

London Housing Design Guide

INTERIM EDITION



MAYOR OF LONDON

Contents

Foreword	04
Introduction	05
Development of the London Housing Design Guide	08
Using the Guide	09
Summary Table of London Housing Design Guide Standards	11
 Standards	
1.0 Shaping Good Places	18
2.0 Housing for a Diverse City	26
3.0 From Street to Front Door	32
4.0 Dwelling Space Standards	44
5.0 Home as a Place of Retreat	62
6.0 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	70
7.0 Managing the Design Process	80
 Appendices	
1 Space Standards Study	92
2 Furniture Schedule	94
3 Wheelchair Accessible Housing Design Standards	96
4 Definitions	102
5 References	103

Foreword

The finest city in the world deserves the finest housing.

In building London's future we reflect on a past that has created some of the best buildings and urban spaces to be found anywhere in the world.

More recently, though, too much of our new housing has sacrificed space and quality to unit numbers. New homes in London are some of the smallest in Western Europe and this is indefensible. I am determined to see a new generation of standards which improve London's housing and we have a unique opportunity to deliver these now. If we are to renew the capital's tradition of design excellence, we must understand the thinking behind the city's design achievements and its failures. This understanding will ensure that we create homes people want to live in and in which they and their families can flourish, now and in the future.

My London Housing Strategy promotes excellence in design quality and sustainability. This guide underpins that commitment and is the first step to making it a reality. The strengthening collaboration between the London Development Agency and the Homes and Communities Agency has brought together the largest sources of funding for social housing and urban regeneration in the capital. The design standards set out in this guide will be applied immediately to LDA supported projects. I am also pleased that the HCA London Board has agreed that the new standards will be applied to new schemes applying for funding from April 2011 and to all tenures on its own land holdings. I encourage all

others involved in the creation of new homes to embrace this guidance.

My draft replacement London Plan is taking this challenge forward across all tenures. It incorporates a range of policies and guidance for housing design, including a new generation of minimum space standards. This will be supported by detailed supplementary guidance on housing to support implementation.

I have considered carefully the wide range of comments from all sectors of the development industry, submitted to me during the public consultation process on the draft guide. This interim edition is my response, and it sets out and explains my aspirations for the design of new housing in London. As well as applying to LDA supported projects, it signposts my aspirations to improve the quality of the design of homes in London, which will be carried forward through HCA funding requirements, the replacement London Plan and its associated supplementary guidance.

Above all, the objective of this guidance is not only to 'deliver housing units' but to provide beautiful and appropriate homes of the highest quality that respond to the complex design challenges posed by this most dynamic of cities.



Boris Johnson, Mayor of London

Introduction

This interim edition of the Mayor's London Housing Design Guide (LHDG) has been revised following public consultation on the draft LHDG in 2009 and the findings of a cost and delivery impact analysis. It is being published to show the direction of travel of the final guide, to shape the design of London Development Agency (LDA) supported developments, and to encourage all involved in the design of new housing to embrace the Mayor's aspirations.

The guide is not a statement of planning policy. Planning guidance for all housing tenures is contained in the draft replacement London Plan and its draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Housing. The final guide will be issued following the finalisation of the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) consultation on its Proposed Core Housing Design and Sustainability Standards and the draft replacement London Plan Examination in Public, incorporating any necessary changes arising from these processes to ensure all design guidance is in alignment.

At the core of the guide are new minimum space standards. The guide also advocates improvements in the development and procurement processes so that design remains valued from vision to delivery. Together these support the Mayor's aspiration to help build a better, more humane and more beautiful city, with great housing at its heart.

The Challenge of London

This is a guide for London, and takes into account the diversity and complexity of its built environment and its social composition.

London's population is projected to grow to 8.8 million by 2031, and this promises to keep demand for housing high. At the same time London aspires to become a world leader in tackling climate change, and currently faces the uncertainty of gradual recovery from recession. The ambition to improve the quality of life for Londoners and the quality of the city's places and spaces is a particular challenge against this background.

The Design Challenge: A New London Vernacular

We are building places to live in a city with unique character, with examples of great housing and city-making at a range of densities. London's terraced houses, apartment buildings, streets, squares and the best of 20th century development have created highly successful residential environments with enduring appeal. This guide aspires to encourage a new London vernacular that can take its place in this rich fabric.

A new vernacular does not propose a singular architectural style, but recognises that the best housing comes from robust guidelines in planning and regulation, together with a deep understanding of particular architectural and social contexts on the part of designers and developers.

There are certain qualities that characterise the best parts of London that this guidance seeks to encourage. London has many great urban places created by housing. We want to encourage housing that has a clear and sophisticated urban intention, and improves and civilises the streets and public spaces around it.

» Introduction *continued*

London in general has a street-based urban arrangement. Essential to successful housing is an understanding of the hierarchy of streets in an area. Some are vital and busy, others are quieter. Good housing should add to the continuous, connected urban fabric of London. All this demands great design to successfully deliver.

The best areas of housing in London very often have strong and singular characters, often because of a consistent architectural expression and the widespread use of high-quality materials. In general, London's housing should not be striving for 'iconic' architecture, but should focus on great background architecture made of durable materials that weather well.

There is a demand in London for diverse dwelling types, and this guide describes how these can be mixed together without segregation by type or tenure, to make places where everyone can feel a sense of belonging. In recent years, some less successful trends have emerged in the development industry. In building so many over-dense apartment blocks with internal corridors serving small, single-aspect dwellings, we have risked creating a damaging legacy for future generations.

A fundamental aim of this guidance is to ensure that London's housing is flexible and accessible in use and adaptable over the life of a building. Housing should support family life, both in the flexibility and adaptability of homes and in the provision, in greater quantities, of larger homes. The minimum space standards in this guide aim to ensure that homes have the long-term adaptability to suit growing

families or new owners and tenants.

New dwellings must be accessible to the widest possible range of people at all stages of life, including disabled and older people. The ability to quickly and cheaply adapt a home when our circumstances change is particularly important in an ageing society where many of us want to maintain our quality of life, maximise our independence and stay in our own homes for as long as possible.

This guide also recognises that quality of detail is essential to really successful housing, and should not be seen as secondary to good urban planning or the arrangement of dwellings. Beautiful doors, ceramic tiles, elegant balustrades – little details like these can help housing developments go beyond the perfunctory, and add delight and dignity to people's daily lives.

Housing Standards

Housing standards have been used in the past to effect a step change in housing quality. The best known set of UK housing standards is the 1961 report 'Homes for Today and Tomorrow' by the Parker Morris Committee, the primary concern of which was to ensure that every 'council-built' home had enough space, along with satisfactory heating and sanitation.

Today the priority of providing adequate space and amenity is the same, but attention has rightly turned to the quality of provision across all tenures, and whether dwellings are fit for all. In recent years London has been providing some of the smallest homes in the developed world and too many developments of a low quality.

This is not something to be proud of and is not sustainable. The new London standards and guidance are intended to encourage provision of enough space in dwellings to ensure homes can be flexibly used by a range of residents. They also aim to ensure that space can be sensibly allocated to different functions, with adequate room sizes and storage integrated into the planning.

We must also use water, fuel and other limited resources in the most efficient way possible, to reduce carbon emissions and minimise the environmental impact of new development.

Standards alone are no guarantee of quality; they must be underpinned by robust forms of procurement and long-term management plans. Section 7, Managing the Design Process, deals with the development process to help ensure that the best design intentions are delivered on the ground.

The last decade has seen an array of design guidance issued by a variety of agencies. As a result, there is more emphasis than ever on excellence in design and sustainability and that is to be welcomed. This design guide does not aim to add yet another layer of policies and advice, but is derived from existing best practice guidelines, simplified and adapted to fit the capital's needs.