



# glossary of terms

#### ACCESSIBILITY

The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

#### AREA APPRAISAL

An assessment of an area's land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics.

#### BASELINES STUDIES

Studies of existing environmental conditions which are designed to establish the baseline conditions against which any future changes can be measured or predicted.

#### BRIEF

This guide refers to development briefs. Site-specific briefs are also called a variety of other names, including design briefs, planning briefs and development briefs.

#### BUILDING ELEMENTS

Doors, windows, cornices and other features which contribute to the overall design of a building.

#### BUILDING LINE

The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

#### CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

An area appraisal identifying distinguishing physical features and emphasising historical and associations.

#### CONSERVATION AREA

An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Designated by a local planning authority. It may recognise a concentration of listed buildings; existing historic street layout; presence of significant archaeological remains; or the general amenity of an area.

#### CONTEXT

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

#### DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Public and semi-public space that is 'defensible' in the sense that it is surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody. Derived from Oscar Newman's 1973 study of the same name, and an important concept in securing public safety in urban areas, defensible space is also dependant upon the existence of escape routes and the level of anonymity which can be anticipated by the users of the space.

#### DENSITY

The floor space of a building or buildings or some other unit measure in relation to a given area of land. Built density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); number of units or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus

the number of floors or a maximum building height; or a combination of these.

#### DESIGN GUIDE

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the design policies of a local authority or other organisation often with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.

#### DESIGN GUIDELINES

An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or a development.

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Specific, usually quantifiable measures of amenity and safety in residential areas.

#### DESIRE LINE

An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

#### DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

A document prepared by a local planning authority, a developer; or a jointly, providing guidance on how a site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed. Site-specific briefs are sometimes known as planning briefs, design briefs and development frameworks.

#### DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

A sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than some conventional techniques (SUDS).

#### EFFECTS

The consequence for human beings in terms of health and well-being, including the well-being of ecosystems and natural systems on which human survival depends, which stem from environmental impacts.

#### ELEVATION

The façade of a building, or the drawing of a façade.

#### ENCLOSURE

The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space.

#### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The extent to which the use of energy is reduced through the way in which buildings are constructed and arranged on site.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A process by which information about the environmental effects of a project is collected, both by the developer and from other sources, and taken into account by the relevant decision making body before a decision is given on whether the development should go ahead.

#### ENVIRONMENT IMPACTS

The processes whereby a change, which may be adverse, beneficial, or both, is brought about in the existing environment as a result of development activities.

#### ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT

A document which sets out the developer's assessment of the likely effects of the project on the environment and which is submitted in conjunction with an application for planning permission.

#### FEASIBILITY

The viability of development in relation to economic and market conditions.

#### FLORA

All members of the plant kingdom: higher ferns, ferns and fern allies, mosses and liverworts, algae and phytoplankton, fungi and lichens.

#### FOOTPATH

The use by persons on foot only with 'normal complements'. The latter includes dogs and children but is generally considered to exclude pushing a bike.

#### FOOTWAY

A pavement with rights on foot only.

#### FORM

The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

#### FRONTAGE DEVELOPMENT

Development which faces outward onto public space with a frontage that includes entrances and windows; this helps to create a clear distinction between public and private space and informal surveillance of the public space.

#### HEIGHT

The height of a building can be expressed in terms of a maximum number of floors; a maximum height of parapet or ridge; a maximum overall height; any of these maximum heights in combination with a maximum number of floors; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

#### HUMAN SCALE

The use within development of elements which relate well in size to an individual human being and their assembly in a way which makes people feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.

#### INDICATIVE SKETCH

A drawing of building or building forms and spaces which is intended to convey the basic elements of a possible design.

#### LANDMARK

A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

#### LANDSCAPE

The character and appearance of land, including its space, form, ecology, natural features, colours and elements and the way these components combine. Landscape character can be expressed through landscape appraisal, and maps or plans. In towns 'townscape' describes the same concept.

#### LAYOUT

The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

#### LEGIBILITY

The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

#### LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

#### MASSING

The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

#### MITIGATION

The process of making the impact of works on the environment less severe.

#### MIXED USES

A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings. 'vertical' mixed uses are on different floors of the same building.

#### MODAL SPLIT

How the total number of journeys in an area, or to a destination, is split between different means of transport, such as train, bus, car, walking and cycling.

#### MOVEMENT

People and vehicles going to, and passing through, buildings, places and spaces. The movement network can be shown on plans, by space syntax analysis, by highway designation, by figureground diagrams, through data on origins and destinations or pedestrian flows, by desire lines, by details of public transport services, by walk bands or by details or cycle routes.

#### NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

The discouragement of wrongdoing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows. Also known as passive surveillance (or supervision).

#### NODE

A place where activity and routes are concentrated, often used as a synonym for junction.

#### PERMEABILITY

The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

#### PERSPECTIVE

Illustration showing the view from a particular point, as it would be seen by the human eye.

#### PLANNING BRIEF

This guide refers to site-specific briefs as development briefs. Other names, including planning briefs, design briefs and development frameworks are also used.

**PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTES (PPG'S)**

Documents embodying government guidance on general and specific aspects of planning policy to be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in making planning decisions.

**PUBLIC ART**

Permanent or temporary physical works or art visible to the general public, whether part of the building or free-standing: can include sculpture, lighting effects, street furniture, paving, railings and signs.

**PUBLIC DOMAIN**

The parts of a village, town, or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks. Also called public realm.

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)**

Those paths and tracks recorded on the Definitive Map and having a right of access on foot (footpath), horse back, cycling and walking (bridleways) and byways (or BOAT's) (access for all including motorised vehicles)

**PUBLIC/PRIVATE INTERFACE**

The point at which public areas and buildings meet private ones.

**RATRUNNING**

The regular movement of vehicles using residential roads or country lanes to avoid heavy traffic at busy periods on main roads. This often has an adverse impact on residential areas or villages through noise, air pollution and road safety.

**RECYCLE**

A term used to describe a material which is re-processed to produce a derivative.

**SCALE**

The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person. Sometimes it is 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 used simply as a synonym for 'size'. See 'Human scale'.

**SCOPING**

An initial stage in determining the nature and potential scale of the environmental impact assessment.

**SETTING**

An area of land, including related features, which has a material bearing on the character and amenity.

**SETTLEMENT PATTERN**

The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular place.

**SIGHT LINE**

The line of sight from a travelling vehicle or person. Sight lines will help to determine how fast vehicles are likely to move and how safe other road users are likely to be.

**SKYLINING**

Development on, or just behind, the ridgeline of a hill which has an adverse visual impact on the landscape by interrupting the natural horizon with the outline or silhouette of the new development.

**STREET FURNITURE**

Structures in, and adjacent to, the highway which contribute to the street scene, such as bus shelters, litter bins, seating, lighting, railings and signs.

**SURVEILLANCE**

The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen from surrounding windows.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987, and quoted in PPG) as 'Development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations'. The UK's strategy for sustainable development "A better quality of life" was published in May 1999 and highlights the need for environmental improvement, social justice and economic success to go hand-in-hand.

**SWALE**

A grass-lined channel designed to drain water from a site, as well as controlling the flow and quality of the surface water.

**TOPOGRAPHY**

The physical features of the surface of the land including elevations, depressions and rivers.

**URBAN DESIGN**

The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes which facilitate successful development.

**VERNACULAR**

The way in which ordinary buildings were built in a particular place, making use of local styles, techniques and materials and responding to local economic and social conditions.

**VIEW**

What is visible from a particular point. Compare 'Vista'.

**VISTA**

An enclosed view, usually a long and narrow one.

**WALK BAND**

A line on a map or plan showing the furthest distance that can be walked from a particular point at an average pace in a certain time (usually five or ten minutes).