HOW TO DESIGN FOR NON-DOMESTIC BUILDINGS

GOAL: Well-designed buildings and spaces which respond to the needs of the users and contribute positively to the built environment

It is well known that the way a building is designed affects the way we feel and respond to it. Better designed buildings and outside spaces will enhance the users experience – this could be staff, visitors or customers for example. There is therefore a direct link between the design of the building and the commercial success of a business using it.

Buildings must be designed appropriately for their function. However, they must also be designed to contribute to an attractive, safe and active environment that is sustainable for the future.

This guide will help establish the key design and planning principles of any new industrial, commercial or retail development to ensure that the buildings and spaces can be as effective and successful as possible and respectful of their setting.

Cuddesdon Chapel, Cuddesdon

Additional useful and interesting resources:
- The value of urban design (CABE and DETR, 2001) and the value of good design (CABE, 2002)
- BS8300: 2009 Design of buildings and their approaches to meeet the needs of disabled people. Code of practice (2009)

To inform your design:

Technical studies including (but not limited to) surveys on trees, habitats, species etc. where appropriate

To communicate your design:
- Clear elevations, roof plans, floor plans
- A block plan and/ or landscape plan with a clear legend
- Three dimensional models
- Sunlight/ daylight diagram

Entrance court of award-winning Ercol building in Princes Risborough

A range of non-domestic buildings (Milton Park and community centre in Didcot)

☑ TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Layout

The development must:

		Meets criteria	If not, reason for not meeting
9.1	have buildings located on the edge of the site to enclose and overlook public streets, car parking and open spaces to create a strong urban form and active frontages;		
9.2	have main entrances that face onto the street, are easily visible and accessible and provide protection from wind and rain;		
9.3	keep on-site parking to a minimum to help achieve a sustainable development. Provide or link into good pedestrian and cycle links;		
9.4	include substantial elements of planting and a quality landscaping scheme within the space and on the boundaries;		
9.5	locate parking and service yards to the rear screened by buildings and landscaping enclosure;		
9.6	not have an excess of lighting columns, bollards or street clutter;		
9.7	boundaries that reflect the character and appearance of the area and proposed new building.		
9.8	provide 6% accessible parking bays.		

Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot

Radley College in Abingdon and Waitrose in Wallingford

☑ TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Buildings

The development:

|		Meets criteria	If not, reason for not meeting
9.9	breaks down larger footprint buildings to comprise a number of simple, geometric forms to reduce their apparent bulk;		
9.10	ensures that the buildings respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the district in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing;		
9.11	maximises the potential of active frontage with entrances fronting onto streets, spaces and forecourts and making a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility;		
9.12	has ground floors of buildings articulated with windows and doors and interesting detail (through the use of materials, datum line or façade detail) to create a development with a more human scale;		
9.13	mitigates the impact of signage onto the public realm;		
9.14	has a strategy for waste and recycling and convenient and sensitively sited access to waste and recycling points;		
9.15	uses materials that have been informed by the character and appearance of the surrounding area;		
9.16	must be informed by the potential impact the buildings would have on views from the countryside and wider context and across towns and villages with measures to mitigate the impact integrated into the scheme;		
9.17	includes green roofs on flat roofs and vertical gardens provided where space for landscaping is otherwise limited;		
9.18	ensures that long, 'blind' (windowless) facades are avoided, particularly if they are designed to face a street, car parking areas or public open space;		
9.19	ensures that secure covered cycle stores are provided near entrances and adjacent to overlooking windows;		
9.20	ensures that changing and showering facilities are provided for cyclists.		

Rowing Museum, Henley (Oxfordshire)
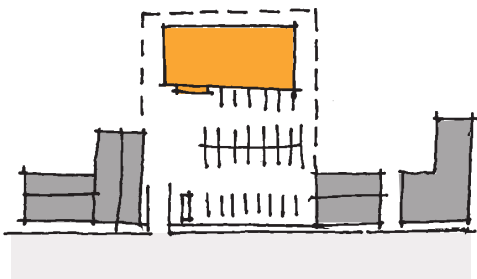
Bad example of commercial parking arrangement

Good example of commercial parking arrangement

☑ TEST YOUR DESIGN:

Car parks

The development must:

		Meets criteria	If not, reason for not meeting
9.21	subdivide large spaces dedicated to car parking into a number of well-defined areas which relate to the buildings that they serve;	☐	
9.22	screen service areas and large areas of parking and minimise the car park frontage onto public streets;	☐	
9.23	incorporate landscaping that responds to and enhances the local environment.	☐	

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