



GWYNEDD

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DESIGN

Design of affordable housing will be carefully controlled by the Planning Authority when detailed permission for construction is sought, to comply with the following:

- Welsh Assembly Government Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12:Design (2002)
- Policies contained in the relevant Gwynedd Council Planning Authority Development Plans
- Other relevant sections of this Design Guide

Whether the site is allocated for housing under the relevant Gwynedd Council Planning Authority Development Plans, is an infill site or, exceptionally, is a site immediately adjacent to a village boundary, design of the development should be in accordance with good practice. Designers will need to demonstrate they have taken into consideration:

- The nature, orientation and environs of the site; retention of features such as existing through routes; views in and out; landmarks; important landscape elements e.g. trees and hedgerows (refer to the section on Site Development)
- The character of the surrounding buildings and open spaces, so that the development is sympathetic in scale, form, massing, and formality / informality (refer to the section on Building Design for definitions)
- Use of appropriate local materials and detailing for buildings, boundaries and paving (refer to sections on Development in Towns, Building in the Countryside, and Public Realm)
- Transport, energy efficiency, waste disposal, future maintenance, and flexibility (refer to the section on Sustainable Development)
- Safety and security of occupiers and property, minimisation of noise and nuisance, and the creation of quality neighbourhoods which foster a sense of ownership (refer to the section on Crime Prevention)

Affordable housing should provide

- Economy of construction, using materials and construction techniques equivalent to, or better than, those used for similar local properties for sale on the open market
- An adequate modern standard of living and sufficient space to meet the household's needs rather than aspirations i.e. not so spacious as to make it unaffordable in the future
- Energy efficiency and ease of maintenance

Design Principles

The number, size and type of affordable units to be included in any residential development is to be agreed with the Authority. This may include a mix of house types – terraced, semi-detached, detached or flats – to suit various households, dispersed around the site. Quality and space standards will apply to ensure that dwellings are of an adequate size for, and fulfil the needs of, occupiers (for information on specific development standards refer to Gwynedd Council Planning Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing)

The development should be designed to create

- An efficient layout that relates well to its surroundings, existing transport and pedestrian routes, local centre facilities and services
- A sense of place, created by appropriate built forms and attractive public spaces, in keeping with the local character
- Variety in housing types and densities providing a social mix, to ensure a diverse and sustainable community with low resident turnover
- Affordable units which are integrated into the overall development and indistinguishable from the open market housing
- Adequate external spaces for amenity use and parking, to avoid overlooking, and to prevent noise and disturbance. Private space should be defensible, i.e. clearly visible from the house but enclosed by landscape features or planting; public space should be easily maintained and controllable by passive surveillance from a number of dwellings
- Energy efficient buildings that incorporate eco-friendly materials and construction techniques, economical heating systems, and good thermal insulation, are inexpensive to run and maintain, healthier to live in, and will remain economically viable throughout their lifetime
- Flexible and adaptable accommodation suitable for all, including the elderly, disabled, or families with young children. Some units may be designed with potential for alteration at a later date, to meet the changing needs of the family, although future affordability must be maintained
- High standards of design and workmanship, using good quality local materials, whether in traditional or innovative ways, to create a neighbourhood that preserves and enhances the character of its surroundings

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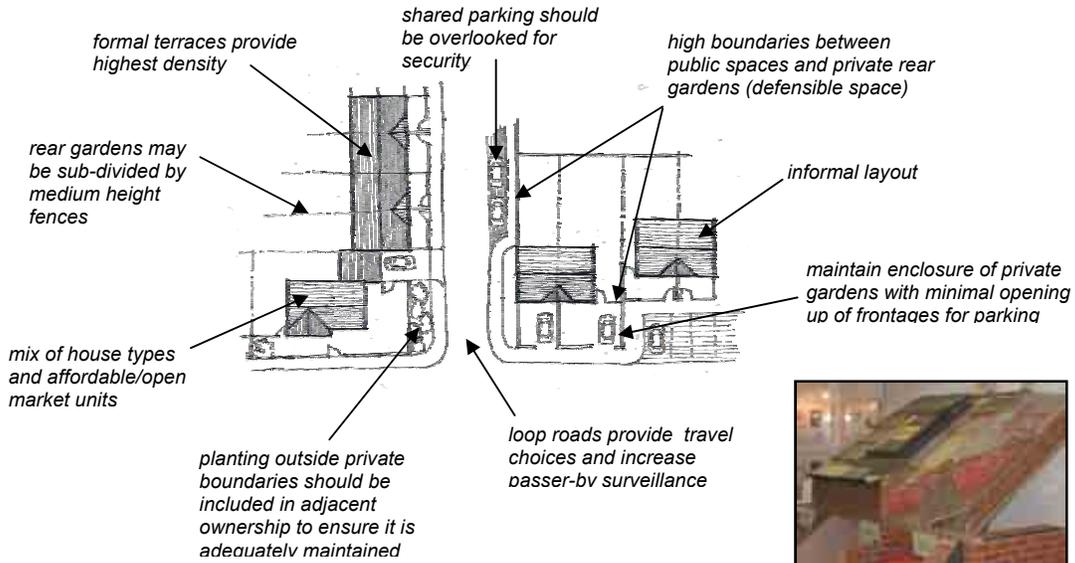
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Terraced housing achieves the highest densities, and is appropriate in both town (left) and village settings (right); a less formal feel can be created by stepping units to accommodate changes in level and irregular building lines, or the use of local features, detailing etc

Respect for the form, mass and scale of neighbouring buildings, and use of local materials, will integrate new housing into its setting and enhance existing character



High levels of insulation and air tightness make for energy efficient homes



The development pattern of villages has traditionally been fairly informal, and a more relaxed approach to layout design, with emphasis on hard and soft landscape features, will generally be most appropriate for new developments on village infill sites and rural exception sites

Where a genuine local need can be proved, conversion of buildings may be considered