of the town into a housing area.

- b. This growth occurred in two initial forms⁶. Firstly large villas set in parkland plots next to the railway and secondly ribbon development⁶ of smaller semi-detached and terraced properties that began to link the existing settlements.
- c. A small-scale commercial centre developed to the east of the station at the junction of a number of historic routes. This supplanted the earlier centre at the junction of Green Lane, Church Road and Ryeground Lane. The inter-war period saw the blocks formed by the existing road network infilled with 2 storey semi-detached suburban housing.
- d. Formby saw a major expansion in the 1960’s and 1970’s with new residential estates spreading beyond the railway line to the west and eastwards from the historic core to the By-pass which now forms the eastern edge of the settlement.

3. Broad Character Zones (Residential)

Residential Character Area	Key Components of Character	ASL Study Ref.
Pre-war semi-detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacious, curvilinear⁶ and linear⁶ road layout based on a loose grid that links into the historic route network. • Curved bay windows, rendering and tiled roofs to houses. • front gardens with mature trees. 	FBCZ 1
Post-war detached & semi-detached housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchical road layout⁶ with use of cul-de-sacs with little integration into historic route network. • 1970’s dormer bungalows and detached/semi-detached ‘Scandinavian’ style properties. 	FBCZ 2
Victorian & Edwardian detached & semi-detached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular grid layout⁶ & ribbon development⁶ on historic routes. • Evidence of development responding to historic field 	FBCZ 3

housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and ditch pattern. • Use of smooth red brick • Extensive mature tree coverage • Built form^g creates strong sense of enclosure and definition to key routes including rail corridor. 	
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4. Broad Character Zones (Commercial & Industrial)

Formby Town Centre ASL Study Ref. FNRD1	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
<p>Mixed commercial area containing 'high street' multiples, local businesses, specialist shops and restaurants, and edge of centre supermarket.</p> <p>Centred on junction of Chapel Lane, Three Tuns Lane, School Lane and Halsall Lane with primary retailing extending along Chapel Lane/School Lane.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 storey pavement fronted ribbon development with storage/residential uses on upper floors. • Variation in architectural style/detailing to add interest to street-scene. • Wide pavements within main retail core. • Presence of street trees. • Mix of on street & dedicated car parking to rear of premises. • Single storey supermarket set within large area of parking.

Formby Industrial Estate ASL Study Ref. FNRD2	
Description & Location	Key Elements of Character
<p>Modern industrial estate, retail warehousing & supermarket.</p> <p>Access off A565 Formby By-Pass.</p> <p>Adjacent to greenbelt.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assortment of single storey brick and prefabricated industrial units. • Standard edge of town retail and supermarket development. • Development set within areas of car parking. • Unattractive service areas. • Limited landscaping. • Limited pedestrian accessibility between units & to adjacent residential areas.

5. Areas of Local Distinctiveness

- a. Areas of Local Distinctiveness are more closely defined areas within the district that have either retained their original character or illustrate a distinct or important period of growth within a particular settlement. Achieving a high standard of design

will be particularly important in these areas in order to preserve or enhance their established character.

- b. The following have been defined as **Areas of Local Distinctiveness** within the area covered by Formby Settlement Plan:

❖ Ryeground Lane

❖ Freshfield Road

Ryeground Lane ASL Study Ref. FALD1	
General character & form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a ribbon of late Victorian semi-detached houses set in mature grounds. • Evidence of historic field layout influencing plot layout. • Closely developed frontages define and enclose approach to town centre. • Ryeground Lane forms part of historic path network.
Architectural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 storey Victorian detached and semi-detached properties. • Red brick with slate roofs • Detached properties are double fronted with bays. • Retention of original features such as sash windows, stone mullions & boundary wall treatments.
Tree coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense clusters of well established trees within front and rear plots.
Threats to character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of original detailing to properties. • Loss of mature trees through age or felling. • Loss of boundary walls & poor quality infill development^g could undermine sense and quality of enclosure.

Freshfield Road ASL Study Ref. CALD2	
General character & form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of wealthy Victorian suburban development of villas set in large grounds. • Strong linear form running adjacent to railway line between Formby & Freshfield stations. • Retention of original features including windows, roofs & boundary walls.
Architectural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive use of red, smooth faced brick with decorative brickwork detailing to upper floors/eaves & slate roofs. • Painted stone detailing to main elevations including window surrounds and string courses. • Retention of original features such as sash windows and boundary wall treatments. • Later infill development reflects a continuity of architectural styles from the 1920's onwards.
Tree coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dense clusters of mature trees within front & rear gardens.

Threats to character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of original detailing to properties including boundary walls & gateposts. • Loss of mature trees through felling or age.
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6. Design Guidance

- a. We have developed the following guidance from an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the area as set out in the above tables. The guidance gives more detailed advice to support the policies set out in the **UDP** and the Borough-wide guidance in Part 1 of the Design SPG.
- b. The guidance is in two parts, firstly there is district-wide advice relating to the **Broad Character Areas**; secondly there is more detailed guidance relating to the **Areas of Local Distinctiveness**. Here a high standard of design is required to preserve or enhance their established character.

District-wide Guidance

- c. Within the Formby Plan Area development proposals will need to:
 - ❖ **Avoid the introduction of forecourt uses on the main approaches to the town centre in order to reinforce and maintain the sense of enclosure along those routes.**
 - ❖ **Maintain back of pavement activity within the town centre.**
 - ❖ **Contribute towards the enhancement of public spaces within the town centre.**
 - ❖ **Strengthen pedestrian linkages between the retail units within the Formby Industrial Estate and the surrounding housing areas.**
 - ❖ **Provide links into the historic path network, particularly where this involves new residential development.**

- ❖ **Maintain existing levels of tree coverage in respect to both street trees and those within individual plots.**

Local Distinctiveness Guidance

- c. In addition to the above design advice the following guidance applies to proposals within the **Ryeground Lane** and **Freshfield Road** Areas of Local Distinctiveness.
- d. Development proposals, particularly in respect to infill development^G and extensions to dwellings, will need to:
 - ❖ **Respect the scale^G and massing of adjacent properties. Particular care should be taken in respecting floor to ceiling heights of existing properties.**
 - ❖ **Use gables, bays or other features to create an appropriate level of three dimensional interest to elevations, break up mass of building and give vertical and horizontal emphasis.**
 - ❖ **Create variety and interest in roofline including use of chimney stacks.**
 - ❖ **Retain or reinstate period detailing, features or original materials including the retention of boundary walls, gateposts or other external features.**
 - ❖ **Ensure that car parking is designed to have a minimal visual impact on the street frontage.**
 - ❖ **Maintain level of tree coverage within street scene.**
 - ❖ **Respect the existing form, scale and massing of adjacent properties and general character of area.**
 - ❖ **Avoid loss of period detailing or features to properties including boundary walls and gateposts. Where appropriate original detailing or materials should be reinstated.**

6. A review of the adjacent Green Lane Conservation Area will be undertaken to consider an extension of its boundary to include Ryeground Lane.

Glossary

Character: See Local Character.

Context: The wider setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

Curvilinear development: Development along, curved roads or boundaries. This is often typical of more modern housing estates, built since the end of World War II.

Form: The layout (urban grain), scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and detail) and landscape of the development, its individual parts and their relationship with neighbouring buildings, adjacent open areas and the local context.

Grid-iron development: (see Layout below) Development where the road and housing layout looks like a grid, (or squared paper like school maths books!) with regular proportions and spaces. This is the commonest and the most traditional pattern for terraced houses built before 1919.

Hard and soft materials: This includes both 'hard' building materials such as bricks, tiles, slates and fencing and 'soft' landscaping such as trees, shrubs and grass.

Hierarchical road layout: Larger main roads (used by all sorts of vehicles) which have smaller roads leading off them (likely to be used by fewer lorries or even buses) which may have even more smaller roads leading off them (used only by local vehicles).

Irregular Grid Layout: (See Layout below and Grid-iron development above) A grid-iron layout where the spaces or blocks in the grid are different sizes and shapes, and roads are different not regular lengths.

Layout: How a development or area is set out, as seen from above. There are many different ways development can be laid out (just as there are many ways of laying a table!). So 'road layout' is the way roads look, as seen from above, 'building layout' is the way buildings are set out within a site or along roads, and 'site layout' is where things like buildings, parking area and paths are within a site, for example.

Linear development: See Ribbon development and rectilinear development below.

Local Character: The overall atmosphere and 'feel' of a place or area, the things which give it an identity, make it different from (or similar to) anywhere else and make it what it is.

Rectilinear development: Development that consists of, or is contained by, straight roads or boundaries. This is often typical of traditional terraced housing, built before 1919.

Ribbon development: Development concentrated in a long, narrow strip along a road, railway line or even a river or canal.

Scale: The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, including its height and massing, or the size of parts of a building or its details. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is simply used instead of size.

Urban grain: The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

Further Advice and Guidance

National design guidance:

- ***'Better Places to Live - A Companion Guide to PPG3'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'Building In Context'***, available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'Design Review'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'PPG1: General Policy and Principles'***, available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- ***'The Urban Design Compendium'***, available from English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation.
- ***'The Value of Urban Design'***, available from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment.
- ***'Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention'***, available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or the Home Office.

Other relevant supplementary planning guidance from Sefton MBC:

- Archaeology
- Providing a choice of travel
- House extensions
- Landscape character
- Landscape design guidance sheets
- New housing residential development
- Sustainable drainage systems
- Trees and development

Sefton MBC information notes:

- Renewable energy information note
- Landscape design guidance sheets

Useful contacts

Planning & Economic Regeneration Department

(For Bootle, Waterloo, Crosby, Hightown, Maghull and Melling)

Planning Department,
Development Control South,
Balliol House,
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Bootle,
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Tel: (0151) 934 3572
Fax: (0151) 934 3587
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(For Southport, Formby, and Ince Blundell)

Planning Department,
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Community Safety Section

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Environmental Advisory Service

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Website: www.bre.co.uk

Commission for Architecture and The Built Environment (CABE)

Tower Building
11 York Road
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Phone: 020 7960 2400
Website: www.cabe.org.uk

English Heritage (North West)

Suites 3.3 and 3.4
Canada House
3 Chepstow Street
Manchester
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Phone: 0161 242 1400
Fax: 0161 242 1401
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Partnerships (North West)

Arpley House
110 Birchwood Boulevard
Birchwood
Warrington
WA3 7QH
Phone: 01925 651144
Fax: 01925 411493
Website: www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

Housing Corporation

Maple House
149 Tottenham Court Road
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W1T 7BN
Phone: 020 7393 2000
Fax: 020 7393 2111
Email: enquiries@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk
Website: www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Eland House
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Phone: 020 7944 3000
Website: www.odpm.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Statement of public consultation

- a The Planning Committee approved a draft 'Design' planning guidance note for feedback and to help it make decisions about planning applications on 5 June 2002. It was placed on our website later that year.
- b The guidance was discussed at the meeting of the Sefton Agents' Forum which was held in April 2003. Few comments or questions were raised during the meeting.
- c We consulted interested organisations in July 2003. In total, we sent over 600 letters to local agents, developers, housebuilders and other interested groups (such as parish councils). We then consulted with the general public in September and October 2003. We placed adverts in the local press and the guidance was available in the two planning offices and at four main public libraries (the main library at Bootle was closed for repair in 2003).
- d Our consultation procedure is in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 'Development Plans' (PPG12) which stresses the importance of consulting widely if we and the Secretary of State are to rely on Supplementary planning guidance notes to help make decisions about planning applications.
- e We received a number of comments about the guidance from Formby Civic Society, Merseyside Civic Society, Government Office North West, Hitchcock and Wright and United Utilities. The table over the page summarises the comments we received, and our responses.
- f We consulted Plain English Campaign on the guidance to help make its wording clearer.
- g We revised the guidance to take account of the comments received during the consultation process, changes proposed to the draft plan, to correct mistakes in the guidance and to make the wording clearer in line with Plain English Campaign's suggestions.
- h We reported the results of the consultation process to the Planning Committee on 17 December 2003. The 'Design' guidance note, including a new Sustainability checklist in Part 4, was adopted on 17 December 2003.

Table – summarising comments received about the Design Supplementary planning guidance note and our responses

Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
General comments about all Supplementary planning guidance notes		
Garden History Society	No comments	Response is noted.
Formby Civic Society	Write to support all of the SPGs.	Support is noted.
Design Supplementary planning guidance note		
Merseyside Civic Society	Supportive of comprehensive assessment of character	Support is noted
Formby Civic Society	The section that identified Freshfield Road and Ryeground Lane as characteristic areas is excellent.	Support is noted
Government Office North West	Expand introduction to document to include overall vision for Sefton’s urban environment.	Wording will be added to do this.
Government Office North West	Document could make useful links to Community Strategy and the major plans for neighbourhood renewal in the Borough	It is more appropriate for these documents to refer to other Supplementary planning guidance notes.
Government Office North West	Suggest highlighting design relating to public realm and inclusion of public art/ street furniture as Borough has some good examples to promote as good practice e.g. improvements at Southport	Southport Seafront Supplementary planning guidance note includes appropriate references. The Design Supplementary planning guidance note is aimed at developers and we considered that it is not the appropriate place to refer to street furniture. There is no policy in the draft Plan on public art and so it would not be appropriate to make reference to this in guidance note.
Government Office North West	Specific points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - useful to mention need for buildings to face streets, squares or parks and avoid inward-facing development - welcome emphasis placed on sustainable drainage systems - section on access could be expanded to take into account public transport considerations - Settlement Character Plans – useful to have the conservation areas marked on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This first point will be included. - The second point is noted. - Access issues are dealt with in the ‘Providing a Choice of Travel’ guidance note but cross reference will be added. - Conservation areas will be added.

Person or Organisation commenting	Summary of comment	Summary of our response
	the plans as well.	
Hitchcock and Wright	Revision of urban edge to include proposed Switch Island/ Thornton Bypass	This is premature until, firstly, the road scheme is approved and, secondly, any consequent change to the Green Belt boundary is made.
United Utilities	Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of underground /overhead electricity cables, water mains, public sewers and overflow systems.	Amendment to be made to say that utilities need to be consulted before planting in the vicinity of their apparatus.