



SUBURBAN DESIGN GUIDE

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

CROYDON COUNCIL

ISSUE 1

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An isometric illustration of a city street scene. The scene is dominated by red brick buildings with dark roofs, arranged in rows along a street. There are green trees and bushes scattered throughout the blocks. In the foreground, a school complex is visible, featuring a large orange building with the word 'SCHOOL' on its side, a basketball court, and a playground. A red double-decker bus is parked on the street. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on urban architecture.

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THIS DESIGN GUIDE

1.1.1 This design guide provides guidance for suburban residential developments and extensions and alterations to existing homes across the borough. It is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which should be used by residents, developers, builders and agents including architects and planning consultants in shaping development proposals, and will assist in making decisions on planning applications and inform the Council's pre-planning application service. Beyond providing technical design guidance, this guide sets out how residential development, including extensions and alterations, in neighbourhoods across the borough is part of a holistic strategy being driven by the Council to deliver tangible public benefits to suburban communities.

1.1.2 With a growing population there is a necessity to build more homes. This is reflected in the current housing target set in the Croydon Local Plan 2018; 32,890 new homes are expected to be delivered in the borough by 2036. It is anticipated that meeting housing need will become more challenging with the adoption of the emerging London Plan¹. In order to achieve well-designed places, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that '*To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places,*

with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified'. The places of Croydon (as defined in the Croydon Local Plan to *provide further design detail in the form of Place-specific development management policies aspiration to achieve good design while retaining and improving the distinctiveness of each place*), including the suburbs and neighbourhoods outside the main Metropolitan Centre of the borough, provide a great opportunity for delivering new homes and it is expected that one third of these, approximately 10,000, will be delivered through small scale suburban developments (windfall developments). In Croydon there are a number of low density and suburban locations which have been identified as having the capacity and ability to accommodate additional housing, benefiting new and existing residents. New homes will allow Croydon to provide truly lifetime communities, places where there are homes for people of all ages; first homes, homes for families and homes for down sizers. Similarly, residential extensions and alterations can allow homes to be adapted to suit the changing needs of residents. This allows people to stay in the communities they love through generations.

1.1.3 The evolution of the suburbs to provide homes that will meet the needs of a growing population has the potential to add new vitality to the places of Croydon. More people living in a place provides a better prospect of improved public services, such as transport and health care. This

is particularly important in the remotest of suburban locations which have suffered from a lack of infrastructure to support the local community. The Council and partners are planning for increased population and how services can be delivered to support them. For example, investment in new transport initiatives will benefit those communities currently poorly served, as well as benefitting new residents. Infrastructure policies and site allocations within the Croydon Local Plan (including, for example, sites for schools and health facilities) and the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan provide for the increased demand forecast as a result of the borough wide development growth. Increased populations also provide the basis for local shops to remain open, allowing local businesses to thrive, and supporting local shopping parades as thriving centres of the community.

1.1.4 It must however be recognised that delivering approximately 10,000 homes in the suburban places of Croydon will result in an evolution of the existing character of suburban streets and that the increased density of homes can impact on the amenity of existing residents if not properly managed. This guide provides technical design guidance that seeks to both limit any negative impact on places, including the amenity of existing residents, and frame opportunities where increased densities can present significant opportunities to enhance places and bring benefits to communities.

¹ As amended from time to time.



Figure 1.1a: Higher density housing designed by Peter Barber Architects exemplifying high quality and enjoyable design that enhances the character of the local area without replicating the existing pattern, scale, form or materials of the context. (Photo: Morley von Sternberg)

1.2 WHAT IS COVERED BY THIS GUIDANCE?

THIS GUIDANCE IS BROKEN DOWN INTO THREE SECTIONS:

1. Suburban Residential Development
2. Areas of Focussed Intensification
3. Residential Extensions and Alterations.

The table below shows where the guidance is applicable.

	SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	AREA OF FOCUSSED INTENSIFICATION	RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS
Residential development proposals, generally under 25 homes	X	X	
Mixed-use proposals, including those that would deliver more than 25 homes		X	
Not generally located in the Croydon Metropolitan Centre and District Centres*	X	X	
Anywhere in the borough			X

*In these areas there is greater scope for development than allowed for in this guide.

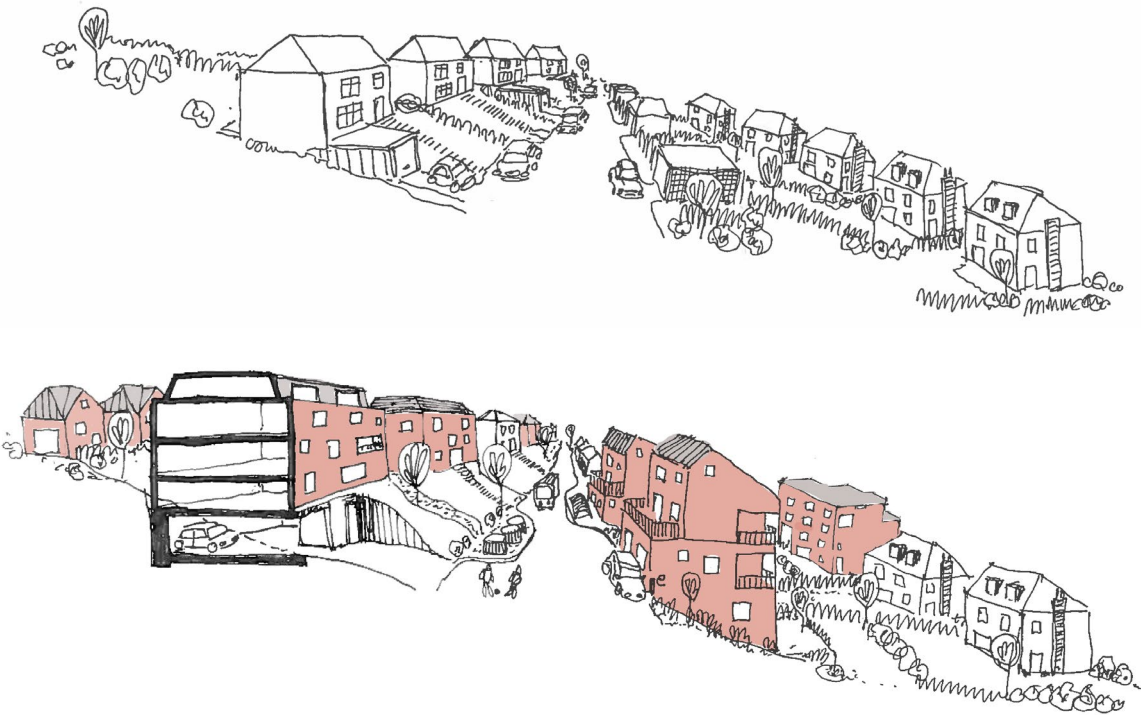


Figure 1.2a: Before and after - Possible development within an Area of Focussed Intensification.



Figure 1.2b: Before and after - Suburban Residential Development.

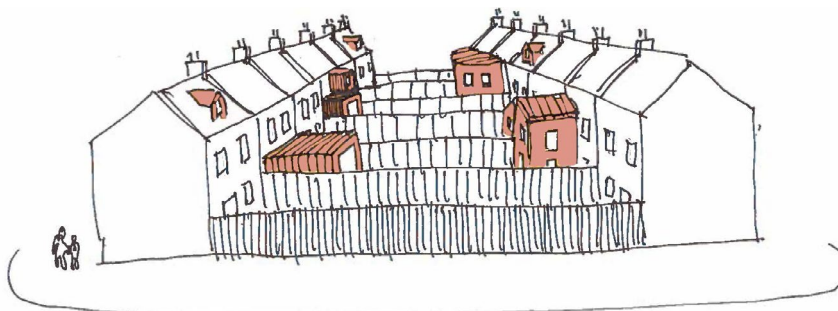
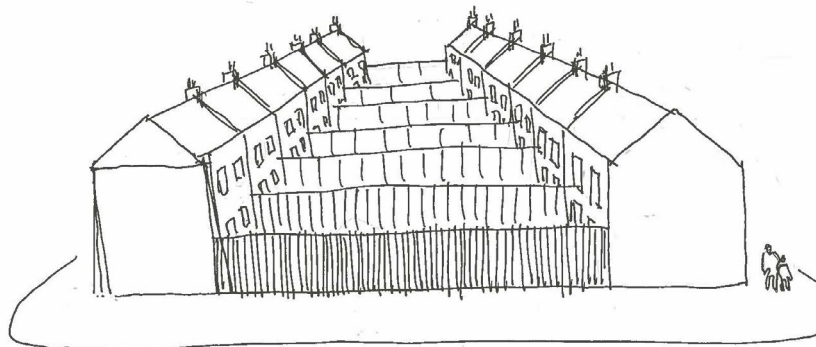


Figure 1.2c: Before and after - Residential Extensions & Alterations.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

1.2.1 This guide is intended for the use of any person involved in proposing or assessing development proposals as previously outlined. It provides guidance for residents, home owners, community groups, developers and associated agents in designing their proposals. It does not negate the need for a planning application.

1.2.2 While development in the borough is managed by the policies set out in the Croydon Local Plan and the London Plan², it is recommended that regard should be given to this supplementary guidance when preparing designs and planning applications, including those which are Permitted Development. It will assist Local Planning Authority officers in making decisions on planning applications and is a material consideration in assessing planning applications. In line with National, London and borough policies, poor design can be a reason for refusal, therefore the use of this guidance is important. Use of this guidance should lead to better quality developments that contribute positively to Croydon, benefit the people of Croydon and should add value for those who develop too.

1.2.3 This document not only establishes guidance on how to achieve an acceptable design, but aims to encourage the highest quality of design by promoting a well thought-through design process, balanced with the need to protect neighbouring amenity, so that the places we live in are both attractive and liveable and contribute to Croydon's future success.

WINDFALL SITES: WHAT ARE THEY?

1.2.4 Windfall sites are sites which are not identified for development as an allocated site under the Croydon Local Plan, including many suburban sites. For example, existing homes that are redeveloped to provide several homes or proposals for building homes in rear gardens.

WHAT IS AN SPD?

1.2.5 An SPD is a Supplementary Planning Document. SPDs form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). They are produced to provide supplementary guidance, information or clarification on the Local Plan or other Development Plan policies. While SPDs do not carry the statutory weight that the Local Plan policies or Development Plan documents do, they should be used as guidance and material consideration in preparing and assessing planning applications

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL PLAN

1.2.6 The Croydon Local Plan provides the planning policy context for this guide. The policies within the Local Plan have greater weight in determining planning applications as part of the Council's development plan, but it is expected that applicants shall adhere to this guide as a significant material consideration to the determination of planning applications. When determining applications, the Croydon Local Plan and its policies, along with relevant guidance, are taken as a whole to reach a balanced decision.

1.2.7 The Croydon Local Plan was adopted in February 2018 and sets out the housing target for the borough. Croydon is planning for 32,890 new homes by 2036. Given the limited developable land available for residential development in the built up areas, the need to accommodate homes across the borough to meet the borough's need, whilst not undermining the valued character and heritage of Croydon is imperative. In order to deliver on the housing target for the borough, it is expected that these homes will be provided through approximately: 11,000 new homes in the Croydon Metropolitan Centre; 7,000 on allocated sites across the borough; 10,000 on windfall sites; and a further 5,000 being either completed or under construction already. This equates to approximately 1,600 new homes per year by 2036 amounting to roughly 1 new home for every 5 that currently exist. This reliance on windfall sites is supported by the NPPF and the Croydon Local Plan provides the evidence base to support this position, having been

² As amended from time to time.

found sound at the Croydon Local Plan examination. Furthermore, policies within the Local Plan protect from the substantial loss of residential gardens in line with the NPPF guidance for windfall sites.

1.2.8 In the Croydon Local Plan, Policy DM10 outlines the expected modes of suburban development on windfall sites including conversion, additions, infill and plot subdivision, rear garden development and regeneration, while Table 6.3

designates four (4) Areas of Focussed Intensification; areas with established infrastructure but relatively low density and the potential to accommodate a significant increase in residential development. Policy DM10.11 provides the policy that development in areas of focussed intensification should be assessed against. The Local Plan states that *‘Developments in focussed intensification areas should contribute to an increase in density and a gradual change in character.*

They will be expected to enhance and sensitively respond to existing character by being of high quality and respectful of the existing place in which they would be placed’. Further detail in relation to the expected evolution or change in character of different areas is set out in Table 6.4 of the Local Plan (see Figure 1.2d below).

Method of accommodating growth and improving Croydon	How it works	Applicable policies
Evolution without significant change of area's character	Each character type has a capacity for growth. Natural evolution is an ongoing process where development occurs in a way that positively responds to the local context and seeks to reinforce and enhance the existing predominant local character. Most development throughout the borough will be of this nature.	DM10.1 – DM10.10
Guided Intensification associated with enhancement of area's local character	Areas where the local character cannot be determined as a result of no one character being dominant, further growth can be accommodated through place specific enhancement policies.	DM34 – DM49
Focussed Intensification associated with change of area's local character	Further growth can be accommodated through more efficient use of infrastructure. Due to the high availability of community and commercial services, intensification will be supported in and around District, Local and potential Neighbourhood Centres which have sufficient capacity for growth.	DM10.11
Redevelopment	In larger areas where growth would result in a change to the local character it must be supported by masterplans or design codes.	DM36.2 DM38.1 DM49.1

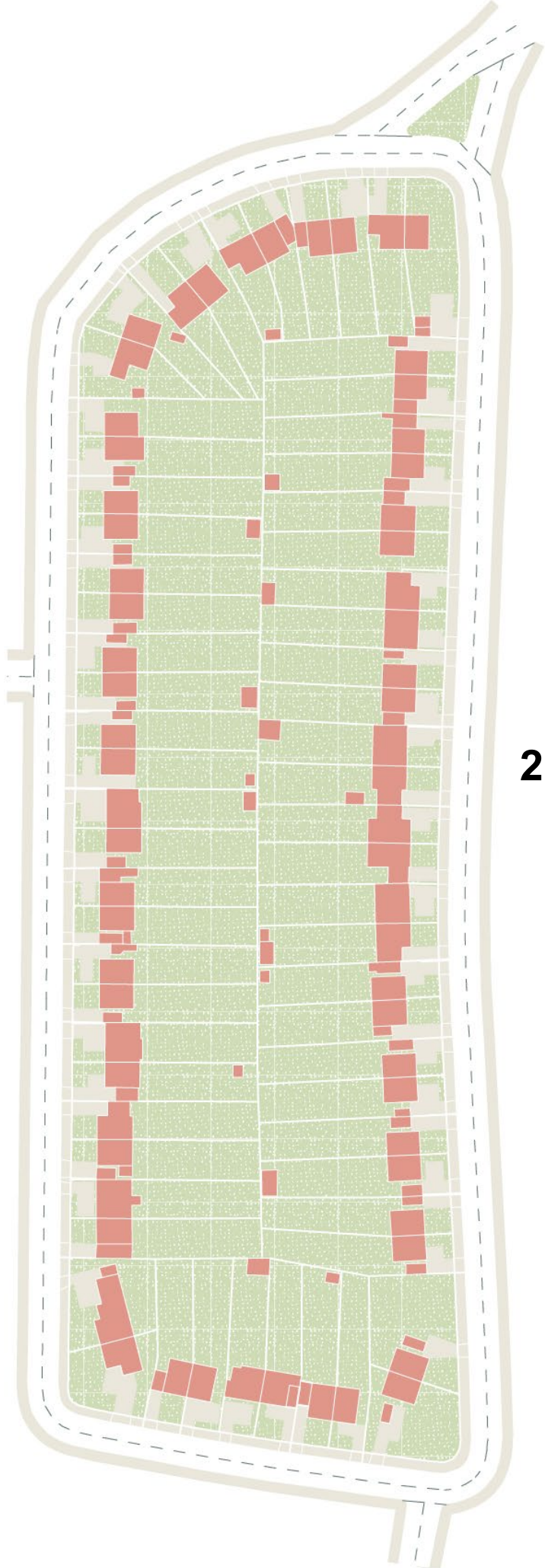
Figure 1.2d: Table 6.4 from the Croydon Local Plan.

1.3 EVOLUTION OF THE SUBURBS

1.3.1 The suburbs as we know them today have largely evolved over the past century. Inter and post-war development saw the construction of large areas of suburban housing, expanding from the terraced suburban streets built in the Victorian era. In the past 50 years, the suburbs have continued to evolve, through the construction of new homes, as well as extensions and alterations to existing homes. Development coming forward today is part of this on-going evolution of the suburbs to provide new housing for younger and older generations, and will continue across the borough in all types of neighbourhoods. Whether through development of land to the rear of a row of terraced houses, or the redevelopment of a larger home into several family homes, the indicative evolution of typical street patterns is illustrated in Figures 1.3a, 1.3b and 1.3c, and will result in more and larger buildings. The process of suburban evolution indicated here is expected over a period of 10 – 15 years, however it is recognised that market conditions may bring about change in a shorter period of time. The guidance is written so that it is relevant to creating sustainable neighbourhoods regardless of the rate of development to ensure that the benefits of such growth are optimised.

Key

- Existing Houses
- Existing back lands (including garages)
- New Homes



2018 — ■

— — — — — ➔ 2036

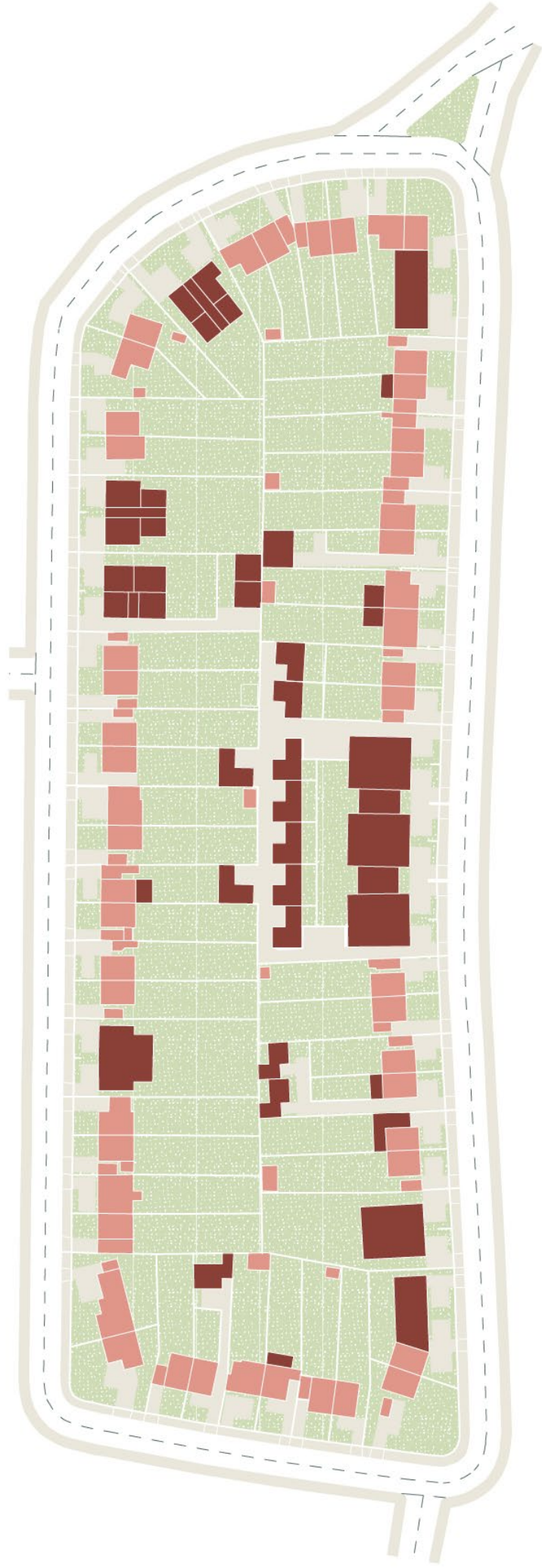
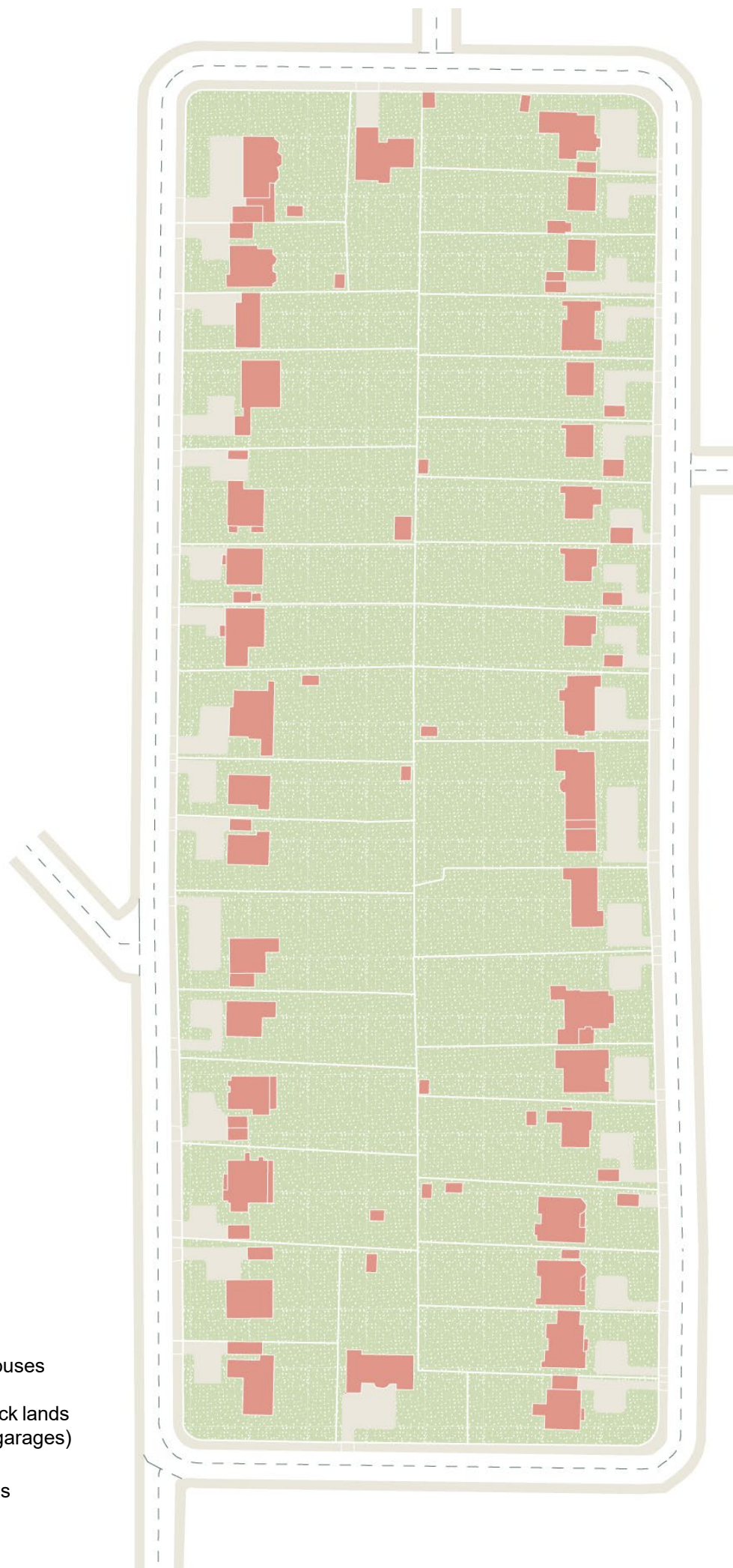


Figure 1.3a: Evolution of streets with semi-detached homes.



Key

- Existing Houses
- Existing back lands (including garages)
- New Homes

--- → 2036

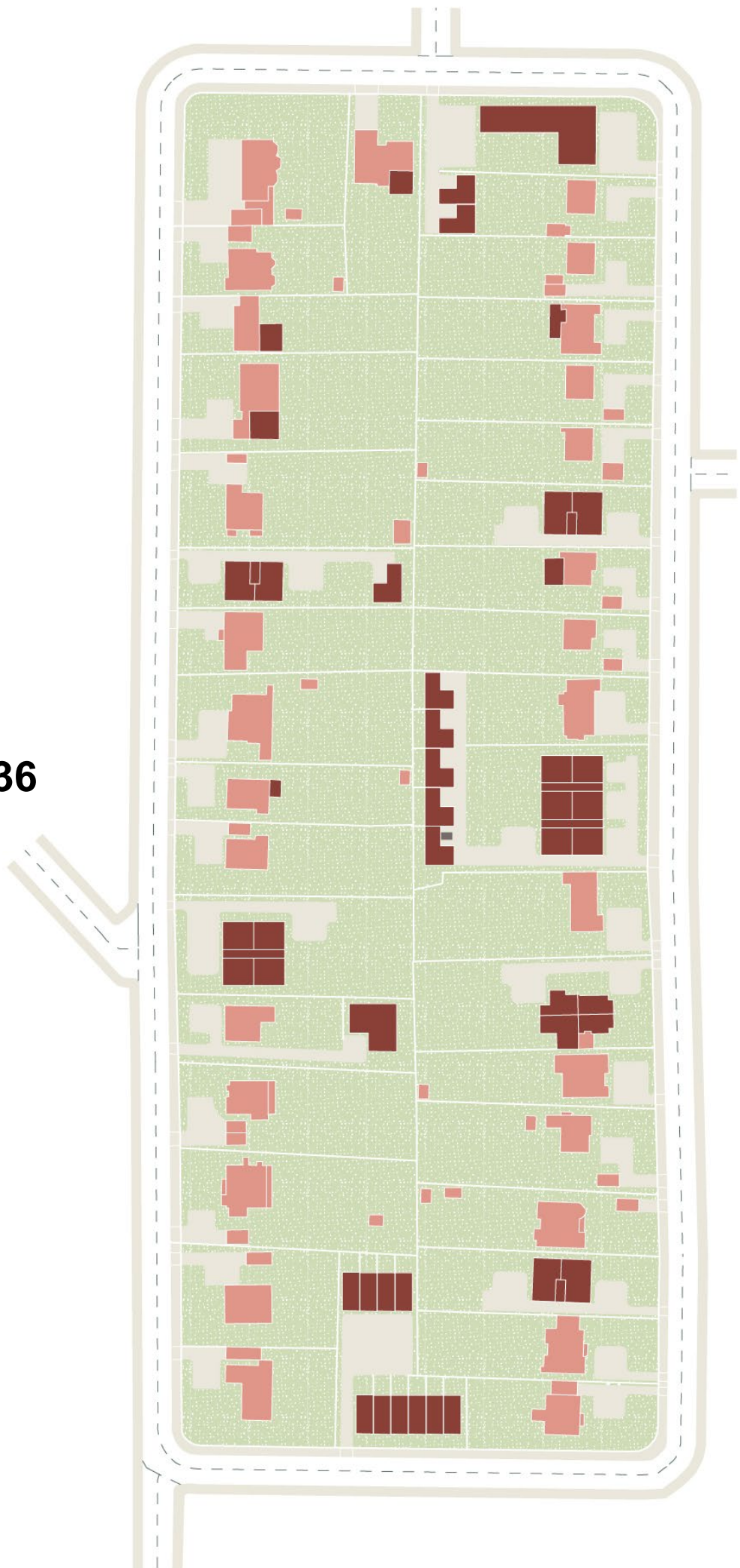
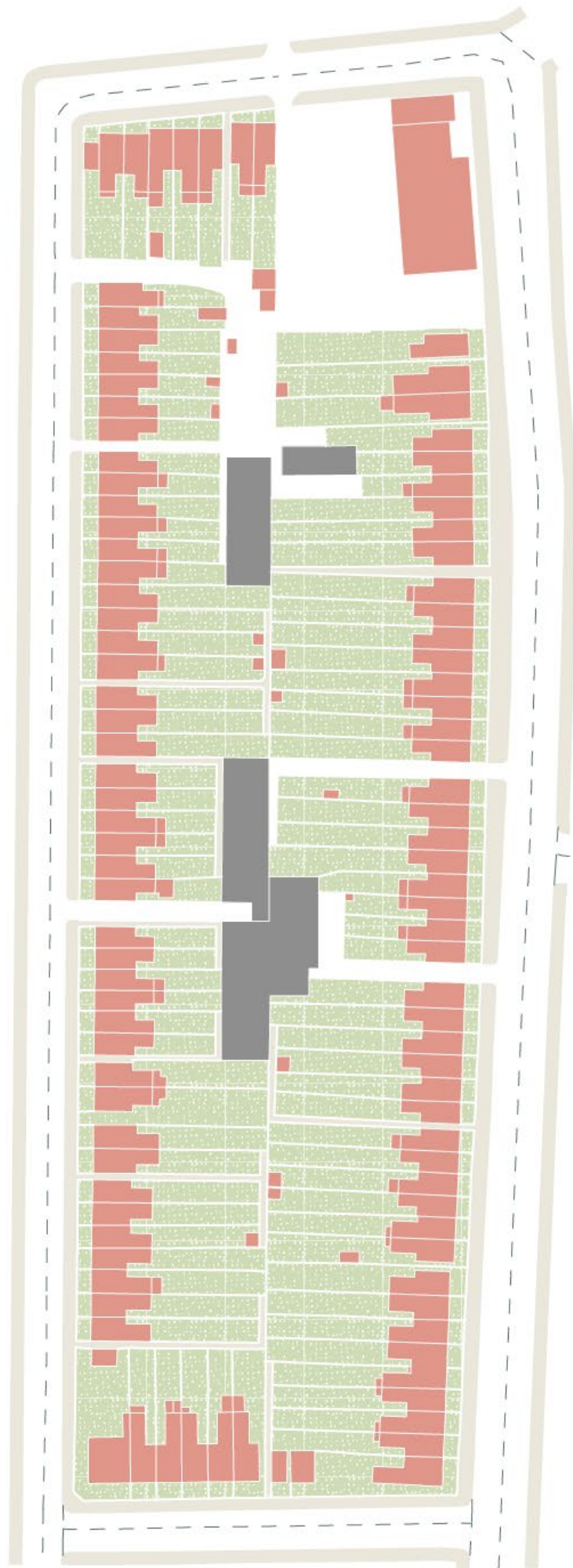


Figure 1.3b: Evolution of streets with detached homes.



2018 — —

Key

- Existing Houses
- Existing back lands (including garages)
- New Homes

--- → 2036

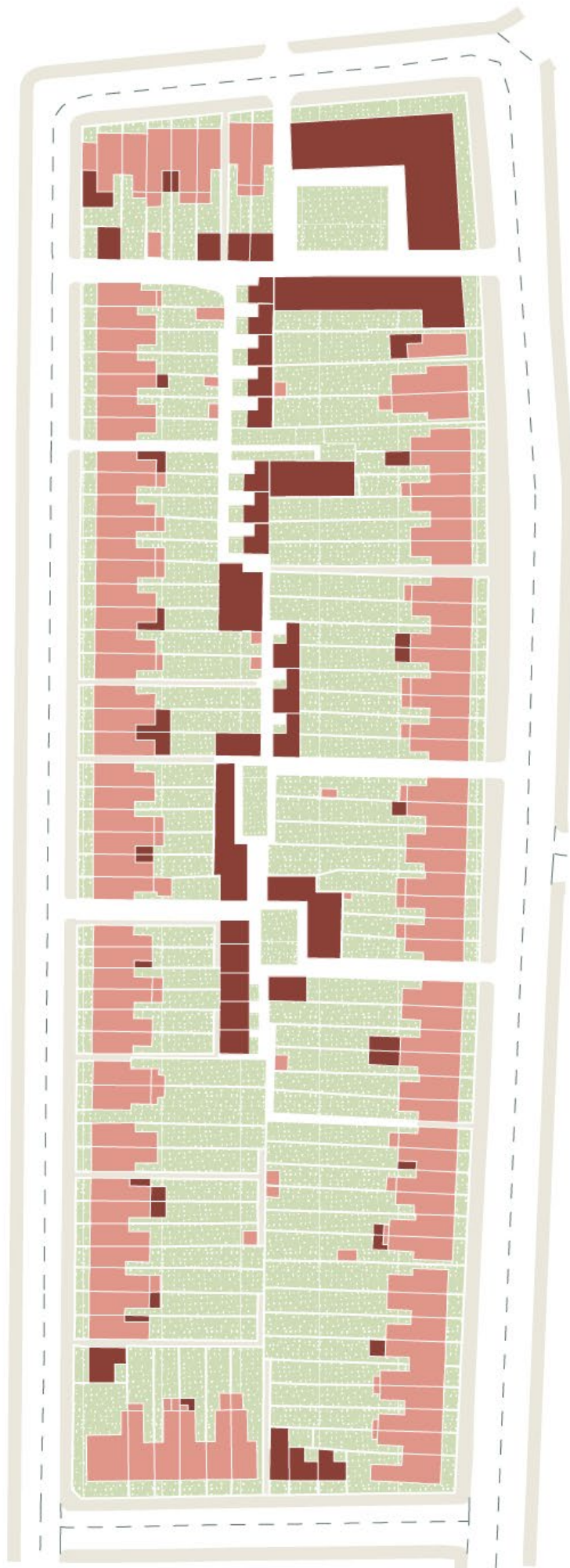


Figure 1.3c: Evolution of streets with terraced homes.

1.3.2 The evolution of the suburbs is underpinned by the strategic objectives of the Croydon Local Plan which are required to fulfil Croydon's spatial vision and deliver the Croydon Local Plan policies. Key design principles that support the objectives of the Croydon Local Plan and will help to ensure suburban growth is suitable and sustainable include:

- Creating places where people can live, work and play within their neighbourhood;
- Providing homes for people of all ages and needs to live in one neighbourhood, with the services to support them;
- Delivering developments that respond to and enhance the existing character of a neighbourhood and its built appearance;
- Delivering development that preserves or enhances designated heritage assets³,

³ Designated heritage assets include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments.

- non-designated heritage assets⁴, views and landmarks;
- Resilient and adaptable built form that is capable of accommodating future change;
- Delivering environmentally sustainable communities which are designed to minimise environmental impacts and reduce consumption of energy and other resources;
- Creating places that are legible and easy to navigate;
- Creating well-designed streets⁵, that are attractive and operational;
- Delivering walkable and cycle-friendly communities;
- Providing access to open spaces;
- Providing access to transport infrastructure and other public services;
- Providing access to shopping

⁴ Non-designated heritage areas include Locally Listed Buildings, Local Heritage Areas, Locally Listed Historic Parks and Gardens (Archaeological Priority Areas).

⁵ Refer to TfL's Healthy Streets for London guidance available at: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-for-london.pdf>.

- and leisure facilities;
- Contributing to the community's health and well-being;
- Contributing to economic activity and prosperity; and
- Supporting and encouraging social cohesion.

1.3.3 Suburban growth occurs whether it is planned or not. As families grow and the population increases, housing needs to change and the suburbs change with them. Some residents choose to renovate their homes to accommodate a growing family and others redevelop, while some downsize or seek alternate housing options. This evolution shapes the suburbs and identifies a need for the guidance set out in this document to ensure that the suburbs are sustainable for future generations.



Figure 1.3d: Larger suburban developments, of up to 25 homes as covered by this guide, may result in the creation of a new suburban street with a mixture of flats and houses.



Figure 1.3e: A development of flats designed by Alison Brooks Architects within an existing residential street. (Photo: Paul Riddle)

1.4 DESIGN AND PLANNING PROCESS

1.4.1 The Council requires development to be high quality and this should inform the design of a project brief at the earliest stage, as well as the subsequent design proposals.

1.4.2 For some residential extensions and alterations, the proposal may be covered by Permitted Development rights. It is crucial to determine whether a proposal needs planning permission before undertaking any work⁶. Any works to a Listed Building, including those covered by Permitted Development rights, are likely to require Listed Building consent in addition to any planning permission.

1.4.3 For further advice on whether planning permission may be required, or for any planning enquiries, please refer to the Council's website⁷.

⁶ Information about the planning process and relevant documents, policy and legislation can be found on the Planning Portal at: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

⁷ Information on the pre-application services provided by Croydon Council can be found at: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/pre-application-meeting-service>

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

1.4.4 Engaging an architect, designer and/or planning professional can help to ensure your proposal meets your requirements, along with relevant planning policies and guidance.

1.4.5 By working with a professional, applicants are more likely to achieve high-quality proposals, which will add greater value to a development.

1.4.6 It is strongly advisable to employ a registered architect or competent agent to design your proposal.

1.4.7 For more complex developments, it can be necessary to seek the assistance of planning consultancies to advise and to help take your scheme through the planning process. You may also need to take advice from other consultants including structural engineers, quantity surveyors and transport consultants.

DEVELOPING A BRIEF

1.4.8 Regardless of the size of your project, a brief should be developed in consultation with your architect and/or any other consulting professionals. A brief should clearly set out the required outcome of the proposal, be that in terms of required space or a particular architectural ambition. It should also identify potential constraints. A brief should respond to the relevant aspects within this guide depending on type of project.

SCOPING CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1.4.9 In order to understand how a proposal might respond to the site and surrounding context, it is important to understand what constraints and opportunities might be relevant to a future development.

1.4.10 Planning constraints, including flooding, Metropolitan Green Belt Land, Conservation Areas, Local Heritage Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeology, can be searched using the Local Plan interactive map⁸. Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings are not contained on this map and should be searched on the relevant council webpages⁹. Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments can also be searched using Historic England's National Heritage List for England¹⁰.

1.4.11 For proposals affecting the historic environment, including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, further advice is provided in section 1.4 Heritage.

1.4.12 Applicants should consider both the existing constraints on a site and future constraints, such as where planning permission has been granted on neighbouring land but has not yet been built. Wherever possible it is helpful to include both existing and approved neighbouring developments on submitted drawings to help illustrate the cumulative impact of development along a street and how this may affect the streetscene.

⁸ Available at: <http://www.planvu.co.uk/croydon2018/>

⁹ Available at: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/conservation>.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True>.

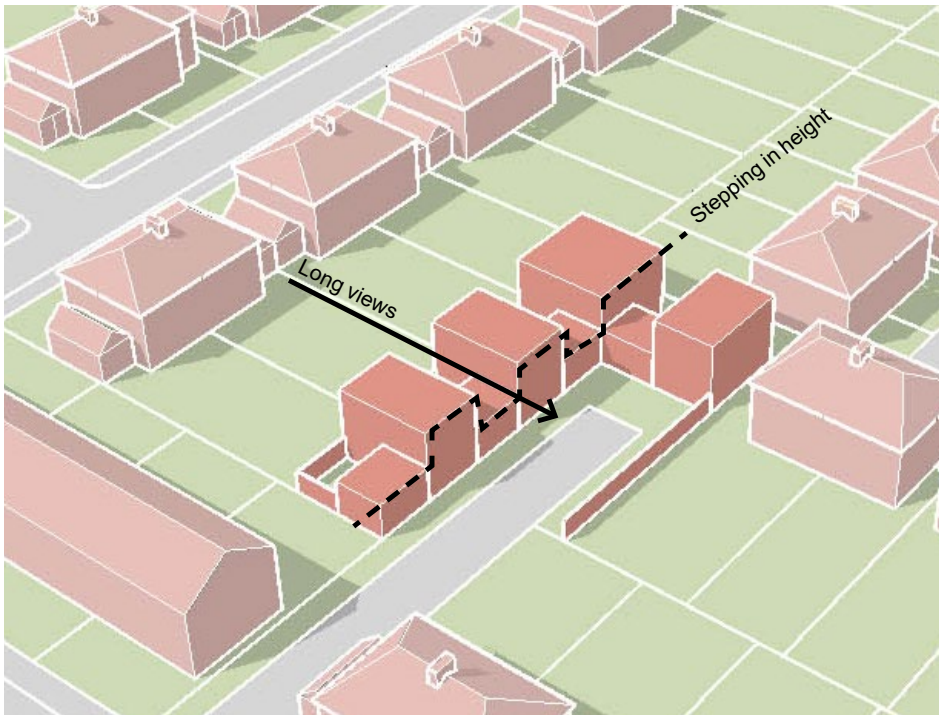


Figure 1.4a: A diagram indicating how site constraints and opportunities might inform the development of the design. The proposal has introduced a stepping form as per guidance Section 2.13.



Figure 1.4b: A pair of houses designed by Bell Phillips Architects with a strong suburban character and contemporary design. (Photo: Kilian O'Sullivan)

HERITAGE

1.4.13 Particular care must be taken for a proposal which impacts on heritage assets. These include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings and Local Heritage Areas. Heritage assets can be physically affected by proposals, and also affected by proposals in their surroundings (their setting).

1.4.14 Much of the guidance contained in this document is relevant to proposals affecting heritage assets. However, where there is conflict between this guidance and the conservation of heritage assets, the conservation of heritage assets has more planning weight and should be prioritised.

1.4.15 Where a proposal affects a heritage asset, the following process should be followed:

1. Identify heritage assets affected by the proposals. Information on scoping

constraints and opportunities is available in section 1.4.9. For larger proposals, heritage assets in the surrounding area as well as on the site itself should be identified.

2. Understand what is important about the heritage asset (its significance). The reasons why a heritage asset is significant differs in each case. A number of resources are available via the Conservation pages of the council's website¹¹ to help identify significance. Dependent on the nature of your proposal and the asset(s) affected, further historic research may be needed to understand the significance of the site, such as looking at historic maps, or on-site assessment.
3. Design the proposal to respond to the significance of the

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/conservation>.

heritage assets. Elements of a proposal such as scale and massing, layout, proportions, materials, architectural style or positioning should be designed to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets. Dependent on their particular significance, it may be appropriate for your proposal to directly imitate the architectural style, or for a complementary but distinct modern approach to be taken.

1.4.16 The above process should be outlined within a Heritage Statement, and submitted with your planning application to explain and justify your approach.

1.4.17 Please check the Conservation pages of the Council's website for further resources. For conservation areas, the council's Conservation Area General Guidance (CAGG) and area-specific Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans (CAAMPs) provide a summary of significance and detailed guidance on the type of development which may be appropriate¹². These documents should be consulted at the start of any design process affecting a conservation area.

1.4.18 Where a proposal affects heritage assets, engaging with the council at a pre-application stage is strongly encouraged. Engaging a heritage specialist and/or conservation architect can also be extremely beneficial¹³.

¹² Available at <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/conservation/conservation-areas>.

¹³ Although not exhaustive nor a recommendation, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), Royal Institute of British Architects and Architects Accredited in Building Conservation Ltd. all hold lists of relevant conservation specialists.



Figure 1.4c: An infill development in the East India Conservation Area.

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING MODELS

1.4.19 The council seeks to support good-quality innovative models of housing, particularly self-provided housing.

1.4.20 For non-standard, bespoke and innovative models of residential development such as co-housing, co-living, community-led housing, self-build and custom build, there may be flexibility in the application of aspects of this guidance, however the Council will not accept any reduction in design quality or standard of residential accommodation. For co-housing and co-living schemes that propose shared amenities and facilities in place of amenities and facilities ordinarily provided within or as part of a residential unit, the Council will seek to ensure that individual units are appropriately sized and liveable and that any shared amenities and facilities are also appropriately sized, comfortable and genuinely useable by all residents. Any community-led scheme would be required to conform to the accepted principles of a community-led project¹⁴.

1.4.21 Non-standard or innovative housing models will not be supported if they are being proposed as a way of avoiding residential space and design standards or that would result in substandard residential accommodation.

DEVELOPING A DESIGN

1.4.22 The development of a design proposal is a dynamic process and can take many iterations before it is successful. It should develop out of the brief and should adhere to the relevant planning policies and guidance. Certain aspects, such

as sustainable design and building regulations, must be considered in all proposals.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

1.4.23 It is important that the design of a suburban proposal does not have a detrimental impact on the environment. Adaptable, sustainable buildings will better respond to the changing needs of society and the environment as the suburbs continue to evolve.

1.4.24 Proposals should be designed to reduce reliance on energy; for instance, utilising natural daylight and ventilation, whilst being orientated to avoid overheating. Materials with better performance qualities, such as insulation, should be used wherever possible. Landscaping is a key factor in embedding environmental sustainability into a design and should be treated as an integral part of any proposal, where appropriate. If considered at an early stage, insulation, heating, ventilation systems and lighting can all be integrated with the building design. Integrated design ensures that comfort and conditions are optimised at minimum cost and energy consumption.

1.4.25 An environmentally responsive proposal will consider the local environmental impacts of the development, such as biodiversity and flooding. Developments within Flood Zones 2 and 3 will not usually be supported and would require sequential and exception tests as outlined in Policy DM25 and Table 8.1 of the Croydon Local Plan. Development should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and should refer to Section 2.33 for guidance.

1.4.26 Sustainable design also takes into account the need to create lifetime neighbourhoods,

providing places where people of all ages can live and work. Therefore, proposals should consider how it can be adapted for different users and uses.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

1.4.27 Building regulations should be considered from the early stage of a design process. Building Regulations approval will be required for all suburban residential developments and the majority of residential extensions & alterations, including fire safety, energy efficiency, sound and thermal insulation and the structural stability of an extension.

ENGAGING YOUR NEIGHBOURS

1.4.28 It is important and recommended that you talk to your neighbours and anyone else who may be affected by your proposals at an early stage as possible to properly consider how neighbouring amenity may be affected. This should occur before a planning application is submitted or when development occurs under Permitted Development. Responding to neighbours' concerns in a meaningful manner can help to develop an acceptable proposal.

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

1.4.29 For information and guidance on the application process, including pre-applications¹⁵, Design and Access Statements (DAS) and the Validation Checklist¹⁶, please refer to Croydon Council's website and the Planning Portal¹⁷.

¹⁵ <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/pre-application-meeting-service>.

¹⁶ <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/makeapplication/validation-checklist>.

¹⁷ Information about the planning process and relevant documents, policy and legislation can be found on the Planning Portal at: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>.

¹⁴ Principles and further information available at: <https://www.communityledhousing.london/clh/>.

