

**Report on the East Devon New
Community Design Workshop.
23rd and 24th July 2004.**

**Prepared by Dr Jon Cooper and Tom Medcalf
Joint Centre for Urban Design,
Oxford Brookes University.
August 2004.**

**OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY**



Report on the East Devon New Community (EDNC) Design Workshop – 23rd & 24th July 2004

Executive Summary.

The executive summary reflects a focused and consensual set of design outcomes from the two workshops held on the 23rd & 24th July 2004, these are:

- an identification of 30 design qualities that it was agreed would constitute a “good” place;
- the production of 13 key design principles that can provide specific guidance on how to achieve a “good” place;
- the ranking in importance of 36 significant site and contextual characteristics of the EDNC development area;
- the identification of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers of the site that lead to general design implications for the development process;
- the establishment of specific strategic design principles for the development site in terms of movement patterns and as a specification for a “good” high activity area or town centre;
- the identification of 16 emerging issues that require further consideration throughout future planning and design stages.

Report Contents:

Executive summary.	Page 1
Purpose of the report.	Page 4
Structure of the report.	Page 5
Outline of the workshop structure and format.	Page 5
Workshop Day 1: Establishing general design aims and principles.	Page 9
Workshop day 2: Design guidelines for the EDNC development.	Page 14
Development context;	Page 14
Mental mapping.	Page 14
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & barriers.	Page 16
Development proposals;	Page 22
Calibrating links & movement.	Page 22
Identifying areas of high activity.	Page 27
Defining a high activity area – a town centre.	Page 28
Character and distinctiveness.	Page 34
Identification of other emerging issues.	Page 39
Concluding comments and recommendations.	Page 40
Glossary of technical terms	Page 43
Appendices.	Page 45
- Appendix A: event invitation letters.	
- Appendix B: workshop briefs.	
- Appendix C: additional selected character cards.	
- Appendix D: Useful articles.	

List of Tables:

Table 1.0 Participant's details and attendance.	Page 6
Table 2.0 Design qualities.	Page 9
Table 3.0 Case study analysis explanations.	Page 10
Table 4.0 Design principles.	Page 12
Table 5.0 Mental mapping results.	Page 14
Table 6.0 Identified strengths.	Page 19
Table 7.0 Identified weaknesses.	Page 20
Table 8.0 Identified opportunities.	Page 20
Table 9.0 Identified barriers.	Page 21

List of Tables...continued:

Table 10.0 Selected character cards by street type.	Page 34
Table 11.0 Selected character cards.	Page 35
Table 12.0 Indicative storey heights, structure & set back depth extracted from the selected cards.	Page 37
Table 13.0 Emerging issues requiring action.	Page 39

List of plans & diagrams:

Figure 1.0 Indicative site context plan.	Page 17
Figure 2.0 Indicative parameters plan.	Page 18
Figure 3.0 Group A. Movement & links proposals.	Page 23
Figure 4.0 Group B. Movement & links proposals.	Page 24
Figure 5.0 Group C. Movement & links proposals.	Page 25
Figure 6.0 Group D. Movement & links proposals.	Page 26
Figure 7.0 Group A. Model for a good town centre.	Page 29
Figure 8.0 Group B. Model for a good town centre.	Page 30
Figure 9.0 Group C. Model for a good town centre.	Page 31
Figure 10.0 Group D. Model for a good town centre.	Page 32

Purpose of the report:

To present the results of the collaborative workshops held on 23rd and 24th of July 2004 commissioned by East Devon District Council and the East Devon New Community Partnership.

The purpose of the event was to provide information and ideas that could inform the production of supplementary design guidance for the new Community area.

The EDNC development workshops were based on a collaborative process whereby selected stakeholders such as local and parish councillors, residents group representatives, Local Authority officers, consultants and developers were actively involved in formulating design principles for the development. An objective of the process was to engage a broad range of local and national expertise in order to identify areas of agreement that could be used to enhance, support and sometimes challenge the proposals for development.

An overall aim was to avoid a prescriptive approach to the production of design ideas for the development but to provide generic principles that could be interpreted by developers as part of their design consultant's rationale to support more detailed proposals. These would form the basis for on-going discussions with the other stakeholders.

This report reflects this approach and is presented as an accurate account of the agreed design principles and key issues of concern raised during the two workshop days. Those facilitators' comments that have been included are for reasons of either explanation and/or clarity. Within the context of the aim and objectives of the process the consensual views of the participating groups have been included, whereas individual comments have been excluded. This reflects the ethos of the process whereby a mix of stakeholders in participating groups were asked to come together to share expertise and find common ground.

Inevitably there will be principles and issues that will be open for further reflected interpretation by individuals and individual organisation members. This should be perceived as a good thing as much work was produced over a short period of time and a degree of flexibility and interpretation guarantees the avoidance of a prescriptive approach and provides the scope for further negotiation.

Structure of the report:

The report is divided into 5 sections.

1. ***Outline of the workshop structure and format*** - with participant's details and levels of representation by organisation.
2. ***Workshop Day 1: General design aims and principles*** - generated from the July 23rd workshop.
3. ***Workshop day 2: Design Guidelines for the Development*** – generated from the July 24th workshop.
 - 3.1 ***Site context*** – results of mental mapping and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers (S.W.O.B.) analysis.
 - 3.2 ***Site proposals***
 - 3.2.1 *Calibrating links & movement.*
 - 3.2.2 *Identifying areas of high activity.*
 - 3.2.3 *Defining a high activity area – a town centre.*
 - 3.2.4 *Character and distinctiveness.*
4. ***Identification of other emerging issues.***
5. ***Concluding comments and recommendations.***

1. Outline of the workshop structure and format.

The workshops ran over two days, facilitated by staff from the Joint Centre for Urban Design (JCUD), Oxford Brookes University. Participants worked in four small groups constructed to ensure a mix of representation in each group. Table 1.0 lists the participants that attended on each day.

Table 1.0 Confirmed participants details and attendance. (√ indicates attendance)							
Name	Representing	Day 1	Day 2	Name	Representing	Day 1	Day 2
Group A				Group B			
Paul Davis	Persimmon Homes.	√	√	Nick Duckworth	Hallam Land.	√	√
Jo Hawkins	EDNCP.	√	√	Laura Wright	David Lock Associates.	√	√
Ed Moffat	Christians together in Devon.	√	√	Kathy Sparks	Living Options.	√	√
Cllr John Glanville	East Devon District Council.			Cllr Ray Franklin.	East Devon District Council.	√	√
Mary Rowe	Rockbeare Parish Council.	√	√	G Turner	Whimple parish Council.		
Peter Pepper	Broad Clyst parish Plan Steering group.	√	√	Steve Rippin	East Devon District Council.	√	√
Janthia Algate	East Devon District Council.	√	√	Mike Jones	Devon County Council.	√	√
Paul Tyler	Devon County Council.	√	√	Roger Giles	Ottery St Mary Town Council.	√	√
Rob Finch	Devon & Cornwall Housing Association.	√		Clare Brewster	East Devon District Council.	√	√
Group C				Group D			
Barry Kerslake	Town & Country Supplies	√	√	Nick freer	David Lock Associates.	√	√
Sarah Philips	David Lock Associates.	√	√	Genevieve Evans	CPRE – East Devon.	√	√
Andrew Bell	Transport 2000	√	√	Richard Aggett	Town & Country Supplies.	√	√
Cllr Ruth Burrow	East Devon District Council.		√	Peter Howard	Broadclyst Parish Council.	√	√
Vera Howard.	Honiton Town Council	√	√	Derek Baxter	Ottery St Mary Town Council.		
Neil Blackmore	East Devon District Council.	√	√	Steve Power	East Devon District Council.	√	√
Alan Stone	Devon County Council			Vicky Rollison.	Devon County Council.	√	√
Ali Round	East Devon Primary Care Trust.	√	√	Sharron Reynolds.	Devon & Cornwall Constabulary	√	√
				Peter Bowden	Whimple parish Council		

Listed below is a summary of the representation at the workshop arranged by stakeholder type.

9 Residents and Councillors;

8 Local Authority Officers;

3 Developers;

3 Planning & design consultants;

7 other stakeholder organisations;

3 Facilitators from JCUD, Oxford Brookes University.

Workshop aims & objectives.

The overall aim of the workshops was to produce an agreed set of design principles that could inform the production of supplementary planning guidance for the EDNC and to identify emerging issues that are likely to require further investigation. From these aims the objectives for the workshops are set out:

- to evaluate the urban quality of existing locations in Honiton in order to produce an agreed set of urban design principles that can be used to produce a “good” place;
- to use these principles to inform the way in which new development can be designed in an appropriate manner that is acceptable to a broad range of interested parties; and
- to identify from this process those key emerging issues that are yet to be fully resolved.

The first day concentrated on developing agreed general design aims and agreed design principles to be applied to the development. This was achieved by examining part of an established area of Honiton in relation to the identification of the qualities that make a “good” place.

The second day applied the design aims and principles developed in day 1 to the EDNC area. Participants were asked to provide information in relation to the site context, links & movement patterns around and across the site and the potential make up of a high activity area. A final session allowed the

participants to record any other key issues not dealt with during the workshops.

Each group was asked to undertake the tasks set and on completion of the tasks a feedback session was held to identify points of common agreement – these points were recorded by JCUD facilitators throughout the two days and form the bulk of this report.

2. Workshop day 1: Establishing general design aims and principles.

- TASK 1: to evaluate an existing urban area - Honiton.
- TASK 2: each group proposed alterations to the Honiton area that would overcome the negative aspects of its urban quality.
- TASK 3: each group presented design proposals and explained how the negative issues had been overcome and what urban design principles could be stated.

At the beginning of the first day the participants were asked to list the qualities that they considered made a “good” place and that new development should aim to achieve. Table 2.0 lists the qualities in the order identified at the workshop – they are not presented in any order of preference.

Table 2.0 Design qualities – a “good” place would have the following qualities:	
1. Fit for purpose – pleasant to live in.	16. Design to maintain continuity.
2. Safe & secure.	17. Sense of belonging.
3. Feeling of openness – people zones – a buzz – vitality.	18. Diversity.
4. Places to sit.	19. Scale [human].
5. Tranquil spaces – a mixture of [types of] spaces.	20. Visually attractive and interesting.
6. Water: pond/lakes/streams – sense of peace.	21. Familiar points – readable [<i>make sure that the place is easy to understand by providing recognisable features</i>]
7. Trees/hedgerows	22. Happy residents with a sense of community.
8. Wildlife – landscape elements to create “sustainable” places	23. Attractive architecture & materials.
9. Shading – sensory stimulation.	24. Mixed street scene/uses.
10. Public & private spaces.	25. Social amenities – schools, hospitals.
11. Flexibility/adaptable buildings.	26. Transport – within and beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ease of movement on foot, choice of modes, • public transport, cars
12. Character/local identity.	27. Employment opportunities.
13. Anti-social behaviour needs to be addressed	28. Economically viable.
14. Atmosphere	29. Landmarks and focal points
15. Strong social networks and mix – cultural/age /etc.	30. All buildings & spaces accessible to all.

The remainder of the first workshop looked at how these qualities might be delivered through the design of built form. The participants were asked to

examine the centre of Honiton - in order to identify the features they thought worked in terms of creating a “good” place and those features that they felt didn’t work.

The participants were asked to evaluate Honiton and provide an indication of where both positive and negative features occurred with an explanation of **why** these features were felt to occur. Table 3.0 lists the features the participants were asked to identify and the various explanations they gave for their choices.

Table 3.0 Case study analysis explanation	
Instruction	Reasons given for location selections
Pedestrian safety – mark an area T1 which you feel would be the most threatening as a pedestrian at night	Not overlooked. No one there after hours No commercial activity. No footpaths, narrow pavements. Poor sight lines.
Resident’s privacy – mark an area P1 where you feel resident’s privacy has been most compromised, both in terms of private outdoor activities or over exposed living rooms.	Overlooked back gardens – high fences adjacent to footpaths.
Social interaction – mark an area F1 which you regard as feeling the friendliest i.e. which offers the most opportunities for residents or others to have chance meetings, when entering or leaving their homes, walking or driving past.	A Focal point – adjacent to church. Set back slightly from the main path Well maintained. Good surveillance of space from house fronts.
Residents security – mark an area E1 which you feel would be the most exposed to burglaries or other unwanted intrusions.	Not overlooked. No surveillance. No residential element. Unattractive.
Vehicular security – mark an area V1 where you feel vehicles would be most vulnerable to vandalism or theft.	Not overlooked. Car park not manned. Not a key route for pedestrians. No CCTV
Finding your way around – mark an area L1 where you feel you could most easily get lost on a first visit.	No landmarks. Poor signage Poor sight-lines

Table 3.0 Case study analysis explanation ... continued	
Visually attractive – mark an area A1 that you feel is most attractive.	Variety of Architectural style. Mixture of uses. Distant views Aesthetically pleasing.
Memorable – mark an area M1 which you feel is memorable.	The High street – architecture, uses, activity, rear access alleyways. Church setting – as a positive landmark. Spankey’s night club and lock up garages– negative landmarks different from surrounding uses.
Overall desirability – mark an area D1 where, if you had a family, you would most like to live.	No through traffic Cul-de-sac Quiet.
Street hierarchy – grade the street system of the area G1 by agreeing on which routes are primary (graded 1), secondary (2) and tertiary (3).	1 = High street – mixed uses, through route. 2. = Northcote Lane, A373, St Syres Rd – connected streets but not main streets. 3. = George street – cul-de-sac very quiet.
Residential Densities – Mark a piece of the area (H1), which appears to have the highest residential density.	Angel court & All Hallows court – terraced housing with a mix of integral garages and dedicated parking spaces.
Mixed uses – Mark an area (U1) where the greatest number of different types of uses occur (e.g. retail, leisure, educational, health, entertainment, residential etc).	High street – buildings able to change from residential to commercial uses – robust. By the Church – open space, retail & residential. Cattle market – Leisure, education & open space.

Key features identified that affected the selections made were:

- degree of overlooking;
- proximity of and level of interaction from adjacent buildings;
- visibility of route;
- presence or absence of landmarks;
- degree of maintenance;
- levels of variety and activity;
- definition of public & private spaces;
- degree of route connectivity.

On completion of this exercise the participants were asked to produce a model of Honiton, using 1:500 scale wooden blocks, which “fixed” any identified problems in relation to the earlier analysis. The results of this design exercise were summarised as sets of design principles by each group. From these sets each group was invited initially to submit two principles that had to be endorsed by the other groups before inclusion on a final list. Additional principles were then invited for endorsement and inclusion. The resultant set of design principles are presented in table 4.0. in the order they were offered at the workshop - they are not presented in any order of preference. Text in italics represents points elaborated verbally and paraphrased here by the facilitators.

Table 4.0 Agreed Design Principles
1. Ensure that all public spaces are bounded by <i>[buildings with]</i> active edges.
2. The principal route structure will be well connected and the secondary structure will provide scope for variation.
3. Use existing historic character to inform new development identity – specific elements will need to be identified
4. Ensure that new development incorporates a variety of people friendly spaces/routes that can both create and link <i>[distinct]</i> districts.
5. Plan the flow and movement of people into and throughout the development to maximise ease of access so that all potential users can use all routes, with priority given to walking/pedestrians, then cycles, then public transport, then cars (in general).
6. Design buildings and spaces that can be used flexibly over time and can have multiple uses (e.g. supermarket with underground parking and residential above or civic buildings such as community centres with commercial café and social housing above).
7. New development should incorporate a high quality focal point or points.
8. New developments should be visually connected within and beyond their context. <i>[address views in and out of the site as well as within it]</i>
9. New development should be designed for the needs of all ages and groups of people.
10. All new development should acknowledge best practice with regard to environmental sustainability and design.
11. Providing a range of housing types at a variety of density in order to increase Town vitality.
12. Provide buildings and spaces capable of accommodating a mix of uses in order to increase activity at different times.
13. Provide sufficient higher densities close to the Town centre to encourage greater activity & support a range of amenities and services, including public transport, for all ages.

There are several design implications arising from these principles – these were briefly discussed during the first day and are paraphrased below by the facilitators:

- the large majority of buildings will need to face the streets with well-defined fronts and secured, unexposed backs;
- large box like buildings e.g. multi-storey car parks will need to be sleeved with other active uses;
- a variety of building types, styles and sizes will be needed;
- a clear listing of what constitutes “public space” is needed;
- maintenance and management facilities and arrangements will need to be put in place as part of the design process.
- An analysis of the existing place will need to be undertaken in order to effectively locate the suggested historical element to be used in forming identity.
- The introduction of mixed uses will require the accurate identification of both pedestrian and traffic flows around the new development to ensure that non-residential uses are located on the busiest routes to maximise access and visibility.
- In order to provide local services for all users with easy access issues of supporting density and access to public transport will need to be addressed – this was touched on at the workshop.
- Best practice with regard to environmental sustainability will need to be identified [the *BedZed zero emission development may provide an example.*]

3. Workshop day 2: Design Guidelines for the EDNC Development.

- TASK 1: to evaluate the site and its surrounding context;
- TASK 2: to produce strategic design guidelines for the type of development;
- TASK 3: each group to note down key issues that have not been covered in the workshops

3.1 Development Context:

3.1.1 Mental mapping.

At the beginning of the second workshop day the participants were asked to construct mental maps of the EDNC site and its surroundings. The aim was to identify important local features that might be used in generating or enhancing local character in later detail design. Table 5.0 lists the features recorded and indicates their rank in terms of the number of mental maps on which they were shown – suggesting the level of awareness of the features.

Table 5.0 Mental mapping results		
	No of mental maps on which the feature appeared.	Rank
The flood plain	√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√	1
Jack in the green pub	√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√	1
Nursery	√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√	2
Stream – Cranny Brook	√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√	3
Level Crossing	√√√√√√√√√√	4
Field and Hedgerows	√√√√√√√√√√	4
Chinese restaurant	√√√√√√√√√√	5
Cash & Carry retail park	√√√√√√√√√√	5
View to Hills to the North	√√√√√√√√√√	6
Farm buildings	√√√√√√√√√√	6
Petrol Station	√√√√√√√√√√	7
Power lines	√√√√√√√√√√	7
Airport	√√√√√√√√√√	7

Table 5.0 Mental mapping results.... Continued.	No of composite mental maps on which the feature appeared.	Rank
View to a knoll and hills to the east	√√√√√√	7
Rising/higher ground to the north	√√√√	8
Rockbeare Church	√√√√	8
Bridge on the old A30	√√√√	8
Broadclyst	√√√√	8
Fox Inn	√√√√	8
Old Orchards	√√√√	8
Rockbeare school	√√√√	8
Blue Hayes Farm	√√√√	8
Low ground - central stream valley	√√√	9
Aircraft engine testing noise	√√√	9
New Inn pub	√√√	9
Electricity sub station	√√√	9
Trees	√√	10
Balloon Business	√√	10
Ash Clyst Forest	√√	10
Country Supplies Shop	√√	10
Signal box	√	11
Fosse way	√	11
Commercial buildings	√	11
Clyst Valley Cricket Club	√	11
Caravans	√	11
Elbury Organic farm	√	11

The mental mapping exercise simply records the features that people remember. To identify whether the remembered features were regarded as positive, negative or neutral the participants were asked to undertake a S.W.O.B. analysis that would indicate how important these feature may be.

3.1.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Barriers (S.W.O.B.) analysis.

On completion of the mental mapping exercise the participants were issued with an indicative site context plan (figure 1.0) and an indicative site parameters plan (figure 2.0) and were asked to complete a S.W.O.B. analysis of the area and its surroundings, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers to good development. The composite results offered verbally by each group and recorded on flipcharts by the facilitators are shown on tables 6.0. to 9.0. The items are shown on the tables in the order they were given by the participants at the workshop and present 16 identified area strengths, 6 weaknesses, 11 opportunities and 4 barriers. It is noticeable that several items appear in more than one table. There was generally a high degree of overlap between each group's analyses, but with some individual points also being made. The main themes that developed through the S.W.O.B analysis are summarised after tables 6.0 to 9.0 below.