

# Birmingham Design Guide

Streets and Spaces City Manual

September 2022



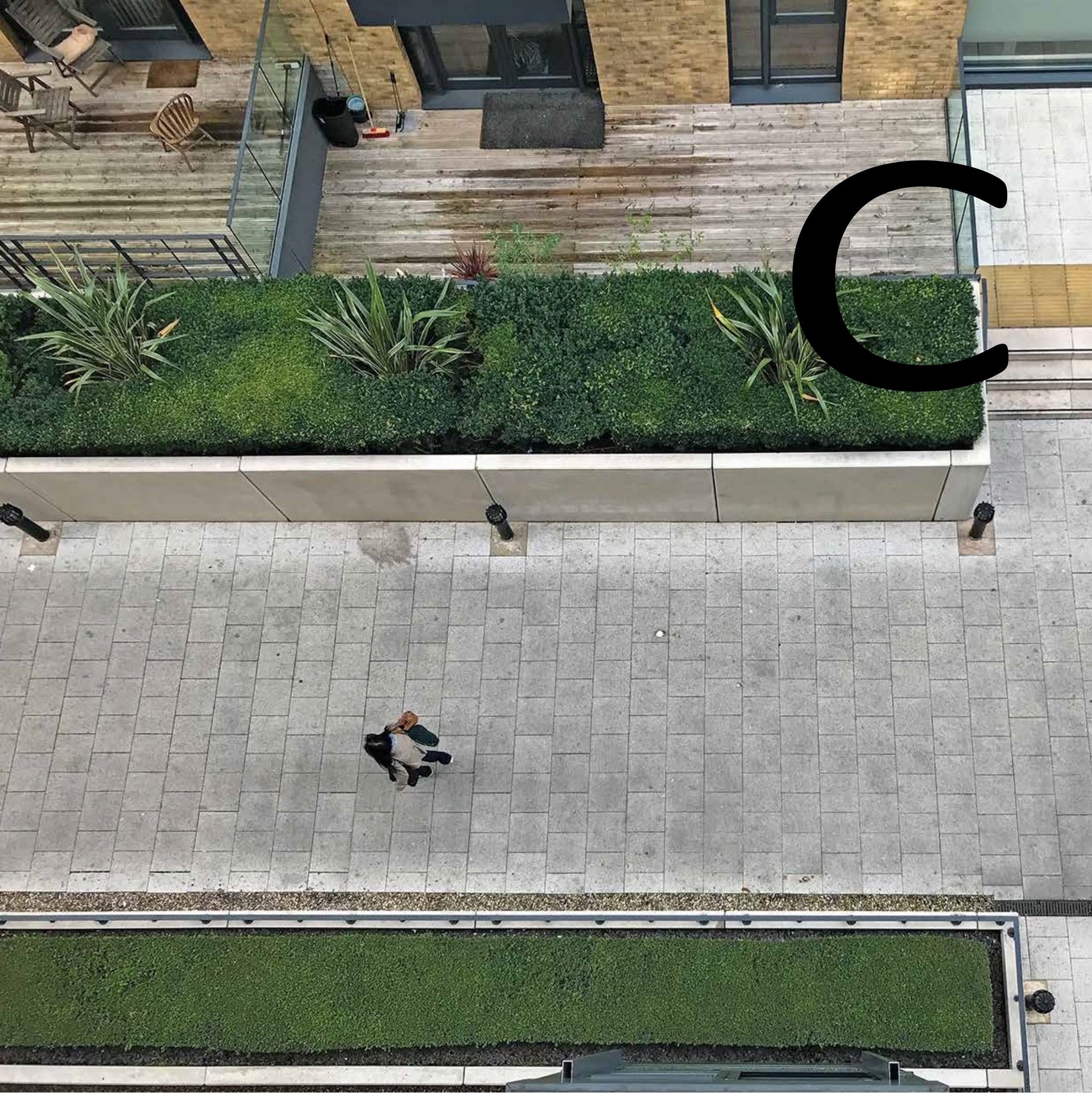
Cover image.  
 Paradise masterplan, Glenn Howells Architects.  
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# Birmingham Design Guide

## Streets and Spaces City Manual

September 2022





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# 1 Creating great streets

## CITY NOTE SS-1

Create safe and inviting, inclusive spaces

1.1 From conception, how people interact and move within and around a space should be a foundation of a development's design.

1.2 The design of streets and public spaces should be tailored to respond to their location and function; position in the street hierarchy; and the buildings enclosing them. They should be safe and pleasant places for people to walk or linger, considering how sun, shade, wind, noise and air quality affect the local microclimate. These climatic factors are particularly important where schemes propose use spillage and active engagement with the public realm.

1.3 The desire to create a particular space must be balanced with these different factors; ensuring spaces are appropriate to their setting and function. Spaces should not be delivered purely as a perceived requirement to 'placemaking'.

1.4 Places and streets should prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport over cars. Streets and pedestrian/cycle only routes should pass in front of buildings, rather than to the rear of them. Pavements should be uninterrupted across side streets and driveways. 20 mph speed limits should be applied in local neighbourhoods and centres. Routes should be overlooked from surrounding buildings, well-lit and have clear lines of sight.

1.5 Streets and spaces should be accessible and welcoming to all. Pavements should be level, free of obstructions and sufficiently wide. Consideration should be given to provision for a wide variety of mobility options including all ability cycling options and e-scooters (as legislation allows). Designs should consider the use of textures and colours to aid accessibility, allied with appropriate wayfinding where necessary. If an area of 'shared space' is proposed, the designer must work closely with the City Council and appropriate accessibility groups, to ensure the design delivers a safe environment for all users (particularly those with visual or hearing impairment).

1.6 Public spaces and streets must include appropriate green infrastructure within their design. This should aid the visual and environmental appeal of spaces, but also provide an infrastructure function in relation to the management of surface water (via rain gardens, trees, verges, planting beds, etc.) and the reduction of noise and air pollution.

1.7 New paving, furniture and other elements of the streetscape should enhance the quality of the environment and complement surrounding buildings. They must be high quality, robust and cost effective to clean, maintain, repair and replace. When specifying hard landscaping and its base and bonding materials, consideration must be given to whether it will be subject to vehicle movement and how it will stand up to this in the long term.

1.8 Seating, lighting and other street furniture should be appropriate to local needs and character. Seating should be provided where people may want to rest along routes, people-watch, take advantage of views, socialise or take a break from work. In local centres or key shopping/business areas, frequent seating opportunities should be available for those with limited mobility.

1.9 Waste bins should be conveniently located close to seating areas, but their scale, siting and design must not result in them becoming a visually dominant piece of street furniture.

1.10 The use of railings and bollards as a means of guiding pedestrians or restricting vehicle access should be limited where possible, with landscape features, trees or other street furniture used to fulfil the function desired.

1.11 Developers are encouraged to use feature lighting and art to enhance the quality and legibility of streets and public spaces, particularly in urban centres and landmark locations. The scale, type and position of lighting columns should be compatible with the scale and layout of adjacent buildings (especially buildings of historic value) and where appropriate be features in their own right (further guidance on lighting is detailed at City Notes 49 to 54 in the Living and Working Manual).

1.12 Where street furniture is to be located in a new or existing public highway, applicants must engage with the City Council's Highway Department and its partner to understand any additional maintenance requirements related to furniture proposals. This may require detailed designs, to enable an appropriate maintenance assessment to be undertaken.



Assay Office, Glenn Howells Architects.  
© Tom Bird.



## CITY NOTE SS-2

Buildings and users to activate streets and spaces

1.13 The characteristics of streets and spaces are heavily influenced by how buildings and uses relate and enclose them. Development should create proposals that effectively enhance public environments, with buildings that interact, activate and engage with the public realm; creating activity and vibrancy.

1.14 Buildings should generally follow a consistent line along streets, parallel to the carriageway, except where this detracts from the established local character, or there is a design rationale for an alternative approach.

1.15 Buildings should front on to and overlook the public realm, with well punctuated main entrances taken from primary frontage, making for convenient access and safer, active streets. Residential properties should provide natural surveillance from generously glazed, well-used rooms such as kitchens and living rooms, whilst other uses should take opportunities to animate streets and public spaces by having generously glazed facades and 'shop fronts', coupled with active ground floor uses such as retail, cafes, gallery space, reception areas, meeting spaces and offices that activate frontages.

1.16 Designs and layouts that seek to install blank elements, or small or obscured windows at street frontage will not be supported. Features such as garages, vehicular access, boundary treatments, service areas, bin stores and sub-stations should be sited away from primary frontage; but where it is not possible to site elsewhere, they must be discreetly positioned and designed to not deaden the streetscene.

1.17 At corner plots and junctions, buildings must successfully address, utilise and overlook dual street frontage; and where appropriate create architectural and/or landscape statements that help punctuate these junction points and enrich the wider townscape.

1.18 Buildings with outdoor rooms, spaces and elements can further enhance streets and spaces, creating activity that aids vibrancy and user safety. Where incorporated into mixed-use areas, these benefits must be balanced with the amenity of any existing residents and the character of the surrounding area.

## CITY NOTE SS-3

Servicing of buildings

1.19 The servicing requirements of a building should not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment, either through the location and design of servicing infrastructure; or dedicated areas within the public realm.

1.20 Where service areas, car park entrances or boundaries are located at street frontage, their design, location and scale must reduce their visual impact on the street and adjacent uses.

1.21 Loading bays which need to be sited within the public realm should be designed and detailed in a manner that does not lead to them visually dominating the street scene; encroaching on pedestrian or cycle space and routes; or conflicting with vehicle movement.

1.22 Within mixed use or multi-business developments, efficient servicing arrangements must be utilised, sharing provision to reduce the space devoted to this function.

Sub-stations

1.23 The siting of a sub-station within a development must effectively balance the operational and maintenance requirements of the infrastructure, with the need to reduce its impact on the surrounding public realm and uses. Where a prominent location is justified, the design of the enclosure/buildings must reflect the materiality and design of the development and its surroundings; and/or utilise measures such as green walls and roofs, soft landscape and/or art to help reduce its visual impact.

#### CITY NOTE SS-4

##### Avoid street clutter

1.24 In designing and enhancing the city's streets and spaces, designers should ensure proposals provide appropriate street furniture and infrastructure that complement the design and desired functionality of a space. However, this 'street detailing' should not result in an oversupply of features, leading to street clutter that negatively impacts on the visual appearance and amenity of the environment; or impedes effective movement through spaces.

1.25 In designing proposals, designers must consider the location, coordination and communal impact of street features and infrastructure such as street furniture, signage, advertisements, utilities and wireless infrastructure/telephone boxes. Where appropriate these should be sited in zones/clusters and use systems that enable the sharing of mounting infrastructure, integrate with other landscape features, or form part of a wider modular system that aligns with the furniture palette and fulfils dual functions. Where existing infrastructure is present, clear justification for additional furniture or infrastructure must be given. Whilst street furniture, lighting and signage play an important role in creating a functional street, they must not dominate it.

1.26 Utility equipment should be positioned underground or effectively integrated into landscape features, or clad appropriately to align with their surroundings. Locations should also be sought that reduce visual impact and the potential to impede pedestrian movement. In schemes where new streets and infrastructure is being installed, the installation of accessible and integrated service trenches should be explored. CCTV, anti-terrorism and other security measures should be discreet as possible and integral to public realm design, as detailed below.

#### CITY NOTE SS-5

##### Anti-terror measures

1.27 In order to enhance the city's resistance to potential terror attacks, proposals that could be seen as a possible target (due to the volume of people visiting or using the development; its location; and/or the nature of user/operator), must engage at the early

design stage with West Midlands's Counter-Terror Unit to establish any potential risks and design measures that could help reduce them.

#### Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM)

1.28 Allied with the installation of laminated glass (as detailed at Design Principle 22: Safe places - Anti-terror measures), developments must consider the potential for threats from vehicle borne attacks.

1.29 The primary method of deflecting potential threats is the placement of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) measures within the public realm and landscaping within the vicinity of the building or space.

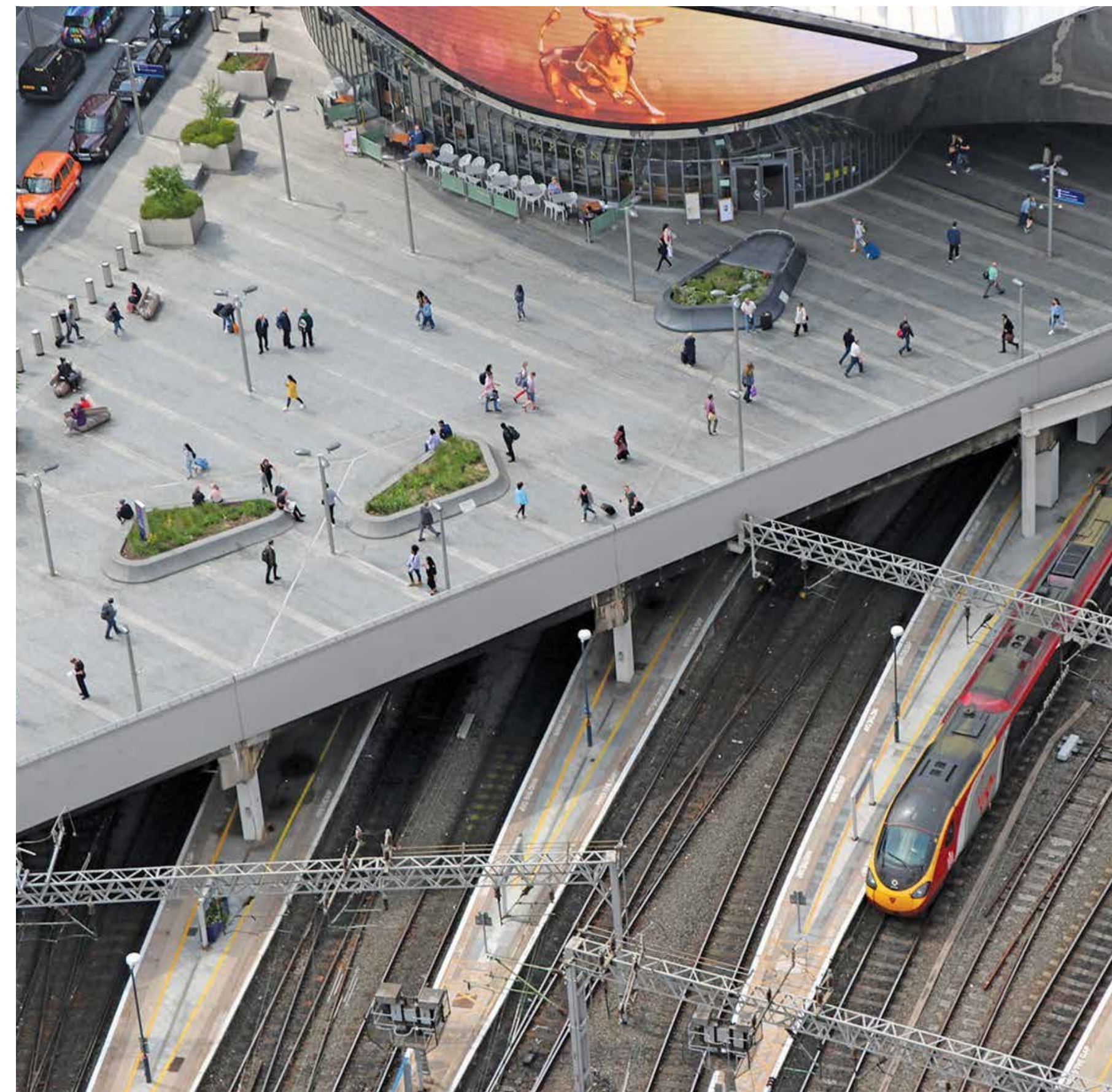
1.30 The characteristics and constraints of a given site will influence the methods of HVM that can be installed, but this should not lead to the visual fortification of a development through the installation of bollards, concrete blocks or large visually imposing (utilitarian) barriers.

1.31 Where a development is advised to integrate HVM measures, it should undertake a Dynamic Vehicle Assessment to help understand potential vehicle routes and speeds that could be used to forcibly access the development.

1.32 Having understood the HVM requirements associated with a site, designers (in consultation with the Counter-Terror Unit) should seek landscape based solutions that utilise level changes and landscape features to achieve the HVM requirements. Where this cannot be achieved, a combination of landscape features and HVM infrastructure solutions should be sought.

1.33 Where HVM infrastructure is the only means of creating the protection sought, these should be effectively integrated into the surrounding street's palette of materials and furniture, using rated infrastructure integrated into street furniture (bins, benches, cycle stands), public art or landscape features (granite blocks, raised tree pits, planting beds, hedges, walls).

1.34 Proposals close to the canal network, must engage with the Canal & River Trust.



## CITY NOTE SS-6

### Advertisements

1.35 In accordance with Development Management in Birmingham Development Plan Document (DMB) policy DM7, advertisements and signage within the city's public realm, or sited on buildings will not be permitted in locations where they would significantly detract from the quality, enjoyment and function of the surrounding environment. Proposals that would negatively impact on the architectural quality of a building, the character of the surrounding area, adjacent uses or pedestrian movement would not generally be supported.

1.36 Where allowed, their scale, position and overall design should be sympathetic to their location, ensuring through individual or cumulative impact, they do not:

- Cause visual clutter within public spaces or streets;
- Block or impact on important views;
- Detract from the character or significance of a heritage asset;
- Cause a driving hazard;
- Produce unacceptable light pollution; and/or
- Create obstacles to pedestrian movement or sightlines.

1.37 Guidance on the design of shop front and totem signage is provided by City Note LW-31 to LW-26 in the Healthy Living and Working Manual.

### Large format banner advertisements

1.38 The City Council will only permit large format banners where it is essential that an entire elevation of a building is to be scaffolded for building or related work. Effectively applied, mesh or banners can mask the work being undertaken; reducing its visual impact on the surrounding environment and protect adjacent users.

1.39 The potential size of the coverings, lend themselves to the application of temporary public art and images of the proposed development, which the City Council supports. They can also be attractive spaces for commercial advertisements, which can have a negative impact on its surroundings, relative to the location or size of advertisement. To help reduce this potential impact, proposals seeking to install large commercial banners over scaffolded elevations should:

- Have no elevation containing an advertisement greater than 500sq.m in area or 40% of the scaffolded elevation, whichever is the lesser; but in sensitive locations, this area/percentage may need to be reduced when assessed in the surrounding context;
- Within sensitive areas such as conservation areas, or on, facing or in close proximity to a listed building, the entire scaffolding mesh must be covered by a 1:1 scale image of the building being constructed/refurbished, or other similarly appropriate image;
- Have the whole elevation covered by mesh to a good quality of workmanship, and shall have any commercial element sitting within, and framed by, the mesh;
- Be removed as soon as the relevant work, as described is complete. The advertisement consent will last no longer than the agreed building programme or one year, whichever is shorter. Large format advertisement banners should avoid seeking a further temporary consent unless in exceptional circumstances. The renewal of such applications will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that reasonable works have taken place since the original permission and that essential works justifying the full scaffolding of the elevation are still required; and
- Submit a detailed schedule of works explaining the nature of the works to be undertaken to the building, why scaffolding is necessary and the overall program of work to the building.

Large banner advertisements will not normally be permitted in predominantly residential areas.

### Advertising hoardings

1.40 Due to the scale and prominent locations sought for the siting of advertisement hoardings, these structures often dominate their surrounding environment, negatively impacting visually and physically, in terms of the human-scale of spaces.

1.41 As a result of this potential, the City Council may only support proposals that can demonstrate they will not have an adverse effect on the amenity and/or safety of the surrounding environment.

1.42 In assessing proposals for new advertisement hoardings, the City Council will consider the following guidance:

### Location and land use guidelines

#### Designated heritage assets

1.43 Designated heritage assets (listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Park and Garden's and conservation areas) or their surroundings would not normally be an acceptable location for advertisement hoardings as their presence is likely to negatively impact on the amenity, character, significance and/or setting of the asset.

#### Green belt and open spaces

1.44 These areas will not normally be acceptable locations for the display of advertisement hoardings as they are likely to negatively impact on the openness and appearance of the green belt, landscape or open space (open space includes public open space used for recreational and community purposes, private playing fields, canals and linear walkways; central reservations and land adjacent to traffic islands and areas of nature conservation).

1.45 On highway verges, railway embankments or within railway cuttings regard will be had to the particular visual characteristics of the land in question and the surrounding area.

#### Residential and mixed-use commercial and residential areas

1.46 Proposals must demonstrate that advertisements would have no adverse effect on the amenity of the surrounding area; or how it would lead to enhancement of an area.

#### Commercial areas

1.47 Proposals will only be acceptable in commercial areas if it can be demonstrated that it would have no adverse effect on amenity of the local area and not detract from the physical enhancement of the city's environment. Within these areas, account will need to be taken of the scale of commercial frontages, the effect on visual amenity and the cumulative effect of existing advertisements, hoardings and street furniture.

#### Transport corridors

1.48 Advertisement hoardings will only be acceptable where they do not detract from the visual amenity of the area and the quality of gateways into key areas of the city.

### Existing Birmingham City Council trees

1.49 The presence of existing BCC owned trees within or adjacent to a site must be considered as a permanent and growing landscape asset. The City Council will not enter into tree pruning regimes of its tree stock to facilitate lines of sight to an advertisement. Proposals must reflect this in their proposed sighting and also consider any future conflicts as the tree grows.

### Public safety

1.50 The potential impact advertisement proposals may have on highway safety will be a key consideration:

- Proposals adjacent to highway infrastructure will need to clearly demonstrate, to the City Council and other public sector stakeholders, the proposal will not affect the safety of persons using the road network;
- The siting of advertisement hoardings will not normally be acceptable where visible from the city's motorway network or primary roads such as the A38 due to their potential to distract drivers;
- The siting of advertisement hoardings near to any road, railway signal or any sign that assists traffic, pedestrian or cyclist movement will not normally be acceptable unless there is long range visibility to enable a driver to read the display before reaching a point in the transportation network where further distractions would increase the risk of accidents;
- The display of advertisement hoardings must be sited so not to obstruct highway visibility splays;
- Illuminated and digital hoardings will not be acceptable where the light source creates a glare and distraction to road users, resulting in a traffic hazard; and/or
- Freestanding hoardings should not obstruct footpaths or provide hiding places and opportunities for crime or anti-social behaviour.

### Design and siting

1.51 If a location of an advertisement hoarding is considered acceptable, the design of the proposal must align with the following guidance:

- Freestanding hoardings which are clearly separated from buildings and do not provide temporary screening for a site will not normally be acceptable, unless it can be demonstrated they would have no adverse effect on amenity;
- If a freestanding structure is accepted, its design should seek to add interest or enhance its surroundings where appropriate, using the structure to create public art;
- Any display should be set back a minimum of 2m from the back of footpath unless there are visual amenity reasons to the contrary; and/or should be set back or align with an existing building line;
- Where hoardings are designed to form part of a boundary or screen, their size and location should respect, and be similar in scale, to the size of the boundary treatment proposed;
- Hoardings should respect the scale of adjacent buildings. The size, design and siting must not negatively impact on the character of the surrounding area;
- Advertisement hoardings on the gable ends of buildings should not obscure architectural features, or extend beyond the edges or the roofline of buildings;
- Hoarding sited on a building must relate to its proportions, its architectural style and respect the symmetry of the elevation;
- Hoardings, including monopole or bipole units, will not be acceptable in locations which when viewed against the immediate surroundings, create dominant skyline features, harmful to the visual amenities of the locality;
- It will not be acceptable to have the rear structural element of the display wholly or partially visible to the occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties; to the uses of adjacent transport infrastructures (including public footpaths); Public Open Space; public realm or public car parks, unless it is satisfactorily screened or treated;
- Hoardings should not result in the screening or enclosure of facilities such as car parks or public footpath, preventing their natural surveillance; and

- The cumulative impact of advertisements and other street and highway furniture must be a key consideration. Proposals that seek to locate additional advertisements in an area with existing advertisements and street furniture, must demonstrate how their proposal will not lead to the cluttering of an area, negatively impacting on amenity and user safety.

### Digital and full-motion advertisements

1.52 Illuminated, digital and full-motion hoardings enhance the advertisement's presence within the city's landscape, leading to the potential for greater impact on amenity and safety. Allied with the guidance above, proposals for digital, illuminated or full-motion hoardings must demonstrate how the proposal will not impact on the amenity of adjacent uses (particularly residential) and public spaces through their prominence, glare and the emission of light and movement. This should consider the impact on internal and external areas.

1.53 Proposals must also demonstrate that the safety of public spaces is not compromised during non-daylight hours, creating periods of over illumination, shade and movement, which could impact on the ability of pedestrians to navigate safely through the city's streets and spaces.

### Freestanding advertisements and telephone kiosks

1.54 Freestanding and telephone kiosk advertisements have the potential to impact on the amenity and safety of the city's public realm and historic environment.

1.55 In considering the siting of freestanding advertisements and telephone kiosks, proposals must justify how they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the surrounding public space; the amenity and setting of an historic asset; and/or the safe use of spaces for pedestrian, cyclist or vehicle movement. This justification must include a robust cumulative impact assessment of existing street furniture, advertisements and infrastructure, allied with the proposal.

1.56 Advertisement proposals that are considered to have a negative impact on amenity or safety, individually or cumulatively, will not be supported.







Gratitude Exhibition, Paradise.  
© Greg Holmes.



**CITY NOTE SS-7**

**Public art**

1.57 Public art is an important part of the urban landscape and cultural offer of the city. Integrated into the design of building facades, public realm and landscapes, art can add substantially to the quality and uniqueness of spaces; creating bespoke features that can act as focal points, landmarks and attractions that draw users and aid wayfinding through the city.

1.58 Beyond their physical contribution to the environment, art can play an important social role, representing or helping to characterise communities. It can also present an opportunity to engage directly with communities in their creation.

1.59 Birmingham benefits from a range of public art that contribute to the varied character areas of the city, ranging from historic statues, to street art, lighting schemes and sculptures. Development across the city should work proactively with artists and communities to continue adding to this diverse portfolio; and retain existing art where it contributes to the character of the area.

1.60 Beyond direct integration into designs, the City Council also supports the use of public spaces for art activities and temporary installations.

1.61 Where hoardings are used to enclose and secure development sites, developers should positively use these as canvases to help reduce their impact on the surrounding environment; using them to promote their scheme and/or install temporary works of art.

1.62 To help understand the City Council's approach to public art and source links to existing projects and artists, designers should consult the Birmingham City Council's Culture Team.

**CITY NOTE SS-8**

**Health - sport/exercise/play/culture**

1.63 Its ability to support and encourage active travel (walking, running and cycling) is the primary health benefit linked to the city's public realm network, but there is also scope to use the spaces for community, cultural, exercise, sports and play purposes. This could range from the siting of an outdoor gym, skate or play equipment; the creation of areas that could enable groups to use spaces informally and formally for community and cultural activities, classes or workshops; to providing infrastructure that enables the use of the canals for canoes or paddle boards.

1.64 Consideration should also be given to how spaces and features may be used more informally by urban sports such as skating, BMX and parkour. The potential damage these sports can cause to materials and features often leads to deterrents being applied to designs, which in many cases is valid. But these sports contribute to the cultural mix of the city and where it is appropriate to do so, designs should include features that can withstand and enable use by these sports.

1.65 The nature and location of the space being designed will inform the appropriateness of integrating sport, exercise and/or play into a public realm proposal. Consideration needs to be given to potential conflicts and other users, but where there is scope to provide features and infrastructure these should be integrated into the landscape design, in consultation with the City Council.

1.66 In creating their designs, landscape architects are encouraged to challenge and explore how landscape and spaces could be more beneficial to health and well-being. This is particularly relevant in urban areas, where spaces can often be very formal, with limited facilities beyond seating and planting. Whilst beneficial, could the design of these spaces be more playful, considering how children or young people could benefit from the space; or its core use diversified?

1.67 Widening the use and scope of spaces not only supports healthy living, but could also extend the periods when spaces are used (in turn aiding building uses) and help re-imagine the function of some existing spaces.

## 2 Designing the transport needs of development

### CITY NOTE SS-9

Creating safe, attractive, efficient walking and cycling environments

2.1 Developments should align with the principles of the Birmingham Transport Plan (November 2021)<sup>1</sup>. Streets and neighbourhoods should be designed to ensure that walking and cycling are 'go to' options for everyday trips. The City Council supports reallocation of road space away from prioritising private cars, to enable the delivery of public transport and active travel networks. Developments in the city centre should align with the principle of transformation of this area, to create pedestrianised streets and public spaces, integrated with public transport and cycling infrastructure. Private car access will be limited, with no through trips allowed.

2.2 To help create low-carbon and low pollution developments, it is important that proposals are sited and designed to enable employees, users and residents to access a range of facilities and services without needing to use cars. To aid this, proposals should create walking and cycling routes that effectively link with, and enhance, the city's existing transport networks. Walking and cycling routes should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. Links to the city's extensive network of blue and green corridors (such as our canals) should be optimised where possible. Active travel infrastructure and opportunities should be available from the outset of a development.

2.3 Useful guidance on designing environments which encourage active travel are available from Healthy Streets<sup>2</sup> and Sport England<sup>3</sup>.

2.4 Where new streets and routes are to be created, these must prioritise safe, efficient pedestrian and cycle movement over motor vehicles through the reallocation of road space away from private car use (in consultation with the Highways Authority). Designs

should apply parking management tools, pedestrian and cycle priority, low speed road layouts, 20mph speed limits, crossing facilities and/or segregated routes that invite use.

2.5 The successful application of these measures can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes that can enhance spaces and user experiences of them. The design of proposals should consider the following:

- **Safety** - create routes that minimise conflict with motor vehicles and maximise natural surveillance;
- **Directness** - Pedestrian and cycle routes should be direct and convenient, reflecting desire lines and connecting into key destinations. Crossings should generally be straight across rather than staggered and utilise measures such as raised elements and wide spans to help heighten pedestrian status and reduce vehicle speeds;
- **Coherence** - the need for directional signage within streets should be minimised by designing legible places. Where wayfinding information is needed, it must be integrated in to the public realm and not contribute to street clutter;
- **Attractiveness and comfort** - routes must be wide enough for current and expected levels of use, surfaces unobstructed and easy to maintain, gradients are suitable for all abilities, lighting provided and seating considered;
- **Adaptability** - routes should offer potential for further connections and extensions in future; and be suitable for a wide range of people, of varying ages and ability; and
- **Integrated mobility options** - cycling and walking infrastructure should be integrated with the wider public transport network and convenient and secure cycle parking. Public transport hubs should be easily accessible by foot and bicycle and have excellent interconnectivity. Co-location of transport facilities should be sought where possible. (See information on mobility hubs in SS16).

2.6 Information on cycling and walking proposals in Birmingham and the wider region is available in the Birmingham City Council Walking and Cycling Strategy and Infrastructure Plan and the West Midlands Cycle Charter. When designing cycle routes and infrastructure into a scheme, proposals should consult and adhere to the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance, balanced against good urban design principles.

2.7 Where a proposal is of a sufficient scale to require the development of new community services and facilities, these should be located to enable wider community benefit of the assets provided, supported by new routes to aid access.

2.8 Proposals must seek to align with guidance and standards related to distances between new developments and community facilities set out in BDP policies TP9 (public open spaces, parks and play areas) and TP45 (walking distances to GP surgeries, shops, schools and public transport services) and; Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) Bus Service Access Standards.

2.9 All developments should be guided by these sustainable travel principles, but the City Council will give heightened focus to developments within the city centre, designated Local Centres, adjacent to public transport interchanges and in the city's Green Travel Districts (GTD).

2.10 TDAG First Steps in Urban Air Quality<sup>4</sup> is a useful guide to help mitigate poor air quality for cyclists and pedestrians.

<sup>1</sup> Birmingham Transport Plan [birmingham\\_transport\\_plan](#)

<sup>2</sup> Healthy Streets website

<sup>3</sup> Sport England active design

<sup>4</sup> First steps in urban air quality



### CITY NOTE SS-10

Deliver a clear hierarchy of connected streets

2.11 New streets and public routes should be linked up and connect seamlessly to the existing network to provide a choice of convenient routes. Cul-de-sacs should be kept short and used sparingly, whilst gated forms of development will not normally be acceptable.

2.12 Where cul-de-sac layouts are used within a development or where through routes for general traffic are not appropriate, proposals should seek to create pedestrian and cycle routes that continue through, enhancing permeability across a scheme and linking with wider existing networks where possible. Such routes should be open, well-lit and/or have good natural surveillance.

2.13 Proposals should create or contribute to an existing street hierarchy that will aid legibility and promote local character and sense of place. A hierarchy of streets should be designed to reflect their role within the development and the wider area. Different street types should be created by considering the design of the space between buildings; the scale and appearance of enclosing buildings; frontages and boundaries; and the widths of footways/cycleways/carrageways, parking solutions, materials, street furniture and planting.

2.14 A specific hierarchy will be influenced by the nature of development, its location and the character desire; but may include the following:

- High street or primary route;
- Shopping or mixed-use street;
- Avenue;
- Boulevard;
- Mews;
- Lane; and/or
- Courtyard.

2.15 Hierarchies should focus on creating pedestrian environments, perhaps encompassing a range of streets. This could include tree lined avenues, to the more intimate character of mews and pedestrian focused areas that encourage user interaction, play and safe movement, and limit through-trips for motorised traffic.

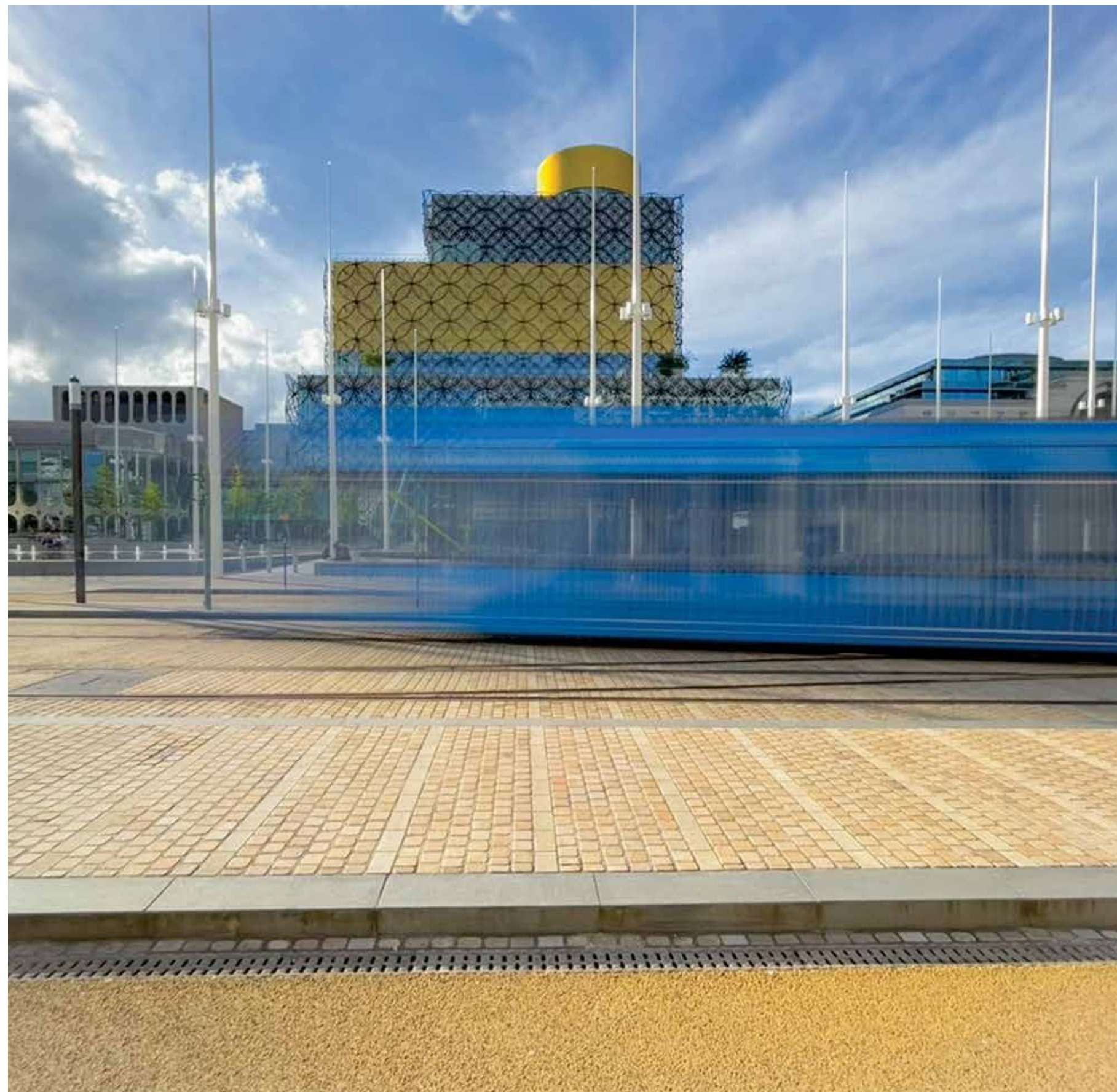
2.16 Successful neighbourhoods often incorporate places where there is a natural focus, such as squares, greens or corners. Particularly near to local facilities, these places encourage people to stop and chat, and offer obvious meeting places for the community.

2.17 Creating a successful hierarchy will play an important role in balancing the dual function of the city's public realm. It should create a framework that enables effective, safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and road users; and the creation of quality environments not dominated by vehicle movement.

Royal Wharf masterplan, Glenn Howells Architects.  
© Greg Holmes.



Crocodile Works, Glenn Howells Architects.  
© Paul Miller.



### CITY NOTE SS-11

Make legible places that are easy to navigate

2.18 In establishing a street layout and hierarchy, or assessing the contribution development could make to an existing street network, consideration must be given to how a proposal will aid navigation.

2.19 Proposals should make places that are easy to understand so people can find their way around using cues from the built environment such as character areas, the street pattern and hierarchy, landmarks (buildings, structures, trees), focal spaces (such as squares, water ways and parks) and vistas/views.

2.20 A strong, connected grid of streets, as well as offering a choice of routes, is an easy layout to understand, further enhanced by the appropriate siting of landmarks, public spaces and squares to aid orientation and enhance the quality of spaces.

2.21 Where interesting buildings, trees, vistas or other features already exist within the site, the opportunity should be taken to integrate these into the scheme wherever possible, as well as introducing new ones. Consideration must also be given to views and features in the wider area (identified via a Character Assessment, as detailed at Design Principle 2), ensuring proposals do not negatively impact on them.

2.22 Where landmarks exist, or are to be created within a site, these should help inform street patterns, hierarchy and overall layout; ensuring the landmarks are effectively revealed and framed by development.

2.23 Historic routes should be retained within developments, maintaining their widths, proportions and alignments and conserving significant features. Historic grains/street patterns should also be used to inform the character and hierarchy of new streets and spaces.

2.24 Where required, signposting and waymarking should be sensitive to the local environment, simple, consistent, clearly legible, adaptable and well maintained. Rationalisation and consolidation of signage to avoid and reduce street clutter will be supported.

2.25 Particularly for traffic free routes, signage considerations should be treated as an integral part of the design process. Placement of signs should ensure visibility and clarity for all types of user.

2.26 Large new developments which will be key destinations in the city centre may need to be added to the city's Interconnect wayfinding signage and mapping. Early discussions regarding this should take place with the appropriate Business Improvement District (BID) or Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

### CITY NOTE SS-12

Support access to public transport

2.27 TfWM's refreshed local transport plan sets out a guiding philosophy on the importance of sustainable transport trips, including by public transport and active travel modes. These objectives are supported by the City Council, and development should seek to aid their delivery where possible. The TfWM's Planning Guide will provide further guidance (once published) of how TfWM can work with developers to aid this.

2.28 Planning contributions may be sought to help fund public transport improvements within the immediate vicinity of a development site(s) where this is required to mitigate any identified impacts of the proposal on the transport network. These would be sought in close discussion with TfWM.

2.29 New developments should aim to make public transport more convenient than using a car. Public transport stops and priority measures should be integrated into site design. Public transport stops/stations should be accessible through safe and direct walking and cycling routes. Secure and convenient cycle and motorcycle parking should be integrated with public transport where possible.

2.30 Within development proposals, site entrances and exits should be situated nearby public transport access points. Within a site design, high density buildings should be placed closest to public transport access points where possible.

2.31 Public realm design around public transport access points is important, particularly around key interchanges. High quality design will enhance the experience of using public transport and should be welcoming, and accessible. Where appropriate, accessible wayfinding and signage should be integrated into a design to aid movement and access.

### CITY NOTE SS-13

Accommodate transport needs for disabled people

2.32 All development proposals should be inclusive; everyone should be able to get to, into and around developments and access services and facilities.

2.33 To help achieve this, proposals must apply and align with the following:

- All developments should adhere to the latest national design guidance on inclusive mobility;<sup>5</sup>
- Disabled parking provision should ensure close proximity to destinations. It should link safely with footpaths and avoid unnecessary vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. Provision of disabled electric charging bays, and inclusive cycle storage should also be made available where required;
- Street furniture should be carefully positioned to ensure it does not cause unnecessary obstruction and clutter should be kept to a minimum in any public realm design;
- Consideration should be made for how inclusive access will be maintained during construction phase;
- Resting opportunities should be a key element of public realm design to improve access for those with limited mobility;
- Key destinations, as set out in the Birmingham Parking SPD, should include access and space for drop-off/pick-up areas for Ring and Ride or demand responsive transport options in close proximity to entrances; and
- Proposals should seek to enhance accessibility between the site and surrounding public realm and route network.

<sup>5</sup> Inclusive mobility

### CITY NOTE SS-14

Provide cycle and motorcycle parking and infrastructure that is convenient, safe and secure

2.34 All development must support and aid the growth of Birmingham's cycle infrastructure; encouraging and enabling residents, employees and visitors to use bikes and safely store them.

2.35 Most developments are also required to install motorcycle parking. Provision for powered two wheelers has an important role to play in improving mobility options in Birmingham.

#### Secure cycle parking

2.36 Within the city's public realm, the 'M' shaped Sheffield stands will be used to enable short stay securing of bikes, whilst people are visiting or using facilities within the city centre, other centres and public transport interchanges. Within private areas of public realm, the City Council promotes the use of Sheffield stands, but alternatives to the 'M' design may be appropriate to align with a wider street furniture palette.

2.37 Exceptions to the city-wide application of Sheffield stands may be within conservation areas or adjacent to heritage assets, where bespoke, discrete solutions may be required.

2.38 In general, Sheffield stands or M style stands should be provided as default. All stands should give secure support for both wheels and frame. Single wheel holder types are unsatisfactory because of the risk of theft and of wheels buckling. Stands should be sufficiently spaced apart with a minimum of one metre between each. Two metres length should be allowed for a cycle parking 'bay', ensuring the stand is sufficiently set back from any walls to ensure it is usable. Stands must be sited away from vehicle parking bays or service areas to avoid potential for damage to the stand or bike.





2.39 Beyond public facilities, development must provide long-stay secure, covered parking facilities for occupants and users of their development. Apartments, large leisure facilities, offices and other places of work, should seek to provide integrated, safe cycle storage preferably within the ground floor of the building that is convenient to access (at-grade or via a ramp) from the street and the internal circulation of the building. Where bespoke storage cannot be integrated into the fabric of the building, secure storage within a basement car park or service area should be considered, with safe separation from vehicles. Where lifts are needed to access cycle stores or facilities these should be sufficiently large to accommodate their cycles (at least 2m deep and 2m wide) with an overall door aperture of 1.2m. Where communal storage is to be provided, it must be covered by CCTV.

2.40 If external storage is the only option, these must be covered, secured and overlooked by occupiers. External stores must be robust and designed to align with the building it serves; and effectively integrate with the surrounding landscape. For residential properties, individual bike lockers/pods should be considered to aid security and encourage use. If bike storage is to be provided within a house or individual residential unit, the area devoted to this use should be in addition to overall Nationally Described Space Standards requirement for the dwelling. These should be effectively integrated into a layout, close to the entrance area. Siting stores above ground floor level is not generally supported.

2.41 In addition to provision for permanent users, places of work, retail, leisure facilities, places of worship and other destination uses this should include secure, well-lit, covered visitor cycle parking, ideally within 10m of visitor entrances and overlooked by CCTV or internal users. The design should align and integrate with the surrounding public realm and/or architecture; and not dominate.

2.42 For schools or community facilities where children and young people may visit, consideration should be given to the provision of secure scooter parking facilities.

2.43 In designing cycle storage, consideration should also be given to non-standard and inclusive cycles that may be used by residents, employers or users. These may range from cycles with child trailers or trailer bikes, to cargo bikes, recumbent or wheel-chair friendly tricycles. Where it is likely that such cycles may be used, the capacity of storage should be designed to successfully accommodate and secure these larger bikes.

2.44 Electric bikes are becoming increasingly popular and offer a good urban mobility solution. Charging provision for these should be considered, particularly for residential accommodation or other large developments where long stay cycle parking is required.

2.45 The amount of cycle storage a particular use needs to provide is detailed within the Birmingham Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2.46 Doorways serving cycle storage or routes to storage must be at least 1.0m wide.

2.47 Stores to serve houses must be at least 2m x 1.4m to store 2 bikes and 2.2m x 2m to store 3 bikes.

#### **Powered 2 wheeler (motorcycle) parking**

2.48 Motorcycle parking has many similar requirements to cycle parking. It must be near, clear, secure and safe to use. It must be located in well lit areas which are close to destinations and visible and/or have CCTV coverage so as to deter theft.

2.49 Motorcycle parking should have dropped kerb or level access, and should be on a solid, level surface. Anchor points should be provided for security. Raised level anchor points in the form of a raised bar at a height of around 600mm is preferable to ground level anchors. A continuous horizontal rail can allow for efficient use by bikes of varying sizes. Anchor points should be welded and not screwed into place and there should be sufficient space to manoeuvre around them. Layout of anchor points should not present a hazard to other road users or pedestrians (particularly those with visual impairment). Motorcycle parking should be clearly signed, indicating it is for Powered Two Wheelers only. Where possible stands should be under cover.

#### **Supporting infrastructure**

2.50 Within apartments and places of work, appropriate facilities and infrastructure should be provided to support and encourage the use of bicycles for everyday journeys. This should be accessible and include lockers, tool stations and repair areas, drying areas for clothes and showers. Ideally these should be integrated into the cycle storage facility, or within close proximity to it. The size and amount of these facilities should reflect the number of occupants/employees and use. Similarly, for long stay motorcycle parking, such as workplaces, lockers for storing clothing and equipment (including crash helmets) and changing facilities should be provided.

### CITY NOTE SS-15

Minimise and manage car parking, ensuring it does not dominate

2.51 Managing demand for parking is a key principle within the Birmingham Transport Plan, with it identified as a key means for managing travel by private vehicle. There is a need to balance the provision of appropriate user parking, with the impact it may have on health and the surrounding environment; and the need to encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

2.52 Designers should refer to Birmingham's most up to date parking standards to ensure they are providing appropriate provision and accommodating specific facilities for disabled users, electric vehicles and any car club provision. Early consultation with the City's Transportation Development Control should also take place, to ensure appropriate access, egress, height restrictions and traffic management measures are designed into parking facilities where required.

2.53 Car parking will need to be tailored to each site and use, taking account of the type of development and local character. It should be convenient, safe (people living in houses should generally be able to see their car from their windows) and effectively designed into streets and buildings. In the majority of cases, designs will need to utilise a mix of solutions and typologies to achieve this.

2.54 The creation of on-street parking via the loss of existing gardens, landscape and boundaries that add to the character of an area will be resisted.

2.55 It is important that any development proposal consider the car parking required at the outset of the design process, ensuring it is integrated into the design and not considered an afterthought; leading to a 'what can we fit where' approach that negatively impacts on the design of the whole scheme.

2.56 The City Council supports the application of Manual for Streets and the Space to Park guidance which, along with guidance within this document, proposals should align with.

2.57 As reflected in the Birmingham Parking SPD, the City Council may support the removal of existing on-street parking provision within the city centre where it would aid and support enhancements to the public realm, public transport provision, walking and cycling, deliveries, taxis, car clubs and electric vehicle charging. The City Council may also support the consolidation of existing off-street parking provision to help achieve similar gains to the public realm and/or non-private vehicle based travel. But any proposals will be assessed on a case by case basis, considering the public realm and/or transport gains achieved and the impact of parking loss on the surrounding environment.



### Parking to serve residential uses

2.58 The siting and design of residential parking solutions must be informed by the character of the surrounding area, the type of scheme being proposed and its location. Appropriately considered, this may result in a mix of parking typologies needing to be integrated, but in designing these, proposals must consider the following parking typologies sequentially:

1. On-street parking effectively designed into the street and public realm. Spaces should be unallocated (communally available to all residents and visitors) and adoptable;
2. Parking basements or undercroft with discrete access points;
3. Allocated side of plot;
4. Allocated front of plot; or
5. Small rear parking courtyards, overlooked and conveniently accessed.

2.59 In applying the sequential approach, proposals must clearly justify why a preferable solution has not been applied, where it could be accommodated.

2.60 The application of this sequential approach to car parking solutions helps ensure where parking is provided it is appropriately designed in convenient locations that people want to use; reducing the potential for unmanaged parking within the public realm; enabling the potential for transient use; and promoting the efficient use of land.

### School and community buildings

2.61 In designing schools and community buildings, designers must consider the potential for unmanaged parking and movement of cars generated by parent drop-offs. Measures should be adopted by the school or community building to encourage safe and sustainable travel by users (to be outlined within a travel plan); allied with the introduction of physical measures to prevent adhoc and dangerous parking where needed. Where possible a Car Free Schools Streets<sup>6</sup> approach should be adopted.

2.62 All schools in Birmingham are encouraged to join the Mode Shift Stars Scheme<sup>7</sup> that provides supports the development of a sustainable travel plan.

<sup>6</sup> Car free school streets car\_free\_school\_streets

<sup>7</sup> Young active travel initiative

### Parking typologies

2.63 Our transport network is rapidly changing and advancements in mobility mean that travel habits may significantly change in future. Designs should seek to be sufficiently flexible to allow for the repurposing of parking as and when demand reduces. This may range from the ability to create areas of public realm or facilities for scooter or cycles, to converting a multi storey car parking into a different use. Further guidance on the design of different parking solutions is provided below:

2.64 On-street parking can have a negative impact on the street environment, where it has not been effectively designed into the public realm and landscape. Effectively integrated, it can contribute to road safety (slowing vehicle speeds), enhance activity within the street, provide surveillance of the vehicles, and in certain scenarios help support adjacent uses. Where incorporated into a scheme, it should be supported by a 20mph speed limit to help aid pedestrian and cyclist safety; and effectively broken up with landscape features.

2.65 Basement or undercroft parking can be an effective means of removing cars from streets and public realm, securely storing them beneath the active floors of buildings or under public spaces. The extent of the parking deck visible at street level should be minimised to avoid creating blank frontages to the public realm; and façade treatment should ensure that buildings appear to sit firmly on the ground, with ventilation requirements carefully integrated in to the overall façade design. Vehicular entrance areas, gates and/or barriers must be located and designed to minimise the visual impact on the building and street; with solutions seamlessly integrating with the building's design.

2.66 Off-street side of plot parking must be of a sufficient width to enable passengers and the driver to exit the vehicle. A landscaped boundary treatment should be applied between neighbouring bays, to reduce the collective impact on the street and potential for damage to apposing vehicle doors.

2.67 Off-street Parking at building frontages should not dominate these areas. Where applied, they must be visually broken up by front gardens, trees, hedges and boundary treatments (such as brick walls or brick piers with railings) appropriate to local character. Parking bays at right angles to the street should generally be limited to

runs of no more than four and to one side of the street, for reasons of pedestrian safety and streetscape quality. Bays and driveways should be of sufficient dimensions (as below) to ensure vehicles do not spill onto pavements, restricting pedestrian movement.

2.68 Garages should be subservient to active building frontages and/or landscape in the street scene, set back behind building frontages. They should have appropriate internal dimensions (as detailed below) to encourage their use for parking. Smaller garages will not be counted as a parking space.

2.69 Carports can provide visually permeable, secure parking with a less deadening effect than a garage. The design of grilles and gates must align with the house and its façade; and be visually permeable.

2.70 Rear parking courts should be landscaped spaces that accommodate parking, effectively overlooked and enclosed by development. They must not dominate the public realm. Vehicular entrance areas gates and/or barriers must be located and designed to minimise the visual impact on the building and street; with solutions seamlessly integrating with the building's design. Building entrances from the car park should be secondary to those at street frontage. Within residential schemes the use of courts are most appropriate for apartment blocks and should only serve houses where frontage or on-plot parking is not achievable. The introduction of mews houses or flats over garages can make parking courts safer places, provided the houses or flats have well defined front doors and attractive frontages with a clear connection to the public highway.

2.71 Multi-storey car parks (MSCP) may be appropriate in urban centres or associated with high car use destinations to make efficient use of land. As with any development, the proposal should display architectural quality and integrate with its surroundings. Modern, high quality cladding materials should be utilised to help enhance the architectural quality of the building, limit light pollution, aid security and mask its function. Where appropriate, active ground floor uses should be included to help a proposal integrate and/or enhance its surroundings. Design should also consider the future adaptability of the building, applying floor to ceiling heights that enable future conversion to alternative uses.

2.72 Surface car parks can have a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment, particularly when large in scale such as those serving retail, leisure and commercial units; applying open expanses of tarmac, which rarely enhance their surroundings. Where applied to a scheme, parking areas should contain significant landscaping (trees, shrubs and non-bitmac materials) to reduce their impact on the adjacent street scene and buildings; create safe segregated pedestrian routes; and help break up their open nature.

2.73 Gates, screens and barriers must be of a design that aligns with and enhances their surroundings. When integrated into a building (including MSCP), gates and screens must align and/or complement the building's material palette or have a justified design rationale for an alternative.

2.74 Parking sited next to a canal must be effectively screened to reduce the visual, noise and light impact on the canal.

2.75 Parking bay, garage and car port dimensions must be sufficient to ensure drivers and passengers can enter and exit the vehicle without knocking doors against adjacent vehicles or structures. To help achieve this, proposal must ensure at least the minimum dimensions are applied:

#### Parking Bays

- 4.8m x 2.4m for a standard bay.
- 4.8m x 3m for bays with walled boundaries.
- 6m x 2.4m for a parallel bay.
- 4.8m x 2.8m for an electric vehicle charging bay.
- 6.6m x 3.6m for a disabled parking bay.
- 6.6m x 4.6m for a disabled parking electric vehicle charging bay.

#### Garages and car ports

- At least 6m x 3m for vehicle storage.
- 7m x 3.3m for vehicle and cycle storage.



## CITY NOTE SS-16

### Additional parking and mobility considerations

#### Disabled people parking provision

2.76 Disabled people parking bays should be 3.6m wide or alternatively should consist of two standard 2.4m bays with shared spaces of 1.2m between. In addition a 1.2m safety zone should be provided for boot access and cars with rear hoists. The 1.2m safety/unloading zone at the rear of the accessibility parking bays should not project into the 6m minimum width manoeuvring roadway in car parks, as this would expose disabled drivers to being reversed on in the 'safe zone'.

2.77 On-street parking bays should be 6.6m long with a width of 3.6m and dropped kerb access at one end (See DETR Leaflet 05/95). Accessibility 'on street' parallel parking bays should allow for additional length for a tailgate/rear unloading ramp, with a drop kerb alongside.

2.78 Disabled people parking should be clearly marked, located as close as possible to the main accessible entrance to the building and with level or ramped access from the bay to the entrance. Wherever possible this should be undercover.

2.79 Disabled people bays should not be allocated to individual residences, but a pool of disabled parking bays should be available at each site for use by any Blue Badge-holding residents.

#### Zero emission vehicle charging

2.80 Zero emission vehicle charge points need to be positioned carefully, whether on-street or off-street, to ensure ease of use and to minimise the impact on pedestrians and street character. Guidance on positioning charge points is available from the Energy Saving Trust<sup>8</sup>.

2.81 Birmingham City Council has adopted an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy which details proposals for the roll-out of publicly accessible charge points across the city. Any development with on-street charging requirements should ensure integration with the proposals in this Strategy. New developments such as supermarkets, retail outlets and fuel stations may be required to collaborate with the City Council's delivery partner in supporting deployment of publicly accessible charge points on private land.

#### Car club provision

2.82 Car clubs have the potential to have a significant impact on reducing car ownership when provided within or close to residential developments, particularly in city centre locations where the density of potential users is high and the need to own and use a car on a regular or frequent basis may be low.

2.83 Car club provision should align to guidelines as set out in the Birmingham Parking SPD.

2.84 Car club parking bays should be sited carefully to ensure people have full access to the vehicles without impediment. The bays should be clear and signed as Car Club only. Guidance on provision of car clubs in property developments is available from CoMoUK (previously known as Carplus), the accreditation body for car clubs in the UK<sup>9</sup>.

#### Mobility hubs

2.85 Co-location of a variety of transport facilities can be a great way to extend travel choice beyond private car usage, make efficient use of space, and promote sustainable travel. Designers of new developments are encouraged to consider a mobility hub approach which co-locates mobility options and other community facilities.

This could include provision for:

- Shared transport such as e-scooters, cargo bicycles, West Midlands Cycle Hire, car club vehicles and zero emission vehicle charging points;
- Active travel support including wayfinding maps, bike hangars, tool stations and digital public transport information and timetables;
- Public space and community facilities, such as a shelter, seating, micro-parks, and parcel lockers; and/or
- Space for pop-up retail, food, public services and grassroots initiatives.

Further guidance on mobility hubs is available from TfWM<sup>10</sup>, or Comouk<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Authority%20Guidance%20-%20Positioning%20chargepoints.pdf](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Authority%20Guidance%20-%20Positioning%20chargepoints.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [www.como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Car-clubs-in-property-developments-2015.pdf](http://www.como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Car-clubs-in-property-developments-2015.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Transport for West Midlands

<sup>11</sup> <https://como.org.uk/shared-mobility/mobility-hubs/what/>



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# Birmingham Design Guide

Streets and Spaces City Manual

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