

9.0 Public Spaces

- ▶ **Recreational Public Space**
- ▶ **Urban Parks**
- ▶ **Formal and Informal Recreation**
- ▶ **Amenity Spaces**
- ▶ **Cemeteries and Burial Grounds**
- ▶ **Outdoor Sports**
- ▶ **Play**
- ▶ **Public Art**



9.0

Public Spaces

Safe, social and inclusive.

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9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 The quality of spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Public spaces are defined as streets, squares and other spaces that are accessible and open for all to use. They can be a welcome separation between a block of housing or commercial buildings to allow for public use of a space that may consist of areas of play, public art and/or green space for example. This section of the Design Guide provides guidance on designing public spaces, public open spaces and play provision, public art and community safety considerations.
- 9.1.2 This section should be read in conjunction with chapters 8, 9, 12 and 15 of the [NPPF](#) and policies EE1 – EE13 of the adopted [Local Plan](#). The [National Design Guide](#), in particular sections P1 to P3, outlines how well-designed public spaces are safe, social and inclusive.
- 9.1.3 Other chapters of this Design Guide provide guidance in relation to the creation of streets and the relationship between built form and the public realm.
- 9.1.4 Other key documents and resources that should be referenced include:
- ▶ [Central Bedfordshire Sustainability Plan 2020-2030](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Environmental Framework](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#)
 - ▶ [Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Tranquillity Strategy](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Leisure Strategy](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Children's Play Provision Guide](#)
 - ▶ [RoSPA website: information relating to children's play near SuDS and risk assessments](#)
 - ▶ [Secured by Design website](#)
 - ▶ [The Forest of Marston Vale: Design Guidance SPD](#)
 - ▶ [CBC Highway Construction Standards and Specifications Guidance](#)
 - ▶ [Chilterns Building Design Guide](#)
 - ▶ [Trees in the Townscape](#)

9.2 Designing Public Open Space - The key Principles of Public Space

Landscapes and Greenspaces

- 9.2.1 Green space can be used as a community resource and provides recreational benefits, aids social cohesion and improves quality of life. Trees and plants also contribute to tackling climate change as well as providing habitats for different species.



Figure 240: Dunstable Downs

- 9.2.2 Key requirements for landscapes and greenspaces:
- ▶ Landscaping and strategic open spaces should be incorporated within the layouts of new developments. High-quality communal spaces should be provided with supporting facilities and infrastructure which encourage activity by all users.
 - ▶ Amenity spaces should be provided in a format that is multifunctional and flexible, capable of being adapted (presently and over time) to cater for a range of uses by people of all ages and abilities.
 - ▶ Green infrastructure should be allowed to shape and structure developments, while good landscape design should provide wayfinding cues and sensory stimulation, features which can provide valuable reassurance to older people and those with dementia.

- ▶ Amenity spaces should be aligned to make best use of sunlight, thereby encouraging residents to use outside spaces.
- ▶ The impact of the built environment on the local environment should be mitigated with green infrastructure features including green roofs, rain gardens and planted walls.
- ▶ The provision and type of ground surfaces should be considered from the outset of any development, and an approach taken that balances the needs of all users in terms of patterns, colours and materials with the technical requirements and future maintenance of highways. Consideration must be given to the Council's [Highway Construction Standards and Specifications Guidance](#).
- ▶ Existing ecology and natural habitats found on sites must be safeguarded and enhanced, and new opportunities for increasing biodiversity should be explored.
- ▶ Opportunities for community food production should be integrated into the proposed landscape.
- ▶ Surface water run-off systems should be considered to minimise flood risk and increase biodiversity.
- ▶ Care should be taken in the selection of tree and shrub species that are appropriate to the area, fitting in scale and colour, climatic requirements and growth habits.
- ▶ The future management and care of green spaces and infrastructure should be considered at the planning stage.
- ▶ Landscape proposals should look to ensure proposed landscape schemes complement and draw from the positive aspects of the sites wider landscape setting.

9.2.3 Further guidance on design and the landscape is included in Context and Identity and Nature sections of this Design Guide. Reference should also be made to Movement section with regards to the use of paving materials and tree planting within streets and the public realm, and Resources section with regards to sustainability, climate change and sustainable drainage.

Urban Public Space

9.2.4 In addition to the technical requirements that enable the urban area to function, public space must be attractive, safe and well-maintained, as well as accessible to users of all ages and a range of physical and mental abilities. Achieving this requires considerable resources and co-ordination, and the most successful places are a demonstration of developer commitment and civic pride. Streets, parks and squares, and their relationship to surrounding buildings, dictate the overwhelming character and identity of places to a greater extent than the architecture and detailing of the built form. Well-designed spaces provide for the needs of residential and business communities and offer a satisfactory balance between competing interests. Public space should also be designed to accommodate and encourage biodiversity, which will contribute to the achievement of Biodiversity Net Gain.

9.2.5 It is important to move away from a view of space as comprised of separate functional areas and towards public realm being one shared environment. This changes the way places are designed and built.

9.3 Components of Public Space

9.3.1 Public spaces can include the following typologies:

- ▶ Streets – the space enclosed by the fronts of buildings comprising highway space, meeting space, commercial space, utility and recycling infrastructure, play space and green routes.
- ▶ Paths – neither streets nor footways; not often incorporated in new designs but can be vital in linking streets, squares and other places.
- ▶ Squares – visually static spaces suitable for sitting and socialising accommodating a range of activity and uses including community activity sessions or shared games.
- ▶ Pocket parks – small spaces within the urban block structure, including parklets.
- ▶ Recreation Grounds – usually a legacy of earlier open-space planning; provision made for sport.
- ▶ Open space – for socialising, informal play, nature, landscaping, informal recreation, water management, cultural activities and entertainment.
- ▶ Parks – formal landscape but possibly with open spaces and sports facilities. Provision for a variety of functions depending on size.
- ▶ Waterfront – may host any of the above.

9.3.2 The public space network, and the movement and activities it enables, will connect with the surroundings to become part of a wider urban system. Collectively, this shapes the sustainability of the town. A Context Appraisal should identify opportunities for good collaborative design, and this should be submitted with planning applications.

9.4 Criteria for Urban Public Spaces

9.4.1 Where green space is provided it must be of a very high quality and should be:

- ▶ Part of a wider network connected internally and to its surroundings.
- ▶ Overlooked by building frontages.
- ▶ Well-maintained and appropriately managed, designed to support management over a long period of use.
- ▶ Accessible to all.
- ▶ Of high biodiversity value.
- ▶ Of varied character and functionality to meet identified needs.
- ▶ Able to offer opportunities for multifunctional activity for all.
- ▶ Secure and safe.
- ▶ Sufficiently well-designed and well-equipped as to become a destination – larger public spaces may be appropriate to support with facilities such as toilets and cafés to encourage people to spend more time in the open spaces.
- ▶ Well-connected to walking and cycle routes.

- ▶ Connected to smart infrastructure to encourage flexible use of the space for all ages and for a variety of activities.
- ▶ Provisioned with seating and resting spot.
- ▶ Legible to all users, with clear wayfinding.
- ▶ Provisioned with shelter and shade.

9.4.2 The quality of public space relies on a number of factors including scale, enclosure, materials, detailing, continuity, safety and security, workmanship, street trees, microclimate, adoption and ongoing management and maintenance, construction standards and public art. Quality can only be achieved by adopting the same co-ordinated approach to design and detailing within the public realm as is required for the design of buildings.

Scale

9.4.3 The character of a town or settlement is defined by the understanding of scale. The scale of a space should reflect its importance in relation to the area as a whole and larger spaces should relate to substantial civic meaning, supported by a hierarchy of smaller spaces.

9.4.4 A mixed-use street, for example, needs to be wider and scaled to accommodate its functional, commercial role. In the same way, the scale of residential streets should mirror their place within the hierarchy. However, it is also important to ensure that these spaces are able to function without undue inconvenience or conflict arising between users.

Enclosure

9.4.5 Successful pedestrian environments rely on a degree of spatial enclosure that feels comfortable. This is created by ensuring the width of a space is equal to or less than the height of the enclosing buildings. In practice this is difficult to achieve at lower densities but as densities and building heights increase there is greater potential to design spaces that are well enclosed, dynamic and visually interesting. The enclosure and width of spaces will vary according to the function of the space, and flexibility is required to accommodate parking and other functional requirements. Further guidance on built form and enclosure is set out in the Built Form section of this Design Guide.

Materials

9.4.6 As a general rule, the quality of the design of public space is more important than the quality of the materials used. A well-designed scheme would not necessarily be compromised by the employment of simple, inexpensive materials, whereas a poorly designed scheme does not become successful through the use of expensive materials. Hard landscaping materials need to be aesthetically pleasing, structurally robust, with good weathering characteristics and simple maintenance requirements. These materials should be imaginatively applied to make places attractive, and sufficiently detailed that the surfaces are not easily damaged. Different surface materials can be used to sub-divide large areas of hard surfacing to create different spatial effects or to define routes and areas of different use. Generally, the highest quality materials (such as granite setts and yorkstone paving) should be reserved for locations of special significance. For example, urban or neighbourhood centres and squares which are designed to attract people in large numbers should 'show off' their civic importance through the use of more expensive materials.

9.4.7 Elsewhere, a limited and subtle palette of materials, sizes, shades and textures should be used as a backdrop to street activity and architecture. At the same time, there are opportunities for innovation in terms of the materials used in the public realm, for example, smart technology integrated into the public space can allow for the collection of energy generated through pedestrian footfall on hard landscaping; this can then be returned to the local power grid. The Highway Authority needs to be consulted and must approve all matters relating to existing and proposed highways, including materials. Commuted sums will be sought for the use of materials that require more costly maintenance where highways are adopted. Anything in private ownership should be maintained by the appropriate body such as the developer or management company.

9.4.8 The provision and type of ground surfaces should be considered from the outset of any new development, and an approach taken that enables the development to strike an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of all users over its lifetime, without the need for adaptation in the future, and addressing the technical requirements and future maintenance of highways. Further guidance on street materials is include in the Movement chapter.

Detailing

9.4.9 The quality of the public realm can be badly impacted by poor attention to detailing. Where this occurs, it is often because there has been a failure to apply some of the basic requirements of good design, such as working in close collaboration with other design disciplines and utility companies.

Continuity

9.4.10 It is important that, for large development projects brought forward by a number of different developers or in regeneration areas where the entire network is to be upgraded, the design of streets and the choice of materials are consistent and logical across the entire area. In these circumstances, continuity in design and material use is essential.

9.4.11 A level of consistency can be achieved by adopting design codes for the public realm developed in conjunction with an area masterplan. Special consideration should be given to the transition between a new area of public realm, the existing public space network and the wider landscape.

9.5 Types of Public Open Space and Design Considerations

- 9.5.1 Public Open Space encompasses a series of green spaces at varying sizes, with opportunities for a variety of formal and informal activities, and can comprise the following types of spaces:
- ▶ Spaces providing purely visual amenity, such as a green break in a hard landscape, which enhance the environment and offer a breathing space;
 - ▶ Countryside spaces offering informal recreation in a large-scale setting;
 - ▶ Large recreation spaces with formal sports;
 - ▶ Semi-natural green spaces which may support or protect specific ecological or landscape features; or
 - ▶ A dedicated, equipped play areas for children.
- 9.5.2 These spaces provide key visual and functional areas which benefit the whole community, soften and enhance the built landscape and offer opportunities for physical activity. The Council's [Leisure Strategy](#) is the overarching document that provides guidance for the provision of facilities and spaces within its remit. The Leisure Strategy comprises the following chapters:
- ▶ Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy – indoor leisure centres (not applicable to Public Open Spaces)
 - ▶ Chapter 2: Recreation & Open Space Strategy
 - ▶ Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy
 - ▶ Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy
- 9.5.3 The principles of design within the Strategy have been derived from best practice examples across the varying types of spaces; in compliance with the NPPF and Sport England guidance. Definitions and descriptions for the design of recreational open space are provided in this section, however each design will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration context, scale, and local requirements. All designs should be provided by:
- ▶ Landscape specialists for informal and countryside open spaces,
 - ▶ Play equipment manufacturers for children's play and young people's facilities, and
 - ▶ Pitch turf specialists for sports pitches and supporting facilities.



Figure 241: Flitwick Leisure centre

9.6 Recreational Open Space

- 9.6.1 Within the broad heading of public open space, the Leisure Strategy - Recreation and Open Space Strategy, defines a range of spaces which together should deliver a network of green spaces and a range of opportunities to every community.
- 9.6.2 The Recreation and Open Space Strategy encompasses facilities within nine different typologies of open space. These typologies have been specifically developed for Central Bedfordshire to reflect the types of open space that are available in the area and the functions that these spaces have.
- 9.6.3 The Recreational Open Space Strategy categories are:
- ▶ Countryside Recreation Sites
 - ▶ Urban Parks
 - ▶ Informal Recreation Sites
 - ▶ Large Formal Recreation Areas
 - ▶ Small Amenity Spaces
 - ▶ Children's Play Spaces
 - ▶ Facilities for Young People
 - ▶ Allotments
 - ▶ Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

9.7 Playing Pitch Strategy

- 9.7.1 The Leisure Strategy - Playing Pitch Strategy, assesses outdoor sports facilities and sets policy for provision within new developments. The Local Plan supports the protection and creation of all outdoor sports facilities, but the following sports facilities are specifically supported by the Strategy:
- ▶ Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP)
 - ▶ Football
 - ▶ Cricket
 - ▶ Rugby Union and League
 - ▶ Hockey
 - ▶ Outdoor Bowls
 - ▶ Tennis
 - ▶ Athletics
 - ▶ Netball

9.8 Countryside Recreation Sites

9.8.1 The Leisure Strategy seeks Countryside sites for their recreation value and use in addition to their other potential attributes and uses under green infrastructure (GI) definitions.

9.8.2 Countryside Sites are defined as follows:

“Large countryside-type sites set aside for a variety of recreational activities, offering a range of formal and informal facilities and activities. They may not fit within formal definitions of country parks, but offer residents the opportunity to experience, appreciate and enjoy the countryside. These are destination sites, to which residents expect to travel (usually by car), which provide a range of facilities”

9.8.3 Countryside recreation sites are a key part of the wider network of countryside and open spaces and are managed for countryside recreation. As well as providing a wide range of opportunities for recreation, countryside recreation sites also have a role to play in enhancing health and supporting education as well as providing a link to the countryside. At the same time, many of the countryside recreation sites in Central Bedfordshire are important places for biodiversity and conservation and as such have a dual purpose.

9.8.4 Countryside sites should be pleasant places to be, well maintained and offer a variety of facilities including play. Most function as a family destination and should include paths and toilets. Other opportunities should also be considered including visitor centres, play facilities, catering equipment, cycle and horse tracks and art sculptures.



Figure 242: Houghton Hall Park



Figure 243: Houghton Hall Park visitor centre

9.8.5 New Countryside Recreation Sites should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 8 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).



Figure 244: Henlow Common

9.9 Urban Parks

9.9.1 Urban parks are defined as follows:

“Public parks or gardens in an urban setting that provide a variety of facilities e.g., play area, toilets, tennis courts etc; as well as opportunities for informal recreation”. These spaces provide a wide range and high standard of complimentary facilities of interest to visitors and may include facilities for children and young people and / or outdoor sports facilities as well as often being the venue for community events”

9.9.2 Urban parks are considered to be more formal sites than larger recreation areas and may include cafes or refreshments. They are frequently the central point for events in the town and may draw upon the historical character of the area. They are only required in certain large settlements or in major developments with formal town centre-type spaces.

9.9.3 New Urban Parks should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 9 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).

9.10 Informal Recreation Areas

9.10.1 Informal Recreation Areas are defined as follows:

“Large green spaces that are natural in character. These sites generally offer informal recreational opportunities such as walking and relaxation and allow visitors to experience the natural environment. As well as offering recreational opportunities, many sites in this category are also important for biodiversity and ecology.”

9.10.2 These sites present a mix of different opportunities and include sites of many different characters including woodland, common land and heathland. While many are similar to countryside sites, they are generally smaller in scale and more likely to serve local populations only. They are however particularly important in offering more informal and natural recreational opportunities.

9.10.3 New Informal Recreation Areas should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 11 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).

9.11 Large Formal Recreation Areas

9.11.1 Large Formal Recreation Areas are defined as follows:

“Large green sites which are easily accessible containing opportunities for casual and / or formal recreation for example dog walking, children’s play, casual or formal outdoor sports (most sites are circa 1ha or above).”

9.11.2 These spaces are more formal in their use and in the facilities they offer, than informal open spaces. They often combined facilities to offer a destination for a community to enjoy a range of activities.

9.11.3 New Large Formal Recreation Areas should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 10 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).

9.12 Small Amenity Spaces

9.12.1 Small Amenity Spaces are defined as follows:

“Small, local spaces which may enhance the local area and provide some opportunities for casual recreation use, e.g., dog walking, casual play.”

9.12.2 New Small Amenity Spaces should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 12 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).

9.13 Allotments

9.13.1 Allotments are defined as follows:

“Open spaces dedicated to growing produce and gardening – site where residents pay to have their own plot and grow vegetables.”

9.13.2 Proposed allotment sites should have soil that can be cultivated and therefore should not comprise rubble / building waste or be contaminated by chemicals. Sites should be predominantly flat and not be prone to flooding or other forms of nuisance. Professional soil testing advice should be sought to check the suitability of land; and if required, appropriate sub and topsoils be imported.

9.13.3 New Allotments should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 15 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).

9.14 Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

9.14.1 This typology encompasses both churchyards contained within the walled boundary of a church and cemeteries outside the confines of a church. Cemeteries include private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and closed churchyards. Although the primary purpose of this type of open space is burial of the dead, rest and relaxation and quiet contemplation, these sites frequently have considerable value for the provision of green space, the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

9.14.2 The Environment Agency standards require that Tier I, II and III site assessments are carried out in order to secure EA approval for land to be used as a burial ground. Where provision of a new burial ground is required, the developer will be responsible for carrying out these assessments to determine if the identified site is suitable for burials. The developer should work with the relevant town or parish council who are the burial authorities for their given settlement, to develop a burial ground which is consented, safe, well designed and laid out, in compliance with EA requirements and burial ground provision guidance.

9.14.3 Provision of new cemeteries should meet the quality standard criteria set out in section 16 of the [Leisure Strategy \(Chapter 2, Part 2\)](#).

9.15 Outdoor Sport Spaces

- 9.15.1 Sport England's Active Design Guidance, "Planning for Sports guidance and facility-specific design guidance", have principles embedded within its strategies which can be applied to applications for new developments. The Council will work with developers, the community/sports and Sport England and/or relevant National Governing Body for Sport, to design a facility which provides the appropriate type and scale of sports facilities, changing facilities and kitchen and social areas which are needed to support and sustain the sport, the facility and the club/organisation which operates it.
- 9.15.2 Throughout the construction of the approved facilities, the developer will be required to ensure the construction complies with the Planning permission and Building Regulations.
- 9.15.3 The s106 agreement for the development will require the developer to instruct an independent sports turf consultant to carry out the necessary site/soil investigations and create a specification for the pitch construction which is compliant with Sport England/NGB guidance and is designed to address the site's requirements and the type/level of sport to be played.
- 9.15.4 In addition, the developer will commission the sports turf consultant to carry out a series of independent inspections/assessments of the pitches at key stages in the pitch construction to ensure compliance with the approved plans and pitch construction specification, and applicable standards. Any issues identified are to be rectified in accordance with the relevant permission / standard and to the satisfaction of the council. On completion of construction, and at the end of the establishment period prior to handover to the adoptee, the turf consultant will undertake further inspections of the pitches to identify and rectify any issues in accordance with the relevant permission / standard and to the satisfaction of the council.
- 9.15.5 Built facilities which are required to accompany sports pitches will be designed in accordance with Sport England/NGB standards; and their design will be developed in consultation with the council and the adoptee to ensure that they will appropriate for the intended uses i.e., sports and potential community use.
- 9.15.6 Outdoor Sports Facilities Schemes shall include the following:
- ▶ Site Analysis for pitch construction by independent sports turf consultant
 - ▶ Pitch Construction Specification by independent sports turf consultant
 - ▶ Built facilities specification to Sport England/NGB standards
 - ▶ Tendering for pitch construction
 - ▶ Services
 - ▶ Access
 - ▶ Boundary Treatments
 - ▶ Site Clearance
 - ▶ Pitch Preparation Works/Earthworks
 - ▶ Drainage

- ▶ Sub and Top Soiling
- ▶ Levelling
- ▶ Cultivation, fertilisation and seeding
- ▶ Reinstatement
- ▶ Pitch layout/orientation
- ▶ Development of Sward
- ▶ Initial Maintenance/establishment
- ▶ Regular inspections by a sports turf consultant during construction of the pitches and on completion of pitch construction, and the initial maintenance/establishment period, to ensure construction has been in accordance with the approved specification.
- ▶ Any remedial works required to be carried out to the satisfaction of the consultant. Frequency of inspections to be determined by the consultant based on the works/local conditions.

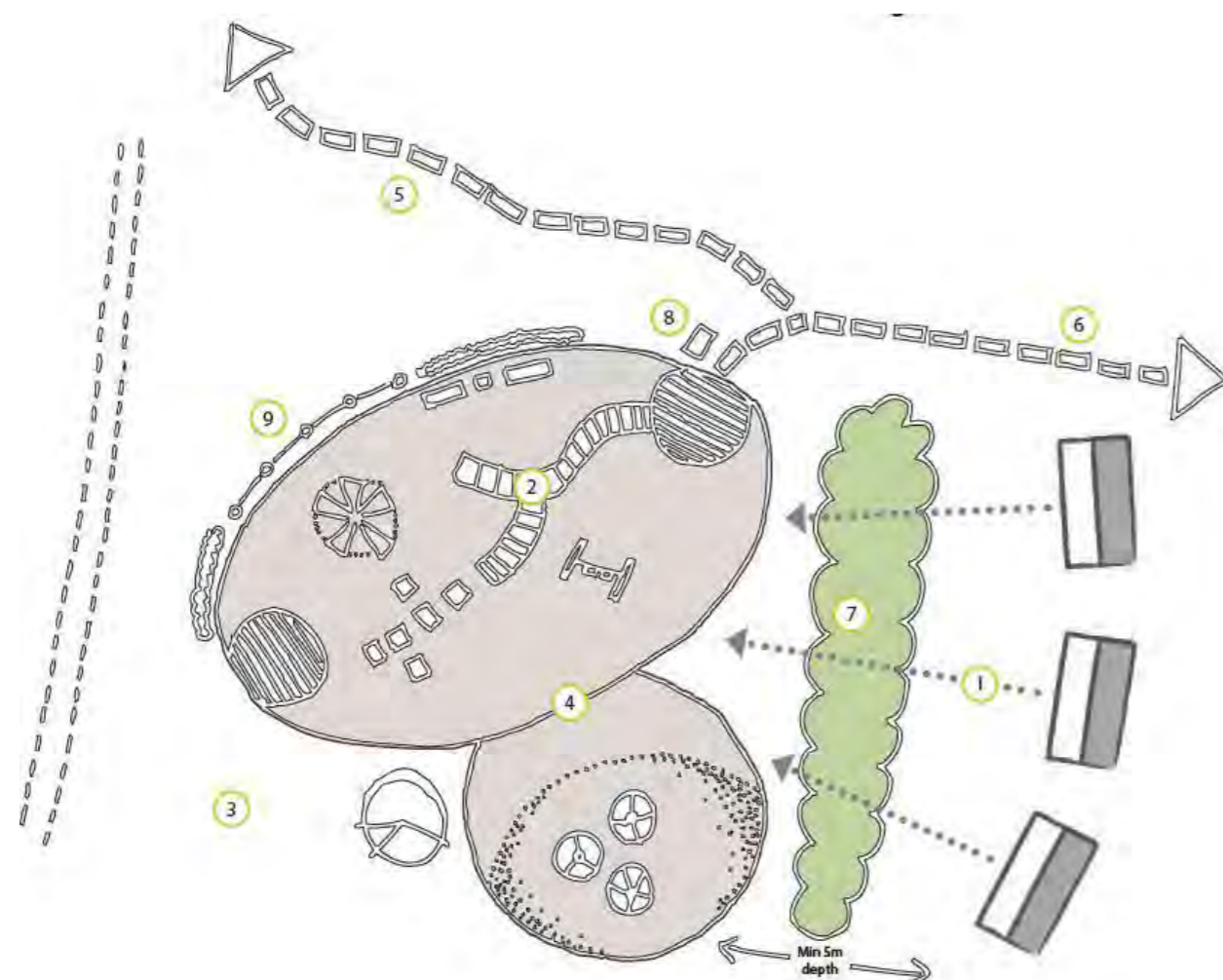
Facility Maintenance

- 9.15.7 Where a development provides onsite outdoor sports facilities, the developer will be required to provide a maintenance sum to the adopting organization, whether that be Central Bedfordshire Council, the relevant town/parish council or a third-party organisation. The maintenance sum required will be calculated using Sport England facility guidance and be for a minimum of ten years.

9.16 Children's Play Spaces

- 9.16.1 Children's Play Spaces are defined as follows:
- "Equipped play areas for children e.g. swings, slides and climbing frames". The broad objective of the provision of these facilities is to ensure that children have opportunities to interact with their peers, to learn social and physical skills and be physically active."
- 9.16.2 The provision of formal children's play areas within new developments is established in the Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy; and supported by the [Children's Play Provision Guide \(2022\)](#), which provides details of standards, equipment and materials.
- 9.16.3 The Play Provision Guide details the categories of play areas required from new development; including the levels of equipment required for each, and the age ranges that each category is designed to cater for. Indicative design principles for each area of play area are outlined below.
- 9.16.4 The Council only support the provision of standalone LAPs (or Super LAPS) in specific locations. The baseline provision of play onsite is a combined LAP/LEAP which is required from 50 dwellings.

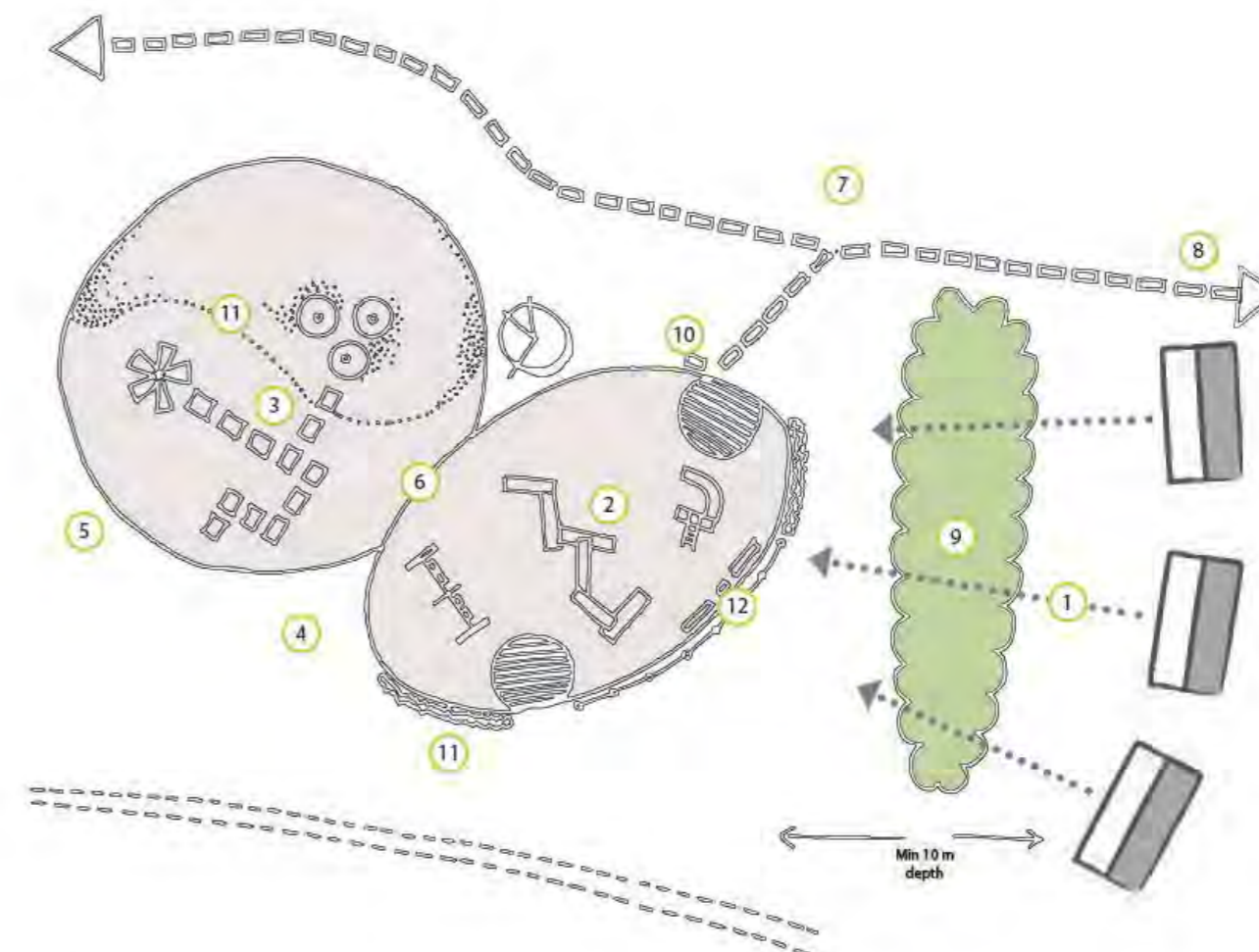
9.17 Local Area for Play (LAP)



- 1 - Well overlooked from adjacent housing
- 2 - Demonstrative features
- 3 - Well drained, reasonably flat surface with grass or hard surface
- 4 - Min 100 sqm activity zone
- 5 - Position next to a well used pedestrian route
- 6 - Within 1 min walking distance
- 7 - Buffer Zone: Varied planting using mix of scent, colour & texture
- 8 - Sign to indicate area is for children's play
- 9 - May need a 600 millimetre guard rail, low fence or planting indicating the perimeter

Figure 245: Local Area for Play (LAP) (equipped) or Doorstep Play Space primarily for children up to the age of 6

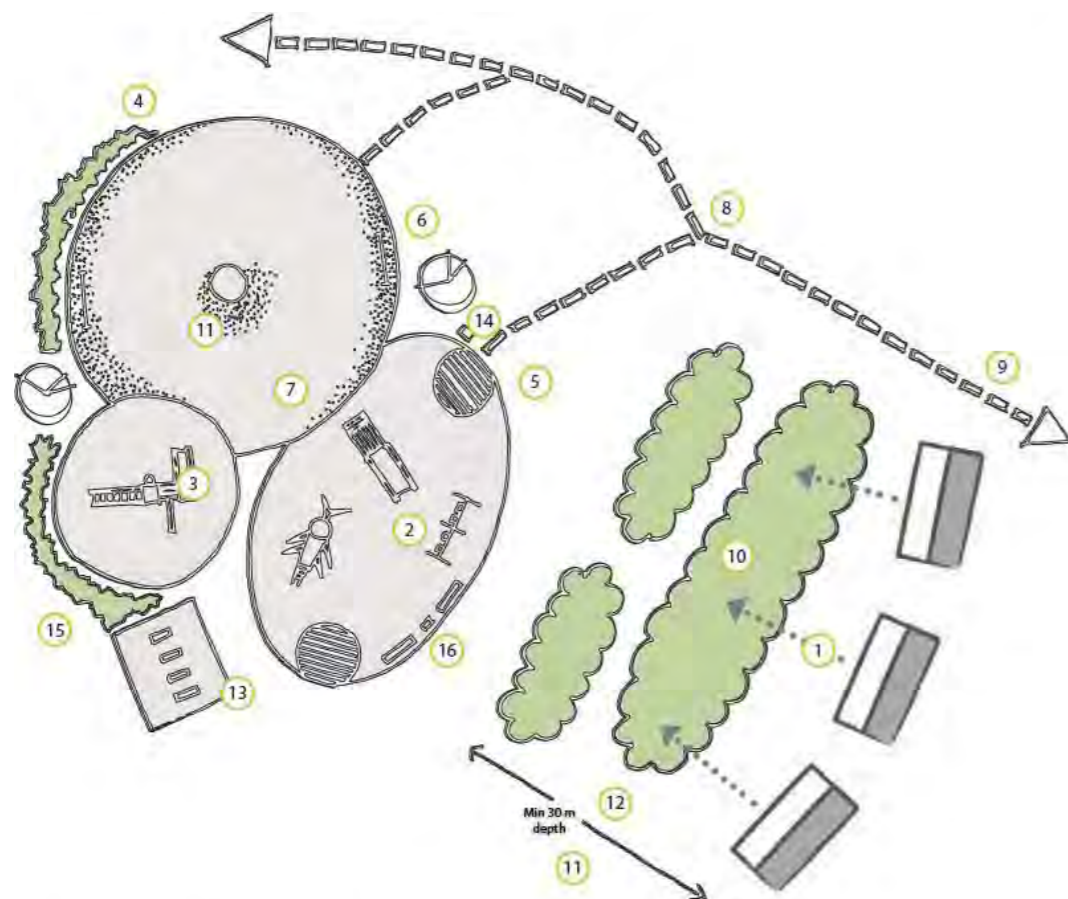
9.18 Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)



- 1 - Well overlooked from adjacent housing
- 2 - Stimulating & challenging equipment with natural materials
- 3 - Min 6 play experiences
- 4 - Well drained, reasonably flat surface with grass or hard surface
- 5 - Impact absorbing surface beneath and around play equipment
- 6 - Min 400sqm activity zone
- 7 - Position next a well used pedestrian route
- 8 - Within 5 min walking distance
- 9 - Buffer Zone: Varied planting using mix of scent, colour and texture
- 10 - Sign to indicate area is for children's play
- 11 - Needs to be enclosed if one of more adjoining roads there should be 2nr outward opening/self closing gates with 1 metre high fence
- 12 - Seating for accompanying adults with 1 or more litter bins

Figure 246: Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) for children who are beginning to go out to play independently

9.19 Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)



- 1 - Well overlooked from adjacent housing
- 2 - Stimulating & challenging equipment with natural materials
- 3 - Min 9 play experiences
- 4 - Boundaries should be recognisable by landscaping
- 5 - Well drained, reasonably flat with grass or hard surface
- 6 - Impact absorbing surface beneath and around play equipment
- 7 - Min 1000sqm activity zone. Hard surface area of at least 465sqm min to play 5-a-side football
- 8 - Position next to well used pedestrian route
- 9 - Within 5 min walking distance
- 10 - Buffer Zone: Varied playing using mix of scent, colour & texture
- 11 - When minimum distances apply consideration needs to be given to: enclosure, planting scheme & physical features within the activity zone
- 12 - If purpose built skateboarding facilities, a greater distance may be needed
- 13 - Convenient & secure parking facilities for bikes
- 14 - Sign to indicate area is for children's play
- 15 - Perimeter fencing is generally considered inappropriate though some fencing may be necessary if the site adjoins a road. If so, two outward opening gates on opposite sides of the NEAP.
- 16 - Seating for accompanying adults with 1 or more litter bins

9.20 Locating Children's Play Spaces

9.20.1 Ideally the location of the play space should allow easy access from all parts of the development, near to well used pedestrian routes with good surveillance from neighbouring properties. Access to play space should also avoid the need to cross major roads and other hazardous obstacles. Footpaths which are to be used as a main access footpath to the rest of a green corridor should not run through the middle of a play area.

Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) and Children's Play Areas

9.20.2 Sustainable drainage (SuDS) should not be sited near to children's play areas due to safety concerns. RoSPA recommends that play areas should be at least 30 metres from water features, including SuDS schemes. Where separation cannot be achieved, developers will be responsible for providing an independent risk assessment at Pre-Application, Full Application, or Outline Application stage (by RoSPA or other independent inspection company) to inform the design of the play area and its environs. If the safety standards cannot be achieved in the identified site, the developer shall provide an alternative play area site. The RoSPA website has more [information relating to children's play near SuDS and risk assessments](#).

9.20.3 The risk assessment will determine whether existing control measures are adequate or whether more needs to be done. A risk assessment may specify the following is designed into a SuDS scheme:

- ▶ Headwalls and structures around inlet/outlets should not look similar to play equipment, i.e. steel bars. It is necessary to make sure children can't gain access to large headwalls/pipes, and this requires sensitive design.
- ▶ For SuDS which are not permanently wet, i.e. detention basins, landscaping needs to clearly define areas that will attenuate water with signage. This may include additional informative signage i.e. this area is designed to attenuate water in storm events and will drain down naturally over 12 hours.
- ▶ Where it is considered likely that unsupervised young children could gain access to water within SuDS, then a toddler proof fence 600-750 millimetres high should be provided to prevent toddlers getting to the water but allow adult entry to step across when necessary. The fence must be a vertical pale type rather than horizontal rail construction which could be used as a climbing frame.
- ▶ Planting at the margin can provide an element of physical protection and create a clearly identifiable visual border. If it is not possible to provide a planted margin, then clear identification of the edge of the water should be provided.
- ▶ Infants, small children and frail/elderly persons are considered unsafe in any flow without adult support. In cases where they are expected to be present without supervision, careful siting, design and fencing should be used to manage the risk appropriately.

Figure 247: Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) for older children of relative independence



Figure 248: Play area in Stewartby



Figure 249: (top left) Play area in Steppingley Road, Flitwick
 Figure 250: (top right) Play area in Churchill Way, Shefford
 Figure 251: (bottom left) Play area in Chapel Drive, Arlesey
 Figure 252: (bottom right) Play area in Wingfield Drive, Potton

9.21 Requirements for Public Art

Developments

- 9.21.1 Policy HQ7 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan requires public art to be provided on the following developments:
- ▶ Residential developments comprising 100 or more dwellings
 - ▶ Other public facing developments where the floor area to be built is 1000m² or more. This could include retailing, leisure, public buildings, and educational establishments

Major Projects/Schemes

- 9.21.2 The Council would also expect public art to be considered:
- ▶ As part of the design of new public spaces forming an integral part of new developments in existing town centres.
 - ▶ As part of the design of significant highway improvements in existing town centres in appropriate settings.
 - ▶ As part of the designs of key public spaces and shopping/local centres in new settlements (such as Wixams and Arlesey) and major urban extensions (such as North of Houghton Regis, North of Luton and East of Leighton Linlade).
- 9.21.3 Considerations for major projects/schemes should be:
- ▶ Appointing artists to design teams from the outset of a project.
 - ▶ Designing elements that might include treatments to floorscapes, landscaping, use of colour, signage, lighting, street furniture, railings etc.
 - ▶ Liaising with relevant specialisms, e.g. if the public art is going to be located within the public highway, the applicant should liaise with the highway authority to ascertain whether the location of the artwork is acceptable.



Figure 253: (left) Midsummer Place, Milton Keynes Glass, artist Anne Smyth
 Figure 254: (right) Public art at the gateway into Linmere, Houghton Regis

Detailed Planning Applications

9.21.4 Developers are encouraged to submit public art proposals as part of a planning application rather than including it as part of a discharge of condition or a s106 agreement. In circumstances where public art proposals are submitted with a detailed planning application it will need to contain the following information:

- ▶ A management plan consisting of a summary of the knowledge, skills and time allowed for Public Art project management.
- ▶ A brief for the involvement of the artists where Public Art is not already included in the architecture or landscaping of the scheme.
- ▶ An assessment of the positive impact the Public Art will have on the environment and/or the local residents.
- ▶ A description of the commissioning and procurement process with a brief report on tasks already completed.
- ▶ Details for future care and maintenance. Permanent works should be durable of good quality construction requiring very little if any maintenance.

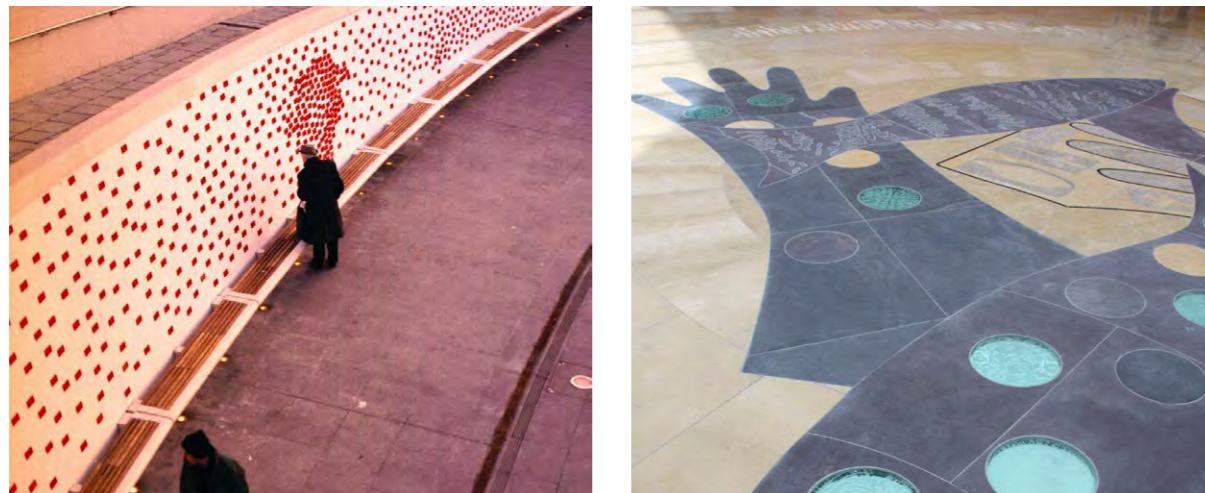


Figure 255: (top left) Wall/seating Phoenix Initiative, Coventry
 Figure 256: (top right) Medieval Floorscape, Shopping Centre, artist Anne Smyth
 Figure 257: (bottom) Mayfield Road Shops shutter artwork, artist Zena Jay Ellis

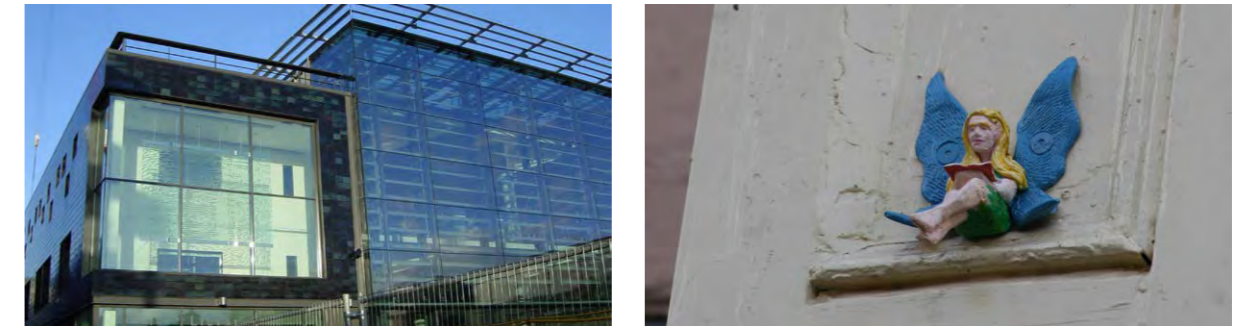


Figure 258: (left) Uncover-Discover, artist Georgia Russell, (Jubilee Library, Brighton)
 Figure 259: (right) Leighton-Linslade Children's Trail, artist Martin Heron (photo Hilary Western)

Outline Planning Applications

9.21.5 For schemes where an outline application has been submitted with no details of public art provision, the Council may require that a Public Art Plan be prepared setting out how the principles of integrating public art into the development are to be achieved.

9.21.6 For outline planning applications for developments of between 100 and up to 350 homes, a Public Art Statement will need to be prepared containing the following information:

- ▶ The nature and purpose of the Public Art interventions and their relationship to the site including anticipated aims and benefits.
- ▶ Preferred locations for the public art interventions in terms of buildings and spaces (this could be in the form of a location plan).
- ▶ A Public Art brief explaining how artists are to (or can) be involved describing the potential recruitment process.
- ▶ The proposed process for community liaison and engagement.

9.21.7 For Outline Planning applications of 350 homes and above, a Public Art Plan will need to be prepared containing the following information:

- ▶ The nature and purpose of the Public Art interventions and their relationship to the site including anticipated aims and benefits.
- ▶ Preferred locations for the public art interventions in terms of buildings and spaces.
- ▶ A Public Art brief explaining how artists are to be involved describing the potential recruitment and likely timescales.
- ▶ The process for community liaison and engagement.
- ▶ An indication of the Public Art programme priorities set in the context of the phasing of the development.
- ▶ The ownership, maintenance, and decommissioning of the scheme.
- ▶ A statement indicating the responsibility for future care and maintenance.
- ▶ This will be addressed as details of the Public Art Programme are developed. Permanent works should be durable and of good quality construction requiring very little maintenance.



Figure 260: public art commission: community hall, Stotfold



Figure 262: Toadstool Trail, Ampthill

Freestanding Artwork

9.21.8 There may be circumstances where a freestanding artwork will require separate planning permission, not covered by the main planning permission for the development. In these circumstances it is the developer's responsibility to submit such plans and obtain the necessary consent.



Figure 261: Timesticks, artist Wendy Briggs



Figure 263: (left) Heritage Trail, Houghton Regis

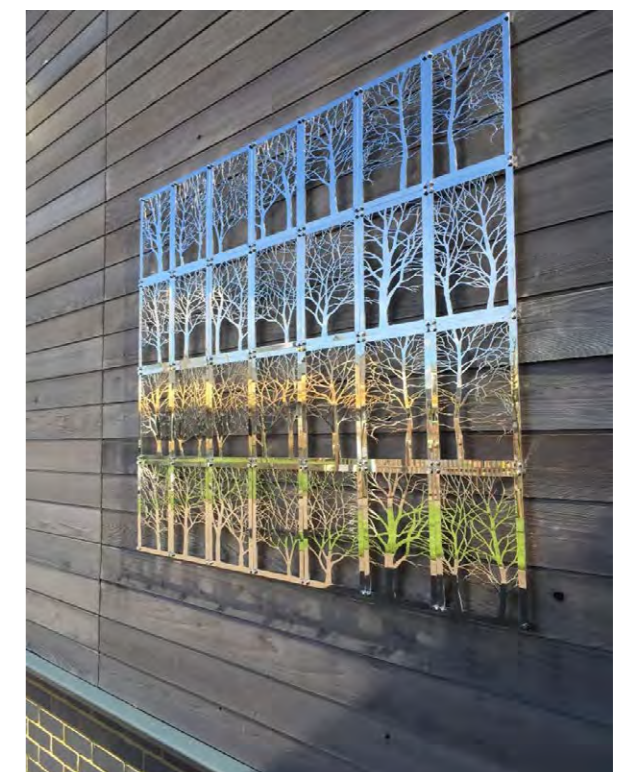


Figure 264: (right) Wendy Briggs artwork at Orchard Community Centre, Biggleswade

9.22 Community Safety Considerations

Safer Places

- 9.22.1 The Design Guide includes details around security and safety in the Built Form and Homes and Buildings sections. However, it is important to emphasise the relationship between public spaces and how they should relate to the built form that may be adjacent or nearby to it.
- 9.22.2 Two of the Safer Places attributes deal specifically with the design of the dwelling:
- ▶ Surveillance – There should be multiple opportunities for active surveillance. Blank gable walls or re-entrants should be avoided, especially where properties face footpaths or the public realm.
 - ▶ Physical Protection – places that include necessary, well designed security features. e.g. gates, fences, walls, and planting.
- 9.22.3 The Secured by Design Standards for new housing include a set of standards relating to the environmental design and physical security of residential developments and adherence to them is usually required via conditions at the planning application stage. Environmental design standards relate to the layout and design of the development. Physical security standards relate to building construction issues, such as doors and windows of enhanced security standards, laminated glass etc. More information on Secured by Design Standards can be found on the [Secured by Design website](#).
- 9.22.4 Whilst it is not a requirement to meet full Secured by Design Standards, the standards for doors, windows and glazing should still be met. Front doors should be visible from the public realm (to reduce the possibility of screening of an intruder (see Figures 265 and 266). Single storey flat roofs for garages, porches etc. should be avoided as they provide an easy step for gaining access to first floor windows.

Lighting and CCTV

- 9.22.5 Although a necessity of most development, lighting can result in significant visual intrusion especially in more rural areas with dark night skies. Modern lighting systems and luminaires produce efficient and directional lighting which can help reduce visual impact at night-time as can the design and layout of development. Domestic lighting, including household security lighting, is more difficult to manage and control. The setting of development and roads away from rural edges can assist in reducing light intrusion. Lighting should be directed to where it is needed with no horizontal spillage towards existing trees. Lighting columns in general should be as short as possible as light at a low level reduces landscape and visual harm particularly upon the edge of the village. The location of lighting and CCTV columns should avoid existing and new trees within the site. A site wide lighting strategy should be submitted for all major applications.

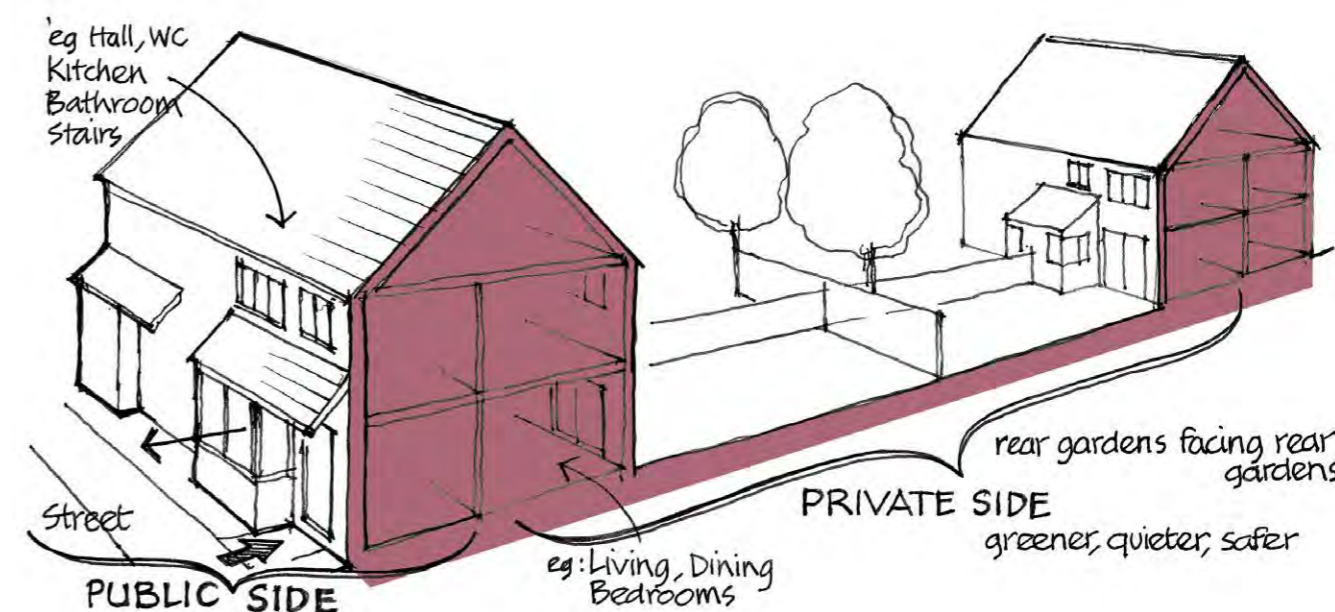


Figure 265: Encourage a sense of security and tranquillity through a clear distinction between the public and private side of a house.

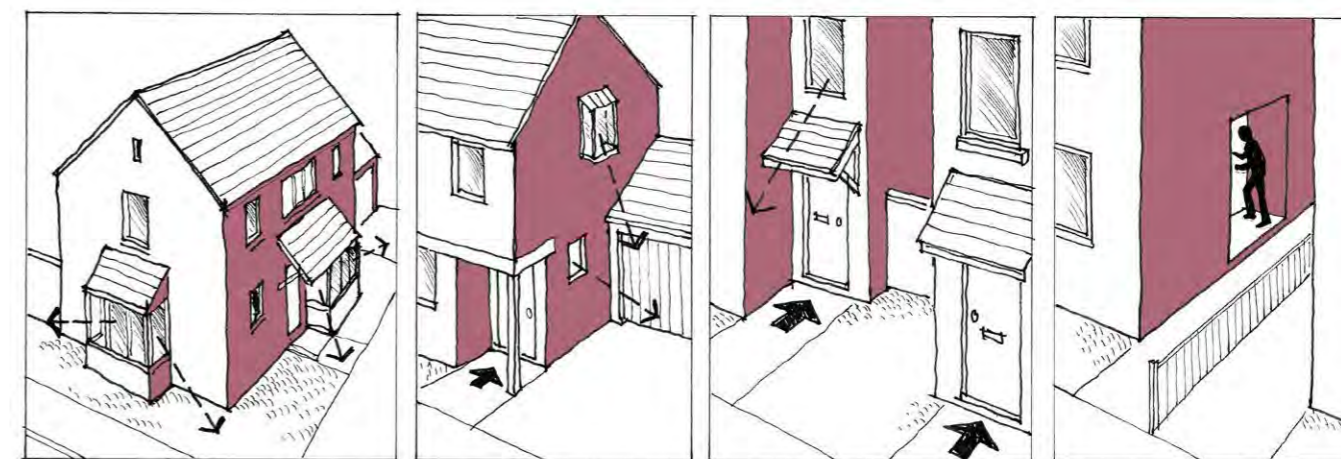


Figure 266: Ideally dwellings should wrap around corners to ensure that all parts of the public realm are overlooked. This may require the use of double-fronted dwellings avoiding blank facades. Entrances clearly seen from the street. Vulnerable side entrances are discouraged