

Swindon Borough Council
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
SWINDON CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN
POSITION STATEMENT No SBC01

STRATEGIC POLICY ISSUES [1]

Strategic policy issues and matters to be examined:

Design Strategy (Section 2/Policy 1): Design Criteria and Tall Buildings

- How will the plan deliver high quality design, which both creates a distinct local identity for the Central Area as a whole and reinforces the distinctive features of each character area within it? [7]
- How will individual character areas be improved by good design; how will these outcomes be monitored/measured and how will they contribute to overall aim and objectives of the plan? [7]
- Are the design criteria sufficiently robust to determine schemes for tall buildings without first assessing Swindon's existing skyline, identifying where such buildings might be developed and what form they should take? [7]
- Reconciling potential conflict between design aspirations and encouraging Green Roofs [7]

Public Realm Strategy (Section 5):

Public Realm (Policy 3)

- The status of the Central Area Public Realm Strategy, the Town Centre Public Art Strategy and the Lighting and Signage Strategies; their relationship to each other and to the CAAP [6]

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Design Strategy

How will the plan deliver high quality design, which both creates a distinct local identity for the Central Area as a whole and reinforces the distinctive features of each character area within it? [7]

The Action Plan introduces each of the five character areas that make up Central Swindon, as defined by the Proposals Map Area Action Plan Boundary. These character areas are the subjects of area-based policies in Part II of the Plan. The intention is that these brief introductions to individual character areas describe the prevailing character of the area and important features that create its special interest or character, which should be reinforced through new development. There is scope to clarify the Council's expectations for new development in those areas. Amendments to supporting text at Chapter 3 Design Strategy are suggested at **Appendix 1** of this topic paper for clarification. It is not considered that the clarification of urban design principles is material and it is not therefore necessary to subject them to the SEA process.

In order for the policy to enable informed decision making about the quality of a proposal, sufficient information regarding the quality of materials used and detail of design must be submitted with all planning applications. High standards of architectural design and detailing are necessary to create new areas of townscape character and interest but equally to enable a new development to complement neighbouring buildings and assimilate into the environment in which it is located.

The Borough Council expects the highest standards of design and detailing to be employed in all new developments. The key to successful design is in the detailing. The detailed design of a proposal is concerned with both buildings and the public realm and the interface between the two. It is essential to think carefully about the way chosen materials work with each other, how the various elements of a building relate and how they line up. This is as vital in the architectural articulation of a building façade as it is to the detailing of a square, a street or an avenue of trees. High standards of architectural design and detailing are necessary to create new areas of townscape character and interest but equally to enable a new development to complement neighbouring buildings and assimilate into the environment in which it is located.

A good example of detailed design is when the quality of the plan and section has been carried through to the detailing, and the consistency with which this detailing is carried throughout an entire building. The choice of materials is important in this process as it shows a relationship to context, maintenance and sustainability.

The detailing of a proposal, i.e. a buildings appearance including openings and bays, entrances and colonnades, balconies and roofscape and the rhythm of the façade all contribute to a successful and high quality building and are vital in determining the suitability or acceptability of a proposal. The choice of facing materials needs to take into account the quality of the materials, their method of fixing, colour, texture, profile and durability.

Further to their contribution to good design generally, these details can also help reinforce distinctive features in each character area. By taking cues from existing

buildings in an area of Central Swindon it is possible to create an addition to the built environment that complements but does not simply copy the existing character. By respecting cues like scale and massing but using an innovative approach to materials and detailing it is possible to reinforce the identity of an area and contribute to its special character. Cues should be taken from positive features of a place. There is no reason why character and innovation should not go together. New and old buildings can coexist happily without disguising one as the other, if the design of the new is a response to urban design objectives laid out by the Council.

The Borough Council expects that the highest standards of design and detailing will be employed in all new developments, especially those situated adjacent to areas of conservation status or significant architectural merit. Within the Conservation Areas, the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the special character or appearance of the Area will be an important consideration.

In order to achieve these aspirations with regards design and detailing the Inspector may wish to consider making some minor changes to wording at Policy 1 – High Quality and Innovative Design. Suggested amendments are incorporated at **Appendix 2** of this topic paper. The Council does not consider these changes to be overly onerous on developers or so substantive to be fundamental to the soundness of the plan and in need of SEA.

How will individual character areas be improved by good design; how will these outcomes be monitored/measured and how will they contribute to overall aim and objectives of the plan? [7]

Good design is a key requirement in achieving more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the built environment. Individually allocated or windfall development opportunities are unified by overarching spatially rooted objectives relating to high quality design, high quality public realm, transport and movement and sustainability. The ease with which one can navigate Central Swindon and the experience of moving in, between and through existing or newly created places by foot, cycle, car or public transport will contribute to the successful regeneration of Central Swindon for visitors and residents alike. This can be achieved through well-connected, well-designed public realm and green routes. This satisfies the need for Central Swindon to ‘function’. In terms of desirable and high quality urban ‘form’ these spatial principles go in parallel with an overarching aspiration to achieve sustainable development while aligning the singular objectives of new development with the wider objective of comprehensive, coherent and well integrated regeneration.

The Annual Monitoring Report (CD148) produced by the Council includes two local indicators to monitor performance against Design Strategy in the adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan, 2011 (CD101), Policy DS6 “Standards of Design and Amenity” and Policy DS7 “Urban Design”.

The first indicator monitors the number of applications refused through non-compliance with design standards. The intention is to roll this indicator over on adoption of the Central Area Action Plan and the Swindon Borough Core Strategy

with an indicator that distinguishes between new development in Central Swindon and the wider borough.

To date it has not been possible to monitor this policy effectively but improvements to software should enable the Council to monitor this in a more consistent and accurate way. Since the indicators introduction the Council has employed an Urban Designer who keeps track of development proposals that have been modified subsequent to policy based advice. This information will be fed into the design compliance indicator for the 2007/2008 Annual Monitoring Report and will be retained for future updates. An example is attached at **Appendix 3** of this topic paper.

The second indicator monitors the number of objections received from crime organisations to development proposals. This will be of even greater importance given the criteria introduced at Policy 1 'High Quality and Innovative Design' that requires all development to achieve secured by design status. In retrospect the Council consider this may be onerous on smaller applications and the Inspector may wish to apply it to major applications of 10 or more dwellings only. Appendix 2 details a minor amendment to Policy 1 in line with this suggestion.

Are the design criteria sufficiently robust to determine schemes for tall buildings without first assessing Swindon's existing skyline, identifying where such buildings might be developed and what form they should take? [7]

Policy 1 'Tall Buildings' and its supporting text are based on best practice set out in CABI's publication Guidance on Tall Buildings, July 2007 (CD331). The definition of a tall building has been tailored to Swindon given its relative lack of city like tall buildings. We have avoided being prescriptive to enable create design solutions to be advanced. The dedicated policy and more rigorous and specific criteria used to determine applications will ensure a robust and consistent analysis of all development proposals that incorporate a tall building. All proposals that incorporate tall buildings will be referred to the Swindon Design Review Panel and South West Design Review Panel. Further, CABI are routinely consulted on large regeneration proposals.

Reconciling potential conflict between design aspirations and encouraging Green Roofs [7]

There is not a one-size fits all approach to Green Roofs. The emerging Green Roofs Development Control Guidance Note (CD118) promotes tailored solutions that deliver aesthetic benefits as well as environmental ones. Roof tops are a wasted resource and huge potential exists to make greater use of buildings in increasingly dense urban areas. Given the nature and pressures of urban regeneration, the creation of new spaces has to meet a number of interests; these generally result in highly formal spaces with little ecological benefit. Creating low-maintenance, terrestrial, naturalistic green spaces in the urban core is often compromised when stakeholders assess their wants and needs. Green roofs may provide one solution. For further information please refer to Swindon Borough Council Position Statement No. SBC02 and the Council's Draft Green Roofs Development Control Guidance Note (CD118).

Environmentally they can help combat the urban heat island effect and provide opportunity for biodiversity. Practically and functionally, they maximise the efficient use of land, providing more public and private green space where land values are high and preclude the creation of sizable green spaces on the ground. Areas of green roofs can provide accessible space for people to enjoy. Aesthetically, green roofs can be as clean, modern, and integral to good contemporary architecture as glass and steel. They can provide both visually and physically accessible green space. Roofs are largely visually 'dead' and unappealing and their appearance to those overlooking them can be softened by vegetation. Contemporary design can incorporate green roofs. Green roofs can contribute to and complement the character of areas.

With respect to Central Swindon's conservation areas, whilst the construction of green roofs on existing Listed Buildings will often be inappropriate, the incorporation of green roofs within new buildings, where these will contribute to the character of the conservation area, will be supported. A good example of a new building within a Conservation Area that encompasses contemporary sustainable construction techniques (albeit not a green roof) is the Heelis Building (The National Trust's Headquarters, which is located in the Railway Works Conservation Area. This building, the winner of a number of design awards, whilst appearing very different to the Listed Buildings that surround it, complements these buildings and adds to the overall character of the area.

The status of the Central Area Public Realm Strategy, the Town Centre Public Art Strategy and the Lighting and Signage Strategies; their relationship to each other and to the CAAP [6]

The status of the Central Area Public Realm Strategy, the Town Centre Public Art Strategy and the Lighting and Signage Strategies

The strategies named above compliment each other in their objectives and are designed to work together to deliver a more legible, attractive and functional public realm in Central Swindon. In combination these strategies play an important role in the consideration of development proposals in Central Swindon and can help achieve many of the objectives of the Area Action Plan.

Swindon's Central Area Public Realm Strategy was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (CD120), along with its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal in June 2006. It's primary objective to achieve high quality public realm with open space and walking routes that are attractive, safe and uncluttered. The Area Action Plan Chapter revisits the streets and spaces detailed in the SPD, incorporating further streets, spaces and green spaces that are within the AAP boundary. The Lighting Strategy detailed in the Action Plan originates from the Public Realm Strategy. The Wayfinding and Information Strategy was written to inform the procurement of replacement and new signage within Central Swindon and was approved by the Council in May 2008 (CD122).

A person's perception of a place is informed by the ease one can move around it and get to and from places of interest. The Wayfinding and Information Strategy was written as a reaction to Swindon's poor legibility. While new development, including the use of landmark buildings, will, in time, repair the urban fabric and positively contribute to better understanding of the Town Centre, physical

intervention through the use of wayfinding street furniture will helping people to orientate themselves.

The Strategy is not an SPD and has not been subject to any formal public consultation but stakeholders including The New Swindon Company, InSwindon, the town centre BID company, First Great Western, Steam Museum and the four largest high street retailers represented in the town centre were involved with the decision making process and have approved the map design and locations. The order for 5 wayfinding monoliths and 20 fingerposts has been placed and they are likely to be installed at prominent locations to aid people's navigation of Swindon Town Centre by July 2008.

The Swindon Central Area Public Art Strategy (CD120) has been formally approved by the Council. The Strategy covers the area incorporating the operational boundary of The New Swindon Company, Swindon's Urban Regeneration Company. As such its specific guidance relates to those project areas outlined in their Regeneration Framework (CD107). The founding principles can be used to inform discussions around public art creation in all new development in Central Swindon and beyond.

The Public Art Strategy has been written to guide both Council Officers and developers as a framework through which to encourage and integrate art and artistic thought into the development process and to engage with artists and the creative process in bringing forward the regeneration of Central Swindon.

The Strategy will allow the Council to target resources in accord with the Boroughs priorities and ambitions. The Strategy provides a framework for commissioning and procuring art within Central Swindon and identifies resource implications and mechanisms for delivery. It will be used as a guide to focus those involved in implementing or managing development on securing artistic interventions within the development process at an early stage and to a predetermined rationale.

Strategies relation to each other and the CAAP

Public Realm is one of four key drivers in the AAP Development Strategy, each of which will contribute to the success of Central Swindon's regeneration and connect individual developments spatially. It sits alongside our aspirations to achieve sustainable development, high quality design and effective and efficient transport and movement. It is synonymous with each of the other drivers. Public Realm as the streets and spaces between what we consider to be the built environment has a vital role to play in how an environment feels and functions and how successful it is as a place to walk, take part in activities or sit and relax.

Public Realm also has a heightened role given the current economic climate. The great benefit of investment in public realm is the potential to sustain and invigorate private interest and confidence in Swindon as a place to invest. It can galvanize far greater amounts of private funding over the longer term with upfront investment at a proportionately lower level by the public sector. At the same time it clearly demonstrates the commitment of the Local Authority and other public sector agencies, including central government, to the revitalisation of the urban

environment and regeneration more widely. This worked well in Sheffield, whose public realm is celebrated.

Public realm, as tangible improvements to the environment in Central Swindon, can be the catalyst for greater private investment in large high profile regeneration proposals and other development. These developments will in turn contribute to and build upon Swindon's solid economic performance to the benefit of the town as a whole. Socially, great quality public realm can start to give Swindon back a real sense of place.

An Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice was posted in April 2008 to invite expressions of interest for detailed design work for high priority public realm projects. These include, but are not limited to, Canal Walk, Regent Street and Regent Place and Bridge Street. These schemes are identified as deliverable in 5 years and will inevitably involve a level of intervention from public sector funding streams. Others spaces and streets such as The Parade and Regent Place will be delivered as an integral part of new development over a much longer timescale.

These high priority schemes, once worked up to detailed design stage will put the Council in a good position to make comprehensive bids for further rounds of growth points funding and to secure or even boost indicative allocations for 09/10 and 10/11. They will also make bidding to other available public funding streams possible and help in the allocation of S106 monies secured since the introduction of Developer Contributions (CD121 and CD145) in September 2006. The tender for detailed design work will be awarded by the Council in June/July 2008 with a view to having worked up schemes ready to implement by Spring 2009.

Appendix 1 – Suggested Amendments to Design Strategy (Proposed amendments underlined and italicised, deletions as strikethrough)

3. Design Strategy

Context

This Section helps deliver the *Central Area Action Plan* objective of:

- *Securing the delivery of high quality and innovative design.*

Design is given prominence at the beginning of the *Action Plan* because of the existing poor quality of Central Swindon's built environment. A step-change in design quality is required to help Central Swindon foster a greater sense of pride, to attract visitors and new business and to create a better functioning and user-friendly environment.

Design Principles

Good design has an important role to play in raising the profile of Swindon, creating and reinforcing a distinct local identity and sense of place, strengthening confidence in the town and promoting inward investment.

Good design is also about creating an environment that allows all members of society to move around in a safe, predictable and convenient manner.

New Development in Central Swindon will be guided by urban design principles aimed at improving the quality of new buildings and their surroundings, not only in terms of how they look, but also how they function. *'New development' covers proposals at all scales ranging from small public spaces and individual or grouped buildings to large-scale comprehensive development schemes.*

~~These design principles, which should be applied to all new development in Central Swindon, are to ensure:~~

- ~~• public and private space is clearly defined;~~
- ~~• buildings on primary routes have active frontages on to the street;~~
- ~~• buildings are adaptable and offer a diversity of uses;~~
- ~~• streets can be easily read; and~~
- ~~• buildings are of a scale and form that positively contributes to the character of the area.~~

New development in Central Swindon must satisfactorily respect and address the following urban design principles.

Order and unity is the arrangement of separate elements of a group in a logical and comprehensible way.

Expression is the communication of quality and meaning. It is important for the architecture of new proposals to express the use of the building. Public buildings should be expressed in a way that respects and gives a sense of civic pride to the public realm and public facilities, similarly office buildings can symbolise a sense of financial and economic strength through their architectural expression.

Integrity - a building with integrity is honest to its time and to the design principles that embody the kind of architecture one is striving to achieve.

Detail - concerned with the detailed design of both buildings and the public realm and the interface between these two.

Context relates to the way a new proposal interfaces with its surroundings. This may/does comprise the following principles:

Siting – the relationship a building has to the urban grain of the town as well as the relationship the building has to other buildings and to the street.

Massing –the 3 dimensional envelope of the building. This defines the building's height, bulk and silhouette. A good building respects its neighbours in terms of these criteria.

Scale –can be assessed in terms of human and built scale. Every building has a relationship in terms of scale to that of a human being and also to its surrounding built form. A building can therefore be of human or inhuman scale and can be in or out of scale with another building. This is exactly measurable and not a matter of opinion.

Proportion – is the relationship between different parts of a building. It is also the agreeable or harmonious relationship between parts of a building within a whole and to surrounding buildings.

Rhythm – is the arrangement of the components of the façade and is the repetitive use of a group of visual elements along an elevation. This can consist of patterns of openings, projected bays and other architectural elements. Successful pedestrian streets are made up of vertically aligned rhythms across a façade. A logical form of rhythm across a façade adds to a sense of order to the streetscape. The same can be said for having respect for a common building line i.e. how buildings meet the street.

Materials – Swindon Borough Council will be expecting to see a natural palette of materials, to a high quality that weather attractively over long periods of time.

Additional design guidance is provided in the Swindon Design Guide and the Swindon Shop Fronts Coding Guidance.

Reinforcing or Creating a Sense of Place in Central Swindon's Character Areas

Design principles should always be applied with local context in mind. High standards of architectural design and detailing are necessary to create new areas of townscape character and interest but equally to enable a new development to complement neighbouring buildings and assimilate into the environment in which it is located.

The Borough Council expects that the highest standards of design and detailing to be employed in all new developments. The key to successful design is in the detailing. It is essential to think carefully about the way chosen materials work with each other, how the various elements of a building relate and how they line up. This is as vital to the architectural articulation of a building façade as it is to the

detailing of a square, a street or an avenue of trees. High standards of architectural design and detailing are necessary to create new areas of townscape character and interest but equally to enable a new development to complement neighbouring buildings and assimilate into the environment in which it is located.

Further to their contribution to good design generally, these details can also help reinforce the distinctive features in each character area. By taking these cues from existing buildings in an area of Central Swindon it is possible to create an addition to the built environment that complements but does not slavishly copy the existing character. By respecting cues like scale and massing but using an innovative approach to materials and detailing it is possible to reinforce the identity of an area and contribute to its special character. Cues should be taken from positive features of a place. There is no reason why character and innovation should not go together. New and old buildings can coexist happily without disguising one as the other, if the design of the new is a response to urban design objectives.

The character areas identified in Part II of the *Action Plan* and subject to specific area based policies each have distinctive features, which should inform the design of new development within these areas.

Town Centre (Policies 12-15)

Existing Character

The civic and commercial heart of the town is itself characterised by distinct areas, which generally exhibit single land uses. Concentrations of these single uses in particular areas detract from the Town Centre's general liveliness to the detriment of a sustainable mixed use community. Further to the reduced functionality of the Town Centre, it's form has been marred by the legacy of late 20th Century development where many high quality older buildings were demolished and local street patterns were shattered to make way for more modernist architecture. This seriously detracts from local character.

General Design Aspirations for the Town Centre

Successful regeneration will depend on broadening the mix of uses. Injecting housing into the mix wherever possible will enable activity to be stretched beyond traditional shopping and office hours. Refurbishment of existing buildings should address the need for active frontages at ground floor level. Having frequent doors and windows animate the public realm and reduce crime and fear of crime (*Policy 12*). Introducing commercial or residential uses on the upper floors can enliven an area further (*Policies 12-15*). Care must be taken to ensure uses are compatible.

A high housing density is appropriate can be increased in the Town Centre but this should not mean that flats are the only choice of home within the area. A mix of housing tenure and type, including family housing, is vital in ensuring the future sustainability of the Town Centre (*See Policy 18*).

The Town Centre and gateways that mark a person's arrival to the Town Centre are perfect locations for landmark buildings. Landmarks help people move around a place. Whilst every building cannot be a landmark, distinctive features should be considered at key corners and within nodes of activity. Landmarks can be

distinctive by virtue of height (particularly raised heights on corners), use, status, colour and location. High standards of design are especially important in prominent landmark buildings given their profile (Policy 1).

Care must be taken to ensure that the Town Centre's few remaining high quality older buildings are protected and enhanced to add character and variety.

Old Town and Victoria Road (Policy 19)

Existing Character

Old Town is regarded more favourably than the Town Centre in urban design terms due to its collection of high quality older buildings. Its historic character merits conservation and enhancement. The predominant building height is two ~~to~~ three storeys in Wood Street and the High Street. ~~This~~ and the area exhibits traditional shop front design.

In the residential streets a common building line is set back from the pavement with defensible private space to the front of residences. Property widths are fairly narrow and common materials include brick, brick with stone dressings, stone painted brick or render. Commercial premises generally front directly onto the street.

General Design Aspirations for Old Town

New development should respect the special local character of Old Town. Shop front design and signage should be in compliance with the Council's Shop Front Coding Guidance to maintain a unified street frontage on Victoria Road, Bath Road, Newport Street and Wood Street (Policy 19). ~~and~~ Public realm should be improved in line with the Public Realm Strategy (Policy 3) to create the high quality environment for shoppers and pedestrians necessary to achieve it's projected status as a niche shopping destination well connected to the existing Town Centre. Proposals on Victoria Road should ensure that any changes to properties respect their historic character and respond to the Green Spine (Policy 3 and 19). Proposals incorporating contrasting contemporary design must be of an exceptionally high quality (Policy 1).

Existing Residential Communities

Existing Character

The existing residential communities in Central Swindon are largely characterised by Victorian terraced housing set out on grid patterns, which demonstrate a fine urban grain. New development proposals must not alter the character of the streets and should respect the form and function of the communities within which they are located. ~~Improved physical and functional links to and from new and existing communities are vital to aid integration.~~

General Design Aspirations for Existing Residential Communities

All new development proposals which impact directly on these residential communities should demonstrate how they contribute positively to the area. Proposals that are out of scale with existing development or result in significant intensification of a site can have negative impacts on communities by creating overbearing buildings, casting of shadows, increased traffic congestion and

parking problems. Improved physical and functional links to and from new and existing communities are vital to aid integration.

North Star (Policy 16)

North Star is isolated from the Town Centre and the railway acts as a barrier to its accessibility. Perhaps the least defined of the Central Swindon character areas, North Star and the Swindon Central project area exhibits mainly low-density uses with a good proportion of available land given over to surface car parking. It mixes predominantly leisure and industrial uses with a further education facility and office employment uses to the south.

The plots are large, with large 'pavilion-style' structures, mostly set within soft landscaping, or car parks. Activity is limited mainly to internal areas depriving the street scene of life and interest.

General Design Aspirations for North Star

There is significant scope to increase the density of development in these areas and height is not a significant issue given the island nature of the site and its neighbouring land uses. Development will need to help enhance movement across the railway, as North Star is isolated from the Town Centre and the railway acts as a barrier to its accessibility. New development and should also enhance movement between North Star and the wider urban area, especially the residential areas and open space to the north of Great Western Way.

New development should incorporate active frontages, which meet the street and newly created open spaces thus increasing the activity and variety of the street scene. There is great potential to improve physical and visual permeability at North Star. The area is highly visible from the railway, a significant gateway to Swindon. The design of new development should respond to its high profile location especially given the quality of the existing westerly approach to Swindon Station through the Railway Works area.

The Railway Heritage Area

Existing Character

The Local Planning Authority has a duty to protect Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and their settings from inappropriate development. There are two such areas in the Railway Heritage Area, the Railway Village and Railway Works Area. Swindon's Railway Works is Britain's main railway engineering showpiece, and has been the subject of a World Heritage Site bid. Many of the engineering sheds have been sensitively converted, not least into the Swindon Designer Outlet Centre. The high density terraced railway cottages are largely in Council ownership and have been restored and maintained in a sensitive way so as to respect its historical tradition.

General Design Aspirations for the Railway Heritage Area

Development proposals within, or that will impact on the setting of, the Railway Heritage Area should not harm the character of the area. With the rate of change expected over the next twenty years and the high profile of regeneration in Central Swindon, preserving and enhancing our rich historic environment will deliver an area that complements the regenerated Town Centre. New development should take positive cues from the existing built fabric.

Crime and Fear of Crime

The principle of designing out crime is common to all character areas in the Action Plan. The quality of design and standard of maintenance is an increasingly important factor in people's perceptions of an area. Community safety is of fundamental importance when considering both the design and function of the built environment. Once a development has been completed, the main opportunity to incorporate crime prevention measures is lost. The costs involved in correcting or managing badly designed development are much greater than getting it right in the first place.

Crime prevention will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in Central Swindon. New development should deliver defensible space, by maximising natural surveillance, and by promoting active frontages. Developments should create a clear distinction between public and private area and who is responsible for these areas.

Police Architectural Liaison Officers should be consulted at the earliest opportunity and all new major developments should aim to achieve Secured By Design status.

The Swindon Design Review Panel

The Swindon Design Review Panel has been established to assess the design merits of major schemes in the Town Centre. The Panel will provide an important quality control function and its recommendations will be given significant weight in the consideration of planning applications. Where additional design advice is required the Council will also refer prominent schemes to the ~~Centre~~ Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and / or the South West Design Review Panel for their expert consideration.

Appendix 2 – Suggested amendments to Policy 1 High Quality and innovative Design

Policy 1

High Quality and Innovative Design

~~Applicants will be expected to demonstrate in their Design and Access Statement how their development proposals address each of the criteria set out below. High quality design will be required of all new development in Central Swindon. Applications will be expected to demonstrate that the design of the development proposal satisfies each of the criteria set out below.~~

The design should:

- ~~• make a clear distinction between front and rear with private space to the rear and a frontage onto the public realm, enforced by consistent building lines, with setbacks reduced for public buildings;~~
- incorporate active frontages especially where the development forms part of the Town Centre;
- ensure entrances are emphasised and designed to complement the public realm onto which they front;
- consider a mix of uses and where residential forms part of the mix, ensure a mix of housing tenure and type is achieved;
- ~~• ensure appropriate scale, layout, site coverage, and orientation of buildings, external appearance, roofscape (including any necessary provision for the screening of service plants), materials and hard and soft landscape;~~
- respect and satisfactorily address order and unity, expression, integrity, siting, massing, scale, proportion, rhythm, materials and landscaping
- include any necessary provision for the screening of service plants
- respect the context of the site and the character of the part of Central Swindon within which it is located
- embody the principles of inclusive design and access for all;
- preserve or enhance the character, appearance ~~or~~ and setting of Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings;
- deliver the sustainable construction requirements set out in Policy 2; and
- incorporate Secured by Design principles on all major new developments*.

*Major developments are developments of 1,000 sqm (gross) and over and developments involving 10 or more dwellings

Application Name/Address	Application Ref	Date	Proposal	App Type	Local Policies	Specific Issue	Original Application		Resubmission/Amendment		Design Improvement?	Decision
							DS6 compliant	DS7 compliant	DS6 compliant	DS7 compliant		
Regent Place	S/07/??/TB	May 07	Large-scale Mixed Use, Retail, Residential tower, leisure	Major	Swindon Design Guide DS6	Choice of materials linkages elevated walkways tall building local context, character scale, proportion, massing etc	no	no	no	no	no change	approved at committee
The Marsh, Wanborough	S/07/??/RB	June 07	5 or 6 large dwellings outside settlement boundary, Wanborough	Minor	Swindon Design Guide	Pastiche architecture, lack of contextual response to wanborough inappropriate architecture height, massing, scale	no	no	no	no	no change	approved at committee
The Exchange (Pre-App)	S/07/	June 07	Large-scale office/mixed use development - TC Regen	Major	DS7 Public Realm Strategy Central Area Action Plan Swindon Design Guide	character, identity & distinctiveness Green Spine' Quality of materials						
Whitworth Road	S/07/1140/SC	June 07	Care home	Major	DS7 Swindon Design guide Backland & Infill SPD	character, identity & distinctiveness contextual response	no	no	no	no	no change	refused
2 Page Hay Cottages	S/07/1433/NIRO	June 07	Demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 5no dwellings & assoc. works - at land adjoining 2Page Hay Cottages, Back Lane, Blunsdon	Minor	Backland & Infill SPD DS6, DS7, Swindon Design Guide	Building plots too small in relation to context Garden Amenity Height and Massing Visual Separation	no	no			change	refused
Land at Churchway, Blunsdon	S/07/1778/NIRO	July 07	Erection of 8 dwellings & assoc. works	Minor	Swindon Design Guide, DS6 Backland and Infill SPD	lack of contextual response, site layout uncomfortable negative passive solar gain lack of frontage & enclosure	no		yes		change	deferred
Land to Rear 617-627 Cricklade Road	S/RES/07/1729/RA	Aug'07	Erection of 21no. Houses and 34 apartments with assoc. car parking and landscaping (phase 1) - reserved matters from permission S/03/3264	Major	Swindon Design Guide	negative response to character lack of a sense of identity lack of sense of place	no	no	no	no	no significant change	
Jurys Inn Hotel and apartments, Fleming Way & Princes Street, Swindon	S/07/1245	Aug 07	Erection of a new hotel and apartments along Fleming Way and Princes Street.	Major	Swindon Design Guide	good response to site and appropriately designed regarding policies DS6 and DS7 slight issue re: passive solar design to the south elevation	yes	yes			no change	approved
Proposed Residential development at Hanson Batchin Plant, Stratton St. Margaret	S/PRE/07/1956	Aug 07	Proposal for residential development approx. 43 houses and apartments.	Major	Swindon Design guide Backland & Infill SPD	inactive edge to residential street back of development facing street	no	no				withdrawn
Hreed School Site, Moredon, Swindon	S/06/2474	Nov 07	Demolition of exist buildgs & erection of up to 350 res units, open space etc	Major	DS6, DS7	Block sizes too small Lack of sense of place negative frontages poor garden amenity	no	no				architects changed