

and a return to city legibility as an aim of design policy.¹⁰ There is now a clear consensus amongst urban designers that development should aim to create a sense of place and community. A legible development can also be created by the emphasis given to paths, landmarks, nodes, edges and districts. There should be a clear design strategy for the use of materials, colours, and building heights to strengthen features which give identity to the quarter or district.¹¹

Open space provision should be closely linked with conservation and should be designated before the housing layout is attempted. A greater emphasis is being placed on street trees and the greening of the street, all of which may have maintenance and management implications for the local authority; it may also have cost implications for developers. Nevertheless, these are important considerations for the design brief.

It is argued in this book that all development should be sustainable development. See Moughtin (1996)¹² for a fuller treatment of this subject but this section of the design brief would include the topics shown in Table 2.4.

The emphasis being placed on good design may take a variety of forms but all such supplementary planning guidance should be cross-referenced to establish policy and be in accordance with it. An area of concern for the design brief will be a desire to link new developments with existing urban struc-

ture. The ways of making these connections should form a major theme of the design brief. The structure and content of the design brief may take a variety of forms but its main aim should be to stimulate good urban design, not to restrict imaginative or innovative development.

CASE STUDY IN NORTHEAST LEICESTER

A planning brief was produced for a district centre site in 1990. This was in accordance with the Hamilton Local Plan¹³ and the soon-to-be-adopted City of Leicester Local Plan.¹⁴ The District Centre site provided for 9700 m² of retail floorspace to serve the community of Hamilton, which is a green-field development of 4000 dwellings. Progress on this development, which was to meet the needs of the expanding Leicester population, had been constrained because of the development of a controversial road infrastructure.

The development was slow owing to the economic recession in the housing market. The developers started negotiations with a very basic scheme in 1995, claiming that the planning brief was out of date and that retailing had moved on since 1990. The developers stated the scheme was in accordance with the basic remit of the outline planning permission. Analysis of the scheme suggested that little or no attention was given to the layout or to the planning of the development in relation to the adjacent residential areas. The outline planning application had been renewed on a number of occasions and permitted 10 200 m² of retail floorspace. This allowed for a superstore, four larger shop units, a public house, a doctor's surgery and a petrol station.

After several meetings and intense negotiations, it was clear the developer was unwilling at this point to amend the scheme in any substantial way. Further design guidance relating to the layout was also provided. Internally, officers debated the issues and came to the conclusion that the application

Table 2.4 Topics for sustainable development.

Mixed land uses
Local access to facilities
Transport choice opportunities, i.e. foot, cycle routes, buses, light rapid transit
Water conservation
Energy conservation
Nature conservation
Long-life developments
Adaptable buildings for flexible land use
Building height restriction
