

# chapter 3

THE SHAPE OF DEVELOPMENT



## chapter

<i>contents</i>	<i>page</i>	<i>contents</i>	<i>page</i>
<b>Design principles</b>		<b>Highways</b>	
introduction	14	design considerations	48
scale & density	15	the road layout	48
public open space	29	layout guidance	49
security	31	footpaths, cycleways & emergency links	54
landscaping	33	speed restraints	56
<b>Interpretation of highway design standards</b>		buses	56
introduction	41	providing for people with disabilities & special needs	59
traditional features	41		



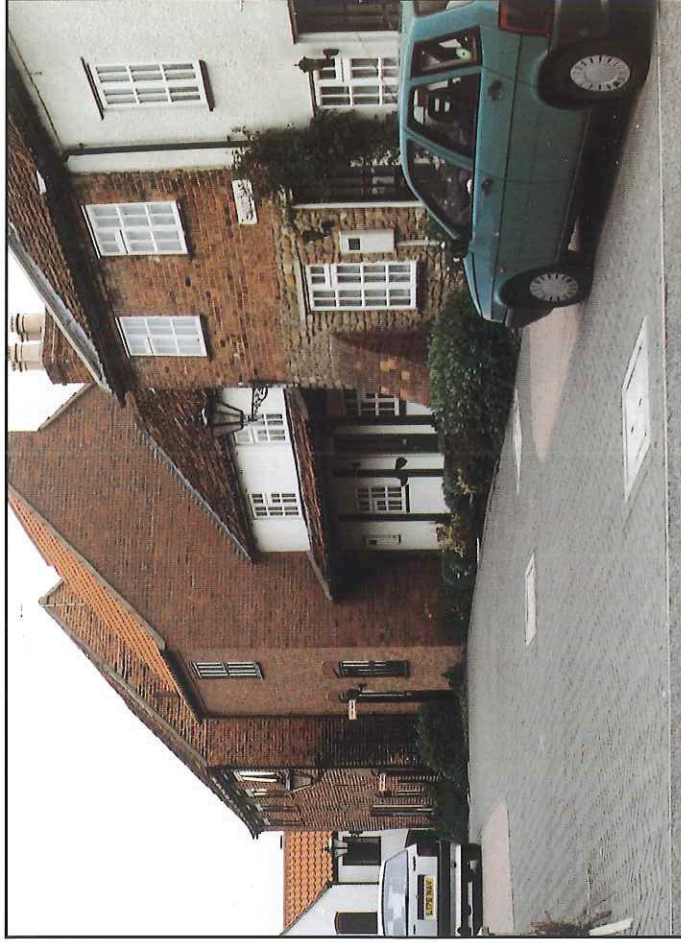
## CHAPTER 3 - THE SHAPE OF DEVELOPMENT

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

#### INTRODUCTION

3.0.1 All too often new residential development does not relate well to its setting. The most obvious problems occur when new development is built on green field sites on the edge of settlements, especially when the new scheme is large in relation to the existing village or town. However, it can be as much of a problem when new housing is inserted into the existing fabric of settlements, particularly in areas of traditional character. Nonetheless, examples of new buildings which are sympathetic to their surroundings are more often found in urban locations on small infill sites, where the scale and design of new development is more readily influenced by the character of the immediate locality. **The failure to respect the existing scale of townscape and landscape when developing new residential sites is the factor which most often characterises the difference between the “old” and the “new”, and this is especially emphasised within new large estate developments.**

3.0.2 Most new residential development in Lincolnshire will be an extension of or an insertion into an existing settlement. However, the need to respect the existing physical context applies equally to new relatively free-standing development. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that the starting point for the design of new residential development should be the assessment of the character and appearance of the existing buildings, roads, open spaces and landscaping in the vicinity, and the extent to which that should influence the proposed development.



3.0.1 ... New buildings sympathetic to their surroundings.

3.0.3 A number of questions dealing with the shape of development are relevant:

- *Is the existing settlement landscape or building dominated?*
- *What is the scale of the existing settlement?*
- *Is there a recognisable settlement pattern. Is it, for example, formal or informal, linear or enclosed?*
- *Is the land-form of the site a significant influence?*
- *What will be the setting of the new development?*
- *Are there important views of and from the site?*
- *How is the settlement approached?*
- *Are there features which can benefit the new development or its surroundings?*

3.0.4 Answers to such questions will often establish principles from which sympathetic new design can emerge, complementing the character of a place. Development can either blend with the existing or contrast with it, but neither approach will be successful unless it is based upon an appreciation of what already exists. It must, therefore, reflect an appreciation of the character of what is there already.

## SCALE AND DENSITY

3.1.1 It is not just the size of buildings which affects the appearance of development; the extent of car parking and highways, as well as the quality of the space between the buildings combine with the buildings themselves to affect the appearance of development. The simple calculation of “so many dwellings per hectare” is frequently misleading and is of little help in guiding the design process. For example:

- *Low density development can become overdeveloped and dominated by buildings due to the excessive use of large scale dwellings.*
- *Conversely, where higher density developments are appropriate, too many small dwellings can lead to an environment dominated by the associated car parking.*

Both these situations reduce the importance of the space around the buildings and make it unable to contribute to distinctive and pleasing townscape and/or landscape character.

3.1.2 **To determine the appropriate density of dwellings for a particular site a number of main principles should be considered together.**

### **Environment:**

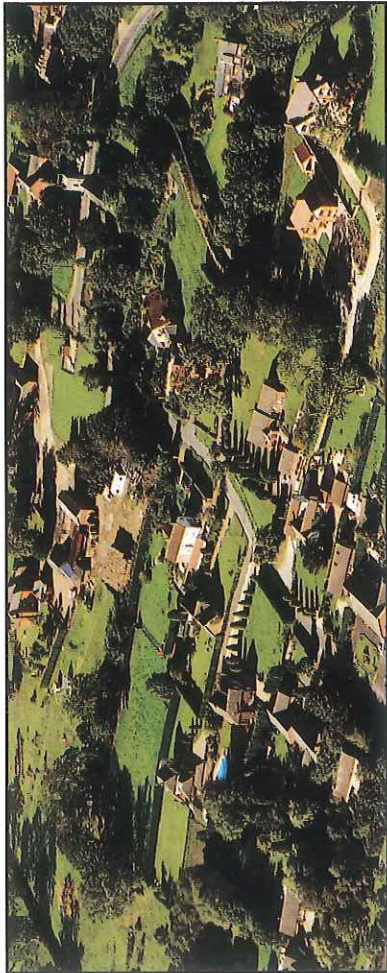
Buildings should be comfortably accommodated to create good townscape and significant landscape that is appropriate to their scale and setting.

### **Space About Buildings:**

This is as important as the land devoted to buildings and cars. The creative



3.0.3.



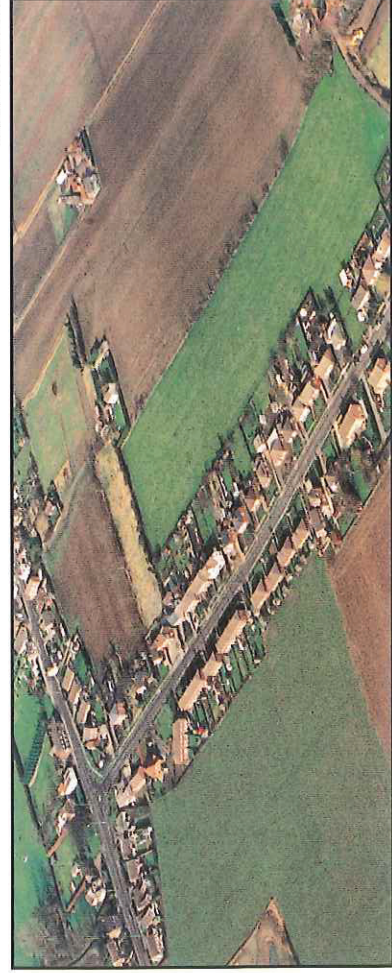
**Landscape dominated**

.....OR.....



**Formal**

.....OR.....



**Linear**

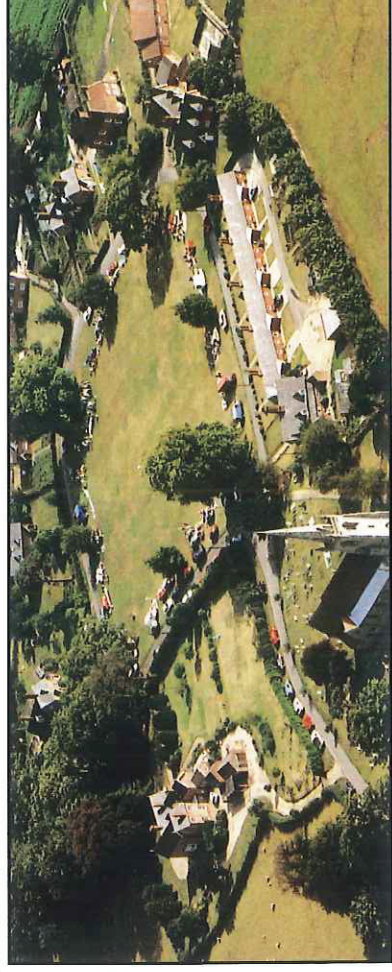
.....OR.....



**Building dominated**



**Informal**



**Enclosed**

use of space within a layout can give a focus and sense of place to what may otherwise be little more than a collection of buildings and roads.

### Highways and Parking:

The requirements for car parking and highways are directly related to the extent of the development being served. They must not be seen as irrelevant to good design, since they have a fundamental effect upon the quality of places.

These three main principles, together with the issues of spatial organisation, public open space and security, are considered below in further detail.

### Environment:

3.2.1 Sites are often considered favourable for development because they are attached to or form part of a settlement, and they are often allocated on the basis of a pre-determined density. In such circumstances it is important that the new development should have due regard to the setting of the site, its scale in relation to its surroundings, and the issue of the density of development.

### Building Volume

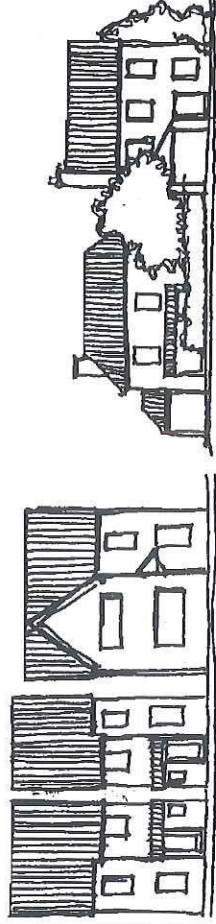
3.2.2 Density is as much to do with the scale and volume of the buildings as it is with the actual numbers of dwellings on a site. Higher density does not necessarily mean building more of the same, nor does it presume an increase in the building content of the site. It may be achieved by the introduction of a diverse range of smaller accommodation as long as it remains at the right scale for the area. Conversely, where low density is appropriate, this does not have to imply a predominance of large scale houses. Building volume is a determining factor in whether a development is to be building or landscape dominated.

## 3.2.2 BUILDING VOLUME

LOW DENSITY ... SHOULD ALLOW ROOM FOR PLANTING

Excessive scale and volume ....

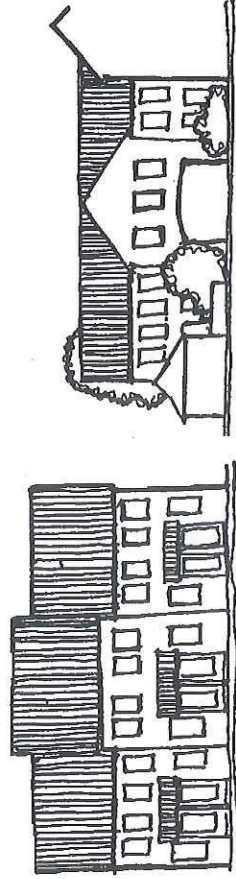
.... better!



HIGH DENSITY ... NEED NOT MEAN MORE OF THE SAME

Excessive repetition....

.... better



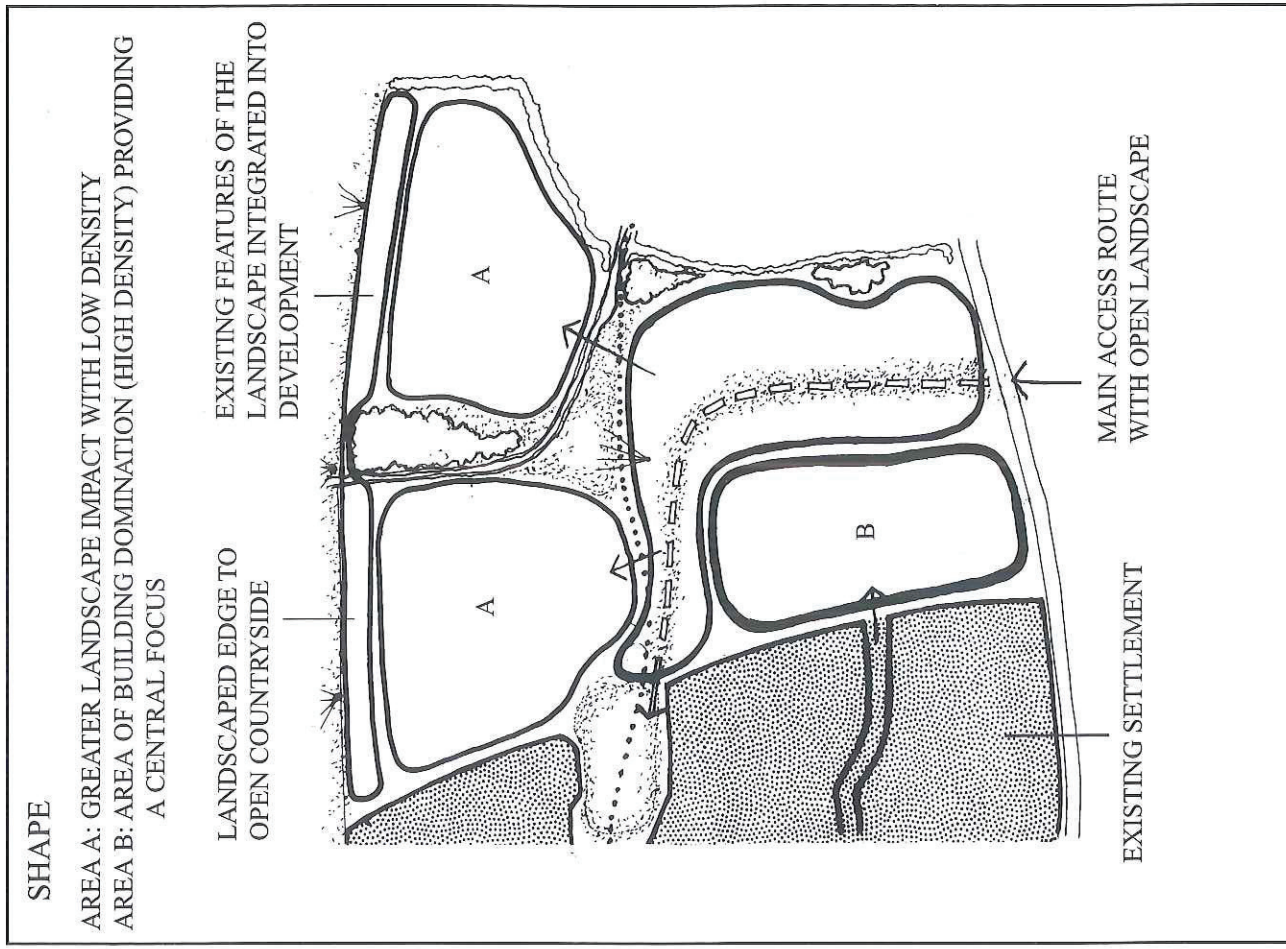
### Scale

3.2.3 It is important to consider the scale of the site relative to its surroundings. For example, a development of a given size will have a greater impact on a small village than on a large town. In a small scale development a single identity may be appropriate, whereas a large development may benefit from being broken down into smaller areas each with its own identity. The character of individual spaces will not only be determined by the scale and style of their enclosing buildings, but also by surface treatments and landscaping, and by the way they inter-connect. The scale of individual new buildings will usually be dictated by the need to relate to adjacent existing buildings, subject to an appropriate overall scale of development. It would not be appropriate, for example, to tack onto a village of small cottages or terraces a new estate of large detached dwellings. However, in a well landscaped and spacious 'park-land' setting such properties could be wholly appropriate.

### Shape

3.2.4 It is often appropriate for a new development to adopt the distinctive characteristics of the existing settlement pattern. This approach is especially effective for small sites closely associated with existing town or village centres.

3.2.5 The approach to larger scale development should not be towards universally high density or low density. It should be broken down in scale and given "shape". This could, for example, be achieved by balancing distinctively low density areas, perhaps on the landscape dominated outskirts, with a high density centre giving a focus to the development. Uniform high density estate development is rarely appropriate in Lincolnshire.



### Site Elements

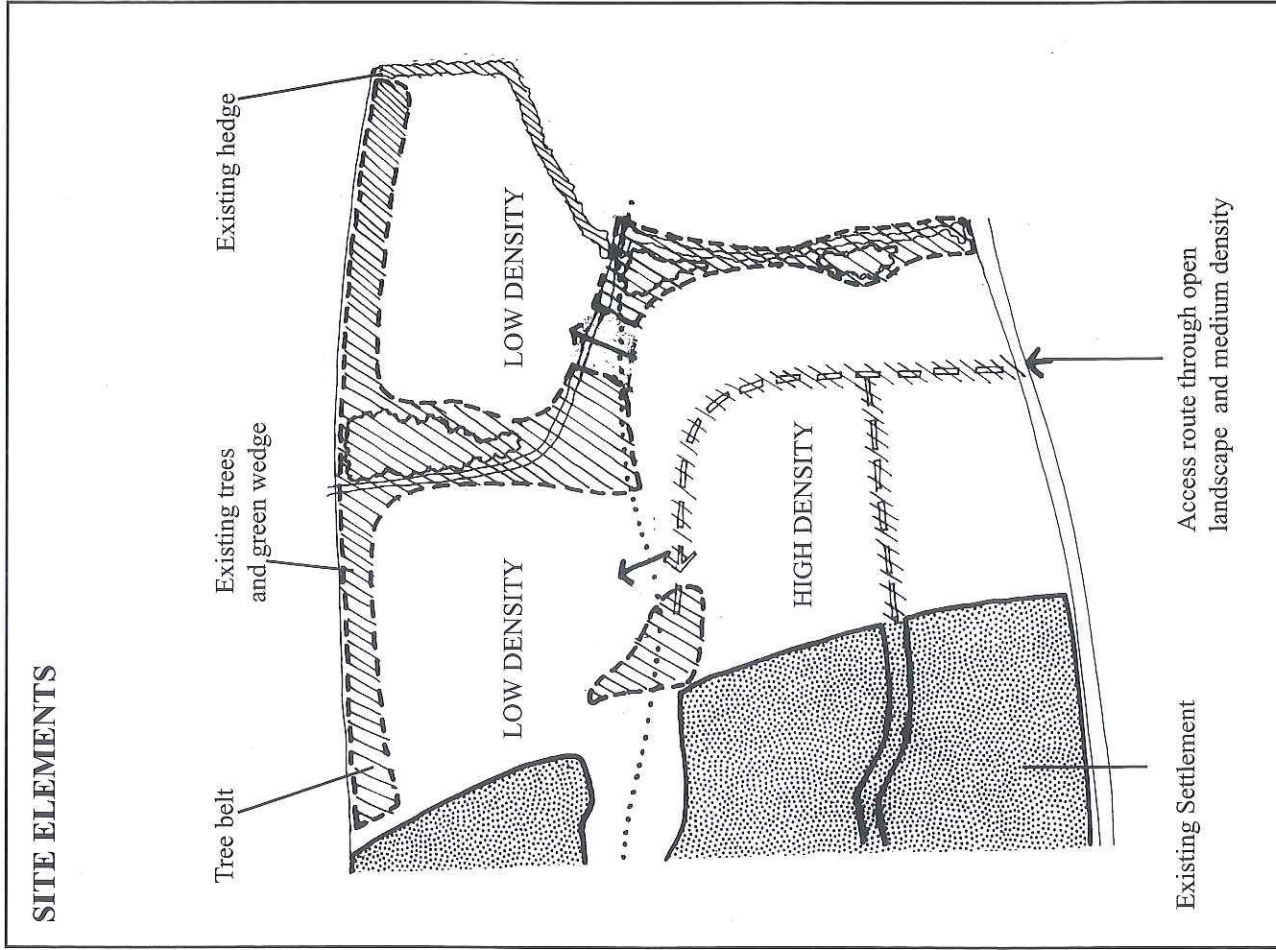
3.2.6 It is misguided to assume that every square metre of a proposed site is capable of supporting development at a given density. A positive approach is needed, where the various elements for a site development are identified at the outset. For example, where a large site needs to be serviced by a Local Distributor Road or other works, it should be recognised that the land taken up for these purposes cannot physically support housing nor contribute directly to a good residential environment. Similarly the space under existing tree canopies and boundary hedges cannot support development.

3.2.7 It may be necessary to break up the mass and scale of development by introducing spaces which incorporate parks or green wedges, between areas or groups of houses. There may be specific requirements to screen the edge of a development by planting a tree belt, or to soften a skyline, or emphasise footpath routes. Unless space is allocated for these purposes before the number of dwellings is determined, such provision will only be achieved at the expense of compressing pre-determined numbers of dwellings into ever smaller remaining areas of site.

3.2.8 Before the development potential of any site can be considered it is necessary to identify the major factors affecting it, both in support of development and which govern its relationship with its surroundings. It must therefore be recognised that residential densities must apply only to areas suited for actual housing development and not to the gross area of the site - which, for example, could incorporate a stream, or significant areas of trees that should be retained.

### Enclosure

3.3.1 It is important to recognise that the way in which buildings are grouped, and how they relate to each other, is a powerful influence on how we react to the built environment. An estate of standard houses, set to a





uniform building line, all built of the same materials would be monotonous.

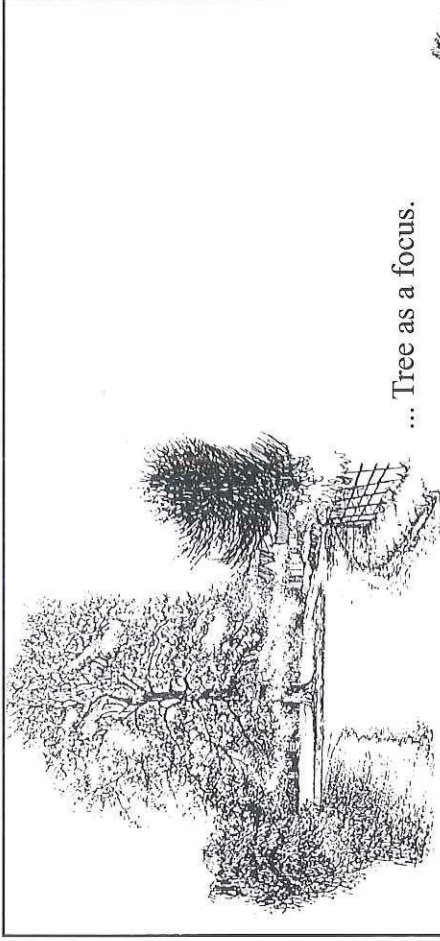
3.3.2 A walk around a historic town is usually a pleasurable and thought provoking experience. This is more often than not a result of the constantly changing pattern of small and large spaces, enclosure and openness, and surprise and uncertainty. By using this approach to housing layout it is possible to ensure that new housing areas are both interesting and attractive.

3.3.3 Buildings can be arranged to create identifiable spaces, each with their own character, enabling the observer to react in different ways. Spaces can be linear or static, formal or informal in shape, dominated by buildings or landscape, large or small: their character may be determined by the size and spacing of the enclosing buildings, their colours and textures, and the way planting is used.

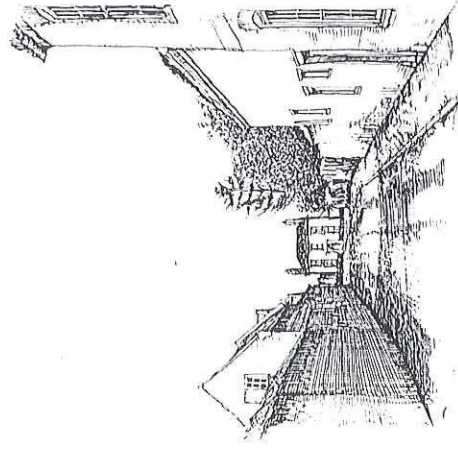
3.3.4 There are no hard and fast rules which dictate the proportion of width of space to height of enclosing structures. However, as a general guide, satisfactory enclosures may be achieved where the width/height ratio of linear spaces does not exceed 2.5 to 1, and for static spaces does not exceed 4 to 1.

3.3.5 These basic principles which are the foundation of an appreciation of urban design, can be complemented by other factors to create spaces of true quality. For example -

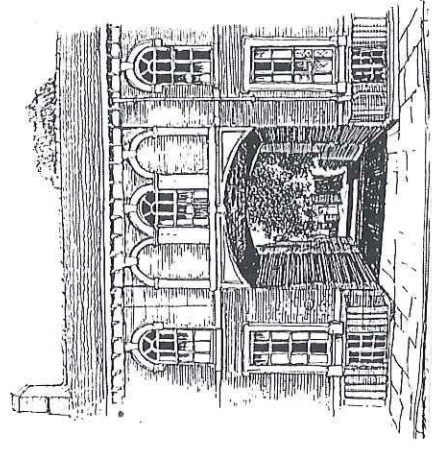
- *the existence of a fine specimen tree could form the focus of an attractive surrounding space;*
- *a linear space may be focused on a well designed property or striking physical feature;*
- *the use of an archway at the entrance to a linear space provides immediate interest, encouraging the user to go beyond it.*



... Tree as a focus.



... building as a focus



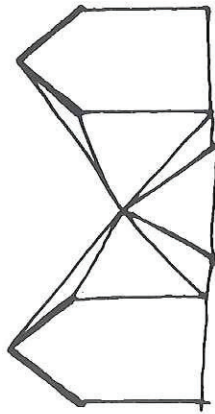
... archway adds interest.



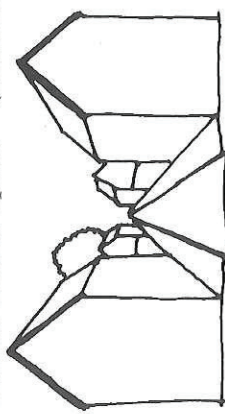
3.3.2 SPACES MAY BE LINEAR

... OR STATIC

URBAN

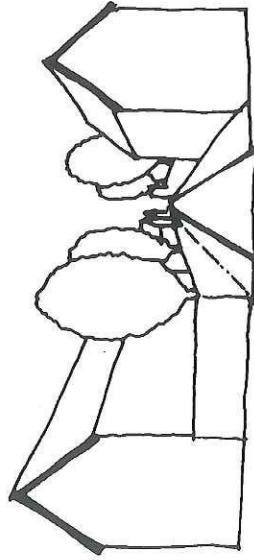


Formal Linear Space (Terraced Street)

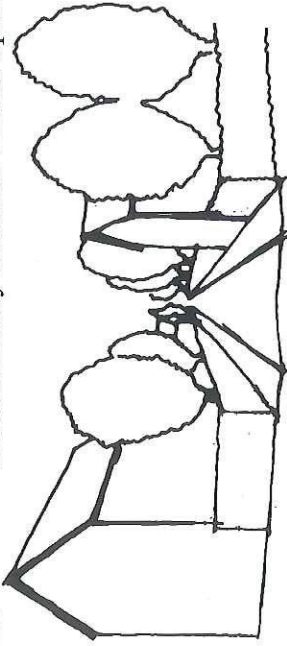


Predominantly Formal Linear Space

... OR RURAL

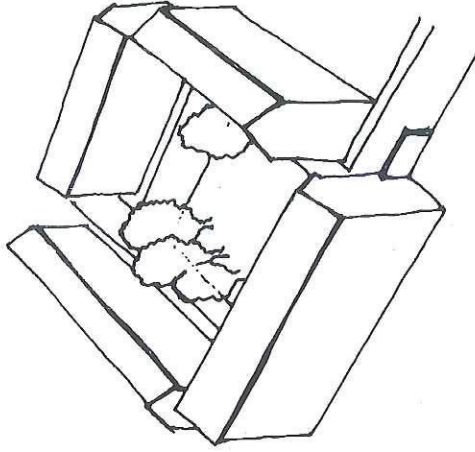


Predominantly Informal Linear Space



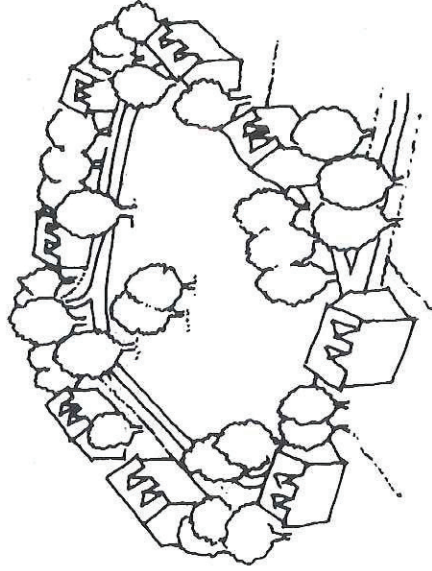
Informal Linear Space (Village Street)

FORMAL.....



Formal Static Space (Town Square)

... OR INFORMAL



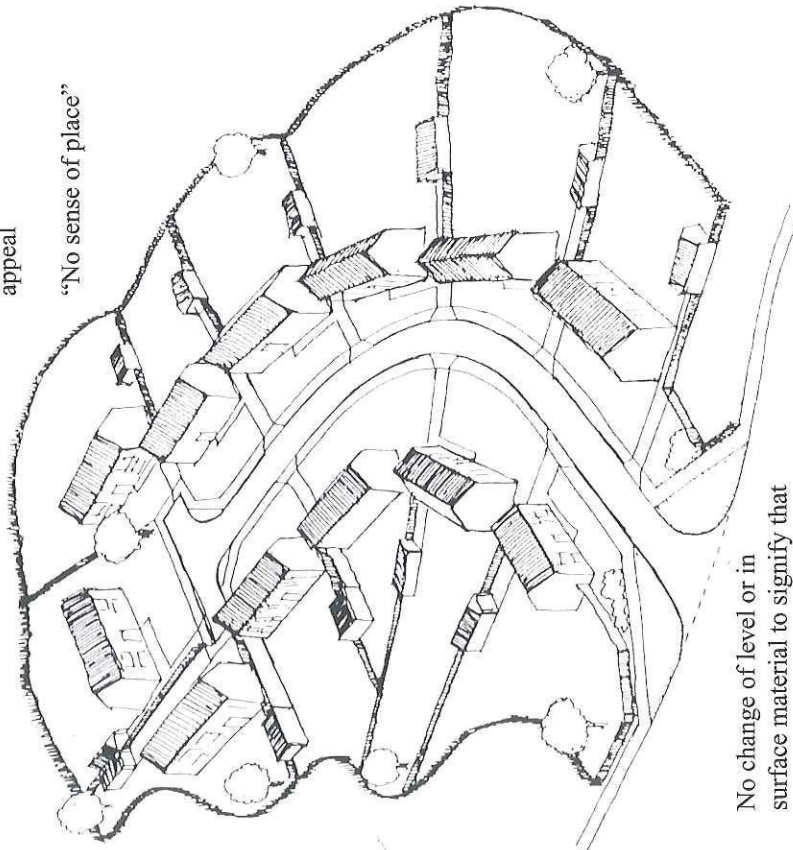
Informal Static Space (Village Green)

### 3.3.6 SPATIAL ORGANISATION

“Conveyor belt design!”

Buildings set to a rigid building line. Space between dwellings dictated by driveways

Token landscaping!  
No thought about integrating the development into the landscape or providing shade, shelter or visual appeal



No change of level or in surface material to signify that pedestrians have priority.

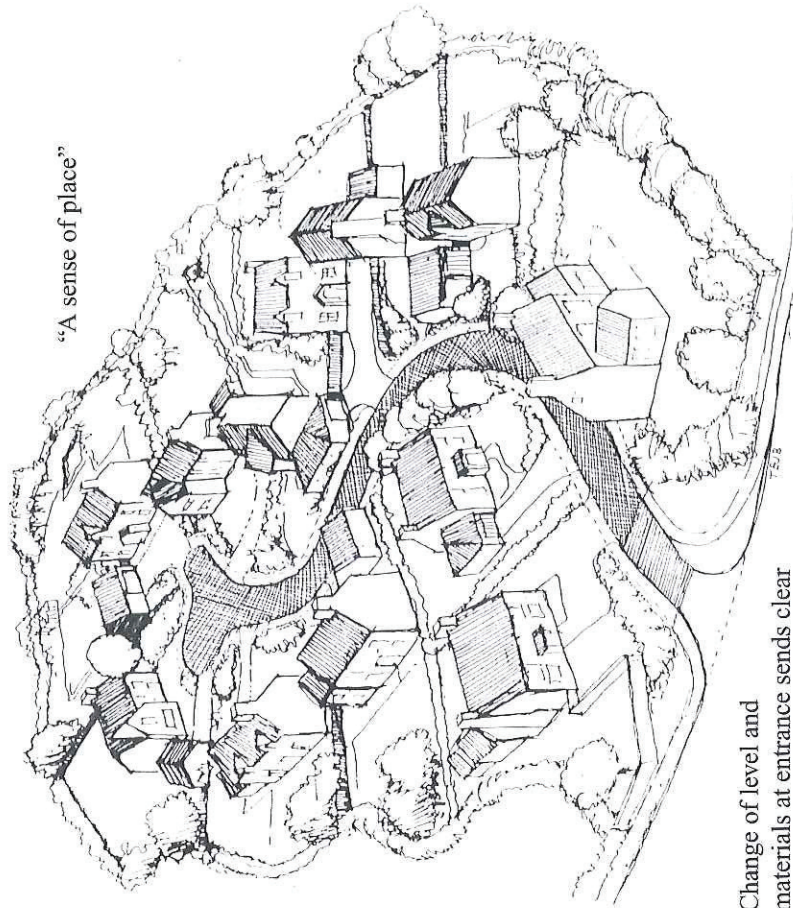
Unnecessarily dominant road and footway system dictates layout.

Repetition and standardisation - “It’s all the same and could be anywhere”

... WHY DESIGN A LAYOUT LIKE THIS?

Unique design for customers and location!  
Buildings informally grouped create interest and identity.  
Garages create ‘gateways’ and enclosure

Planting is used to soften boundaries, provide privacy, shade, shelter, habitat and visual interest.



Change of level and materials at entrance sends clear message to motorists.

Impact of road reduced by shared surface (no footways) and informal turning head.

Variation of road, buildings and boundaries - “It’s worth exploring”

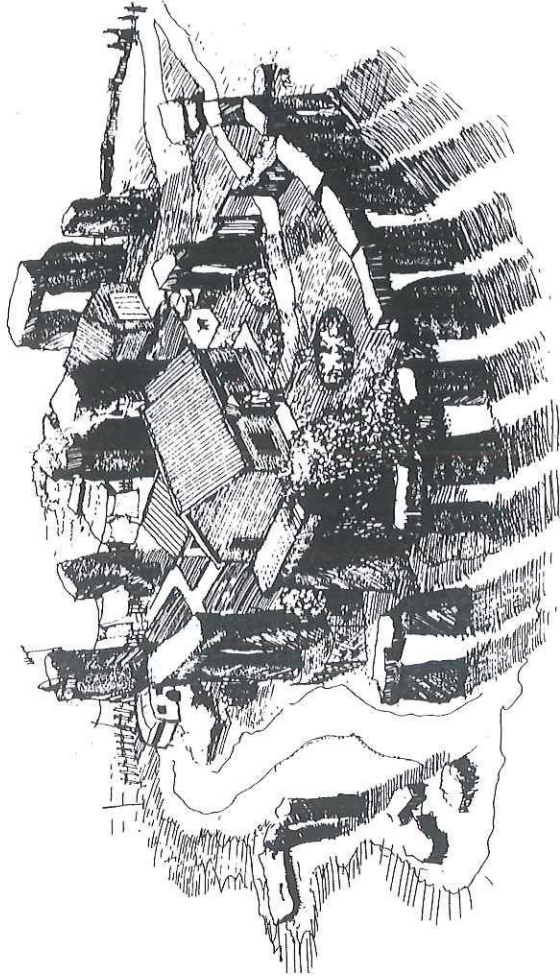
... WHEN IT COULD BE LIKE THIS?

“A sense of place”

3.3.6 Whilst houses will always be modified by their occupiers into individual homes, an unimaginative layout cannot be so easily improved. **One of the main aims of this guide is to encourage developers to produce layouts which reflect the relationship between buildings, landscape and spaces which are characteristic of the their locality and to encourage the arrangement of buildings to enclose distinctive and attractive spaces for enjoyment by residents and visitors.**

#### **Sense of Place**

3.3.7 An important aim of this guide is to ensure that the design of new housing in Lincolnshire relates to local character in order to achieve a sense of place. In the past, all too often new roads have been simply lined with standard dwellings and a few trees and future occupants left with the sometimes impossible task of creating an identifiable 'place'.



A Sense of Place ?!!!

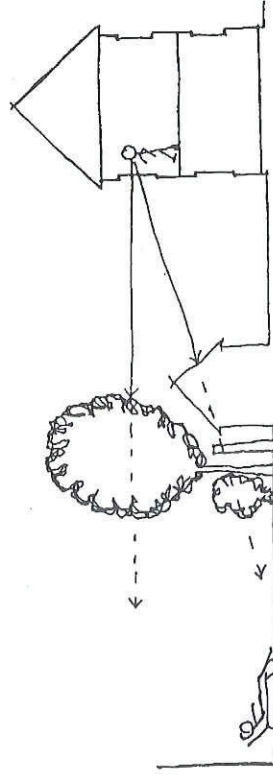
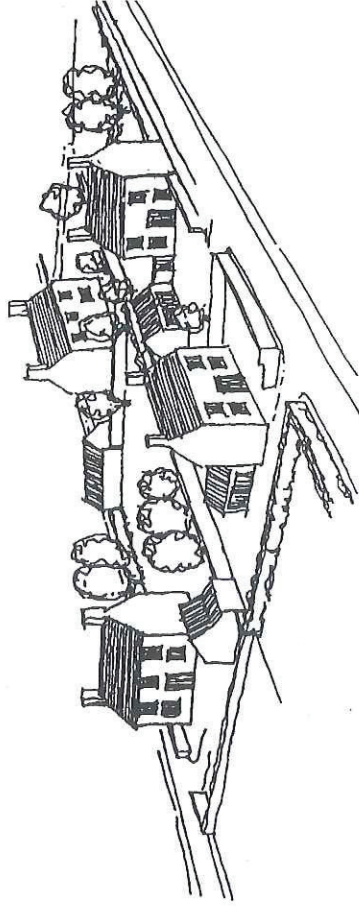
## Privacy and Overlooking

3.3.8 Care will be needed to secure a good degree of personal privacy in residential housing layouts. It is essential to minimise the overlooking of areas of private garden; and the distance between facing windows, especially at the rear of dwellings, must be sufficient to ensure that the occupants do not experience discomfort as a result of excessive overlooking. This may also be achieved by careful attention to individual house design, and the use of more informal layouts, avoiding parallel rear elevations.

3.3.9 To further minimise overlooking and perceived loss of privacy, it is appropriate, where possible, to locate upper floor windows of conventional cill height in such a way as to avoid direct views into neighbouring private gardens, unless the view from them is oblique or well screened by trees or buildings.

3.3.10 Views into living rooms from the public side of buildings also require consideration. Reasonable internal privacy for living rooms should be achieved, for example, by screening large front-facing windows, restricting unscreened windows to a narrow width, or avoiding unscreened front facing windows to through living rooms.

3.3.8 INFORMAL LAYOUTS ... AVOIDING PARALLEL REAR ELEVATIONS ... USING SOLID GABLES ... THOUGHTFUL SITING OF GARAGES ... AND GOOD USE OF PLANTING



3.3.9 OUTBUILDINGS, BOUNDARY WALLS, TREES AND HEDGES HELP AFFORD PRIVACY

## Space about buildings:

3.4.1 The understandable desire of developers to maximise the level of saleable building accommodation frequently leads to minimal space between buildings. This is particularly noticeable with conventional family housing even at lower densities. A move towards creating a greater mix of housing has tended to raise densities, rather than improve space standards.

3.4.2 Whilst accommodation for smaller households inevitably features smaller gardens, it remains important to reserve space for a tree, or privacy or for sunlight. A layout which consists entirely of small dwellings with small gardens minimises garden space around the buildings, which still retain conventional height and mass. There is a requirement for a more diverse range of garden sizes, enabling larger gardens to accommodate screen and relief planting.

3.4.3 In traditional patterns of development, in towns and villages, small dwellings with little or no gardens were frequently able to benefit from their relationship with more spacious neighbouring properties, or an adjoining open space. This should be replicated by providing an appropriate mix of large and small dwellings on a site, to achieve a balance of building scale and plot sizes.

3.4.4 Where such a balanced development is not considered acceptable by developers, those wishing to develop large houses must accept much lower densities to achieve this essential sense of spaciousness. Equally, proposals for predominantly small dwellings will need to include an element of compensating open space, such as a square, green or park.

3.4.5 Open space within housing areas is inevitably fragmented by numerous plot divisions. Areas of private garden are normally dispersed throughout a layout and do not therefore gel into visually significant space. Only where densities are comfortably below twenty five dwellings per hectare do gardens create visually significant open space.

3.4.6 On many higher density developments, gardens, whilst being used as hobby spaces, clothes drying areas and for sitting out, are also the only place for storage and wheeled bins.

3.4.7 Where garden provision is so limited, it is rarely possible to accommodate any significant planting, let alone allow it to reach maturity. Even moderately sized gardens tend to be used for cultivation or play, rather than as locations for significant planting.

3.4.8 This document does not attempt to prescribe rigid formulae for the allocation of private space, but developers should recognise that gardens should be large enough to be practical and useful. They should also not be uniform in size, nor be so small as to exclude significant tree planting.

3.4.9 **Those designs which limit tree planting to garden areas only will be considered unacceptable, unless sufficient garden space is allocated for adequate planting without causing obvious conflict with other garden uses.** Most new housing development should incorporate substantial tree planting to enhance its appearance. For that reason landscaped space will be an essential element in housing layouts. Densities must therefore be set at levels which can properly accommodate these needs.

