

# neighbourhoods for living



A G U I D E F O R R E S I D E N T I A L D E S I G N I N L E E D S

## WHY HAS THIS GUIDE BEEN PRODUCED?

Much recent guidance has been produced on design at national level. This guide seeks to supplement that and provide support for the Unitary Development Plan. The guide specifically provides further clarity for developers and designers in Leeds regarding:

- the themes and principles of residential design
- the character and essence of Leeds
- submission requirements and analysis based process.

## WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR?

It is expected that this guide will be of value to a variety of groups:

- **developers** - to improve the quality and choice of housing in Leeds, to appoint full design teams capable of exploring and responding to the complete range of issues, to address the need for local facilities in development
- **design teams** - to provide improved design of houses, streets, spaces and local facilities in Leeds District (Architects, Landscape Architects, Highways Engineers, Urban Designers, Mechanical/Electrical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Surveyors, Drainage Engineers, Public Art consultants, Planners, Ecologists etc.) - to provide background for the broad inter-disciplinary and sustainable approach to design
- **local amenity societies and community groups** - to encourage local character analyses to contribute to future development (residential area character appraisals and Village Design Statements)
- **businesses** - to consider the context and 'catchment' of housing and the value of facilities and services associated with housing areas
- **politicians and other representatives of the community** - to assess the characteristics and enhancements (especially of spaces and facilities) needed to improve a neighbourhood
- **general public** - to stimulate interest in the evolving and improving attitude to the home and the neighbourhood, and to engender a sense of ownership beyond the house to the streets and spaces of the places people live
- **students** - individual design/development disciplines may find the guide useful in explaining the 'holistic', inter-disciplinary approach to good housing design.

## HOW TO USE THE GUIDE?

It is expected that the guide will be used in a variety of ways (ranging from strategic to detailed) including to provide:

- an outline of the existing neighbourhoods/districts of Leeds
- an approach to landscape analysis
- a background to a residential-based character analysis
- key principles required for general good practice in housing design
- references - national and local policy framework and background reading
- examples of good practice in drawings and mapping to initiate proposals for a site
- clear submission requirements for planning applications
- some of the features of local distinctiveness in Leeds
- background to explore a range of house types (and relevant densities) and appropriate approach for sites.

The starting point for an enquiry into the content of the guide will vary. The guide should be used to explore the:

- **issues** - an enquirer concerned with a particular topic will start there and use the cross references to enable a more 'holistic' approach to the design issues to emerge. The topics are inter-connected just as the design team is expected to work in an inter-disciplinary way
- **process** - the section entitled 'Bringing it all Together' provides an approach to the processes of design with case studies. The 'Outline' at the start of the document indicates the type of information/drawings required to submit a planning application.

## STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Leeds City Council to complement the Unitary Development Plan - 9th December 2003.

This has followed consultation with key interest groups, including developers, designers, Leeds Civic Trust, elected members, the police, professional institutes (Urban Design Alliance), housing associations, House Builders Federation, access officers and others.

(Urban Design Alliance consists of Royal Institute of British Architects, Royal Town Planning Institute, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Landscape Institute, Institute of Highways and Transportation, Institution of Civil Engineers, Civic Trust and Urban Design Group)



### WEBSITE

The document is also in electronic form (pdf) - available for download from Leeds City Council website ([www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)). This form allows easy navigation through the document with bookmarked sections/topics.

## new foreword

February 2007

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER**  
Leader of the Council  
Executive Member for  
Development and Regeneration



*'Neighbourhoods for Living' was published in December 2003.*

*Over the past 4 years it has been well used by developers, designers and planners. We have distributed over 1000 copies and its success as a tool for us all to achieve better design is illustrated by the fact that the first print run has 'sold out'!*

*Good design is central to making successful places. Its value is acknowledged by developers and residents alike. In January 2005 our Executive Board adopted Ten Urban Design principles which underpin our work and these have become strong drivers for all our development work. Renaissance Leeds and the Vision processes with our partners in the Leeds Initiative are embedding the need for quality and character in all our neighbourhoods - creating places which we can all be proud of.*

*Leeds is thriving with development activity and we have important regeneration programmes emerging throughout the district. The 'sustainable communities' agenda is also central to what we do and it is appropriate that the national Academy for Sustainable Communities is located in Leeds.*

*In November 2005 we hosted a workshop with housebuilders, designers, interest groups, planners and decision-makers. This was constructive, interesting and enjoyable, and there was a clear desire to create design excellence, responding to local character.*

*We are committed to continuing to work with developers, designers, communities and other partners to deliver better ways of working together to protect and enhance our environment - to create places which will be well-used and well-loved by residents and visitors - 'neighbourhoods for living' that will last and be worthy of future generations.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Carter', written in a cursive style.

Note: the re-printed document remains unchanged apart from this new foreword and list of contacts at the back.

## original foreword

December 2003

*People want to live in Leeds. There is increasing demand for homes in our city and we must build appropriately to meet that need. We are all very aware of mistakes of the past in approaches to residential development. How do we make better places for us all to live in, both now and in the future?*

*This guide is about managing change. It is vital for us to develop sustainably - to protect what we value for future generations, to improve existing neighbourhoods and to create new places that will be attractive, safe and enjoyed for years to come.*

*Leeds has a unique range of settlements from leafy suburbs and villages to market towns, former mining towns, inner urban areas and a vibrant city centre. What gives different neighbourhoods their sense of identity? The answer is the variety of qualities and characteristics - landmarks, building styles, walking routes, spaces, landscape, local amenities etc. In this guide, the themes of **use**, **movement**, **space** and **form** have been used to develop key objectives and principles to help us understand these characteristics and so build better places to live.*

*Also, developers, architects, planners and landscape architects should work with communities to analyse sites and prepare proposals. This guide points towards the need for good multi-disciplinary design teams working together from the start of the process. This is a crucial ingredient for successful development.*

*I am confident this guide will achieve highest quality design in Leeds and better places to live for us all.*

**COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH MINKIN**  
Former Executive Member for  
Development and Sustainability  
Chair of Leeds Architecture  
and Design Initiative

For further detailed information regarding Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG's) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) visit our web site at [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)



## OUTLINE

Co-ordinated approach	2
Key issues	3
Themes and key objectives	3
Design process and planning	
submission requirements	5
Policy context	7

## THEMES & PRINCIPLES

### Use

Creating neighbourhoods	14
Density and mixed uses	16

### Movement

Making connections	18
Developing the movement network	20

### Space

Making attractive spaces that work	22
Safer places	26
Private spaces	30
Publicly accessible spaces	32
Wildlife	36
Designing for parking	38

### Form

Local character	40
Scale and massing	42
Landmarks, views and focal points	44
Quality buildings	46
Homes for the future	50
Privacy and intrusion	54

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Design process	60
Community participation	64
Case studies	
-Small/medium scale development	66
-Medium/large scale development	68
-Brownfield site redevelopment	70
Conclusion	72

BIBLIOGRAPHY	73
--------------	----

CONSULTATION	78
--------------	----

USEFUL ADDRESSES	
------------------	--

**T**his guide is expected to be of value to the variety of participants involved in residential design in Leeds. It provides relevant guidance for all types of residential proposal, ranging from small scale infill housing schemes to major projects on large sites involving a mix of uses.

## Co-ordinated Approach

There is a broad range of aspirations for residential design in Leeds. Developers, politicians, designers, residents, amenity/conservation groups, planners, local businesses, and others have different views of how to achieve appropriate housing design for the 21st century and beyond. It is the role of developers, designers, planners and politicians to reconcile these (sometimes conflicting) aspirations. This guide begins the process in Leeds to bring these aspirations together - it provides an approach and principles which inform the design and procurement of new housing in Leeds. This has grown from the existing national guidance and the need to enhance Leeds' particular qualities. It also provides further clarity for developers about submission requirements for planning applications.

Individual design disciplines have different starting points from which the process of design is delivered. The resultant proposals have an emphasis based on those aspirations. A highway engineer may prioritise efficient traffic penetration, a landscape architect may consider the creation of beautiful spaces to be the key aspiration, a resident may require a generous living room with a view or large garage as the primary requirement etc.

An urban design-led approach to producing 'neighbourhoods for living' seeks to bring the aspirations (and design disciplines) together in an inter-disciplinary way. The design approach and procurement process that explores and responds to the varied aspirations in a rigorous way should always apply in the development of housing. This guide seeks to provide a framework for this to happen.

### ASPIRATIONS

There is a broad range of aspirations for residential design



## Key Issues

Key issues facing residential design include the need to:

- meet the need to create more homes (increasing number of households) and generally increase average density across the District
- reduce the amount of countryside, and other greenfield land, being built on and give priority for new homes on previously developed land
- create development that respects and enhances its local context, distinctiveness and character (both visually and in usage/activity)
- improve quality and choice of house type (highest design quality, range of size/ household/tenure/price/garden/context, accessibility for disabled people, accommodate ageing population)
- create walkable neighbourhoods with associated other uses and facilities (reducing the need to use the car and increasing the attraction of good public transport routes nearby)
- create attractive, people-friendly places (with less dominance of highway dimensional criteria in the design of streets and spaces)
- create a safe and secure environment for all, which engenders community pride in neighbourhoods (creating a positive sense of place, active streets and 'natural' surveillance)
- support existing and future urban regeneration using high quality residential design
- improve the quality of illustrations and information provided with submissions for planning approval.

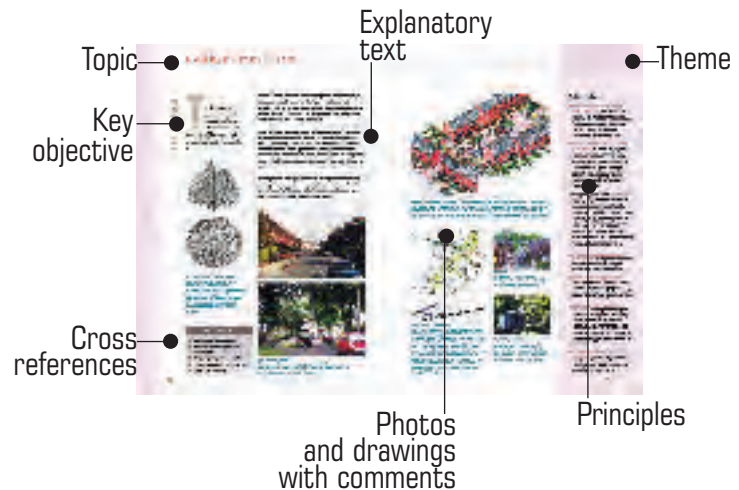
Leeds City Council's second Corporate Plan sets out our priorities for 2002-5 which cut across all areas of the Council's work - six of the ten priorities link with the issues of 'neighbourhoods for living': reduce crime, work towards meeting the Government's housing decency standard, support older people to live independent lives, achieve more sustainable patterns of travel, enhance the environment and protect it for future generations, and reduce waste and increase recycling.

## Themes and Key Objectives

The main topics of the guide are split into four themes:

- **USE**
- **MOVEMENT**
- **SPACE**
- **FORM**

The four themes are inter-related in the same way as the work of key built environment disciplines are inter-related (USE - Town Planners, MOVEMENT - Highways Engineers, SPACE - Landscape Architects, FORM - Architects). Positive multi-disciplinary working is the key to developing successful places to live.



### LAYOUT OF GUIDE

Each topic has a key objective, a series of principles and illustrations/ text which provide guidance for development



### MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORKING

There was a participatory workshop on Neighbourhoods for Living. People from a range of disciplines and interest groups explored the draft document and tested/commented on its content by looking at a range of sites and issues (at Leeds Metropolitan University on 24th February 2003)

## Key Objectives for each Topic

USE	SPACE
<p><b>creating neighbourhoods</b> - to create neighbourhoods that respect the local context, offer a choice of housing and provide good access to complementary local facilities within walking distance.</p> <p><b>density and mixed uses</b> - to create vitality, with increased development densities supporting a range of services, mixed uses and public transport.</p>	<p><b>making attractive spaces that work</b> - to create people-friendly places that allow for necessary vehicular access.</p> <p><b>safer places</b> - to create safe and secure places with effective natural surveillance.</p> <p><b>private spaces</b> - to provide well designed private and semi-private open space for all dwellings, appropriate to the design character of the area.</p> <p><b>publicly accessible spaces</b> - to provide a varied network of attractive, usable and safe publicly accessible spaces as part of a hierarchy of places.</p> <p><b>designing for parking</b> - to provide appropriate parking at discreet but safe locations within the development.</p> <p><b>wildlife</b> - to retain existing important species and habitats and maximise opportunities for habitat enhancement, creation and management.</p>
MOVEMENT	FORM
<p><b>making connections</b> - to create connected layouts that provide choice, and improve access to facilities and public transport.</p> <p><b>developing the movement network</b> - to develop a framework of connected spaces that respect all users by offering a safe attractive environment for all.</p>	<p><b>local character</b> - to ensure that proposals respect the local character by enhancing the positive attributes whilst mitigating negative aspects.</p> <p><b>scale and massing</b> - to provide built forms that contribute positively to the townscape whilst respecting the scale of adjacent spaces.</p> <p><b>landmarks, views and focal points</b> - to take every opportunity to create good design that respects key views, landmarks, and focal points.</p> <p><b>quality buildings</b> - to create high quality building design with appropriately designed elements.</p> <p><b>homes for the future</b> - to develop wherever possible on brownfield sites with efficient energy use, minimising waste production and pollution.</p> <p><b>privacy and intrusion</b> - to safeguard privacy and amenity.</p>

## Design Process and Planning Submission Requirements

It is recommended that applicants make contact with the local planning authority at the earliest stage to discuss submission requirements and initiate the design process appropriately. Clearly there will be different approaches to small infill schemes and large new estates. It is expected that development briefs will be agreed for larger sites to provide a good basis for design development.

The process required is analysis-based, context-driven and creative, to produce highest quality design. At the outset a developer/designer should:

- explore the policy framework (national/local/neighbourhood)
- explore existing area-based studies (for example, Conservation Area appraisals, Village Design Statements, Urban Design Strategies)
- explore relevant precedents of highest quality design (designer's own portfolio, journals, books, site visits, responses to similar contexts).

Image provided by Carey Jones Architects



**DISTANT VIEW** (photomontage at night)

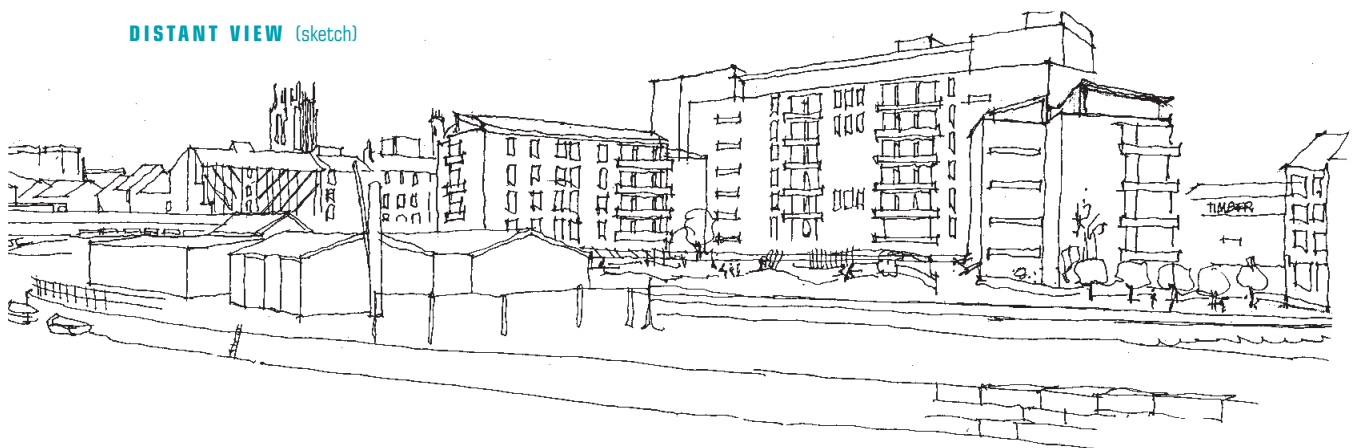
The key stages for all proposals are:

- **analysis** - existing situation (site and adjacent areas) - a thorough analysis provides a good foundation for the next stages of the design process
- **concept** - broad proposals based on analysis
- **scheme** - proposed layout and form based on concept
- **detail** - based on analysis-concept-scheme.

Within each stage a series of analyses/ illustrations is needed, and these should form part of the design statement in the planning submission. For the designers, this process is both iterative and cyclical, as each stage provides an opportunity to explore and test ideas.

The range of analyses, annotated maps and illustrations (existing and proposed) required will depend on a variety of site specific issues, raised by their scale, the particular proposals and their surrounding context.

**DISTANT VIEW** (sketch)



## outline (cont)

In addition to the basic requirement for location plans, floor plans and elevations there is some basic illustrative matter which should be used, namely:

- **existing context analysis map(s)** - likely to be 1:1250 or 1:500 OS map base, fully annotated with urban design analysis key attributes such as views, building lines, skylines, materials, style, land uses, access and active use of spaces/ relationship between buildings, streets and spaces, transport network especially adjoining streets and missing links
- **proposed context analysis map(s)** - this should indicate the response of the proposals to their surroundings in a similar style and scale to the existing context analysis map(s) and its impact within and on the surrounding area. Other proposals that will effect the context also need to be included
- **streetscene sketches** - views of proposed development from surrounding area as seen by passers-by at street level, as detailed sketches showing responses to the streetscene in full context
- **more distant views** - existing views affected by the development proposals, showing full context. (this may have to include evidence that proposed development is not visible from important distant views)
- **images of style, materials and detail of buildings and setting** - photographs of details and architectural style (similar proposals), detailed sketches, sample materials, photographs of detailed techniques/ materials, street furniture, and landscape elements which have had a few years to weather and mature.

There is no particular preferred format for presenting this information - CAD, photomontage or hand drawn illustrations are acceptable, provided they are in colour, accurate and indicate the full context. The submitted illustrations need to be easy to photocopy for consultees comments. Physical models need to be easily transportable and accurate, and show their context.

Some of these may form part of the explanation in the design or transport statements that will be expected to accompany any significant application.

Refer to 'Bringing it all together' for further information and case studies.



**STREETSCENE IMAGE** (photomontage)

*Image provided by Carey Jones Architects*



**IMAGE OF STYLE MATERIALS AND DETAIL**

*Image provided by West & Machell Architects*

## Policy Context

A change in approach to residential design is being pursued at both national and local level. There is a significant amount of good design guidance for residential development available at the moment.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the House Builders Federation (HBF) and other professional groups are contributing to the debate / initiative at a national level. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is responsible for the Planning Policy Guidance notes which provide a basis for the importance of good design (PPG1), for considering housing (PPG3). In particular there is a strong foundation for this guide in the following national government documents:

- **By Design: Better Places to Live (A Companion Guide to PPG3)** [DTLR/CABE, 2001] - provides broad and detailed guidance to improve residential design (houses, spaces and mixed uses).
- **By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice** [DETR/CABE, 2000] - sets out the importance of design issues in the statutory planning system.
- **Places, Streets and Movement: A Companion Guide to Design Bulletin 32 - Residential Roads and Footpaths** [DETR, 1998] - provides clear direction to ensure that places to live are not dominated by unrelieved vehicular areas.

Other important national documents include:

- **Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure** (DoT, 2002) - the overall objective of the guide is to provide inclusive design and through that achieve social inclusion
- **Crime & Disorder Act 1998 Section 17:** places a duty on local authorities to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder - this includes the design of residential development.

***“We believe we are about to see a step change in the quality of new housing.”***

(Building for Life team - HBF, CABE and the Civic Trust - 2002).



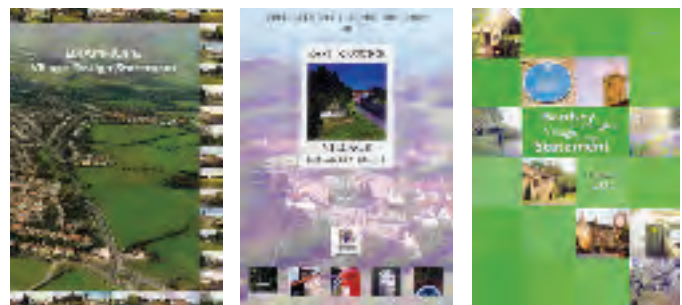


## The Leeds context

This guide supports the national work at a local level, and aims to underline the principles and processes which should create better 'neighbourhoods for living'. It also provides an outline of some of the particular attributes of Leeds and an approach to analysis based design that should underpin all proposals for housing development.

This guide (Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG 13) aims to complement the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). This guide supersedes the previous SPG 13 ('Housing Density Draft for Consultation', 2000) and Residential Design Aid 4 ('Space About Dwellings', 1989). There are other guides produced by Leeds City Council's Development Department which provide relevant background information. These include:

- **'Sustainable Development Design Guide' (SPG 10, 1998)**
- **'Site Development Guide' (1995)**
- **'City Centre Urban Design Strategy'** - including appendix Design Framework for Leeds (SPG 14, 2000)
- various **Village Design Statements** for parts of Leeds



- **'Securing space for existing and new trees'** (forthcoming - data in Residential Design Aid 4 is still current until then)
- **'Designing for Community Safety'** takes the underlying principles of **'Secured by Design'** and demonstrates how they can be used to create good design with good physical security that results in safe sustainable communities.

In addition there are Corporate policies, such as that to reduce road casualties especially children, and documents, including:

- Leeds Initiative's 'Vision for Leeds - A Strategy for Sustainable Development 1999 to 2009' in which there are relevant strategies such as Integrated Transport, Better Neighbourhoods and Confident Communities.
- West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and its associated strategies eg Walking Strategy.

Contact Development Department for latest list.

'Neighbourhoods for Living', as Supplementary Planning Guidance, supports the existing policy and, in particular, provides guidance which complements the Unitary Development Plan.



In brief, this guide aims to provide:

- inspiration to improve design
- basic principles to underpin residential design
- background to local character
- strategic considerations relating to appropriate site location
- analytical approach to considering local character
- context-driven approach to the process of preparing design proposals for sites
- clear direction to provide more sustainable development
- an understanding of the potential to increase general density with highest quality design
- good/poor practice examples (house design and residential layouts)
- examples of illustrations and analysis expected to be provided with submissions for planning approval.

Most alterations, extensions or demolitions of listed buildings will require separate listed building consent in addition to planning permission. There is a presumption that all listed buildings will be retained and sympathetically treated. Similarly conservation area consent will be needed for substantial demolition of all but the smallest buildings in a conservation area. It is expected that all buildings that make a positive contribution to a conservation area will be retained and the development used to enhance the special character of the area. These consent submissions will need to be accompanied by a full justification of the proposals.

(SEE [www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation)).

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Within the document there is an underlying concern to achieve sustainability - providing a fundamental concern for future generations (especially the environmental and social implications of design). Major concerns include:

- choice of site (preferably previously developed land, well connected to existing facilities and public transport routes)
- optimising density to reduce land take
- using less energy in construction
- reducing energy consumed in use/occupation
- efficient waste management
- controlling pollution
- engendering community pride and safe/secure neighbourhoods
- improving quality of life and accessibility for all
- respecting and improving existing ecological systems/habitats/improving biodiversity.

### Better Design

Leeds has a rich legacy of housing. Throughout history 'models' have been used to develop housing. A variety of house types were based on previous models, such as the Georgian terrace, the Victorian suburban villa, the 'back to back', the 1960s tower block, the 1930s semi. Some of these are more successful than others.

In recent years the model for new design has been limited and the design quality stifled. The rigid approach to house and layout design has led to detached or semi-detached plans with poorly enclosed front gardens and unimaginative architecture which are dominated by unrelieved vehicular provision. This has become a model that has failed to meet a number of the aspirations for housing.

An important aim of this guide is to encourage a variety of models (and some special individual designs) - building on the successful historical models that still work today. Developing in existing urban areas requires a response to context that has been lacking in recent years. In particular, there is a need to vary the limited 'palette' of volume house builders, which has been responsible for significant detrimental impact on the 'local distinctiveness' of Leeds. There are diverse character areas throughout Leeds, ranging from the intensive city centre to leafy suburbs. Situations from which appropriate design solutions may develop can be classified as city centre, urban, suburban and edge.

Highest quality design solutions should emerge in Leeds based on best practice.



#### GEORGIAN TERRACED HOUSE

In most city centre situations these have been converted to offices, but could still become attractive houses/flats



#### VICTORIAN SUBURBAN VILLA

Many have become high quality flats with private garden space



#### VICTORIAN ROW OF TERRACED HOUSES IN INNER SUBURBS

Robust buildings have lasted well and provide excellent streets provided the car is tamed



**INTER-WAR SUBURBAN SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES**  
Still traditional family homes in suburbs of Leeds



**RECENT LOW RISE BLOCK OF AFFORDABLE FLATS TO RENT**  
Attractive, award-winning design



**FORMER CLOTHING FACTORY**  
Now converted into luxury flats



**FLATS IN MEDIUM RISE TOWER BLOCK**  
1960s tower blocks have proved to be generally unsuitable for family housing - however some have been successfully improved/modernised



**RECENT RIVERSIDE APARTMENT BLOCK**  
Attractive flats with good balcony space



**MODERN MOVEMENT STYLE OF 1930S**  
Provides light, attractive living space

**RECENT 'OPEN PLAN ANYWHERE SUBURBIA' DETACHED HOUSES**

This limited model for housing has had a detrimental effect on the local distinctiveness



