

Edinburgh Design Guidance

2024/25 Update



Edinburgh Design Guidance Consultation Draft

December 2024

What is the guidance for?

- Sets out the Council's expectations for design quality in new development.
- Aims to promote good place-making by:
 - Providing guidance on how to comply with planning policies.
 - Guiding the approach to the design of streets, spaces and buildings.
 - Explaining key ideas that need to be considered.
 - Giving examples of good quality design
- Material consideration for planning applications

Context of the Review

- Guidance last updated and adopted January 2020.
- New draft updated to align with:
 - National Planning Framework 4
 - City Plan 2030
 - City Mobility Plan
 - Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan
 - Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan
 - New/amended legislation

Context of the Review

- Developing collaboratively with input from the following Council teams:
 - Planning (lead team)
 - Transport, Strategy & Partnerships
 - Flood Prevention
 - Environmental Protection
 - Waste Management
 - Climate Change
 - Equally Safe
- Further input from external stakeholders.

Changes Across Document

- Guidance on responding to the historic environment and accessibility integrated throughout the document.
- Updated illustrations, diagrams and case studies.
- Document restructured to align with NPF4 themes: 'Sustainable Places' and 'Liveable Places'.

Document Structure

- **Sustainable Places**

- Context
- Climate Mitigation
- Climate Adaptation
- Addressing the Nature Crisis
- Sustainable Transport

- **Liveable Places**

- Mixed Communities
- Distinctive Places
- Healthy, Safe and Welcoming Environments

- **Appendix**

- Supporting information and detailed technical guidance

2.1.2 HOUSING MIX, SIZE AND TENURE

- Provide a mix of homes that meets the needs of a range of household types and sizes, including families, older people and disabled people.
- Design new homes to be inclusive, accessible, and adaptable.
- Provide a design and layout that is tenure neutral.
- Provide future residents with adequate space for healthy living.

City Plan 2030 Policies

Env 26 – Housing Density

Env 33 - Amenity

Housing Policies (Hou 1 – 7)

NPF4 Policies

Policy 14 - Design, quality, and place.

Policy 16 - Quality homes

Well-designed neighbourhoods provide a variety and choice of homes to suit all needs and ages. This includes people who require affordable housing or other rented homes, families, older people, students, and people with physical disabilities or mental health needs.

Neighbourhoods also benefit when key community facilities are located within safe, convenient walking distance of homes. Please refer to [Chapter “1.5.2 Living Well Locally” on page 53](#) for guidance on meeting this requirement.

Edinburgh’s population is ageing, and the number of single households is increasing. There is net migration



Providing a mix of housing options - This mix of flats, colony houses and townhouses at Ropeworks, Leith accommodates a diverse range of household sizes and tenures.

out of the city by families. These demographic changes impact on the supply, size, type, and accessibility of housing required.

Mix of dwelling type and size

A mix of unit sizes and housing types creates diverse communities. This mix should respond to differing needs, immediate site conditions and citywide objectives.

For some sites City Plan sets out Place Policies and Development Principles ([City Plan 2030 Appendix D](#)) which include requirements for design, density and location of housing within developments.

Development of sites should make optimum use of land. Housing types such as flats, colonies, four in a block, terraces, mews houses and townhouses can make for more efficient land use than detached or semi-detached housing. These can provide a range of sizes including larger dwellings suitable for families. [See Chapter “2.2.1 Density” on page 74](#)

For building conversions, it is accepted that the existing building may provide limitations on the mix of housing that can be provided on site.

2.1.2 HOUSING MIX, SIZE AND TENURE

Design
guidelines

- Provide a mix of homes that meets the needs of a range of household types and sizes, including families, older people and disabled people.
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- Provide future residents with adequate space for healthy living.

City Plan 2030 Policies
Env 26 – Housing Density
Env 33 – Amenity
Housing Policies (Hou 1 – 7)

NPF4 Policies
Policy 14 – Design, quality, and place.
Policy 16 – Quality homes

Relevant City
Plan 2030
Policies

Relevant
NPF4 Policies

Explanatory
text

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Examples /
diagrams /
case studies

Links to other
chapters/
pages

Links to other
resources

Part 1: Designing Sustainable Places



Context

- **Responding to Context and Place** – Character, historic environments, archaeology, areas of poor urban quality.
- **Incorporating and Enhancing Existing Features**–Views, natural features, building and built elements, archaeological features.
- **Visual Impact, Skyline & Protected Views** – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, significant landmarks and visual features, sky space, tall buildings.
- **Coordinate Development** – Surrounding areas / neighbouring land and multidisciplinary masterplans.



Climate Mitigation

- **Whole-Life Energy Approach** - Embodied energy & end-of-building-lifespan emissions.
- **Building Adaptability & Maintenance** - Adapting for future needs & allowing for effective maintenance/repair.
- **Operational Energy** – Minimising energy demand & using LZCGT.
- **Sustainable Heating & Heat Networks** – Connecting to existing & proposed networks.



Climate Adaptation

- **Design for a Changing Climate** – Higher rainfall (inc. surface-water, flood risk assessments), heatwaves, nature-based solutions & naturalising/de-culverting watercourses.
- **Green-blue infrastructure** – Guidance on Edinburgh's Strategic Green Blue Network.

Addressing the Nature Crisis



- **Biodiversity** – retain, protect and enhance positive effects for biodiversity.
- **Trees** – retain, protect and enhance tree canopy cover (20% / 30% / 10% targets).
- **Green Roofs** – green/brown/blue roof design and maintenance.
- **Landscape Design and Public Realm** – Landscape character, layout principles, planting, soils, management and maintenance.
- **Hard Landscape** – paving materials, street furniture and boundary treatments.

Sustainable Transport

1 of 2



- **Prioritising Sustainable Transport** – transport assessments/statements, designing in line with the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy, mobility hubs.
- **Living Well Locally** – key facilities, walkability ratio.
- **Layout Design to Support Sustainable Transport** – responding to Future Streets Framework, fronting onto existing streets/paths, creating new streets/paths.

Sustainable Transport

2 of 2

■ Parking

- **Design** – updated cycle and car parking design (inc. for safety, accessibility, car clubs and EV charging)
- **Standards** – updated parking zones and standards - including zero car parking in Zone 1 (city centre) and updates to mapping of Zones 2 and 3



Part 2: Designing Liveable Places



Mixed Communities

■ **Mixed-Use Neighbourhoods**

- High quality, high density, mixed-use walkable communities
- Guidance on BTR, PBSA, accommodation for gypsy/travellers and travelling showpeople and self-build homes.

■ **Housing mix, size and tenure**

- Mix of dwelling types/sizes, inclusive, accessible and adaptable homes, tenure neutral affordable housing, housing for families, older and disabled people.



Distinctive Places

- **Density** – high density, but responding to context and providing high quality
- **Positioning Buildings on Site** – fitting with surroundings and history
- **Height and Form** – impact of heights, roofscape, tall buildings
- **Materials and Detailing** – guidance for different materials, with new mention of considering embodied energy
- **Incorporate Art in Public Places** – public art consent, community approval, different types of art



Healthy, Safe and Welcoming Environments

1 of 2

- **Creating Safe Places** – Community safety, movement, lighting, eyes on the street, suicide prevention.
- **Publicly accessible open space** – useability, access to open space, playspace and community growing
- **Inclusive design of public space** – safety and accessibility
- **Private open space** – amenity and provision



Healthy, Safe and Welcoming Environments

2 of 2

- **Daylight, sunlight, shelter, privacy and outlook** – dual/single aspect, overheating, privacy and outlook
- **Environmental protection** - air quality, odour, noise, lighting, contamination
- **Waste management** – designing in waste collection and creating healthy and safe communal bin stores

Appendices



Appendices

- **Acronyms & Glossary**
- **Protected Views**
- **Sustainability Statement Template**
- **Streets and Paths**
- **Example Edinburgh Densities**

Consultation

Overview

This guidance sets out the Council's expectations for design quality in development. It is structured around two themes:

- Sustainable Places
- Liveable Places

It aims to promote good place-making by:

- Providing guidance on how to comply with planning policies.
- Guiding the approach to the design of streets, spaces and buildings.
- Explaining key ideas that need to be considered.
- Giving examples of good quality design.

Why your views matter

We want the guidance to help people understand what we require for the various types of developments. We want the outcome of development to be good for all users. To do this, we want to make sure the content is clear, helpful, and balanced.

Read the draft guidance

[Draft Edinburgh Design Guidance](#)

Need a different language or format?



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Please email the Interpretation and Translation Service at its@edinburgh.gov.uk quoting reference 24-1284.

Give us your views

[Online Survey](#) >

Closes 3 Apr 2025

Opened 9 Jan 2025

Contact

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Related

[View a PDF version of the Consultation Questions](#)
2.9 MB (PDF document)

[View the Edinburgh Design Draft Guidance \(PDF\)](#)

Closes 3 Apr 2025

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Contents

The survey is divided up into pages for each section of the Edinburgh Design Guidance. There are also pages for heritage, accessibility, and general comments. You can give your views on all sections or you can choose to feedback only on the areas that impact or interest you.

Once you have completed a section, click "Continue" and you will return to this contents page. You do not need to complete this consultation all at once. You can use the button at the bottom of each page to "Save and Come Back Later" until the consultation closes.

Page	Response
Your details (Required)	0 of 3 questions answered
Context	0 of 2 questions answered
Climate Mitigation	0 of 4 questions answered
Climate Adaptation	0 of 2 questions answered
Addressing the Nature Crisis	0 of 4 questions answered
Sustainable Transport	0 of 4 questions answered
Mixed Communities	0 of 2 questions answered
Distinctive Places	0 of 2 questions answered
Healthy, Safe and Welcoming Environments	0 of 2 questions answered
Responding well to Edinburgh's built and natural heritage	0 of 2 questions answered
Accessibility	0 of 2 questions answered
General Comments	0 of 1 questions answered
About you	0 of 9 questions answered
Feedback about this consultation and engagement activity	0 of 1 questions answered

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/planning-edg/>

Consultation closes 3 April 2025