

The draft Birmingham Design Guide - Overview of the Document's Structure

The Design Guide is comprised of a suite of documents, providing guidance on all elements of development.

The suite is made up of a tier of 6 documents, with an overarching Design Principles Document and 5 supporting City Manuals. These collectively form the Birmingham Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The Design Guide Principles Document

The Design Guide Principles Document is structured around 5 Themes, under which are a number of Design Principles development must effectively address and respond to.

These 5 Themes are:

1. The Birmingham ID
2. Streets & Spaces
3. Landscape & Green Infrastructure
4. Healthy Living & Working Places
5. Efficient and Future-ready

The Design Guide's City Manuals

The Design Guide's 5 City Manuals provide further guidance on how to fulfil the requirements of the design principles. There is a City Manual for each Theme, with references given in the design principles to which element (City Note) of the City Manual users should refer to.

The 5 City Manuals:

1. The Birmingham ID City Manual
2. Streets & Spaces City Manual
3. Landscape & Green Infrastructure City Manual
4. Healthy Living & Working Places City Manual
5. Efficient and Future-ready City Manual

DESIGN PRINCIPLES DOCUMENT				
The Birmingham ID	Streets & Spaces	Landscape & Green Infrastructure	Healthy Living & Working Places	Efficient and Future-ready
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Further guidance on how to fulfil the design principles				
CITY MANUALS				
The Birmingham ID	Streets & Spaces	Landscape & Green Infrastructure	Healthy Living & Working Places	Efficient and Future-ready

Figure 1: Table illustrating how the City Manuals link with the design themes in the Design Principles document

END OF SECTION

An example of how a Design Principle and City Manual link

Design Principle 2 (in the Design Principles Document) relates to the use of character assessments to gain an understanding of the surrounding area.

As highlighted, the design principle makes reference to 'City Note ID-1 in the Birmingham ID City Manual' for more guidance on undertaking an assessment.

Character assessment

In order for a new development to successfully contribute to Birmingham's ID, design teams must have an appreciation and understanding of the surrounding character and land-uses.

The character of an area comprises a number of elements and layers, often unique to a given location or site. From the function, style and detail of a specific building or group of buildings, up to neighbourhood level where street patterns, densities and environmental character are formed.

When creating new proposals, architects should have an understanding of, and embrace, all these elements, ensuring schemes successfully acknowledge and interpret relevant characteristics into their

proposal. Where the surrounding character is poor, or there is a design rationale to ignore established character, proposals must lead to an enhancement of the area.

A character assessment will be an important tool in understanding the context of an area, the scope of which should be relative to the scale of the development and the nature of its surroundings. For example, developments involving tall buildings, those within the urban fringe or a conservation area may require an assessment that extends beyond their immediate hinterland.

The below (coupled with further guidance in City Note ID-1 of the Birmingham ID Manual) are some of the elements design teams should assess within a character assessment, to help inform and inspire their design process.

Neighbourhoods:

- Densities.
- Streets, roads and routes.
- Plot widths/block widths/urban grain.
- Land uses.
- Topography/views/focal points/skyline.
- Public realm/art.
- Landscape character.
- Cultural and social mapping.

Buildings:

- Role of buildings.
- Architectural styles and detailing.
- Materials.
- Scale, height and massing.
- Roof-scape.
- Façade emphasis.
- Outdoor space.
- Boundary treatments.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE	2
Character assessment	
BDP Policies: PG3, TP12.	
The design of proposals must be informed by a clear understanding of the surrounding area's character. A direct synergy between the proposed and the existing should be evident and explained; unless there is a clear justification for an alternative approach; or an opportunity for character enhancement.	

Figure 2: a snap shot of Design Principle 2, with the text referencing the Birmingham ID City Manual and City Note ID-1

City Note ID-1 then provides further detail on the different elements a character assessment should consider and acknowledge.

Understanding character

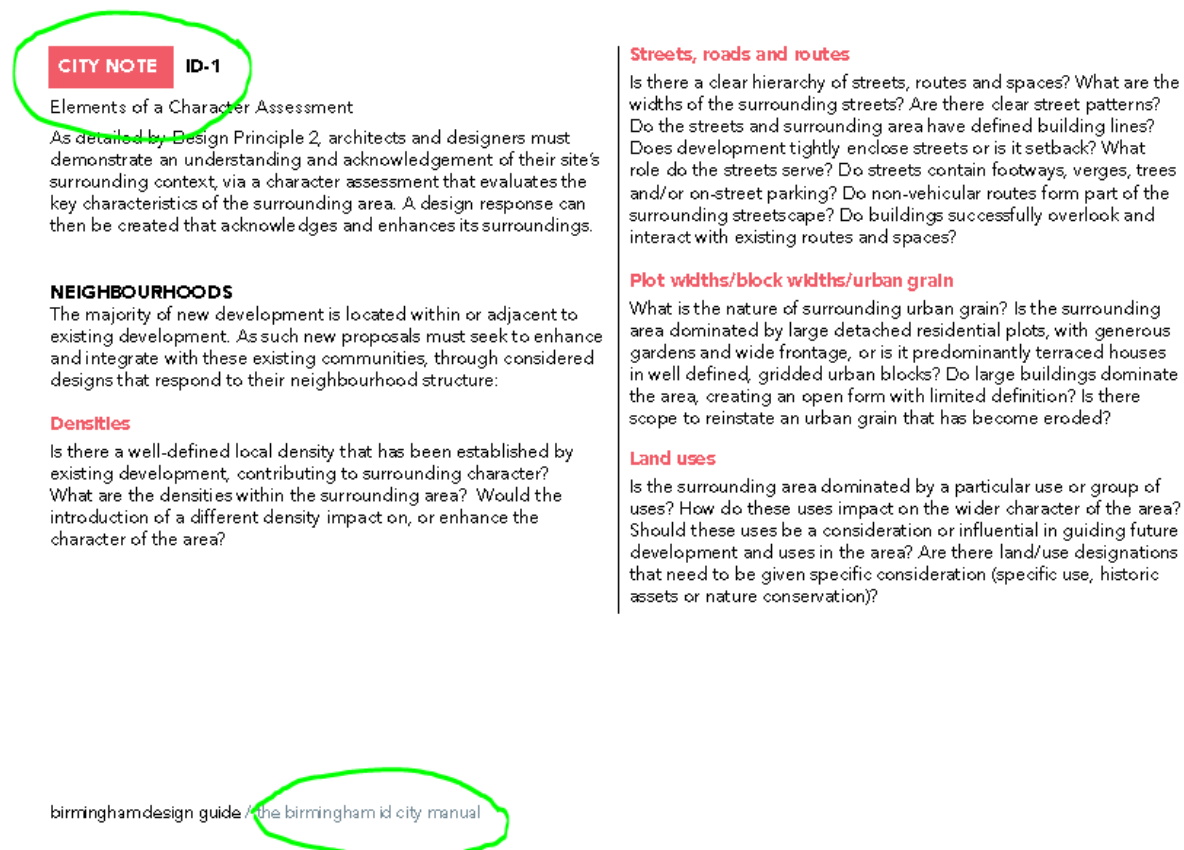


Figure 3: a snap shot of City Note ID-1 in the Birmingham ID City Manual

When submitting a planning application, proposals must demonstrate they have undertaken a character assessment (informed by the guidance in City Note ID-1) as part of their design process, to aligned with Design Principle 2.

Further Queries

Please email queries to: DesignGuide@birmingham.gov.uk

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