

North Tyneside Design Code: Residential Sites



North
Tyneside
Council

New residential sites can help improve connections and facilities for both existing communities and new residents. Some sites will link well to their surroundings, while others may have limited context. In these cases, the challenge is to create distinctive new places with their own identity.

Planning applications for residential sites should also take account of the design codes for Houses and Apartments where the proposed development includes such building types.

Objectives

- a) Respond to and enhance the local character of the area.
- b) Use site conditions, topography and natural features to inform the design.
- c) Make efficient use of land.
- d) Provide good links to existing communities, facilities and public transport.
- e) Support the creation of healthy neighbourhoods.
- f) Ensure street networks are connected, direct, safe and prioritise active travel.
- g) Provide an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures.
- h) Include well-integrated resident and visitor parking that does not dominate the street.
- i) Incorporate landscaping and street trees to enhance the public realm and increase biodiversity.

Residential sites will be considered well designed when these design codes are followed. Any deviations must be supported by clear evidence showing why an alternative approach is more appropriate for the site. Precedent is not a valid justification. Planning applications are assessed on their own merits, with regard to current policy and adopted guidance, which may change over time.

The design requirements for residential development vary depending on the scale of the scheme:

- Small-scale development (up to 10 dwellings) must comply with Design Codes RS 1–RS 26.
- Larger-scale development (more than 10 dwellings) must comply with all design codes (RS 1–RS 39).

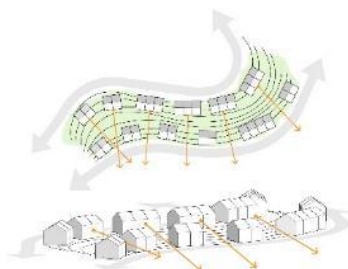
RS 1

Site features and context

The design and layout must be informed by a proportionate assessment of the site and its context, including:

- Landscape character, ecological and topographical features;
- Walking, wheeling and cycling routes;
- Heritage assets, their setting and archaeological interest
(further guidance Historic England's GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets)

Development proposals must demonstrate how this assessment has influenced the design approach.



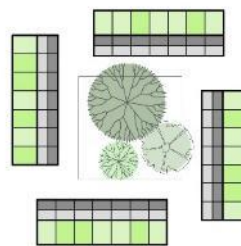
Topography influencing site layout and building form.



Views of heritage assets to be preserved and framed.



Watercourses shaping layout and green infrastructure.

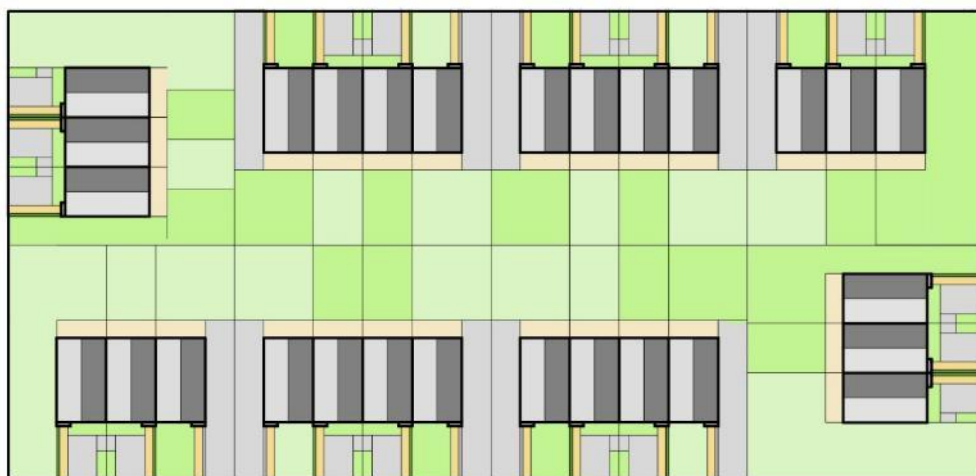


Existing trees to be retained and integrated within the design.

RS 2

Layout and plots

New developments should create well-proportioned layouts and plots that balance efficient use of land with the need to provide private amenity space, protect privacy and avoid overshadowing between properties. Where the planning authority identifies concerns, a sunlight and shadow study may be required.



Well-proportioned layout responding to site constraints, providing private amenity space and appropriate separation to protect privacy and outlook.

RS 3

House types

Standard house types should not restrict the creation of diverse and interesting places. They should be adapted to complement local character or help create a new identity where appropriate.



Examples of the same house type with elevations adapted to reflect the local character of the area (*Bellway Homes*).

RS 4

House type distribution

House types should be arranged to provide visual interest and avoid excessive repetition, while maintaining a coherent overall design. This may be achieved through variation in house types, materials, architectural detailing, or a combination of these approaches.



Consistent vertical window proportions across varied house types.



Repeated oriel windows maintaining façade consistency.



Common elevation form unifying different house types.



Varied house types unified through consistent materials and projecting features.



Different house styles with repeated, similarly scaled gables.



Varied house types linked by a common roof form and shared materials.

RS 5

Local facilities and public transport

Development should provide, or be close to, community facilities such as schools, allotments, health facilities, play sites and local shops.

Opportunities to access public transport should be maximised. As a guide, the distance from residential properties to a bus stop should generally be within 400 metres. Greater distances may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the development remains sustainable, taking account of the quality, safety, and attractiveness of walking and wheeling routes.

Pedestrian routes to facilities and public transport should be well-lit, direct, and overlooked, providing a safe and attractive environment for users.



Neighbourhood layout centred on a walkable community hub with key services and open space.

RS 6 Site edges

Care should be given to the design of site edges. Boundaries with existing communities should be sensitively treated, and landscape buffers would be expected, where appropriate, to provide privacy for existing residents while also creating opportunities for attractive pedestrian routes and wildlife corridors. Where a site adjoins open countryside, the layout should create a gradual transition from the countryside to the new development.



Soft landscape edges forming a transition between development and countryside.



Active frontages addressing site edges and adjacent open spaces.

RS 7

Inclusive Movement and Connectivity

Street networks should include safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes that connect to existing footpaths, cycleways and bridleways. All street crossing points should incorporate dropped kerbs and level surfaces to ensure step-free access for wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, those pushing buggies, and others who rely on inclusive, barrier-free routes. Pedestrian crossing points at key junctions, including both controlled and uncontrolled crossings, should incorporate tactile paving in accordance with national guidance.



Dropped kerb at street corner providing step-free access.



Pedestrian crossing with tactile paving and dropped kerb for inclusive access.

RS 8

Wayfinding and safety

There should be a clear hierarchy of streets that makes it easy to find your way around. A plan showing the street hierarchy should be form part of a Design and Access Statement. All new streets and routes should connect at both ends to other pedestrian, wheel and cycle routes. Pedestrian links should follow Secured by Design guidance, meaning they should be straight, wide, well lit, free from potential hiding places and overlooked by surrounding properties to provide natural surveillance.



Clear street hierarchy that supports clear navigation.

RS 9**Arrival points**

Development should provide a clear and legible point of arrival that supports wayfinding and contributes to the identity of the site. On smaller sites, a clear and well-designed entrance, building frontage, or gateway feature may be sufficient. On larger sites, this may be defined by buildings and landscaping to create a distinctive feature.

RS 10**Surface materials**

Surface materials should be varied at key junctions and feature points using suitable materials. Visitor parking areas and shared private roads should be surfaced in block paving to improve the appearance of the street.



Shared private streets with block paving creating an attractive, low-speed, informal character.

RS 11**Driveway Parking**

Parking should be arranged and designed to support the street scene. Long rows of parking in front of houses are unacceptable. No more than four parking spaces should be provided in a row without landscaping. Landscaping should

include trees and/or shrub planting. Driveways should be wide enough, or include a separate footpath, to allow safe access to the front door.



Side driveway parking, reducing car dominance in the street scene.



Terraced housing with front parking supported by landscaping.

Examples of parking



Block-paved parking with a separate footpath and soft landscaping.



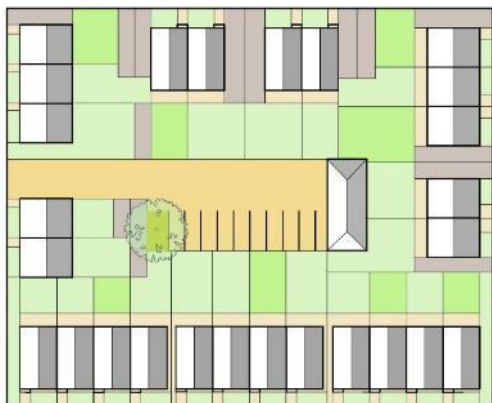
Tarmac parking with no landscaping, creating a car-dominated frontage.

RS 12

Courtyard parking

Where courtyard parking is proposed, parking spaces should be arranged in small groups, located close to homes, within view of active rooms, and allocated to individual properties. Courtyard parking areas

should remain small and should not exceed approximately 10 parking spaces. Where more spaces are required, the area must be supported by additional landscaping.



Small courtyard parking areas serving nearby dwellings.



Larger courtyard parking areas supported by landscaping.

RS 13

Visitor parking

Well-designed visitor parking should be evenly distributed in small clusters. This should take the form of one or two-bay lay-by parking, adopted parking bays or private bays in shared surface and courtyard areas. Visitor parking should be surfaced in block paving to improve the street scene and be located so that it does not affect open spaces or wildlife areas.



Block-paved visitor parking provided in small clusters within the street layout.

RS 14

Sustainable drainage systems

New development must incorporate sustainable drainage systems appropriate to the scale, nature, and location of the development. These should be designed to:

- a) Be integrated into the public realm, contributing positively to streets, open spaces, green infrastructure and supporting biodiversity.
- b) Be appropriately sized and spaced to function as usable public realm features, with basins and wetlands designed as multifunctional spaces. These should be mostly dry under normal conditions, but where possible some areas of permanent water could be created whilst still providing safe public access.
- c) Avoid reliance on single, large drainage features and instead provide a connected network of smaller basins, wetlands, and swales distributed across the site.
- d) Deliver measurable biodiversity enhancements, including the use of native planting and the creation of habitats appropriate to the site context.
- e) Avoid the need for boundary treatments, with fencing or barriers only introduced where demonstrably necessary for safety or operational requirements.



Green roofs managing rainfall at source and supporting biodiversity.



Permeable surfaces allowing water to drain naturally.



Detention ponds providing surface water storage and habitat.



Street trees contributing to drainage and urban greening.



Rain gardens capturing and filtering surface water runoff.



Swales conveying and attenuating surface water across the site.

RS 15

Street trees

New streets should include space for tree planting. On link roads and entrance roads in major developments, street trees should be located within the public realm. On other residential streets, trees may be placed either in the public realm or in front gardens close to the street.

Street trees should be planted every 15–18 metres. Each street should include at least two different tree species, and the layout and trees species must allow enough space for trees to reach their full mature size. Trees should be planted in accordance with BS8545 and BS8640. Where trees are planted in the highway or hard surfacing, tree pit soil cells must

be used that incorporate appropriate drainage solutions. The location of lighting columns and underground utilities should be considered when positioning street trees, and this information must be shown on application plans.

The Council will not adopt trees. Applicants must make arrangements to secure the long-term management and maintenance of street trees in perpetuity.

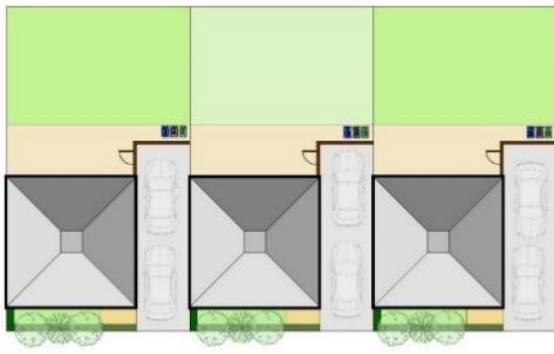


Street trees regularly spaced within the public realm, providing structure to the street and sufficient space for healthy, mature growth.

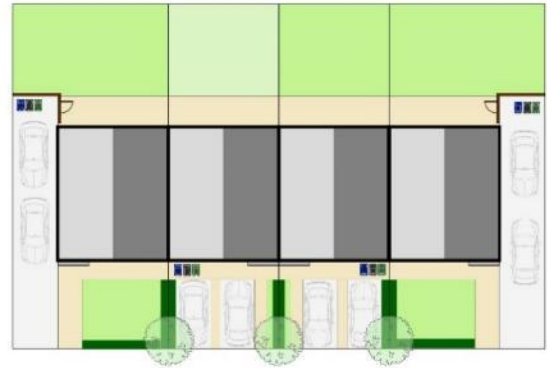
RS 16

Front garden landscaping

Landscaping should be provided along garden frontages to define the boundary between public and private space, enhance the appearance of the street, and support biodiversity.



Front garden planting defining boundaries for detached houses.



Front garden planting to screen parking in terraced housing.

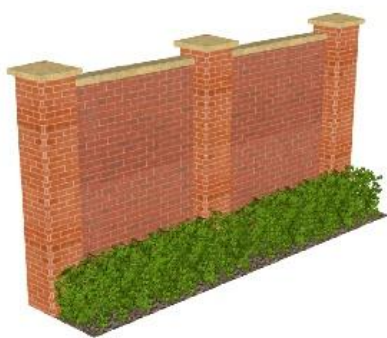


Front garden planting defines boundaries and enhancing the street scene.

RS 17

Rear boundary treatments

Where rear boundaries face the public realm, a feature brick or stone wall must be provided. This may incorporate timber panels and brick piers to the upper section. When timber panels are used, they should be close boarded or feather edge to maintain privacy. The spacing between brick piers should not exceed 2 metres.



Brick wall with piers creating a durable boundary to the public realm.



Brick wall with timber panels providing privacy and visual interest.

RS 18 Rear garden fences

Long runs of boundary fencing should be designed to be visually coherent and durable. In exposed locations, brick piers should be provided at regular intervals to positively improve the appearance and longevity of the boundary treatment.

RS 19 Hedgehog gaps

All boundary walls, fences and other means of enclosure must incorporate hedgehog gaps (13 × 13 cm) to support wildlife movement, unless it can be demonstrated that this would be inappropriate due to site-specific constraints such as highway safety or the need for secure enclosures.



RS 20**Bin collection points**

When residents are required to move their bin to a collection point, an appropriate hard surface should be provided, and the route should be accessible and convenient for both residents and refuse collection crews. The drag distance for residents moving a wheeled bin between its storage area and the collection point should be no more than 35 metres. In all cases, bin collection arrangements should be demonstrated to be operationally practicable and located to ensure the safe and efficient servicing of refuse and recycling by collection vehicles.

RS 21**Landscape management**

Management and long-term maintenance arrangements should be agreed for landscaped areas. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is required for applications subject to Biodiversity Net Gain.

RS 22**Street lighting**

Street lighting should be designed to provide sufficient illumination to enable safe movement for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists, and to reduce opportunities for crime. Lighting columns should be positioned to enhance the daytime streetscape. Lighting should also ensure that that impacts on wildlife are minimised. British Standard BS 5489-1:2020 provides guidance and recommendations for the design of street lighting.



Lighting of play spaces to support safe and inclusive use.



Street lighting providing safe and well-lit public spaces.

RS 23

Biodiversity

Development must demonstrate a minimum of 10% net increase in biodiversity compared to the baseline prior to development, in accordance with statutory biodiversity net gain legislation. Measures should be designed to deliver a range of good quality and well-connected habitats for wildlife whilst also providing attractive, resilient and healthy environments for residents.



Attenuation pond with emergent vegetation providing aquatic habitat and supporting wetland biodiversity.



Species-rich native hedgerow establishing habitat connectivity and food sources for wildlife.



Native wildflower meadow managed for pollinators and enhanced species diversity.



Biodiverse SuDS feature combining surface water management with pollinator-friendly planting.

RS 24

Pylons and overhead power lines

Where sites include pylons and overhead power lines, the orientation of streets and blocks should avoid framing views towards pylons.

Landscaping should be used to help screen or filter views of pylons and overhead lines. To inform a creative design approach which responds to the presence of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) high voltage assets within a site, NGET's '[Design guidelines for development near pylons and high voltage overhead power lines](#)' should be referred to in masterplanning for a site.



Layout designed to minimise views of pylons and overhead lines.



Mature landscaping screening views of pylons.

RS 25

Telecommunication Infrastructure

New or upgraded telecommunication infrastructure should first explore options to share existing infrastructure or use underground networks before proposing new equipment. New equipment should only be installed where there is no reasonable alternative to support the efficient operation of the network.

New infrastructure should be sited to minimise its visual impact and located where it will cause the least disruption to residents. New equipment should be:

- a) Located away from key junctions, the centre of open spaces, and the front of houses, unless there is a technical justification for doing so.
- b) Sited away from important views of heritage assets and their setting
- c) Placed to avoid creating safety hazards and, where possible, positioned at the back of the footpath.
- d) Clustered in small groups in appropriate locations, supported by landscaping.
- e) Ground-mounted cabinets should be painted green (RAL 6003) and may require an anti-graffiti coating, as specified by the authority. Poles should be painted grey to reduce visual impact.

Further guidance on planning and visual considerations for locating telecommunication equipment can be found in the *Cabinet Siting and Pole Siting Code of Practice*. This voluntary code has been developed by telecoms providers and other interested parties.

RS 26

Nature-Positive Building Design

All new dwellings should incorporate a minimum of one integral nesting or roosting feature (e.g. swift brick, bat brick, or equivalent), with features clustered or adjusted as appropriate on apartment buildings, and positioned to suit the local ecological context.

RS 27

House mix

There should be an appropriate mix of housing types that responds to site conditions, the surrounding context and local housing demand. Developments must provide 25% affordable housing, subject to viability. There should be no visual distinction between different tenures.

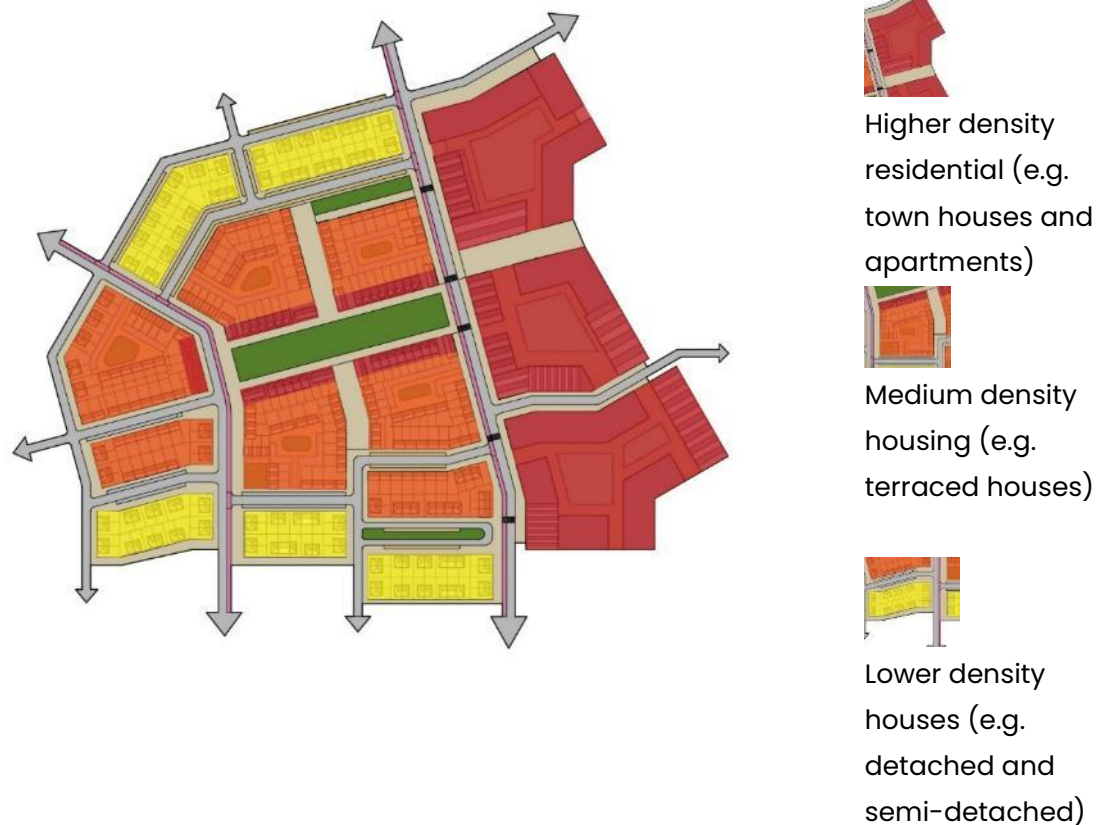


Layout includes a mix of house types, scale and tenures.

RS 28

Key routes and focal spaces

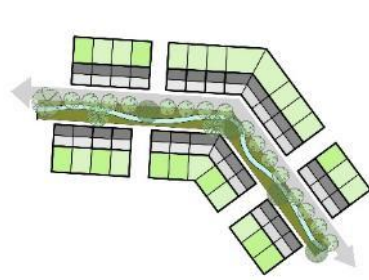
Higher densities should be focused along key routes and at focal spaces to reinforce place hierarchy and support active, well-served locations.



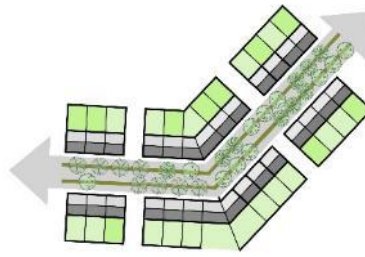
Higher density is located along key routes and focal spaces to reinforce place hierarchy.

RS 29 Green networks

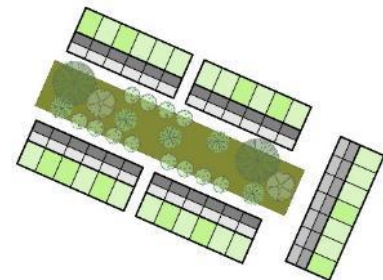
New areas of open space should form an integrated network of green infrastructure that connects to wildlife corridors and recreation routes. These networks should be sympathetically designed for wildlife and biodiversity.



Green space integrating sustainable drainage features.



Tree-lined streets forming part of green infrastructure.



Accessible green spaces for recreation and play.

RS 30 New community facilities

Where new community facilities are required, they should be located in an accessible part of the site, agreed with the Council. These areas should act as a natural focus for higher-density development and as a focal point for the community.



Community facilities located centrally and easily accessible.



Local centre integrated with surrounding development.

RS 31 Utility service buildings

Any required utility service buildings, including substations and pumping stations, must be designed as an integral part of the site layout. Their design, scale, and materials should complement the wider development. Such structures should not be located at site entrances, and their siting must be carefully considered to ensure they are not positioned in prominent or visually sensitive locations where they could detract from the quality and appearance of the public realm. Suitable locations include integration within the built form, such as at the end of a terrace or block, or within a perimeter block development parcel.



Utility building using matching materials to integrate with surrounding development.

RS 32**Character areas**

Larger developments should be structured to include a range of character areas, each with a distinct and legible identity. These should be defined through a combination of building form, layout, materials, landscape, and public realm. Character areas should work together to create a coherent and distinctive place that responds positively to the surrounding context, avoiding arbitrary or superficial variation.

RS 33**Amenity open space**

Development should provide well-located, accessible and inclusive areas of public open space appropriate to the scale and type of development. These spaces should be easy to navigate, overlooked by surrounding homes to support natural surveillance, and designed to offer opportunities for recreation, play, social interaction, and quiet enjoyment, including places for seating.

For family housing, this should include provision for children's play in a prominent and accessible location, close to homes and well overlooked to support natural surveillance. Surface materials within the play area should be durable and designed to enable access all year round.

For other forms of development, including retirement housing, shared spaces should be designed to support informal recreation, social interaction, and opportunities for rest, with high-quality, durable and accessible surface materials suitable for year-round use.

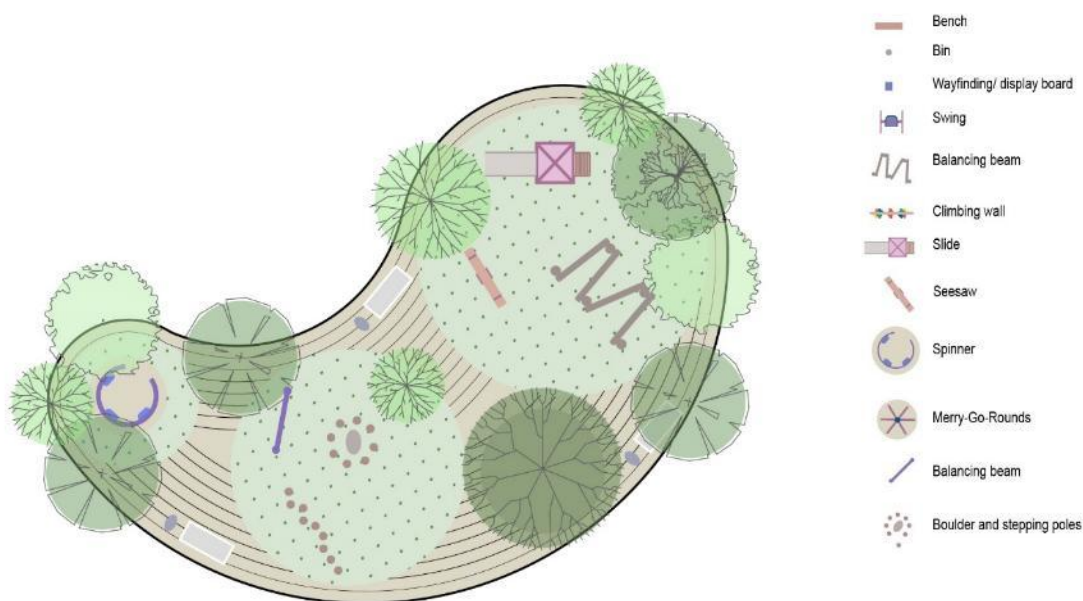


Amenity spaces that are accessible, overlooked and support a range of uses.

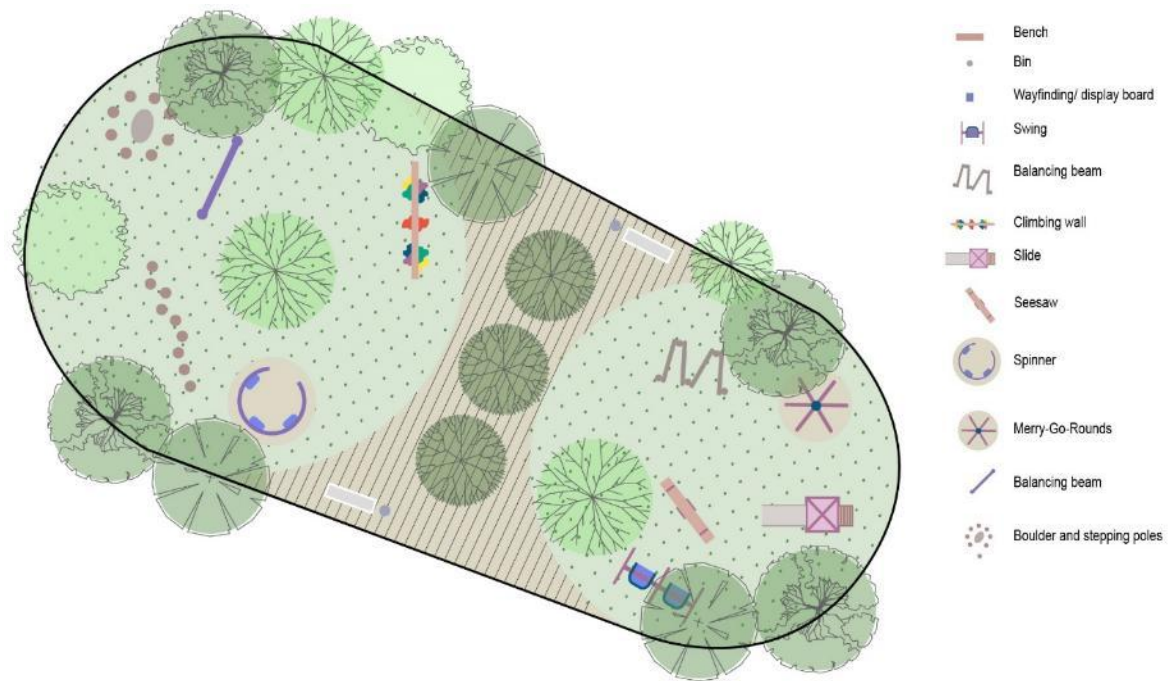
RS 34

Equipped areas for play

Where required, equipped play areas should be located in a prominent part of the site and overlooked by nearby homes. They should be accessed from well-used pedestrian routes. Surface materials should be durable, easy to maintain, and suitable for year-round use. Inclusive seating, litter bins, and signage should be provided. Play spaces should also include inclusive equipment suitable for children of different ages and abilities, offering opportunities for both physical and sensory play.



Example design of a Local Equipped Area for Play.



Example design of a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play.



Equipped play area with safe, controlled access.



Play space with inclusive equipment and open layout.



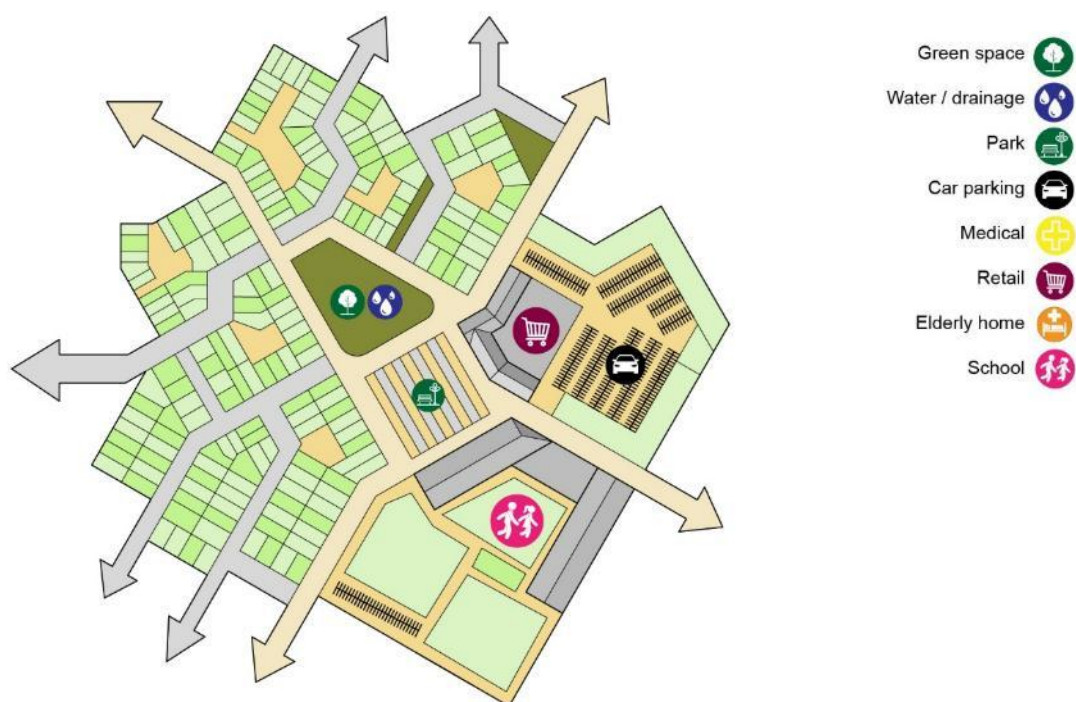
Natural play elements for varied ages and abilities.



Durable seating supporting inclusive use.

RS 35 Site masterplan

To ensure a coordinated design approach on larger sites, applications must include a site-specific masterplan that aligns with this Design Code. These should be supported by proportionate assessments such as Heritage Impact Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.



Site masterplan coordinating layout, movement and community facilities.

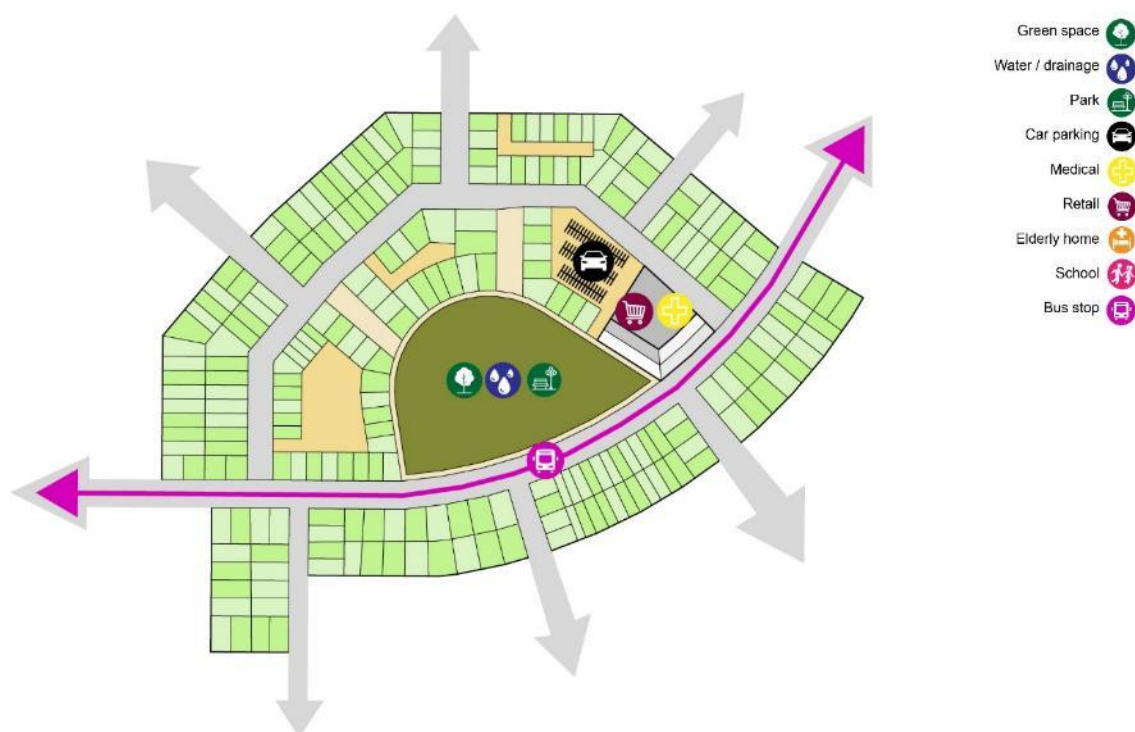
RS 36 Phasing

Details of phasing and the delivery of infrastructure to support new communities should accompany an application.

RS 37

Transport and highway network

Layouts should support an effective and efficient local transport network. Larger sites should incorporate bus-permeable routes and identify suitable locations for new or enhanced bus stops, where appropriate. A plan should be provided showing the area within a 400-metre walking distance of all proposed bus stops.



Bus stop centrally located to support access to community facilities.

RS 38

Community wide sustainable technologies

Where community-wide sustainable energy infrastructure is proposed as part of development, it should be integrated into the site layout at an early stage. Energy centres, plant rooms, and associated infrastructure should be carefully located and designed to minimise their visual and

amenity impacts. They should be positioned away from prominent locations where possible and supported by appropriate landscaping and design measures.

RS 39 **New Schools**

Where new schools are required, they should be:

- a) Centrally located and connected to local facilities, public transport, with safe pedestrian and cycle routes, connecting to the wider network. They should not be sited at the end of cul-de-sacs.
- b) Roughly rectangular in shape and broadly flat, to accommodate efficient building layouts and required outdoor spaces.
- c) Located away from sources of poor air or noise quality, and designed to ensure that noise, lighting and activity from the school do not adversely impact neighbouring properties, sensitive habitats or protected/priority species
- d) Designed to contribute positively to street character. The main school entrance should be clearly visible from the street, easily identifiable and welcoming for visitors.
- e) Safe, secure and accessible for all users, with attractive boundary treatments that prevent unauthorised access while supporting a positive street environment.
- f) Provide covered cycle parking for staff, visitors, and students.
- g) Served by appropriate drop off and pick up arrangements to avoid causing nuisance, congestion or obstruction for nearby residents.
- h) Designed so that service areas (kitchens, bins, deliveries) are located away from main pedestrian routes and residential boundaries.
- i) Provide outdoor play and sports areas that are safe, well overlooked, and appropriately enclosed. The school site should incorporate landscape and biodiversity features that enhance the learning environment and support

wellbeing, including opportunities for outdoor education; however, these areas within the operational school site must be designed and located to avoid constraining the ongoing operational needs, adaptability, or future expansion of the school. Where Biodiversity Net Gain is required as part of the wider development, this shall be delivered in clearly defined and separately delineated areas, with land identified for potential future expansion remaining free from conflicting landscape or biodiversity designations.

Checklist: Residential Sites Design Codes

The Design Code is a key consideration when planning applications are assessed. The Design Code Compliance Checklist is a simple tool to help applicants explain how their proposals respond to these requirements. While completing the checklist is not mandatory, submitting it with your application can make the process clearer, quicker and more robust.

Why complete the checklist?

- It clearly shows how your proposal meets the Design Code.
- It reduces the likelihood of follow-up questions from the Council.
- It helps avoid delays in the determination of your application.
- It strengthens your case if an application is refused and appealed.

Submitting a completed checklist at the point of application is the simplest way to demonstrate compliance with the Design Code and support a timely decision.

Code number and title	Relevant further information	Applicant Response
RS 1 – Site features	Design informed by context, landscape, movement and heritage	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 2 – Layout and plots	Balanced layouts protecting amenity and avoiding overshadowing	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 3 – House types	Adapt standard types to local character	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 4 – House type distribution	Avoid repetition; provide variety and coherence	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 5 – Local facilities	Provide, or be close to, community facilities	☐ Yes ☐ No

RS 6 – Site edges	Sensitive boundaries and landscape buffers	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 7 – Inclusive movement and connectivity	Inclusive walking, wheeling and cycling routes	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 8 – Wayfinding and safety	Clear hierarchy and connected routes	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 9 – Arrival points	Clear and legible entrances	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 10 – Surface materials	Varied surface materials at key points	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 11 – Driveway parking	Max 4 spaces in a row; include landscaping	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 12 – Courtyard parking	Small groups, overlooked, landscaped	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 13 – Visitor parking	Distributed small clusters, surfaced in blocks	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 14 – SuDS	Integrated drainage network supporting biodiversity	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 15 – Street trees	Provide tree planting at regular intervals	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 16 – Front landscaping	Define public/private space and enhance street	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 17 – Rear boundaries	Provide appropriate walls/fencing where visible	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 18 – Rear fences	Durable, coherent boundary treatments	☐ Yes ☐ No

RS 19 – Hedgehog gaps	Provide wildlife access (13x13cm gaps)	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 20 – Bin collection	Accessible routes and max 35m drag distance	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 21 – Landscape management	Agree long-term maintenance plans	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 22 – Lighting	Safe lighting with minimal wildlife impact	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 23 – Biodiversity	Deliver minimum 10% net gain	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS24 – Pylons and overhead power lines	Avoid views and screen with landscaping	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 25 – Telecommunication infrastructure	Minimise visual impact; use existing where possible	☐ Yes ☐ No
RS 26 – Nature design	Provide nesting/roosting features	☐ Yes ☐ No
Further information in support of your answers.		

Additional Design Codes for larger scale residential development over 10 units

RS 27 – Housing mix	Provide mix including affordable housing	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
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RS 28 – Key routes and focal spaces	Focus higher density along key routes	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 29 – Green networks	Provide connected green infrastructure	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 30 – New community facilities	Locate community uses centrally	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 31 – Utility service buildings	Integrate service buildings into layout	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 32 – Character areas	Create distinct but coherent areas	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 33 – Amenity open space	Provide usable and overlooked spaces	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 34 – Equipped areas for play	Provide equipped, inclusive play spaces	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 35 – Site Masterplan	Provide site-wide coordinated masterplan	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS36 – Phasing	Provide infrastructure delivery details	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

RS 37 – Transport and highway network	Support effective transport network	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 38 – Community wide sustainable technologies	Integrate energy infrastructure early	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
RS 39 – New schools	Provide well-located, accessible schools where needed	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
Further information in support of your answers.		

North Tyneside Design Code

North Tyneside Council

The Quadrant

The Silverlink North

Cobalt Business Park

North Tyneside

NE27 0BY

Telephone: 0191 643 2310

Email: planning.policy@northtyneside.gov.uk

Website: www.northtyneside.gov.uk

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