Residential Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document

Scarborough Borough Council

February 2022

SCARBOROUGH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ALTERNATIVE DOCUMENT FORMAT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities…"
(Paragraph 126, National Planning Policy Framework)

1.1   The need to secure good design is embedded within the core approach of the Scarborough Borough Local Plan (adopted July 2017). Indeed, the Local Plan vision anticipates a *"visible uplift in the quality of the design of the built environment"* by the end of the plan period (2032), while specific aims and objectives seek to *"safeguard and reinforce the distinctive character of the (Borough's) various settlements"* and to ensure that development *"adds new and interesting layers to the design palette of the area."*

1.2   These aims and objectives are to be realised through the implementation of policies contained within the Local Plan, including policy DEC1 (Principles of Good Design), which clearly states that *"good design will be expected in order to create attractive and desirable places where people want to live, work and invest, and, to reduce carbon emissions from development."*

1.3   This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) seeks to bring together the Council's existing Local Plan policies in a way that communicates how they can influence and contribute towards the delivery of good design. In doing so, due regard is given to the content of the Government's National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, which have placed significant emphasis on the need to secure good design through the planning process.

Figure 1.1: South Bay Beach, Scarborough

Purpose of this SPD

1.4   The purpose of this SPD is to elaborate on those Local Plan policies which relate to the design of new development, particularly policy DEC1, which places the emphasis on applicants to demonstrate that good design has been achieved. Ultimately, this SPD sets out relevant information / guidance that can be used by applicants to help them make successful planning applications, i.e. applications that accord with the policy requirements of the Scarborough Borough Local Plan and which deliver development of a high design quality.

1.5   While the SPD does not form part of the adopted Development Plan (Local Plan) for the area, it is a material consideration in the decision making process and will be subject to consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders.

"Design Guide" or "Design Code"?

1.6   Both the NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) advocate the use of visual tools, such as design guides and codes in order to provide maximum clarity about design expectations. As outlined by the following definitions from the National Design Guide, design guides and codes are different documents:

Design Guide: *"A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice..."*

Design Code: *"A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area."*

1.7   For the avoidance of doubt, **this SPD takes the form of a design guide**. The Council will give consideration as to whether a Borough-wide design code, or a series of area-specific codes and /or codes relating to particular issues (e.g. shopfronts), should be produced at a later date.

When and how should this SPD be used?

1.8   Paragraph 132 of the NPPF makes it clear that *"design quality should be considered throughout the evolution of individual proposals."* As such, prospective applicants are encouraged to utilise and refer to this SPD throughout the design and planning application process; from project inception through to submission and determination.

1.9   As outlined in Section 3, this SPD advocates the use of an iterative and holistic design approach that can be readily applied / adapted to both small and large-scale schemes. In following this approach applicants should give regard to the guidance presented in the subsequent sections of this document, which outlines how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice. Generally, applicants who follow the presented guidance are more likely to be able to demonstrate compliance with the various policy requirements of the Local Plan.

1.10   The guidance presented will also be used by planning officers in the decision-making process. Officers will be checking to see if proposals achieve the relevant guidance points and if not, seek to ascertain whether there is reasonable / sufficient justification for alternative design choices.

1.11   To assist both applicants and officers in their respective processes, the guidance points provided within this SPD are presented within a checklist at the end of the document (see Appendix B).

2.0 A NEW DESIGN VISION FOR SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH

> *"The National Planning Policy Framework is also clear that local planning authorities should develop an overarching design vision and expectations that can inform design codes, guides and other tools that inform the design of the built and natural environment in their area."*
> (Paragraph 20, National Model Design Code, June 2021)

2.1   The promotion of good design is embedded within the core approach (vision, aims, objectives and policies) of the Council's adopted Local Plan. However, moving forward, there is scope to develop an overarching 'design vision' as the basis for policy-making; a vision that brings together the various strands of adopted policy in a way that reflects up to date guidance and context. The new vision, together with a set of linked design objectives, will be incorporated within both the emerging Local Plan Review and this Design Guide SPD.

Visioning Process and Pre-Consultation Engagement

2.2   As part of the pre-consultation engagement process, and in order to ensure that the new 'design vision' reflects issues that are important to local people, a series of six meetings were held with local town and parish councils, Scarborough Civic Society and Whitby Civic Society during May / June 2021. Organisations were grouped by geographical area and around 50 individuals attended the meetings. Similar discussions were also held with a group of 18 Borough Councillors prior to the publication of the consultation draft. Feedback on the emerging settlement characterisation work (see Section 6) was also sought from the involved parties at this stage.

2.3   The key issues raised during these discussions were (in no particular order):

- **Distinctiveness**: development preserves or enhances existing character, including the historic environment
- **Attractiveness**: creating homes, places and spaces that are attractive
- **Variety**: in house styles, sizes (no. of bedrooms) and tenures (private and affordable)
- **Creativity**: encourage creative design solutions
- **Energy efficiency**: buildings to be energy efficient and to incorporate electric vehicle charging points
- **Accessibility**: accessible homes, places and spaces
- **Legibility**: layouts that are permeable, navigable and understandable
- **Parking**: streets that are not dominated by the car
- **Utilisation of existing features**: use natural and physical features to help create distinctive character
- **Spaciousness**: appropriate densities and proportionate garden sizes (private amenity space)

Figure 2.1: Town Farm, Cloughton (L) **Figure 2.2**: 28 Hungate, Brompton (R) – both schemes were cited in discussions as good examples of distinctive design, with Town Farm providing a creative twist on traditional rural architecture and 28 Hungate reflecting the established local vernacular

- **Green spaces and greenery**: integrated and accessible green spaces, street trees and other landscaping features, and the protection of important gaps between settlements
- **Safety**: ensure secure layouts, that green spaces are overlooked, and incorporate features suggested by police (Designing Out Crime Officer)
- **Health**: Incorporate features that promote physical and mental wellbeing
- **Resilience**: resilient to, and to minimise the impacts of, climate change
- **Mix of uses**: social infrastructure on large developments to meet community needs and to minimise the need to travel
- **Connectivity**: transport and communications infrastructure, connectivity within and between places by a variety of means, including by walking, cycling and public transport.

2.4   In bringing these issues together to formulate a design vision and accompanying objectives, consideration has also been given as to how they align with the priorities identified in the Borough Council's new Corporate Plan *("Better Borough, Brighter Futures")*. These priorities were themselves derived from an extensive borough-wide consultation exercise undertaken in 2020 and as such, they offer valuable insight into what issues are important to local people and of the Council's corporate response to those issues.

- **Better Lives**
  - Happy, healthy, active people
  - Thriving and engaged communities
  - A borough where all feel safe
- **Better Homes**
  - A good quality home for all

- **Better Places**
  - A clean, green and attractive environment to be proud of
  - Vibrant town centres
  - A vibrant culture and heritage offer
- **Brighter Futures**
  - Economic growth that benefits everyone
  - A well connected place

The Design Vision and Objectives

2.5   The Design Vision and Objectives presented below have been derived from the engagement process outlined above and as such, they reflect issues that are important locally. The Vision specifically is an overarching statement of the type of development we want to see come forward in Scarborough Borough.

2.6   The Design Objectives supplement the Vision to provide further clarity on what is expected of developers. These in turn have informed the production of the guidance set out in this document; clear cross-references between the Objectives and the guidance points are presented throughout.

Design Vision

"To create buildings, places and spaces that are attractive and diverse, accessible for all, green, sustainable and resilient, where our communities can be happy, healthy and safe."

Design Objectives

Building upon the Design Vision, the Design Objectives for Scarborough Borough are to create buildings, places and spaces that:

A. Are **attractive** and distinctive, that improve the Borough's outstanding physical and natural environments, and that respect local heritage
B. Are **diverse**, provide choice and variety, and meet the varying needs of our communities
C. Are **accessible for all**, are well-connected and integrated into their surroundings
D. Are **green,** through enhanced landscaping, planting of street trees, and the provision of functional and accessible green spaces
E. Are **sustainable**, that respect natural habitats, are biodiverse and are energy efficient
F. Are **resilient** to and minimise the impacts of climate change, including fluvial, coastal and surface water flooding
G. Allow our communities to be **happy, healthy and safe**

3.0 THE DESIGN PROCESS

3.1   Policy DEC1 of the Scarborough Borough Local Plan (2017) is clear that successful applicants must be able to demonstrate how their proposals have been informed by the principles of good design that are outlined in the policy. Fundamentally, policy DEC1 requires the submission of relevant and proportionate evidence (see Section 4) to show that a clear design process has been followed, demonstrating how the design solution has evolved from an understanding of the site and of the surrounding area to create an attractive place with distinctive character.

3.2   Building upon the requirements of policy DEC1, this SPD outlines a design process that can be easily adapted to any proposal. Those that follow this approach, or utilise a similar approach, should be able to demonstrate compliance with relevant local and national planning policies, including the guidance set out in this SPD.

Pre-Application Discussions and Community Engagement

The Council actively encourages prospective applicants to seek pre-application advice so that the key issues and expectations of a particular development can be understood at an early stage. This includes discussions with the Council itself, with other bodies (particularly with statutory consultees where appropriate and with affected communities.

Early, proactive and effective engagement with affected communities should be undertaken wherever possible in order to evolve designs that take account of their views. In accordance with the NPPF, applications that can demonstrate effective engagement with affected communities will be looked upon more favourably than those that cannot.

The Design Process

Stage 1	• Undertake context and site appraisals
Stage 2	• Establish the design principles and develop the design concept
Stage 3	• Develop the detailed design

Stage 1: Undertake context and site appraisals (see Section 5)

3.3   Applicants should identify and understand the defining characteristics, opportunities and constraints of both the development site and the surrounding area. In addition to physical and natural features, this also includes policy constraints and designations (e.g. Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, landscape and ecological designations, etc.). Engagement with local communities at this early stage can help a designer to understand the area and to identify positive characteristics that should be carried through into the design concept and ultimately, into the final scheme.

Key Steps:
a) Context appraisal (character, constraints and opportunities)
b) Site appraisal (character, constraints and opportunities)
c) Planning policy context (national and local)
d) Designations (international, national and local)

Stage 2: Establish the design principles and develop the design concept

3.4   Understand what the proposal must achieve; establish the essential parts of the proposal and the key place-making principles that will drive the overall design approach. Develop the design concept, which should be informed by and respond to the site and context analysis (see Stage 1 above) and to the established principles. A number of different options could be produced at this stage and discussed with the Council.

Key Steps

a) Develop the design principles:

- **For housing schemes (see Section 7)** – develop the place-making principles, sustainability principles, housing standards, etc.
    - ➢ Establish the character of the development and be clear as to how this has been derived.
    - ➢ Consider how sustainability can be promoted, e.g. through biodiversity measures, sustainable drainage systems, etc.
    - ➢ Establish the type and nature of housing to be provided; understand how the needs of specific groups can be met

- **For householder developments (see Section 8)** – Establish the main parameters of development, including the character, materials, size and form of the building / extension.

b) Develop the design concept(s):

- **For housing schemes (see Section 7)** – produce a masterplan which shows in a clear and simple way, the design principles that underpin the proposed development. Should illustrate key components:
    - ➢ Layout, basic forms of landscape, spaces, street blocks, plots and buildings, including prominent locations for 'landmark' buildings
    - ➢ Pedestrian and vehicular routes, including public transport
   - ➢ Uses, tenures and densities.

- **For householder developments (see Section 8)** – produce initial sketches / drawings that illustrate the design concept, again showing the character, scale, form and materials of the development.

Example, Design Principles and Design Concept:
Middle Deepdale, Eastfield
These images, taken from a Design and Access Statement submitted in support of an urban extension scheme, show the design principles and concept for the proposal. Importantly, they show how the development has been split into different character areas, what those areas would look like (including the relationship between homes and public spaces), how surface water would be dealt with (in principle), how the site would connect to its surroundings, etc.

(Image Credit: Kebbell Homes and P+HS Architects)
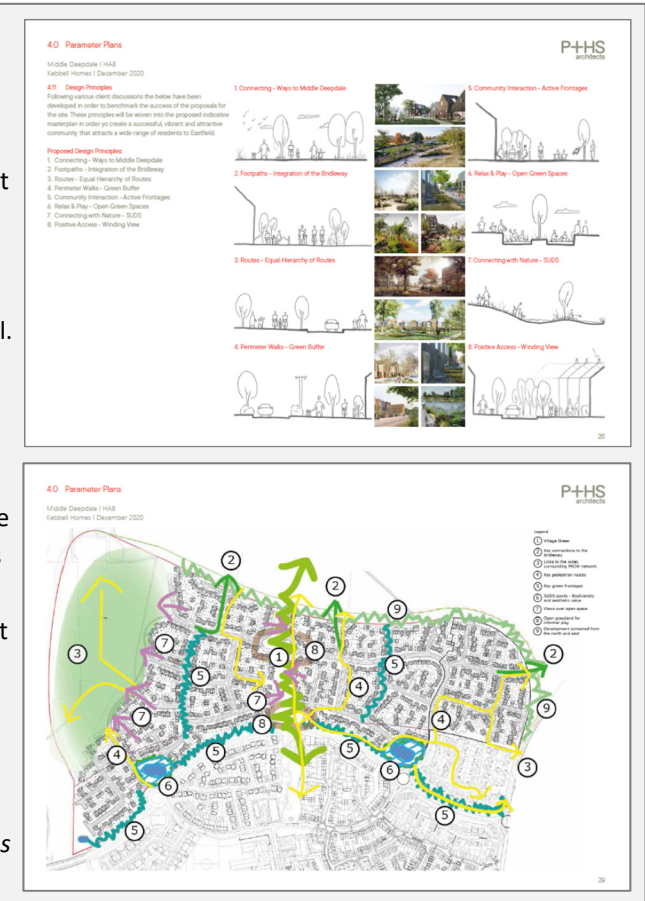
Stage 3: Develop the detailed design (see Sections 7 and 8)

3.5 After deciding the preferred design concept and establishing a number of the macro elements of design (basic layout, etc.), the next stage in the process is to draw up the development in detail. This will involve making choices about internal and external spaces, elevation design (including detailing and materials), and landscaping components, etc. These detailed elements of design should draw from the positive defining characteristics of the local area. Specific guidance on these elements are provided at Section 7 and 8 of this SPD for housing schemes and householder developments (extensions / alterations to existing buildings), respectively.

<u>Key Steps</u>

a) Draw up the detailed elements of design, including (not exclusively):

- External and internal detailed design:
  - ➢ Consider room sizes, private amenity (garden) space, how to distinguish between private and public spaces, practical solutions for the storage of domestic paraphernalia (bins, etc.).
- Elevations
  - ➢ Create attractive frontages, use co-ordinated and complementary designs across the site to create distinctive character.
- Materials and detailing:
  - ➢ Use high quality materials and incorporate details – e.g. decorative brickwork, eaves details, doors and surrounds, window details, etc. – to create distinctive character.
- Landscaping
  - ➢ Consider how a mix of high quality landscaping features (open spaces and streets) can be integrated into the development.

Example, Develop the Detailed Design:
Middle Deepdale, Eastfield
These images, taken from the same Design and Access Statement as the previous example, show how the concept for the landscaping strategy for the site has been developed into a detailed design proposal. This includes bespoke designs across character areas and the different types of green spaces, i.e. amenity spaces (the 'Greenlink' and 'Bridleway') and multi-functional spaces (the 'Swale Green Space').

(Image Credit: Kebbell Homes and P+HS Architects)

4.0 DEMONSTRATING GOOD DESIGN

4.1 Local Plan policy DEC1 is clear that it is the responsibility of developers to demonstrate that (explain how and why) their proposals represent good design; that it conforms to all relevant national and local planning policies, and to this Design Guide SPD. Depending upon the scale and nature of the proposal, the submission of a high quality "Design and Access Statement" (or similar) and/or a "Heritage Statement" (where required) is critical to this process.

Design and Access Statements

4.2 A Design and Access Statement (DAS) is a report that provides a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and to demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. The submission of a DAS is a statutory (and mandatory) requirement for:

- Applications for major development[1]
- Applications for development in a designated area[2], where the proposed development consists of:
  - One or more dwellings; or
  - A building or buildings (including an extension to an existing building) with a floor space of 100sqm or more
- Applications for listed building consent

4.3 Proposals that are subject to the statutory requirement to submit a DAS will be made invalid where one has not been provided as part of the planning (or listed building) application. Even where one is not statutorily required, applicants are encouraged to provide a DAS (or similar) wherever possible. The undertaking and submission of a DAS will help applicants to demonstrate to the LPA that design issues have been considered and addressed throughout the application process; such applications are more likely to be able to demonstrate compliance with Local Plan policy DEC1 and other relevant policies, including the guidance set out in this SPD.

4.4 As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, a Design and Access Statement must *(emphasis added)*:

a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and
e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

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[1] For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more (NPPF Annex 2: Glossary).

[2] Defined by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as, either a conservation area or a World Heritage Site.

4.5   Importantly, regardless of whether the DAS is a result of a statutory requirement or not, the level of information required should be proportionate to the type and overall scale of development proposed.

Plans, Diagrams and Photographs

Design and Access Statements should present a range of visual information to help explain the various aspects and evolution of the design approach, starting with the initial contextual appraisals.

Example, Site Appraisal and Option Generation
Carr Hill Lane, Briggswath

In addition to providing additional living accommodation, this scheme considered how new development could resolve existing detracting elements (top right). Vertical and horizontal extension options were generated before arriving at the final design solution (below right). This analysis was clearly presented in the DAS. *(Image Credit: Ian Hazard Architect)*
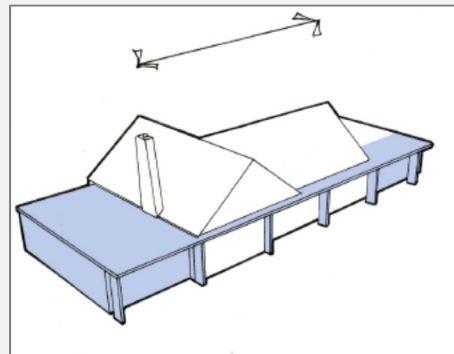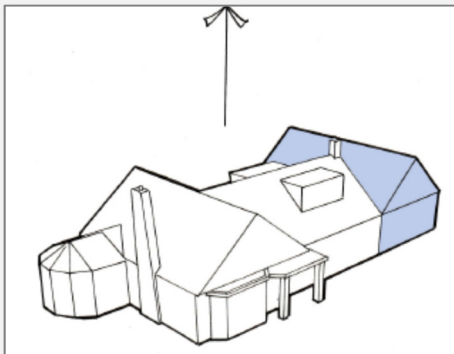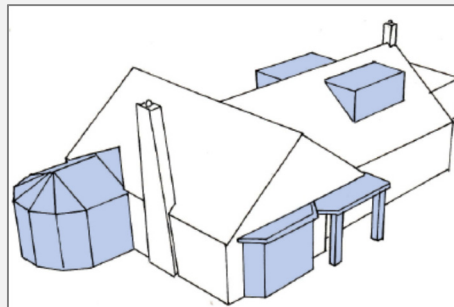
Heritage Statements

4.6   Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states *"…local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected (by a proposal), including any contribution made by their setting."* Such descriptions of significance are often referred to as "Heritage Statements". These can be incorporated within a DAS where relevant.

4.7   For listed buildings and conservation areas, Heritage Statements will be a key method of explaining how the significance of the asset would be affected by a proposal, and demonstrating how those impacts have been influenced by design choices. In respect of listed buildings, good design will be that which preserves or enhances the special architectural or historic interest of the building.

4.8   Historic England's publication, *"A Guide for Owners of Listed Buildings"* (September 2016)[3], provides a useful resource for homeowners that highlights the main issues to consider when making alterations – e.g. extending, updating windows, etc. – to listed buildings. That document should be considered alongside this SPD when applicants are looking to extend / alter their listed building (see Section 7).

Design Review Panel Arrangements

4.9   The local planning authority will use the design review process, particularly for major developments, where it is appropriate and effective to do so. Where the review process is utilised, it should normally be from the outset of the application and should be used to optimise design proposals and to add value to a scheme.

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[3] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/guide-for-owners-of-listed-buildings/

5.0 UNDERSTANDING LOCAL CONTEXT

5.1   Understanding the place in which you are working is the key to good design. In order to demonstrate compliance with Local Plan policy DEC1, developers must undertake an analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site. They must also be able to demonstrate that the proposal responds positively to its local context and creates an individual sense of place with distinctive character. Accordingly, developers should provide information as part of their applications which demonstrates not only that local character has been understood, but also how the chosen design approach draws upon and responds to that character.

5.2   The guidance presented below should help applicants to identify features that contribute to / influence both the site and area context. Please note that the lists of features outlined below are not exhaustive and that there may be features that are unique to a particular site or area; these will become clear during the appraisal process. Clearly, the degree to which the points raised are relevant depends on the scale and nature of the proposal; a large-scale housing scheme on an extensive greenfield site will require a greater degree of investigation than a householder extension, where the focus will be on the plot and its immediate surroundings.

5.3   Early engagement with the local community and the Local Planning Authority is actively encouraged as this can assist applicants in identifying important local characteristics, opportunities and constraints. This is particularly important for large-scale developments. To assist in this process, Section 6 of this SPD sets out what the Council considers to be the positive defining characteristics of particular types of places within the Borough. To be clear, these characteristics should not be used in isolation and are not a substitute for the more detailed analysis work that is

expected of applicants (dependent upon the scale and nature of the proposal).

5.4   Diagrams can be used as an effective tool to highlight the essential parts of the site / area context. Where diagrams have been produced, these should be presented within a Design and Access Statement (see Section 4) in order to demonstrate that the required context appraisal work has been undertaken and to convey the essential features to planning officers, committee members and to other interested parties.

Area Context Analysis / Appraisal

5.5 The analysis / appraisal process should start with the area surrounding the development site. Fundamentally, developments that look outwards, and thereby take positive influence from and integrate with the surrounding area, are more likely to make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of an area.

5.6 In looking at the list of common / defining features below, consideration should be given as to how the design of the proposed development can respond positively to those elements in order to create distinctive character. This process is further explained in Sections 6 and 7.

- **Landform / topography**
  o Landscape character (check the Landscape Character Assessment[4])
  o What is the surrounding topography?
  o Is the site near to the North York Moors National Park?
- **Natural environment**
  o Is the site located within or adjacent to a Flood Zone, Groundwater Source Protection Zone or Drainage Sensitive Area?
  o Is the site located within or adjacent to a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), nature reserve, Ancient Woodland, etc.?
- **Built environment**
  o What is the overall scale, pattern (including street layouts, pattern of open space, landscape and vegetation, etc.), density of development in the surrounding area?
  o What is the nature of adjacent land uses? Is the proposed use compatible with adjacent land uses? Do adjacent uses constrain the type / layout of the development?

- o What is the character of the buildings in the surrounding area (architectural styles, materials, building sizes, form and features / detailing)?
- **Historical environment**
  o Are there any features of historical interest in proximity to the site (conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological features, non-designated heritage assets, etc.)?
- **Views**
  o Identify existing and potential views to, from and over the development site and surrounding features of interest (landmarks), and identify which views should be maintained or enhanced.
  o Would views to and/or from the North York Moors National Park be impacted?
- **Access**
  o What is the nature of the surrounding road network, where are the nearest access points, public transport links (where do they go and how often), etc.?
  o Where are the local shops, schools, doctors, etc.? Will new amenities be provided as part of the development?

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[4] https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-background-information/landscape-character-assessment

Site Appraisal

5.7   In addition to the surrounding area, the design approach should also respond positively to the character and nature of the site itself. As a guiding principle, the unique features / characteristics of a site should be viewed as opportunities to provide distinctive developments. They should not be viewed as constraints to providing 'optimal' developer layouts.

5.8   In undertaking a site appraisal, developers should consider the following list of common site features. Again, this list is not exhaustive and there may be features that are unique to a particular site; these will become clear during the site appraisal process.

- **Size, shape and topography**
  - Clearly define and identify the size and shape of the site and its unique levels, slopes and contours.
- **Natural environment**
  - Identify and understand the 'value' of existing water bodies, vegetation and biodiversity, including designations (flood zone, SINC, LWS, SSSI, drainage sensitive areas, etc.).
- **Built environment**
  - Identify existing buildings, structures or walls and their contribution to character and local distinctiveness.
- **Historic environment**
  - Identify areas and/or specific sites of known archaeological interest, listed buildings, conservation areas, etc.
- **Micro Climate**
  - Identify the position and path of the sun, areas of winter / summer shading from existing natural and built features, degree of shelter or exposure to the elements.

- **Services / Utilities**
  - Identify the location and routes of the key services and utilities, e.g. electricity supply, gas pipelines, water and sewage services, etc. that run across the development site and understand any required 'standoff' distances.