

untypical GROUP | HOPKINS HOMES | TILIA HOMES

Building for a Healthy Life.

JUNE 2025



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BHL | untypical

Building for a Healthy Life.

This document will set out how to apply the 12 considerations from the Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) document to Hopkins Homes and Tilia Homes sites.

The 12 considerations reflect the latest changes in legislation and are referred to in many councils local plans and supplementary planning documents.

BHL is Homes England key measure of design quality.

Hopkins Homes & Tilia Homes:

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As Hopkins Homes and Tilia Homes continue to grow and expand under untypical, its vital all sites are designed with a multitude of factors to ensure quality is maintained and the end user remains the focus.

This document will set out how to design a scheme that aligns with the 12 considerations for Building a Healthy Life, as well as keeping the origins of Hopkins Homes and Tilia Homes products.

It's important to remember this document is a guide, and should be used as an aid to improve design and decision making throughout all stages of a project, and to not be view in isolation. Always refer back to specific council guidance, additional planning documents, as well as information received from Hopkins Homes or Tilia Homes.

Throughout this document will be a traffic light comparison system which sets out what is deemed successful and unsuccessful design elements. Where possible it is good practice for as many considerations to fall within the green light.

Whilst this document is only a guide, and you should refer back to the official Building for a Healthy Life document, its important to consider these elements at the beginning of any scheme.



12 Considerations

Design Considerations

Examples throughout this document will highlight the 12 considerations and where it is deemed good practice or poor practice.

The below listed considerations are to be reviewed throughout the entirety of the design process for any residential scheme, and to be viewed as a ‘ Golden Strand’.

The consideration required for all of our schemes:

1 **Integrated Neighbourhoods**
- Natural Connections
- Walking, Cycling & Public Transport
- Facilities and Services
- Homes for Everyone

2 **Distinctive Places**
- Making the Most of What’s There
- A Memorable Character
- Well Defined Streets and Spaces
- Easy to Find Your Way Around

3 **Streets For All**
- Healthy Streets
- Cycle and Car Parking
- Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Back of Pavement, Front of Home



Using BHL

Traffic Light System

BHL is a design process, not a scoring system.

Examples throughout this document will highlight the 12 considerations and where it is deemed good practice or poor practice.

Where poor practice is identified, these areas are to be reviewed and made green, unless there are external factors outside our of our control.

How to review the considerations:

Stop & Rethink

Try & Turn to Green

Go Ahead

In order to achieve the Building for a Healthy Life Commendations, 9 out of the 12 considerations are required to be green.

Whilst this is the minimum, we strive for all of our schemes to be a standard above the rest, and encourage for design decisions and iterations to achieve all 12 green lights.

Integrated Neighbourhoods

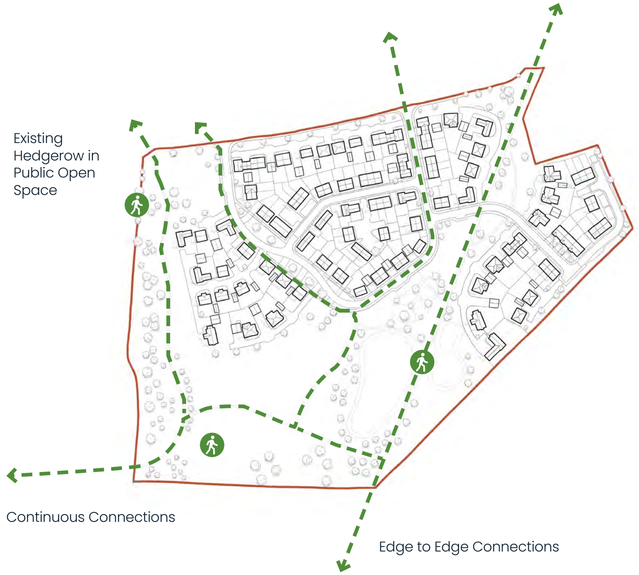
- Natural Connections
- Walking, Cycling and Public Transport
- Facilities and Services
- Homes for Everyone



Natural Connections

Do's

- Edge to Edge connectivity.
- Direct connection routes
- Filtered permeability to reduce reliance on spine roads
- Use of continuous sustainable connection routes around the site
- Streets and routes that can be extended in the future to neighbouring sites
- Maintaining existing hedgerows and POS within the public realm





Connection Routes through POS



Sustainable Connection Routes



Connections to existing PROW



Connections footpath along road

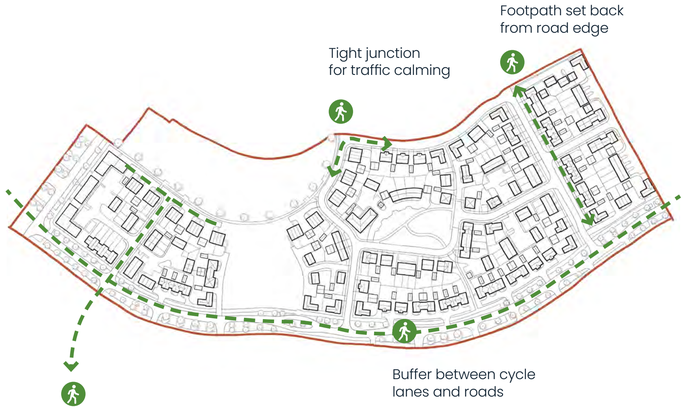
Don'ts

- Blocking off future opportunities to connect with any neighbouring schemes
- In direct connection routes
- Extensive use of private drives which limit sustainable connection routes

Walking, Cycling and Public Transport

Do's

- Share street space fairly.
- Create buffers between cycle lanes and roads to encourage sustainable commuting.
- Prioritise cycle parking close to commercial and community spaces over car parking.
- Encourage cycle and scooter use with well located parking.
- 20 mph speed designations and traffic calming.
- Create short and direct sustainable connections to encourage the use of public transport.
- Tighter radius at junctions to enhance traffic calming.




Buffers between roads and pavements


Hard landscaping material change


Central connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists


Prioritised Cycle Routes

Don'ts

- Large radii on corners which allow motor vehicles to travel at a greater speed.
- Excessively wide carriageways which reduce space for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Whilst softening roads is encouraged to improve the organic feel of a site, be mindful of the pedestrian and cycle routes. These want to be kept short where possible to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

Facilities & Services

Do's

- Focus development around existing public transport hubs.
- Active frontages.
- On sites where commercial or community facilities are present, ensure clear windows are used on the ground floor.
- Mixing compatible uses vertically, such as placing supported accommodation at the heart of new developments above active ground floor uses.
- Include public squares throughout our developments
- Ensure sustainable connection routes can be used by those of all abilities through the use of frequent benches / rest places.



Don'ts

- Inaccessible local centres for pedestrians and cyclists
- Avoid inactive street edges.
- Don't ignore future potential desire lines.
- Avoid locating play and recreational facilities in locations which are hidden away within developments.


Active street frontages


Public Squares

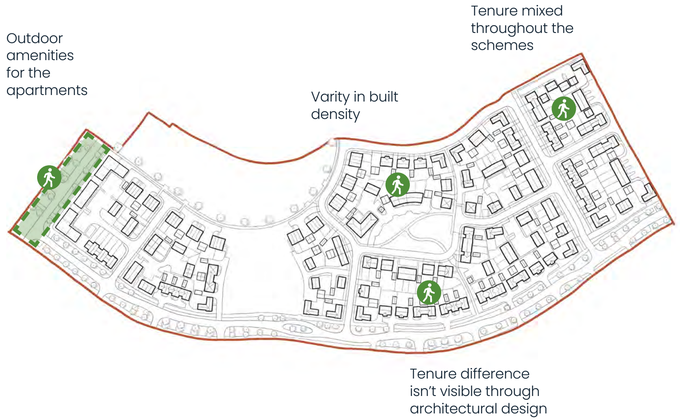

Centralised POS


Rest stops along sustainable connection routes

Home For Everyone

Do's

- Design schemes where tenure is mixed throughout.
- Spead partnership homes throughout the scheme.
- Where tenures are required to be split by core for HA providers, ensure the tenure difference isn't visible through architectural design.
- Where there are apartments and maisonettes its important they have access to private outdoor space where possible. This can include ground floor terraces and balconies.
- Ensure a range of house typologies to meet local housing needs.





Tenure mixed through the site



Mixture of house typologies



Apartments with access to outdoor amenities

Don'ts

- Avoid placing all partnership homes in the same location, expect on smaller schemes.
- Where different tenures are on the site, ensure this isn't portrayed in architectural styles or treatments.

Distinctive Places

- Making the Most of What's There
- A Memorable Character
- Well Defined Streets and Spaces
- Easy to Find Your Way Around



Making the Most of What's There

Do's

- Prior to starting and design work ensure a site visit take place, to have a greater understanding of the surrounding context and characteristics of the area.
- Utilising existing features on site, such as trees, to generate place making.
- Ensure parcel character areas are reflective of the local area.
- Have building typologies and heights reflect that of the existing area to ensure the development fits into the existing grain..
- Protect and enhance existing green space and habitats.
- Where neighbouring sites have back gardens on the boundary reflect that on new developments where possible.




Edge of development landscape buffer


Site visits


Parcel specific character areas


Inspiration from existing character

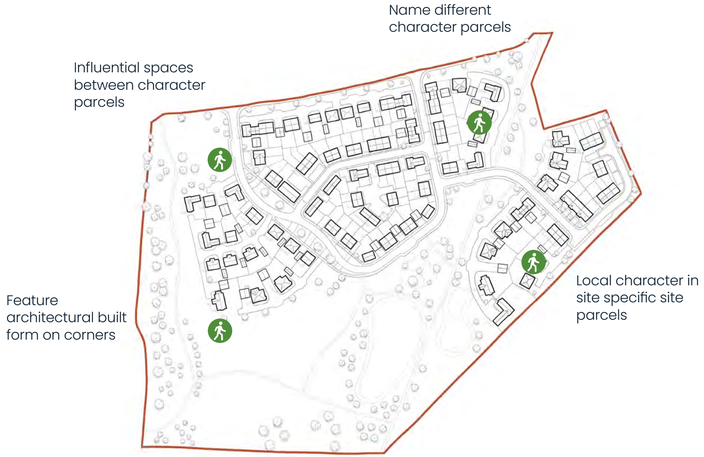
Don'ts

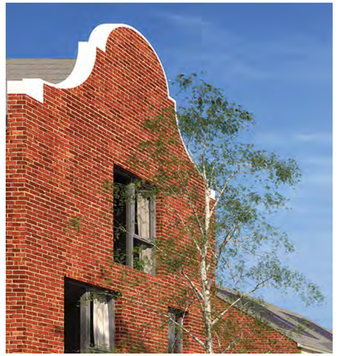
- Don't undertake any design work until a site visit has taken place to get a greater understanding of the sites context.
- Don't orientate homes away from existing features which can be celebrated.
- Avoid leaving unmanaged areas of landscaping between existing residents and new developments.
- Don't funnel rainwater in underground pipes as the default water management strategy.

Memorable Character

Do's

- At the beginning of any scheme, feasibility sketches need to be done and reviewed to ensure the right character is coming through in the design.
- Ensure the local character is portrayed in architectural language and landscape.
- Reflect the local character in a traditional or contemporary style.
- Create influential spaces and building through character groupings.
- Throughout the development applications consider naming the parcels with a distinctive name to help create lasting character.





Draw inspiration from local character



Material selection reflective local character



Varying architectural detailing for character



Create influential places

Don'ts

- Avoid use of a repetitive house typologies which don't create clear character areas.
- Don't however pair house types together which have a drastically different character area which create an in-cohesive street scene.
- Don't take inspiration from neightbouring developments with poor architectural style.

Well Defined Streets and Spaces

Do's

- Increase the use of active residential and commercial frontages.
- Cohesive building compositions and building lines.
- Have front doors and buildings orientated to face streets and public spaces.
- Increase use of corner turner plots to create dual aspect fronting homes.
- Well considered internal vistas.




Well considered internal vistas


Corner turner units


Active Frontages and Street Continuity


Active frontages

Don'ts

- Avoid spine roads with minimal active frontage.
- Don't have large areas of blank façades or boundary walls overlooking public open space or streets which natural surveillance would be beneficial.
- Avoid staggered building lines, but having a coherent parking strategy for neighbouring homes.
- Avoid buffers between new and existing developments which can't be publicly used, creating unsafe spaces.

Easy to Find Your Way Around

Do's

- Consider way finding and placemaking at the early stages of site layouts.
- Use street hierarchy and typologies to create clear way finding through schemes.
- Create vistas to help identify routes through sites.
- Create simple street patterns which can be easily navigated.
- Ensure their are navigation features for all users.





Clear navigation through the site



Placemaking



Navigation for all



Site vistas for way finding

Don'ts

- Whilst it is important for schemes to have an organic feel with soft curves within road and street typologies, ensure to not over emphasise these, creating disorienting places.
- Where possible it is suggested to avoid the use of cul de sac street patterns. Where these are a suitable design decision ensure there are still sustainable connection routes for pedestrians.
- Don't create similar character areas which make a site hard to navigate.

Streets For All

- Healthy Streets
- Cycle and Car Parking
- Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Back of Pavement, Front of Home



Healthy Streets

Do's

- Design streets with pedestrian use as a priority.
- Included tree line avenues
- Introduce areas to sit and interact within the street scape.
- Continue pavement and cycle paths through to side streets and parcels in the site.
- Consider desire lines for pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Increase level of landscaped elements with different street types.





Tree lined streets



Desire lines for pedestrians



Varying landscape to street types



Desire lines for pedestrians

Don'ts

- Avoid designing solely for vehicles
- Don't design road with carriageways wider than 6 meters.
- Where possible reduce corner radii to naturally improve traffic calming.
- Don't introduce traffic calming measures which negatively impact street alignment and contribute to wasting land.
- Don't have white painted cycle routes on pavements or carriageways.

Cycle & Car Parking

Do's

- Have cycle parking as easily accessible as vehicle parking.
- Prioritise cycle parking in prime locations next to community and commercial buildings, over vehicle parking, to encourage sustainable transport.
- Shared / unallocated on street parking.
- Introduce landscaping buffers to on street vehicle parking to soften.
- Where there is parking courts its encouraged to have habitable rooms overlooking for surveillance.
- Ensure electric parking is considered.





Overlooking for surveillance



Cycle parking with cycle links



Cycle links



Unallocated on street parking

Don'ts

- Don't have all cycle storage in poorly accessible sheds and garages.
- Don't have front parking without any landscaping to soften.
- Reduce reliance on tandem parking.
- Avoid streets which are dominated by parked cars, driveways or garages.
- Don't rely on garages for everyday parking spaces.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Do's

- Biodiversity net gain
- Movement corridors for wildlife species.
- Specific functions and uses of POS to create different character areas.
- Create Park Run ready routes on larger sites.
- Be creative with the ways water can be used on site, with features such as rain gardens to connect people with water.
- Design in natural surveillance.
- Where new public open space is introduced ensure future and current path and routes can connect to it for use.
- Incorporate sport & play facilities.





Enhance water features



Natural surveillance



Design for BNG



Well considered SuDs features

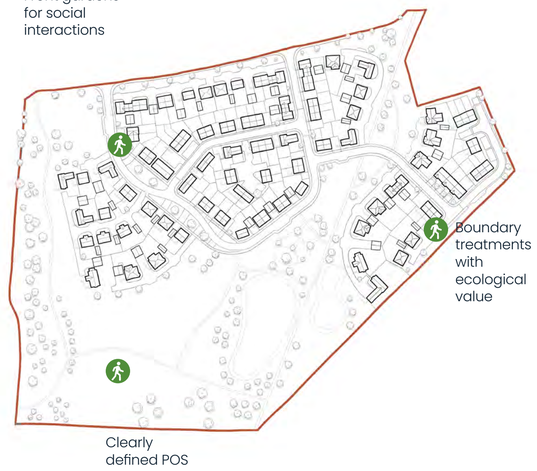
Don'ts

- Avoid large, steep holes in the ground for surface water management.
- Prevent small areas of POS which could easily be neglected and provide little biodiversity value.
- Large areas of impervious surfaces.
- Don't create routes which avoid the use of public open space.
- Avoid buildings which don't overlook public open space.

Back of Pavement, Front of Home

Do's

- Private defensible area.
- Boundary treatments with ecological value.
- Integrated waste storage and utility boxes.
- Front gardens to encourage social interactions.
- Design ground floor apartments with their own front door to increase street activation and natural surveillance.
- Clearly define areas as public or private.
- Consider deck access for apartments to enable cross ventilation and limiting shared enclosed areas.





Boundary treatment with ecological value



Defensible areas



Front gardens



Front gardens and landscape buffer to highways

Don'ts

- Avoid narrow / small landscape strips between properties and street which are impractical to maintain.
- Prevent waste storage for terraces at the rear of the properties where bins get left at the front of the house.
- Concrete screed with pebbles
- Visible external pipes, flues and utility boxes.
- Prevent poorly resolved changes in levels.

Conclusion

- BHL Summary



BHL Summary

Applying the 12 Considerations

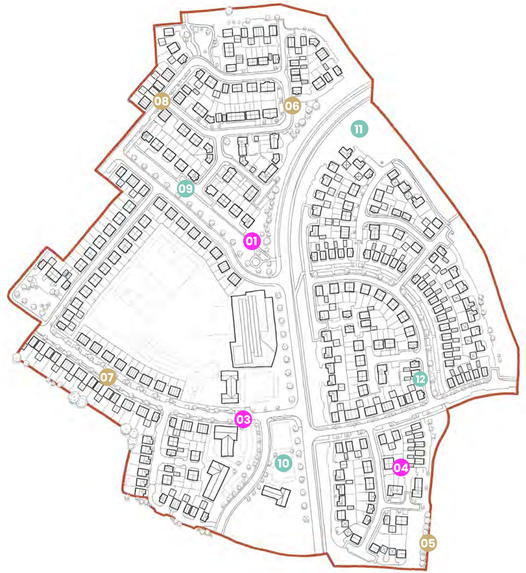
untypical strive for all developments to achieve a minimum of 9 of the 12 considerations, but in ideal scenarios the goal is to achieve all 12.

How these considerations are achieved will vary from site to site, with some having external factors which can have limitations.

The case study illustrates how all 12 considerations can be achieved.

When reviewing all of the 12 considerations it's important to assess the site in both the site plan, as well as how each plots elevations and interacts with one another. 3D models and visualisation can improve design decision made for the 12 considerations.

12 Considerations Case Study:



12 Considerations Key:

1 **Integrated Neighbourhoods**
- 01 Natural Connections
- 02 Walking, Cycling & Public Transport
- 03 Facilities and Services
- 04 Homes for Everyone

2 **Distinctive Places**
- 05 Making the Most of What's There
- 06 A Memorable Character
- 07 Well Defined Streets and Spaces
- 08 Easy to Find Your Way Around

3 **Streets For All**
- 09 Healthy Streets
- 10 Cycle and Car Parking
- 11 Green and Blue Infrastructure
- 12 Back of Pavement, Front of Home

Conclusion

As the official Building for a Healthy Life Document continues to gain importance within the planning system, its important all schemes begin to adhere to this.

When producing any scheme, refer back to the assessment document which is required to be filled in order to achieve the 12 considerations commendation.

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GROUP

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by

project.
architecture