



Department for
Transport



Manual for Streets





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Figure 4.6 Perimeter blocks enclosing a pleasant communal open space.



Figure 4.7 A highways-dominated layout with buildings that have a poor relationship to the road.

4.4 The walkable neighbourhood

4.4.1 Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot. However, this is not an upper limit and PPS13⁴ states that walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 km. MfS encourages a reduction in the need to travel by car through the creation of mixed-use neighbourhoods with interconnected street patterns, where daily needs are within walking distance of most residents.

4.4.2 By creating linkages between new housing and local facilities and community infrastructure, the public transport network and established walking and cycling routes are fundamental to achieving more sustainable patterns of movement and to reducing people's reliance on the car. A masterplan (or scheme layout for smaller-scale developments) can help ensure that proposals are well integrated with existing facilities and places.

4.4.3 Density is also an important consideration in reducing people's reliance on the private car. PPS3⁵ encourages a flexible approach to density, reflecting the desirability of using land efficiently, linked to the impacts of climate change. It sets a national minimum indicative density of 30 dwellings per hectare. Residential densities should be planned to take advantage of a proximity to activities, or to good public transport linking those activities. *Better Places to Live: By Design*⁶ advises that a certain

critical mass of development is needed to justify a regular bus service, at frequent intervals, which is sufficient to provide a real alternative to the car.

4.5 Layout considerations

4.5.1 Streets are the focus of movement in a neighbourhood. Pedestrians and cyclists should generally share streets with motor vehicles. There will be situations where it is appropriate to include routes for pedestrians and cyclists segregated from motor traffic, but they should be short, well overlooked and relatively wide to avoid any sense of confinement. It is difficult to design an underpass or alleyway which satisfies the requirement that pedestrians or cyclists will feel safe using them at all times.

4.5.2 The principle of integrated access and movement means that the perimeter block is usually an effective structure for residential neighbourhoods. A block structure works in terms of providing direct, convenient, populated and overlooked routes. In addition, it makes efficient use of land, offers opportunities for enclosed private or communal gardens, and is a tried and tested way of creating quality places (Figs 4.6 and 4.7).

4.5.3 Several disadvantages have become apparent with housing developments built in the last 40 years which departed from traditional arrangements. Many have layouts that make orientation difficult, create left-over or ill-defined spaces, and have too many blank walls or façades. They can also be inconvenient for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.

4 DETR (2001) *Policy Planning Guidance 13: Transport*. London: TSO.

5 DTLR and CABE (2001) *Better Places to Live: By Design. A Companion Guide to PPG3*. London: Thomas Telford Ltd.

6 Communities and Local Government (2006) *Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing*. London: TSO.