Guides and manuals of "better practice" as an aid to planning in England

Elena Marchigiani

Guides and manuals of "*better practice*" as an aid to planning in England

By Elena Marchigiani[*]

Index

Introduction

The quality of design has played a key role in the debate which has taken place in England over the last few years[1]. The debate has engaged in particular the Government and some professional groups, entailing a common reflection on the design of the physical town and on the need to renew tools for orienting building and regeneration processes in the urban environment.

More and more often, normative devices focusing on policy and guidance, functional and quantitative issues – planning tools aimed both at orienting development policies on a territorial scale (Structure plans) or at managing land uses on a local basis (Local plans and Unitary development plans) - are accompanied by texts which control the formal and qualitative aspects of design of built-up areas and open spaces.

What is unique to the English experience is that these texts, and in particular those concerning urban design (a term which refers not only to the design of the physical-morphological lay-out but takes on a wider meaning), represent a non-prescriptive supplementary apparatus; a repertoire of guides and manuals drawn up at national level, but mostly on the scale of counties, districts, cities or neighbourhoods, which contain principles and examples to be adapted locally starting from a detailed analysis of the context.

In the British system land use planning tools have not a strictly prescriptive value; they assume instead the role of reference for negotiation phases with private operators. Taken together, planning tools and supplementary planning guidance are in line with a conception of planning that is negotiable and process-based, in which the definition of orientation procedures, the control of interventions' spatial aspects, the monitoring of results and the revision of technical equipment, define a sequential and reiterated series of operations. Such a conception, having has a back-ground a reflection on structure and strategic planning that has lasted more than 30 years, intends not to loose attention for the pragmatic nature of spatial outcomes and their morphologic, aesthetic, functional aspects, and at the same time it insists on the need to act both at project and action planning levels.

A number of manuals and guides of "better practice", in line with a search for more open and flexible planning tools, have been produced in the last few years. There emerges an approach that abandons restrictions, and proposes requisites for the formal quality of urban projects. The solutions proposed risk at times becoming too rigidly bound to models, but this approach originates in a long tradition of reflection and debate on *aesthetic control*[2] issues, that has lasted for almost 100 years.

Following these general observations, the first part of this research focuses on the debate about the quality of urban design, which has involved in the last few years the Blair Government and other representatives of the Royal Institute of British Architects (Riba) and Royal Town Planning Institute (Rtpi), in particular the Urban Design Group (Udg).

---

* The translations from English have been made by the author; those from Italian by Rita Pecorari Novak.

[1] This essay will refer to the general national planning situation in Britain, specifically dealing with that in force in England without considering the special rules or procedures which are applied in Wales, Scotland and Nortern Ireland. On the contrary, the selection of the case studies analysed in the third part has been carried out nationwide, on the basis of their respondence to different scales and approaches to the writing of guides and manuals.

[2] A number of texts historically trace the resurgence of interest in the physical dimension and control tools (also from an aesthetic point of view) of urban design in Great Britain. They include, among the others: (Punter 1986, 1987), (Punter, Carmona 1997) and (Vignozzi 1997). The latter (one of the few books in Italy which has recently focused on this research field) traces the evolution of aesthetic control tools from the urban planning law dating back to 1909 to the latest debate, and presents two examples of urban quality control tools (Bristol e Reading).

The author of this paper has analysed a specific period of the debate on the perceptive quality of the urban environment and its conversion into performance requirements and indicators in the essay "Gordon Cullen, *Townscape,* 1961. The multiple landscapes of perception " (Marchigiani 2002). A number of observations made by Cullen and other members of the group revolving around the *Architectural Review* in the second post-war period are clearly recognizable in the latest reflections, showing that urban design issues have been part of the British tradition for quite some time.

The second part offers a first exam of planning tools and levels in England, both of those dealing with programming and land use planning, and of those dealing with design process control.

Finally, the third part, contains the analysis of texts wich exemplify various types of Planning guidelines: good practice guides (at national level); design guides for the design of new expansions (at county level); design strategies (at urban level); guides for the drawing up of design briefs and of strategic regeneration area frameworks (for specific places or specific parts of town). The aim is to highlight recurring themes and contents, with reference to their specific applications and to their relation to other planning tools.

Part one.
A recent resurgence of interest in urban form and urban design issues

1.1. The Blair Government "Urban Renaissance" proposals

When the Labour Government led by Tony Blair took office in 1997, priority was given to improving urban regeneration policies. One of the first reform consisted in the re-organization of the territory's planning and management system. The Department of the Environment (Doe) and the Department of Transport merged into the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (Detr), with the aim to pursue an integrated approach to territorial development policies[3].

The Urban Task Force led by Richard Rogers was set up in 1998 at the Detr, with the aim to "identify causes of urban decline in England and recommend solutions to bring people back into our cities, town and urban neighbourhoods", defining "a new vision for urban regeneration founded on the principles of design excellence, social well-being and environmental responsibility with a viable economic and legislative framework" (Urban Task Force 1999, p. 1). These principles intend to reverse the previous trend which in the 80s and 90s led to a progressive drift from the cities, due to the poor quality of services and facilities and to the spreading of crime and of urban decay.

Towards an Urban Renaissance[4], published in 1999, is a report gathering the outcomes of the ministerial mission aimed at identifying a new direction in public settlements' regeneration policies (**Fig. 1**). The purpose is to guide the governmental programme for the creation of 3.8 million lodgings in 25 years (1996-2021), 60% of which are to be located inside pre-existing cities. Not only does the text represent a research report but it also serves both as a reference book giving hints on management policies, and as a manual for regenerating the urban environment, including recommendations for drawing up local planning documents and an evaluation of concrete examples of projects presently underway, judged in positive or negative terms.

The first part of the document focuses on urban design issues. Special attention is paid to the relationship between urban density and growth forms, and in particular to the need to plan again *inside* the city (its central areas, but also its outskirts), rather than suburban areas, already compromised by dispersed urbanization (**Fig. 2**). Given these transformations, there emerges the need to identify new strategies for urban regeneration, which are to reinterpret density not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of use intensity[5]: "We believe that cities should be well designed, be more compact and connected, and support a range of diverse uses – allowing people to live, work and enjoy themselves at close quarters – within a sustainable urban environment which is well integrated with public transport and adaptable to change" (*Ibid.*, p. 8).

These purposes will be attained through a complex strategy, which focuses on:

- Redesign of the city and the territory as a system capable of linking together residential areas, public spaces and natural corridors connecting to the countryside (**fig. 3**);
- Redistribution of settlement densities in order to create new polarities and strengthen pre-existing ones ("pyramids of intensity"), with the adoption of a development policy that does not use land

---

[3] In 2001, metropolitan and urban planning issues fell within the scope of a new Ministry, known as Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Dtlr) and were no longer managed by the Detr. In 2002 the former was absorbed into the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; and at the same time a new Department of Transport was created to manage specific issues in the transport sector.

[4] For a critical interpretation of the text (Urban Task Force 1999), see (Poleggi 2000), (Carmona 2001, p. 306-310) and (Farinella 2003). The "urban renaissance" principles outlined in the Urban Task Force research have served as reference material for recent experiments carried out by some Boroughs in the poor neighbourhoods in Central London and in contaminated industrial areas, but above all they have been used as guidelines for drawing up the new London metropolitan area Plan in 2002 (Nucci 2003).

[5] Density is seen as a veritable tool for re-designing the city; Local authorities may grant "density bonuses" to entrepreneurs who intend to pursue top-quality planning and are willing to contribute to the strengthening and improvement of infrastructures and public facilities.

indiscriminately. The settlements' layout is re-organized into close-knit units, "urban neighbourhoods", seen as basic material for the construction (and re-construction) of cities (**Fig. 4**);

- Urban neighbourhoods are arranged as parts of the city. The presence of a mix of uses encourages different forms and levels of sociality (**Fig. 5, 6**). They are designed on a pedestrian scale as far as distances and transfers are concerned (**Fig. 7, 8**).

To improve urban project's outcomes it is also essential to act on planning tools and techniques, on a national and local level, by adopting a form of planning that is strategy-oriented. On a local basis, it is the Spatial masterplan*,* rather than traditional zoning plans, that is identified as the device that can best orient the renovation processes of urban space. It is accompanied by design guidelines (supplementary planning guidance) which add further details on its content, especially regarding physical-spatial elements. Its aim is to complete the information on land use planning supplied by Local plans, thus constituting a basis for opening up a dialogue with local actors and for evaluating their proposals (**Fig. 9, 10**).

In line with these objectives, the Ministry published *Our Towns and Cities: The Future. Delivering an Urban Renaissance*[6] in 2000. Taking into consideration the situation of settlements nationwide, this Urban White Paper intends to integrate the principles already expressed by the Urban Task Force into a more detailed definition of social, spatial and economic measures. Beside strengthening initiatives that are already underway, the Urban White Paper announces new action programmes in the urban design field: the promotion of masterplans and supplementary design guidance beside traditional planning tools; the creation of training centres on urban regeneration issues; finally, the revision of the *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1, General Policy and Principles*, in order to stress the importance of urban renewal. The new version of PPG1 "will explain how we should plan for sustainable communities, promoting economic success along with social inclusion and protection of the environment. It will, as envisaged in the Urban Task Force report, ensure that planning policies fully support the drive for an urban renaissance" (Detr 2000a, p. 45)[7].

---

[6] The text (Detr 2000a) is available on the following address: www.odpm.gov.uk (Urban policy).
[7] The text *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1, General Policy and Principles* (Doe 1997) – the instrument which defines the principles of urban planning currently in force in Britain– is available for consultation on the following address: www.odpm.gov.uk (Planning - Planning Policy).

1.2. The debate on urban design issues and the proposals of the Urban Design Group

The resurgence of interest in the quality of settlements and urban design expressed by the British Government in the 90s can be interpreted as the answer to a more general debate which, in the previous decade, involved prominent figures from politics, town planning and architectural culture[8]. Among them there was also Prince Charles. Although he seemed to be more concerned about the formal and regulating aspects of architectural design rather than those of planning[9], his interest in urban regeneration, and in particular in the preservation of the historical heritage and continuation of local building tradition principles, brought the issue of control of the urban project aesthetic quality to public attention[10].

An integrated vision of urban design practice, gathering a number of independent and highly specific disciplines, has gradually taken shape. From this point of view urban design "although a component of modern town planning" takes on the status of "a profession, in its own right, which sits between town planning and architecture, with its own agenda, objectives and way of seeing urban issues and preferred solutions. Urban design is not 'just' about street design [and public spaces], but potentially affetcts, and should be seen as integral to, all levels and all aspects of town planning and architecture. A key feature of modern urban design practice is the ability to integrate a concern with the visual and aesthetic aspects of urban form with a strong social awareness of the need of user groups, plus a sensitivity to wider environmental and sustainability issues" (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998, p. VI).

A definition that is even more explicitly anchored in the operating function of urban design within urban planning initiatives appears in the Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG1), *General Policies and Principles,* published in 1997 by the Department of the Environment. "For the purposes of this Guidance, urban design should be taken to mean the relationship between different buildings; the relationship between buildings and the streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces which make up the public domain; the nature and quality of the public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; and the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established: in short, the complex relationships between all the elements of built and unbuilt space. As the appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings is often of comparable importance to the design of the buildings themselves, landscape design should be considered as an integral part of urban design" (Doe 1997, par. 14).

The Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG3), *Housing*, published in 2000, underlines the Government's intention to promote the quality of urban design and outlines the principles for "creating sustainable residential environments" (Detr 2000b, art. 46)[11]. Resuming some of the themes already expressed in the Urban Task Force's report (1999), the document underlines the need to promote a way of planning that is

---

[8] For a review of urban design definitions and contents that emerged in the debate and of the interactions with planning practice see: (AA.VV. 1994a), (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998). In the latter these issues are dealt with from a double perspective: that of planners ("top-down") and that of users ("bottom-up").
[9] Prince Charles resumes some conceptual categories inspired by the Townscape school, and takes up a number of issues explored by the New Urbanism in the USA: a direct reference to the "urban code" outlined by Andreas Duany on the occasion of the new tourist town project in Seaside (Florida) is in fact present in the book *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* (HRH, The Prince of Wales 1989). A re-reading of Prince Charles' view and of its translation into concrete community architecture initiatives is to be found in (Vignozzi 1997, p. 89-103). For more information on the architectural debate that ensued see (AA.VV. 1989). In particular, Urban Villages Forum is one of the organizations involved in the urban regeneration programme, sponsored by Prince's Foundation (www.princes-foundation.org/).
[10] Following the numerous speeches delivered from 1984 onwards (Jenks 1988), in which Prince Charles harshly criticized modern architecture's incapacity to be expressive and its removal from people's concrete desires (first of all, that of living in a "familiar" urban environment), the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Royal Institute of British Architects urged the Government to revise urban design orientation and quality control tools. One of the outcomes was the production in 1992 of a new version of the *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1* of the year 1988 and in particular the introduction of the "Annex A: Design considerations", which underlined the importance of "The appearance and treatment of the spaces in between and around buildings" (Carmona 2001b, p. 30-32). In the Urban White Paper dating back to 2000, a further revision of the PPG1, already revised in 1997, has been recently suggested by the current Government (see paragraph. 1.1. of the present work).
[11] The text is available for consultation at the following address: www.odpm.gov.uk (Planning - Planning Policy).

1

"safe and take account of public health", and to "create places and spaces with the needs of people in mind, which are attractive, have their own distinctive identity but respect and enhance local character" (*Ibid.*, art. 56). In the ministerial guide, the introduction of public equipments and services as well as green spaces within the new residential settlements as a "contribute to biodiversity" represents a further qualifying element (*Ibid.*, art. 52).

These considerations prove how, in the last few years, more and more clearly urban design has adopted an approach that interprets the quality of spaces not only as the mere sum of single elements but as the result of a more complex morphological interaction, which pays attention to the physical layout and functional organization and at the same time takes into account the perceptive impact of the project on the behaviours and modes of use of future users (**Fig. 1**).

To date no professional group has been specifically appointed to take care of these issues, at least not in the same way as the Royal Town Planning Institute (Rtpi) manages the access to the town planner profession. There are however some organizations and pressure groups, which through publications and different types of initiatives are trying to define a new career brief. Among them there is the Urban Design Group, a voluntary association, made up of professionals and non-professionals coming from various disciplines (it comprehends also influential members of the Royal Institute of British Architects-Riba e and Rtpi), which organizes conferences, exhibitions and events, publishes the periodical *Urban Design Quarterly*, on urban design issues, and offers consultancy to the Ministry[12]. The initiatives promoted by this group are grounded in a series of definitions and general principles, that are part of a 'holistic vision' of urban design based on process, which is aimed at renovating urban regeneration strategies and at involving local communities, authorities and operators.

By integrating the proposals and images of projects developed in the 90s and published by Jon Rowland in the *Urban Design Quarterly* (Rowland 1995) with the "manifesto" of the Urban Design Group (Greed 1998, p. 8; **Fig. 2**), the contents of the different phases involved in the urban design process can be summed up as follows:

- *Analysis and definition of objectives*. The aim is to identify the city's "ambitions", from a social, economical and physical point of view. In order to do so it is essential to describe and understand the character of the place, its history, its transformations, its social and morphological structure. But it is also important to consider both the needs of the inhabitants who make use of the place and of the people who could invest in its transformations. Along with these analyses, Urban design action teams have to use consulting procedures and process the information gathered in a graphic format, so as to ensure a dialogue and confrontation with local authorities, entrepreneurs, owners and population (**Fig. 3**). Altogether, these operations lead to the identification of "strenghts and weaknesses", "hot spots" and possibilities for development, capacities for transformation and transformation thresholds, and finally to the definition of key-objectives for spatial interventions (**Fig. 4, 5**).

-*Definition of a new urban structure*. The construction of a general pattern of relations, consistent with the analysis' outcomes and with the objectives which have been set, results in the Urban design framework and the Urban design strategy. The content of these tools concern in particular the interaction between public spaces, the strengthening and regeneration of their formal and perceptive aspects; the strategies

---

[12] The process of 'professionalization' of urban design has been going on for a few decades. The Urban Design Group was founded in 1978 and was the first association to focus on these issues. As regards to the details of the ensuing debate see the Urban Design Group web site, www.udg.org.uk - hosted on the portal Rudi (Resource of Urban Design Information), www.rudi.net - which also includes issues of the *Urban Design Quarterly* review.
In 1997, some members of the Royal Institute of British Architects, of the Royal Town Planning Institute, of the Landscape Institute, of the Urban Design Group and of other professional institutions and associations have come together into the multidisciplinary group known as Urban Design Alliance, which is presently one of the main authoritative voices on the matter (www.udal.org.uk).
Finally, English Partnerships is the governmental agency, appointed to manage programming and to support urban regeneration initiatives (www.englishpartnerships.co.uk). It has also been entrusted with the task of giving the Ministry support in the research on planning quality issues, through the organization of seminars and workshops and the publication of manuals.

of pedestrianization and reorganization of traffic and transport lines; the localization of new activities and mixed uses (**Fig. 6-10**).

- *Construction of a shared vision.* The urban structure is translated into a three-dimensional image of the future arrangement. This image serves as a guidance for project development and can be used as a reference point by local authorities to give a clearer representation of the framework they intend to pursue, which will be specified and modified during the subsequent management of the project process. Ultimately, this is not an exhaustive and final representation, but an instrument of synthesis from which dialogue can begin with local actors (**Fig. 11-13**).

- *Design briefing, Urban design guidelines*. The description of the context in its multi-faceted dimensions, the definition of objectives of conservation and/or transformation, the prefiguration of a framework in two-dimensional and three-dimensional format interact with the preparation of more accurate guidance tools on the part of local authorities. The process consists in a reinterpretation of the project's layout, concerning the form of spaces and their uses, in order to define a series of rules and recommendations which will be taken into account by regeneration proposals (**Fig. 14**). It entails a sequence of phases, the order of which cannot be given beforehand, depending on the interactions among the different actors involved in the process.

Part two.
Planning tools

2.1. Programming and Land use planning[13]

Before illustrating the different types of Planning guidelines and their contents, it is necessary to take a step backwards in order to draw a short outline of planning tools governing the territory.

Since the *Town and Country Planning Act* of 1968 until the system in force sanctioned by the *Town and Country Planning Act* of 1990[14], English planning has been organised into administrative levels, which at least formally depict a hierarchic and cascade-like system, from the general (national level) to the particular (local level) (**Fig. 1**).

National level. At this level general development plans are not drawn up, but Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), bulletins and ministry circulars, programming and guidance documents such as White Papers, which fix objectives and general themes with the aim of coordinating planning choices with the broadest economic and settlement development programmes at national level. These are policies which, despite lacking coercive value, assume the role of recommendations and directives, to which authorities should make reference in drawing up general and local planning tools. In particular, the PPGs are among the measures which have the greatest impact on the creation of planning tools and processes and which more directly influence on their contents, specifying the themes to be taken as central ones.

Region and County level. This is the level traditionally defined 'strategic'. In particular, on regional scale there are policy options tools i.e. Regional Planning Guidances (RPGs), for long-term programming.

At county level instead there are the Structure plans. They can involve the whole County area, several Districts belonging to Non-metropolitan Areas or National Parks. Their function is to establish objectives and directives for the development of the territory and its infrastructural facilities, to identify the areas to be protected and provide policies for environmental preservation. In conclusion, they are a reference for drawing up Local and Unitary development plans and a tool for the coordination of competence choices of each district[15]. These plans generally give just a diagrammatic representation of the territory without dealing with a specific definition of land uses. The recent renewed interest of the Labour Government in the construction of strategic scenarios on a wide scale reveals the will to bring regional planning and Structure plans back to the importance they had in the 60s and 70s, stressing, however, even on this scale the attention to qualitative aspects and to the physical layout of settlements and open land[16].

Districts, Cities and Metropolitan Areas level. This is the level of Local plans and Unitary development plans enforcement; these are the most operational and tactical planning tools. They are plans drawn up by local authorities (the Unitary development plans are specifically applied to metropolitan contexts such as Great London), having as object a more detailed organization of land uses, both in writing and

---

[13] Here the reference is, in particular, (Cullingworth, Nadin 1997), (Mattogno 2003).

[14] The text of the national British urban planning law is posted on: www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1990/Ukpga_19900008_en_1.htm.

[15] In the Planning Guidance Note (PPG12), *Development plans*, of 1999 the functions advised for Structure plans are: "provide the strategic policy framework for planning and development control locally; ensure that the provision for development is realistic and consistent with national and regional policy; and secure consistency between local plans for neighbouring areas" (Detr 1999, p. 36). The text is posted on: www.odpm.gov.uk (Planning - Planning Policy).

[16] See (Gibelli 1996, p. 17-22). The autor recognises the British Structure plans as the first generation of strategic plans, grounded on a rationalistic, hierarchical and systemic view of the relations between wide and local area planning. "The systemic approach characterizes the first generation of strategic plans ...: an approach which considers the city or the urban region as a system formed by deeply connected sub-systems, to which quantitative models must be applied", models that are "assumed as means capable of giving reliable forecasts on which public decisions can be based". The limits of these intermediate level tools, between national and local scale (their role was reduced by the Conservative Government since the 80s in favour of a more general process of de-regulation) are "abstraction" and "aspiration to all-inclusiveness", their foundation on a "fragmented and sectorialised" analytical system. Limits to which the new proposals of Blair Government try to give an answer refining their physical and spatial contents. For a reconstruction of the reflection on British strategic planning, carried out with the texts published on *Town Planning Review* between 1968 and 2000, see (Pomilio 2001).

1

drawing[17]. In particular, Unitary development plans consist of two parts: a first part which could blend in a Structure plan in terms of form and contents, made up of written texts on strategic objectives and policies the administration will start off; a second part containing the written and graphic explanation of the detail choices concerning land development and use.

The formalization of auxiliary tools guaranteeing the quality of the design process in Britain takes place in a situation of strong discretionary power and opening to dialogue, which characterizes the relation between structural and local planning choices and their translation into project actions.

---

[17] Again in the Planning Guidance Note (PPG12) of 1999, the Local plan is the tool which needs to "set out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land, and should guide most day-to-day planning decisions. The preparation of local plans gives local communities the opportunity to participate in planning choices about where development should be accommodated in their area" (Detr 1999, p. 36).
In the structure of the planning system fixed by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1968, substantially still in force today, there are three different types of Local plans: General local plans (then District area plans), plans specifying the directives contained in the superordinate Structure plans, and which involve the entire District territory; Action area local plans regarding only a part of the territory under the jurisdiction of local administrations (in particular, areas where unitary undertakings such as new building or regeneration projects are directly carried out by public authorities or private companies); Subject plans regarding the entire territory (for instance, Minerals or Green belt local plans). The tool establishing the consistency between the contents of Structural plans and Local plans is the Development plan scheme (or Local plan scheme), a sort of programmatic document drawn up before the shaping of the Local plan (Cullingworth, Nadin 1997, p. 83-84).

2.2. Design control process

To what degree can urban design issues be included legitimately in the town planning normative system is a question that has long been discussed in England.

"In reality, the majority of decisions planning authorities make will be design related in one form or another, from those dealing with settlement form and transportation, to those concerning land use mix, to those aimed at defining an appropriate public realm and those on individual site layout and detailed design". From this point of view, "authorities should recognize how the powers granted to them can be used in a positive manner: to encourage the best in design that respects its visual, social, functional and environmental context, while intervening to improve the mediocre and actively discourage and effectively control the worst". This should happen on all planning scales, from the "strategic" to the "site specific" one (Carmona 1996a).

In order to achieve such results, over the last decade many design control tools have been set up[18], forming a system arranged on levels, from the introduction of themes and issues the Government points out as contents of every planning agenda, to the definition of rules, performance criteria, physical examples for local scale undertakings. The Planning Policy Guidance Notes at national level (its contents more frequently refer to urban design issues) are joined by the Regional Planning Guidance and by the County design guidance; by Development control guidelines, Design guides, Design strategies at city or district level (a crucial level coordinating implementation tools and already containing more operational advices); by Design codes, Development [strategic] frameworks, Design briefs and Master plans at specific area level (**Figg. 1-3**).

If the role assigned to this rich system of Planning guidelines is that of actively contributing to the definition of urban policies and to their shaping into a spatial project, the consequent arrangement of contents and degree of prescriptiveness of such documents is currently object of research and debate.

In the specific instance, a first consideration concerns the borderline between what is legitimate for regulation and what instead should be left to the free choice of the designer. The outline by Matthew Carmona lists the fields that the most recent Planning Policy Guidance Notes ascribe to urban design (Carmona 1996a, 1998; **Fig. 4**). From such classification different dimensions characterising this approach emerge; in particular those that regulation identifies as ascribable to normative control: from the spatial and morphological characters and the relations with the context, to the visual and perceptive aspects and down to dimensions regarding social and functional features of settlements and their level of environmental sustainability. An articulation which marks a significant extension of the urban design scope: from the traditional view of townscape linked to the enhancement and preservation of visual, architectural and urban characters of the context (external aspect of the buildings, the street as urban scene, elevations, views), and from considerations that can be traced back to a functional matrix (public-private, organization, density), to the attention towards ecologic-environmental aspects, uses and social perception of the public realm[19] (**Figg. 5, 6**).

---

[18] The need to elaborate urban design control tools is explicitly mentioned in an official paper by the Department of the Environment only at the beginning of the 90s (Doe 1994), and is included in the parameters of the Planning Policy Guidance Notes in 1995 (Doe 1995a), year when the Department launches the Urban Design Campaign (Doe 1995b). In fact, the version edited in 1992 of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1*, "Annex A" (Doe 1992), despite underscoring the importance of planning in pursuing the objective of improving urban planning quality, still states that such responsibility in any case lies in the hands of the planner. As Matthew Carmona reminds us, until that moment, the attention of the Government is mainly addressed to the protection of environmental "amenities", while project quality control is considered as an excessive interference in the private sphere. This means that while for highly valuable areas there are specific restrictions and intervention criteria, ordinary situations are not subject to any kind of control. Often difficulties to introduce design control tools are due to the opposition of actors involved in the design process: architects and entrepreneurs, who fear to have their freedom to work reduced, but also even the residents, linked to the status quo and not inclined to accept new rules, even if their purpose is to raise the quality of their living environments. It is a new version of PPG1 of 1997 (Doe 1997), as already stressed in paragraph 1.2. in this essay, which finally gives priority to urban design issues, emphasizing its importance in urban planning tools (Carmona 1996a, 1998).
[19] On the importance that interactions between users and living environment should acquire also within design guidance tools, see, in particular, (Donovan, Larkham 1996).

1

Design control tools are not directly prescriptive. They come alongside with traditional tools providing additional advice on urban design. The tighter the relations with local planning are and the more open to dialogue their editing process is, the more useful they are. A reading in terms of process is to be applied not only to the implementation of town plans and urban projects, but also to construction, implementation and revision of the Planning guidelines system (**Fig. 7, 8**). A system which, integrating the contents of Local plan and Unitary development plan, should first of all be adaptable to the emergence of general and local project issues. "... urban design needs to be seen as part of an ongoing process, rather than a one-stop answer to specific problems". A process which can be split into four stages: "analysis, synthesis, appraisal and decision-making ... These stages are neither independent nor necessarily sequential, but are instead part of an integrated, cyclical and iterative process ... decisions made about urban design inform, and are in turn informed by, those made about town planning above and building design below. At the heart of this lies the value and importance of appraisal (analysis) – as both the start and the end of the process – setting the initial parameters from which guidance and policy are drawn, and feeding back into and reflecting the experience of implementation" of those tools and policies (Carmona 1998, p. 48, 50). The appraisal is thus intended as a phase of interpretation and comparison of objectives, guidelines and project strategies with the context. A phase consisting in the analysis and the identification of "strengths and weaknesses", of "opportunities and threats" (**Fig. 9**), and assumed as a crucial shift from the performance requirements contained in large scale Planning guidelines and advices of the Local plan or of the Unitary development plan, to more precise urban planning criteria and rules. At the same time, the monitoring of results and their assessment are a key moment for the possible revision of design control tools (**Fig. 10, 11**).

As Punter and Carmona point out, "The emphasis placed on a rational process of design does not imply a denial of the importance of creativity or inspiration to a good design ... Rather it emphasizes that creativity in design is promoted by initial familiarization with, and study of, the problem, and discussion with various interested parties, which then become a springboard for a new creative synthesis" (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 84). In order to enable design control tools to work at their best, their editing and revision process should be based on the interaction with local circumstances, first of all with the multiplicity of actors involved in the implementation of plans and urban policies (administrators, owners, investors, experts and designers, users) (**Fig. 12, 13**).

2

Part three.
Planning guidelines

3.1. From the description of the context to the project form and requirements

This last section deals with different types of Planning guidelines, presented as checklists of subjects and images: Good practice ministerial guides at national level, Design guides at county level, Design strategies for a city, Design briefs and Strategic framework for specific project sites.

The texts have been chosen with the aim to re-address, through a selection of meaningful examples, some of the themes and contents connoting the different levels of design control.

The guides contain a differentiated repertoire of forms of design control: from the explanation of spatial rules and the construction of abacuses or example lists, to the creation of directives and performance requirements.

Focusing on 'general' tools, the selection presented here does not include sector guidance forms of sure interest, such as the most recent production of urban safety guides[20], which clearly evidence the progressive shift of attention from the aesthetic-formal dimension of urban design to the social one, linked to public space uses.

---

[20] Among these: Condervation & Design Service, Development Department of Nottingham City Council, *Community Safety in Residential Areas*, 1998; New Forest District Council, *Design for Community Safety*, 1998. Both are available at: www.rudi.net; for a critical interpretation see (Farinella 2003).

3.2. Ministerial Guides. Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice*, 2000[21]

The text described here belongs to a wide series of Good practice guides produced by the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (Detr), in this case with the participation of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (Cabe), a new body created by the Ministry in 1999 with the aim to promote a campaign at national level for the quality of urban design (**Fig. 1, 2**). *By Design* plays a subsidiary role towards the Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), *General Policy and Principles* (Doe 1997), translating the general themes contained in the report produced by the Urban Task Force (1999) into more specific terms.

The guide is a collection of "simple principles", aimed at raising the qualitative standards of urban planning and not imposing new models. Principles which become recommendations in the creation of planning tools and definition of action policies on buildings and open spaces, landscape and transport systems: "good design is important everywhere, not least in helping to bring rundown, neglected places back to life. Second, while the planning system has a key role to play in delivering better design, the creation of successful places depends on the skills of designers and the vision and commitment of those who employ them. Finally, no two places are identical and there is no such thing as a blueprint for good design. Good design always arises from a thorough and caring understanding of place and context" (Detr, Cabe 2000, p. 5).

The addressees of this document are mainly local authorities in charge of planning; but also entrepreneurs, citizens and all those who, proposing new undertakings, will have to submit them to the judgement of those authorities. By reading the guide they will be able to know beforehand about the general judgement criteria applied.

The text consists of four parts and some appendices:

Foreword
1. The need for better urban design:
    Purpose of the guide
    Urban design
    Place-making
    The role of the planning system
    Towards better practice
2. Thinking about urban design
    Objectives of urban design
    Aspect of development form
    Objectives and development form brought together
    Prompts to thinking
3. Urban design and the planning toolkit
    Understanding the local context
    The development plan
    Supplementary planning guidance
    Development control
4. Raising standards in urban design
    Proactive management
    Collaboration
    Developing the right skills
    Design initiatives
    Monitoring and review
Appendices
    Checklists

---

[21] The text (Detr, Cabe 2000) can be found at: www.odpm.gov.uk (Planning - Planning guidance and advice). Critical readings are in (w.a. 1999), (Carmona 2000), (Carmona 2001b, pp. 314-319).
In 2000 English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation pubblished *Urban Design Compendium*, a richly illustrated manual drawn up as a compendium of the text analysed here. In 2001, the Dtrl prepared a new guide, in which the checklists included in *By Design* are translated into more concrete principles and examples of project solutions (*Better Places to Live by design: a companion guide to PPG3*, 2001). This guide is available on the aforementioned site of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
In this site references and extracts of other recent ministerial Good practice guides can also be found. They deal with emergent issues, procedures and contents to be considered in the editing of local level tools (among the others: *Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice*, 1998; *Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice*, 1998).

1

Part one identifies the objectives of the guide and explains the meaning of urban design as field of use. A meaning close to that outlined in Urban Task Force (Urban Task Force 1999). Urban design as "the art of making places for people. It includes the way places work and matters such as community safety, as well as how they look. It concerns the connections between people and places, movement and urban form, nature and the built fabric, and the processes for ensuring successful villages, towns and cities. Urban design is a key to creating sustainable developments and the conditions for a flourishing economic life, for the prudent use of natural resources and for social progress. Good design can help create lively places with distinctive character; streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale; and places that inspire because of the imagination and sensitivity of their designers" (*Ibid.*, p. 8). The general aim of the guide is to overcome a negative attitude, founded on the adoption of standards, to promote a performance approach to urban planning and design (cfr. *Ibid.*, p. 10).

Part two describes the "objectives" and the "aspects" characterising the shape of a settlement (**Fig. 3**). By objectives are meant the performance criteria which urban design should follow, and by aspects of development form the elements which altogether define the spatial layout of a settlement (**Fig. 4-9**).

By blending objectives and form aspects together we obtain a matrix of general performance criteria, in the first versions of the guide called "Thinking machine". The local authorities will use it in the drawing up of design policies, once they have assessed the degree of importance of each objective with reference to the conservation and/or transformation needs according to the context, and once established what aspects of development form should be brought into play to achieve such objectives (**Fig. 10**).

Part three analyses the technique and tools able to efficiently introduce the issues of urban design previously described within local planning procedures. The text identifies in particular some crucial operations:

1. Understanding the local context.

The manual provides for each objective a list of themes and fields for the description.

A further interpretation level is aimed at identifying restrictions and development opportunities for the area (**Fig. 11**).

In order to shape policies focusing on the quality of urban planning, the knowledge of the main guidance documents on national scale, containing explicit reference to urban design themes, is necessary. Local authorities should give due consideration to those contents[22].

2. The Development plan.

The "Development plan" is a tool providing "an essential framework for guiding and controlling development". In broad terms, its contents concern: "a vision for the area"; "the main objectives to realise that vision"; "the local context of people and places"; "the overall design policy framework ... against which the local authority will assess development proposals"; "the policy foundation for supplementary planning guidance" (*Ibid.*, p. 42, **Fig. 12**).

Even if all planning levels – including that of Structure plans – should take into account urban design issues and draw scenarios with the role of reference for operative and more detailed actions, defining strategic objectives and identifying planning policies is not enough to ensure the positive outcome of the undertakings. Local planning tools should include the definition of specific project requirements. Local and Unitary development plans should thus be able to outline what is known as a "complete design policy"

---

[22] The documents listed in the guide are: PPG1, *General Policy and Principles*; PPG3, *Housing*; PPG6, *Town Centres and Retail Development*; PPG7, *The Countryside: environmental quality and economic and social development*; PPG13, *Transport*; PPG15, *Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings*. The text makes references also to Regional Planning Guidance Notes, Strategic Planning Guidance Notes for specific fields and themes, and to the Circular 5/94, *Planning Out Crime*.

which, by defining a series of urban planning goals, identifies principles, criteria and methods for project assessment and implementation (*Ibid.*, p. 44).

3. Supplementary planning guidance.

There are many other tools local authorities can adopt in order to provide more specific design guidance concerning areas, places or specific issues. Such tools are not directly included in the local plan (which instead contains binding rules and directives), but are rather a supplementary set of recommendations. These are recommendations deriving from the interpretation of context-bound features and consultations with the actors involved, which should influence and guide the drawing up and implementation of projects and their assessment carried out by local authorities. If general urban design principles are expressed in the local plan's design policies ("general design policy"), the different ways to follow them and translate them into design can be included in a parallel Supplementary planning guidance: Design frameworks, Development briefs, Design guides (**Fig. 13-15**).

4. Development control.

The entire design process must be accompanied by a continuous sequence of discussions between authorities and privates. Within such sequence, the official documents – local plan and guides – should make the public position clear, while the promoters have to submit their proposals in consecutive and repeated stages so as to allow negotiation with the administration (**Fig. 16**).

Part four deals with the ways (method and techniques) the dialogue with actors should be held in order to define an open design process. It should stimulate collaboration by organizing design workshops and Urban design action teams; issue competitions more often; but mainly start a continuous monitoring process of outcomes and revision of design tools contents.

By reading this Ministerial guide, there emerges the aim to provide, first of all, local administrations with clear guidelines on how to translate the Government's renewed attention to urban design issues into planning tools. The text thus looks like a sort of performance and procedure manual: its objective is to illustrate on one hand urban design themes and aims and on the other phases and tools for the definition of local urban policies. However, it does not establish a repeatable method, but it leaves room for re-interpretation and contextualization of the guidelines contained.

3.3. County Guides. Essex Planning Officers Association, *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas,* 1997[23]

The text is the second version, edited in 1997 by the Essex Planning Officers Association, of the *Essex Design guide* drawn up in 1973 by the County Council (**Fig. 1, 2**). This Supplementary planning guidance, which supports the guidelines contained in the County Local plans[24], deals with the planning of new residential settlements. The title already denounces a specific attitude: the impossibility, at least for undertakings with size over 500 dwellings, to conceive them as mono-functional units and the need to plan them as complex urban parts, containing facilities, collective use open spaces and an organised repertoire of residential typologies.

The authors of the Design guide underscore the most important changes introduced, as well as the inclusion of the mixed-use development concept within the general principles of spatial organisation, from which specific advice contained in the guide derives:

- the importance given to the analysis of built-up and natural environment features;
- introduction of sustainability issues;
- the use of different densities, being aware that this choice necessarily entails a different use of 'materials' employed to build a settlement with a high spatial quality;
- the importance of legibility and permeability of the overall design;
- the need to grant pedestrian safety (cfr. Epoa 1997, p. 2 and following).

What finally emerges is a great confidence in the physical space design as a tool able to solve much wider issues, linked to the declared will to "create new places of quality and identity, where people will wanto to stay" (Ibid., p. i)

The structure and the organisation of the guide can be clearly seen in the table of contents:

Foreword
Public Consultations
Introduction
    Planning context
    Application of the Design guide
    Essex character
    Principles of spatial organisation
    Site appraisal
Criteria for Development sites larger than 1 hectare
    Sustainability
    Mixed uses
    Proximity
    Landscape structure
    Permeability and legibility of layout
Further criteria for all sizes of development
    Protection against noise sources
    Public open space
    Children's play
Criteria for layout at densities below 20 dwellings per hectare
    Arcadia
    Boulevard planning
    Tree and hedge species
    Design of buildings within the landscape context
Criteria for the creation of urban space at densities over 20 dwellings per hectare
    Pedestrian scale
    Height of buildings and width of spaces
Criteria for placing buildings at densities over 20 dwellings per hectare
    Continuity of frontage
    Relationship of house to road

---

[23] Part of the text (Epoa 1997) can be found at: www.rudi.net (some pictures attached here were posted until 2002 on: www.essexcc.gov.uk). Comment texts are: (Carmona 2001b, p. 13-17), (Goodey 1998), (Stones 1997), (Tollit, Tollit 1998). Noteworthy is another interesting guide drawn up on County scale: Kent Association of Local Authorities, *Kent Design: a guide to sustainable development*, 2000. This guide, posted on www.rudi.net and www.kent.gov.uk/kent_design/, differently from the one described here, adopts a performance based language to explain urban design objectives and guidelines. For a critical interpretation see (Farinella 2003).

[24] The 14 Districts (now 12) belonging to the County participated in the editing of the guide. The Districts will use the Design service of Essex County Council as the institutional body reference for the application of the guide (Carmona 2001b, p. 15).

The **Introduction** starts with the denunciation of the negative outcomes linked to the spreading of the "suburban ideal of the detached house on its plot" (*Ibid*., p. 1) and with the listing of the aforesaid principles of spatial organisation. There follow the definition of objectives and the guide's field of application (as an integral part of a wider set of guidance and planning tools) and a description of the "Essex character", briefly explaining the different types of settlements and the building typologies which characterised the built-up areas in the County from before the 18th century to the "fragmentation of built form" which marks the most recent developments (*Ibid*., p. 5). Within this repertoire of settlement forms, "unsatisfactory suburbia" lies in an intermediate position on the "spectrum of visual densities", which from the "rural situation", "arcadia" and "boulevard planning" (rural settlements or with strong presence of green spaces, with densities below 20 dwellings per hectare) gets to "urban situation" (over 20 dwellings per hectare) and to "city scale" (not included in the guide because it does not correspond to the typical villages of Essex) (cfr. *Ibid*., pp. 5-6, **Fig. 3**). At the end of the introduction the importance of an attentive description of the context's visual characters is underlined by illustrating the contents of the "site appraisal" (**Fig. 4**).

The text consists of eight sections and five appendices. The manual-like purpose of the guide is clear; its aim is to provide a wide list of written and drawn guidelines with reference to the possible spatial organization modes of settlements and to the composition techniques of the different materials – built-up area and open spaces – which give shape to the project.

The **first five sections** show through sketches the criteria to adopt for planning, subdivided according to maximum size of the area, and density of dwellings per hectare. The general principles of spatial organization are then translated into graphic representations (schematic abacuses of possible solutions)

accompanied by comment texts which underline positive and negative aspects, on the bases of what seems to be a rather reductive reading of local settlement patterns (**Fig. 5-8**).

The **sixth and seventh section**, recalling solutions of the local tradition, contain more precise guidance on the design of 'materials' which make up settlements. The sections deal with the elements characterising the outside of buildings (coverings, openings, volumes, materials and building details, rhythms and alternations of solids and voids with reference to the overall building design); the organization of the grid of roads and their different typologies (**Fig. 9-13**).

The last section (**Appendices**) gathers guidances containing lists of vegetable species and descriptions of the building typologies, the use of which is recommended because they are recognised as typical of the context. There are also guidelines on the adoption of quantitative standards and on the procedures to follow in the maintenance of open spaces.

But a summary of the guide's design contents is in the third part (**Case studies**). These contents are translated into examples of different types of situations which refer to single parts, modular among them, and characterised by specific spatial and functional features. Fourteen cases explain different and better ways to face the design of a residential settlement[25]. They are different in the design of streets and squares and in the relations with the rows of buildings enclosing them; they are better compared to the standard attitude of designers and entrepreneurs (the manual sometimes opposes current solutions with the proposed ones). The composition in a larger settlement of case studies in fact seems to be regulated by sheer juxtaposition, giving shape to a non homogeneous and scarcely structured whole (**Fig. 14, 15**).

The purpose of these examples is to "show how the principles of this Guide can be put into practice in the design of the layout of a number of sites with differing requirements and characteristics. These should not be regarded as stereotypes solutions to be copied, but as demonstrations of the application of the approach advocated by this Guide" (*Ibid*., p. 79, **Fig. 16-19**). But here hides the risk of a bad use of the text, i.e. that architectural stylistic features, settlement principles, schemes and examples could be taken exactly as they are shown, as models to be adopted and not as general guidelines to be reinterpreted. This risk is also increased by the form of the representations used, which are too detailed and 'realistic', but at the same time not so univocally linked to a specific context as examples carried out in a County would be.

---

[25] The case studies are: "an informal urban street", "a variable-width street with the variety of frontage associated with the traditional village", "a formal street of 2-3 storey houses and on-street parking", "a set-piece of buildings at a major entrance to the site", "a piece of urban layout with variable-width roads and a 'market square' focus", "a large, landscaped square", "a layout using Boulevard Planning principles", "a formal square", "an informal village green", "a village-type, tree lined street with housing of mixed densities", "a pedestrian street", "a small mews cul-de-sac", "a layout using Arcadia principles", "a 'brownfield' site development incorporating mixed uses". The categories "formal" and "informal" actually take over again the distinction analised by one of the fathers of Townscape, Raymond Unwin (Unwin 1909).

3.4. City Guides. Department of Planning, Development and Environment, City of Stoke on Trent, *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development*, 1999[26]

The text analysed here is a Design strategy, a document containing the general urban design policies on the scale of the whole city, adopted by the City council and through which the administration will evaluate the future proposals of privates (**Fig. 1-3**). Already the Local plan approved in 1993 (City Plan 2001) contained guidelines on the physical layout of the city - "policies and guidance" -; the Design strategy provides an update of those guidelines, anticipating the contents of the new City Plan 2011 and taking as strategic scenario for urban regeneration strategies the one outlined in the Structure plan 1996-2011 ("Introduction", Dopde 1999)[27].

In the case of Stoke on Trent the creation of a "better design" and "urban regeneration" strategy is seen as a tool making the city more competitive: "A high quality environment is a fundamental requirement if high quality investment is to be attracted and maintained ... to achieve structural economic development, real social improvement and a sustainable environment in the future". The approach followed is "non-prescriptive": the guide "does not seek to restrict design creativity and avoids being prescriptive on matters of style or detail. However, it does require developers to consider the wider urban context and to take into account a range of factors regarding the quality of the urban environment. The Strategy should act as a filter, allowing quality development to pass through, and improving poorly thought through schemes" ("Introduction", *Ibid.*). A careful reading of the context must not lead to a mimetic attitude towards local styles, but rather ensure a deeper understanding of development processes, on which specific intervention proposals should be founded.

Besides the introductory sections, the text is composed of three parts and appendices which support and explain its contents:

Introduction
Executive summary
1. **Design policy**
2. **Detailed Guidance**

    2.1 Context and Local Distinctiveness
    2.2 Urban Design
    2.3 Architectural Design
    2.4 Development in Historically Sensitive Locations
    2.5 Alterations and Extensions
    2.6 Design Statements
    2.7 Public Art

3. **Implementation**

    3.1 Detailed Design Guidance
    3.2 Development Control
    3.3 Communications and Education
    3.4 A Proactive Approach
    3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Appendix A
Urban Design Analysis and Local Character

    A1 The Purpose of the Analysis
    A2 Urban Structure
    A3 Urban Character and Legibility
    A4 Movement Through the Urban Environment - Permeability

---

[26] The text is posted on the Internet at: www.rudi.net. Noteworthy is another interesting guide on a city scale: Leeds City Council, Department of Planning and Environment, Environmental Design Group, *Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy*, 2000. This guide, published on the site www.rudi.net, is a collection of a rich list of descriptions of the features of the context arranged under the entries "Form", "Movement", "Space", "Use", illustrated with charts and photographs. This repertoire is accompanied by the explanation of undertaking's objectives and guidelines for each part of the cities considered, complete with sketches and schemes of possible project solutions. Unlike the case mentioned here, that of Leeds adopts a language which, despite still being a performance language, translates into the graphic form of the scheme and design exploration.
[27] The contents of the Design strategy will be included in the new City Plan, becoming an integral part: "In development control, the policies, which are aimed at achieving quality, should not be seen as being of secondary importance to quantifiable standards" ("3.2 Development Control", *Ibid.*).

A5 Building Character and Architecture
A6 Conclusions

Appendix B
Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats

Appendix C
Urban Design Map

References

The Appendices contain the interpretation process carried out to identify the objectives and project principles expressed in the two initial parts, and at the same time provide a useful range of information and methodological guidelines on the way the urban structure and architectural features should be read. In particular, **Appendices A and B** show the results of the analyses carried out on the city (**Fig. 4-6**), in order to identify elements and relations from which its specific character derives, strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and threats that more detailed intervention policies will have to face (S.W.O.T. Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) (**Fig. 7, 8**). **Appendix C** contains the list of parts and locations of the city considered "sensitive", for which greater attention to context features and design quality is required: landscape areas, conservation areas and potentially conservation areas, listed buildings and monuments, significant sites, water courses, rows of trees, green spaces, but also main road and public transport network, infrastructure junctions, paths across green areas (cycle and pedestrian paths).

The content of the first two parts of the guide derives directly from the analytical and interpretative support provided in the Appendices.

Part one contains the brief declaration of the design principles adopted for the construction of the Design strateg, refering to context and local distinctiveness, urban design, architectural design, development in architecturally or historically sensitive locations, alterations and extensions, public art. They are then explained more in detail in **Part two**, through performance declarations and photographic references on good and bad design practices. From the contents of both parts there emerges the multiplicity of scales and themes linked to settlement design principles: from the overall layout scale of the city area to every single architecture; from the aspects linked to the arrangement of the physical and functional structure to those linked to space use and to the perception of elements which make them recognizable (**Fig. 9, 10**).

Part three collects guidances on the implementation modes of the Design strategy contents. Clearly the document provides a comprehensive layout for the evaluation of design proposals submitted to the City Council and for the preparation of more detailed guides. For these latter, typologies, fields of application and contents are identified: Thematic guidance dealing with general themes or types of settlements, to be adopted on city scale; area and site-specific guidance about parts and locations which are strongly characterised even from a historical standpoint, thus having a great importance in the overall legibility and quality of the urban structure.

Moreover, noteworthy is the great importance given to "communication and education": local communities must be involved in design processes from the very beginning, through a constant and increasing awareness of the urban project quality and an active exchange of knowledge between inhabitants, designers and entrepreneurs. "To be genuinely meaningful, public participation should be used from the beginning of the design process, as a means of specifying preferred uses, facilities and the functional and operational requirements of development. In this way, public participation allows urban design to take on a social role. The designer's role is then to transform the public's aspirations, as far as possible, into physical form. Public participation can not be used as a substitute for a competent and creative design input" ("3.3 Communications and Education", *Ibid.*). Workshop and exhibits which involve inhabitants, owners, schools, entrepreneurs, administrators and political representatives, local universities, are among the tools identified for the construction of dialogue. These come along with competition procedures to be

promoted for particularly interesting urban locations and their results can be taken by the Administration as good urban design examples.

In conclusion, the basic themes of the Design strategy are recurring ones: sustainability, mixed uses, flexibility of buildings and open spaces, care for the pedestrian, conservation and strengthening of the context's characters. The design approach and the type of language used are instead very different from those of the *Essex Design Guide* (see paragraph 3.3.). The aim is neither to stop the flow of time nor to go back to the models of the past, but to promote transformations which although expressing the needs and language of contemporary architecture, show respect for the context they are going to be placed in. Neither schemes, nor examples of models are included here, but only a wide series of performance themes and criteria that the projects should follow and provide with a specific shaping in physical-spatial terms.

3. 5. Site-specific Guides. Percy Johnson - Marshall & Associates, *Design Briefing in Towns*, 1978[28]

Design Briefing in Towns is a report edited by Percy Johnson - Marshall & Associates professional office on the basis of studies carried out by Drew Mackie and Alastair Metheven for the Urban Design Unit of the Scottish Development Department[29] (**Fig. 1-3**). It is not a real Design brief but a guide, containing many examples for the preparation of design control tools on the scale of parts (Urban design briefs) or of single sites (Site planning briefs), or even of documents used by the Administration to initiate competition procedures (Developer's Briefs)[30].

Among all the tools considered up to now, Design briefs are those which more specifically deal with "visual policies", going into details of rules and/or requirements for the design of the settlement's morphological and volume layout. The aim of this manual is to illustrate "from actual case studies, a step by step process through the analysis of quality and character in what exists to the derivation of well based urban design 'rules', aimed at controlling new development so that despite current financial restrictions the end product is sympathetic to its surroundings and acceptable to the public at large" ("Remit", Johnson - Marshall & Associates 1978). The type of control included in this guide aims at ensuring the enhancement of the potentialities of each area, without specifying the architectural language for that site.

The text is first of all addressed to local planning sectors, in charge of drawing up Design briefs. These sectors – stress the authors – often lack qualifications in urban design issues.

The manual consists of two general parts and a third part containing examples for the preparation of Design briefs:

Introduction
1. The working context
    What are Design briefs?
    Why are Design briefs required?
    Who prepares Design briefs?
    How do Briefs interact with the planning system?
    How do Briefs interact with the development process?
2. The preparation of Design briefs
    The decision to prepare a brief
    Types of brief
    A recommended format
    A recommended notation
    Testing
    Design principles
    Identifying frameworks
    Skylines
    Corners
3. Worked examples
    Dundron
    West Port block site
    Church Street gap site
    Corbiehill
    Conservation Area
    Inverderran

---

[28] The text is posted on: www.rudi.net.
[29] In the "Introduction" that John Punter wrote in 1999 to the on-line version on Rudi website, he stresses the importance of this manual for the history of urban design control. It is one of the first texts to deal with such issues, when at national level an Urban Design Unit within the Department of the Environment was still missing. At the end of the seventies, the practice to put Design briefs together with Land use government tools was already widespread, but their contents in terms of physical layout were minimum.
[30] A research on the ways contents of Design briefs should be used has recently been ordered by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The results have been turned into a guide for the drawing of these texts: *Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice*, 1998, available at: www.odpm.gov.uk (Planning – Planning guidance and advice). Unlike the guide edited for the Scottish Development Department analysed here, in which the argumentation is followed by a rich repertoire of case studies involving different Design briefs typologies, the Ministry guide is limited to the identification of objectives, subjects and procedures for the editing and implementation of these tools. From the comparison of these two texts, there emerge on one hand the central Government's will to leave more room to experimentation, on the other, the national importance given today to Design briefs as a guidance tool for local design. This even if the Ministerial guide tends to restrict its use to the cases in which Specific guidance within planning tools or Supplementary planning guidance is missing; or if the area in question has a particular historic or environmental value; or in the cases in which the aim is to promote the development of the area through clear guidelines and design criteria when high quality proposals have not been submitted (if this was the case, the Design brief could delay the implementation of the project, reducing the effectiveness of the planning process).

Hill Street corner site
Station Road town centre Site
Appendix A

Part one describes the role and the functions that Design briefs can carry out within local planning. Design briefs define with more detail the elements characterising the visual and three-dimensional layout of the project to be developed in an area or part of city. In order to be more effective, they should be part of the Local plan since they provide details about specific locations. In plan preparatory stages they could be moreover used as substitute tools (and in some way preliminary), aiming at the protection of vulnerable areas, and then be included in the final version of the Local plan. The capacity of controlling the project's definition and implementation process depends first of all on the position of Design briefs (**Fig. 4**). The earlier they are published and the more they deal with specific physical conditions and economic development potentials of the site, the clearer the process gets and the higher the probability to achieve good results is.

Part two of the guide describes the different types of Design briefs and their main contents: site analysis and design principles.

The decision to adopt this type of tool and the choice of their contents should first of all originate from the evaluation of the requirements posed by the different actors involved in the development process (owners, architects, public contractors, administrators) and of the information they need to implement the process (analytical data, objectives and design control criteria). Both the choice of the type of Brief and the possibility to use also other Planning guidance depend on this complex set of factors and on the scale of the development (**Fig. 5**).

As far as the editing of Design briefs is concerned, the manual suggests a three-part structure corresponding to a series of operations which identify site-specific procedures and control tools deriving from the interpretation and recognition of the location's features (Analysis, Objectives, Controls) (**Fig. 6, 7**).

However, the definition of guidance rules must undergo a "testing" phase. Once they are outlined, they have to be tested by translating them into drawings and models to assess their results, or by simulating project solutions which, not considering such guidances, reveal possible defects. Only at the end of this testing phase will the guidances finally be translated into rules.

Part three contains examples of different Design briefs set down following the aforesaid method and the principles. Due to the lack of available studies, the choice of the authors is that of preparing ad hoc fictitious examples applied to different real contexts. In this way the manual's contents meet many purposes: on one hand, it describes its possible applications, on the other it prepares a preliminary investigation of the problems and gaps that local planning has to face, providing at the same time specific guidelines for the drafting of site-specific Design briefs (**Fig. 8-14**).

As John Punter points out in the "Introduction" to the on-line edition, even this manual is still "strongly locked into the townscape tradition and its analysis of site and context was largely visual", evidencing the will to preserve local characters and avoid the introduction with the project of breaks and marked differences. The attention is put on "morphology", "grain" of fabrics, "dimensions for frontages", "overall building envelope", while guidance on "forms and design details" are less prescriptive. There lacks a more detailed study on "pedestrian circulation" issues, on the organisation of activities to be developed on ground floors livening up street space, on the interconnections between different public spaces. These issues are acquiring (or at least they should) a growing weight in the recent production of Design briefs, where townscape analysis is integrated with the analysis of function, activities and social uses of the public realm. "Techniques of space syntax might be married with pedestrian flow analysis on larger complex sites, with behavioural analyses of space and street use. Even the smallest sites have to consider energy efficiency and resource use, and often biodiversity and environmental capital". Such

factors, stresses Punter, should be included in the sustainability evaluation of each project elaborated for the area subject to a Brief.

3.6. Site-specific Guides. Leicester City Council, *St. Georges, Leicester*: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework, 2001[31]

If the text previously described still belongs to a more traditional set of guidance tools providing guidelines and direct aid in design implementation, the guide for the regeneration of an area in Leicester undergoing strong transformation pressures is the result of a more recent experimentation phase (**Fig. 1, 2**).

"This document provides an urban design and planning framework for the St. George's area of Leicester. The framework is not a master plan. It is a vehicle for facilitating and promoting the regeneration of St. George's as an attractive place to live, work and visit" ("Introduction", Leicester City Council 2001).

The **first introductory part** lists the general objectives of the guide:

- to provide "both a 'vision' for the area and specific guidance for key sites;
- [to] promote a mix of land uses at an appropriate density to ensure vitality and sense of place;
- [to] identify opportunities for future development and investment including retail, residential, leisure and employment uses;
- [to] identify potential environmental improvements and the creation of new public spaces;
- [to] identify potential for and means of securing improved pedestrian access and re-unite St George's with the city centre;
- [to] maintain and enhance the historic character of the area;
- [to] consider the potential phasing and timescale implications of proposed new development" (*Ibid.*)

The guide's structure is particularly rich and complex:

1. Introduction
    1.1. St. George's Strategic Area Framework
    1.2 Purpose of Guidance
    1.3 Structure and Content of Guidance
2. Description and Analysis
    2.1 Location and boundaries
    2.2 Sub Areas
    2.3 City Centre Context and Influences
    2.4 History
    2.5. Current Uses and Ownership Pattern
    2.6 Townscape Qualities
    2.7 Existing Movement
    2.8 Environment
3. Planning contex
    3.1 City of Leicester Local Plan (CLLP)
    3.2 Other Policies
    3.3 The Cultural Strategy
4. Vision and Aims
5. Guiding Principles
    5.1 Uses
    5.2 Access & Movement
    5.3 Urban Design
6. Public Realm
    6.1 Enhancement of Existing Routes
    6.2 Public Spaces
7. Section 106 Planning Obligation Requirements
8. Affordable Housing
9. Compulsory Purchase Orders
10. Consultation
11. Development Opportunities
    11.1 St George's South [S.W.O.T. Analysis, opportunities, key outputs]
    11.2 St George's North [S.W.O.T. Analysis, opportunities, key outputs]
    11.3 St George's East [S.W.O.T. Analysis, opportunities, key outputs]
12. Implementation
13. Contacts
Appendix 1: Listed Buildings

---

[31] The text is posted on: www.rudi.net.

Part two of the document provides a descriptive framework of the area, which explains the internal organisation of parts defined on the basis of specific characters. The reading of functional and mobility aspects, of ownership, historical, morphological and environmental patterns is oriented to defining enhancement opportunities and is accompanied by outlines which interpret relations inside and outside that city area (**Fig. 3, 4**). This aspect is particularly evident in the reading of the "Townsacpe qualities", arising from the reinterpretation of the most traditional Townscape categories (urban grain and pedestrian permeability, scale, built form, details and materials, legibility, gateways, strategic views, open spaces). This analysis is summarised in diagrams, where graphic image and text display potentialities and elements characterising the area from a morphological and perceptive standpoint (**Fig. 5**).

Part three collects a different analysis. Descriptions deal with what is a real preliminary investigation of the guidances concerning the area elaborated within urban planning tools in force (Local plan), conservation and transformation policies (Conservation Area, City Centre Action Programme), public and private economic investments, strategies the administration plan to develop for the creation of new cultural centralities. **Parts from seven to ten** go into details about issues linked to implementation procedures (drawing up of agreements between public and private parties, compulsory purchase powers, consultation procedures, etc.)

Part four closes the first descriptive section, explaining the regeneration objectives ("Vison and aims"). These objectives, expressed only in verbal terms, are a result of the analyses carried out and are expressed in guideline criteria for future developments (quality, place, ease of movement, mixed use, activity, sustainability). Despite their general character, they start to shape possible design operations. They are visions because they purposely offer a vague outline in order to leave room to the actor's proposals and action strategies linked to the urban site's physical and functional layout.

This set of guidelines is further specified in **part five**, describing "Guiding principles" (once again only in verbal form) for the spatial and functional definition of undertakings. First of all, the zoning of the Local plan is partially reinterpreted, with the aim to identify compatibility criteria between different uses. This part also provides, as performance requirements, guidance regarding access and movement system, aimed at making the network of vehicle and pedestrian routes and public transport lines safer and more effective. But there are also urban design guidances, which should grant the quality of future developments: "All applications for large scale development will be expected to include a statement setting out the urban design approach adopted and explaining how proposals relate to the following urban design principles" ("Urban Design", *Ibid.*).

These directives provide indications similar to those contained in some of the texts analysed before and thus further explain visions and objectives with reference to urban design issues: quality, place, vitality, sustainability. Actually these directions do not express proper design principles; however the form of 'directive' enables to acquire either the function of stimulating proposals consistent with the proposed objectives and the role of general criteria for assessing whether these proposals are acceptable.

Within this reasoning which develops following further steps going deep into the subject, there clearly emerges the priority assigned to developments regarding public open spaces, taken as driving forces to launch broader regeneration trends. **Part six** provides more specific design guidance on some streets, squares and widenings in the quarter (**Fig. 6**).

If on one hand the first sections identify objectives and general criteria, establishing a first set of rules to be followed by any project involving St. George area, on the other **parts eleven and twelve** deal with the construction of a clearer spatial strategy. A strategy which, despite being only an advice, can guide the actors involved in the enhancement and reorganisation of the quarter (**Fig. 7**). The tool in question for the elaboration of guidances involving the three parts of the area is the S.W.O.T. Analysis (Strengths,

Opportunities, Weaknesses, Threats)[32]. Opportunities and strengths, weaknesses and threats are described for each part. The aim is always to "identify opportunities for investment; provide detailed development guidance in the form of annotated plans and sketches; demonstrate the development potential of key sites; identify opportunities for environmental improvements, route enhancements and new public spaces; provide models of 'fine-grained' mixed-use development that demonstrate how different uses can be successfully integrated" ("Development opportunities", *Ibid.*).

The interest of this experience lies in the fact that strategic development factors – opportunities and strengths – are not presented only in the form of written statements, but refer to specific spatial sites. For each site, the definition of strategies and the identification of procedures to achieve them goes side by side with the aim to enhance as much as possible the local spatial, settlement, historic and environmental resources. For this purpose the detailed preliminary investigation on the conditions of each area (carried out considering dimensions, quantities, functions, ownership pattern, actors involved and implementation time) come along with detailed descriptions on the current physical and functional characters and schemes showing a possible future spatial layout (**Fig. 8-11)**.

---

[32] Swot analysis originally derives from marketing; it is a matrix for the technical evaluation of the position on the market of enterprises and their development opportunities. Recently this method has been applied to strategic planning, as an aid to programming and decision-making. Often, however, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats translate into general advices for the formulation of abstract policies which are still far from the real spatial conditions they will have to work in. The explanation of such procedure within strategic planning models is in (Pavesio 1998), a study carried out for the Turin Strategic Plan, 1998-2000.

4. Bibliography

Planning tools in England (and general references)

Comune di Milano, Assessorato allo Sviluppo del Territorio
2001   *Ricostruire la Grande Milano. Strategie, politiche, regole. Documento di Inquadramento delle politiche urbanistiche comunali*, Il Sole 24 Ore, Milano

Cullingworth, Barry J.; Nadin, Vincent
1997   *Town & Country Planning in the UK*, Routledge, London

Curti, Fausto; Gibelli, Maria Cristina (a cura di)
1996   *Pianificazione strategica e gestioni dello sviluppo urbano*, Alinea, Firenze

Gibelli, Maria Cristina
1996   "Tre famiglie di piani strategici: verso un modello 'reticolare' e 'visionario'", in (Curti, Gibelli, a cura di, 1996)

Healey, Patsy; McNamara, Paul; Elson, Martin; Doak, Andrew
1988   *Land use planning and the mediation of urban change. The british planning system in practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Loew, Sebastian
2002   "I sistemi di pianificazione urbanistica in Francia e in Inghilterra: un'analisi comparativa rispetto al tema della riqualificazione urbana", *Territorio*, n. 20

Pavesio, Raffaella
1998   "Città con piani strategici in Europa", in (Torino Internazionale 1998)

Poleggi, Giovanni
2000   "Verso un rinascimento urbano: le politiche inglesi per la riqualificazione urbana nel contesto europeo", *Territorio,* n. 14

Pomilio Filomena
2001   *Il piano territoriale strategico: una rassegna di articoli pubblicati sulla rivista Town Planning Review (1968-2000)*, pubblicato al sito www.planum. net

Simmons, Martin
1996   "Il rapporto tra Regional guidance e Development plan nel sistema britannico. Il caso di Londra", in (Curti, Gibelli, a cura di, 1996)

Torino Internazionale
1998   *I dati fondamentali. Informazioni sintetiche di base per la costruzione del piano*, Torino

Urban design and design control

s.a. [w.a.]
1999   "Making Urban Design Deliver Good Places", *Urban Environment Today*, n. 70, 13 may

AA.VV.
1989   *Prince Charles and the Architectural Debate*, Academy, London
1994a   "Special Issue: Design Research and Planning Practice", *Planning Practice and Research*, vol. 9, n. 3
1994b   Section "Urban Design Briefing", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 51

Carmona, Matthew
1996a   "Controlling Urban Design – Part 1: A Possible Renaissance?", *Journal of Urban Design*, vol. 1, n. 1
1996b   "Controlling Urban Design – Part 2: Realizing the Potential", *Journal of Urban Design*, vol. 1, n. 1
1998   "Urbn design and planning practice", in (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998)
1999a   "Innovation in the control of residential design: what lessons for wider practice?", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 70, n. 4
1999b   "Residential Design Policy and Guidance: Content, Analytical Basis, Prescription and Regional Emphasis", *Planning Practice & Research*, vol. 14, n. 1
2000   "Urban Design - By Design", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 76
2001a   "The White Paper. A New Vision for Urban Living?", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 77
2001b   *Housing Design Quality*, Spon Press, London

Cullen, Gordon

1961   *Townscape*, The Architectural Press, London (tr. it. *Il paesaggio urbano. Morfologia e progettazione*, Calderini, Bologna, 1976)

Di Biagi, Paola (a cura di)
2002   *I classici dell'urbanistica moderna*, Donzelli Editore, Roma

Donovan, J.; Larkham, Peter J.
1996   "Rethinking Design Guidance", *Planning Practice and Research*, vol. 11, n. 3

Falk, Nicolas,
1995   "UK waterside development", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 55

Farinella, Romeo
2003   "I criteri d'intervento: le guide e i manuali di progettazione nell'esperienza britannica", in (Pini, a cura di, 2003)

Goodey, Brian
1998   "The Essex Design Guide revisited", *Town and Country Planning*, vol. 67, n. 5, june

Greed, Clara
1998   "Definitions and perceptions of urban design", in (Greed, Roberts, eds. 1998)

Greed, Clara; Roberts, Marion (eds.)
1998   *Introducing Urban Design*, Longman, London

Howard, Ebenezer
1902,   *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, Faber & Faber, London (tr. it. *La città giardino del futuro*, Calderini, Bologna, 1972)

HRH, The Prince of Wales
1989   *A Vision of Britain: A personal View of Architecture*, Doubleday, London

Jenks, Charles
1988   *The Prince, the Architects and the New Wave Monarchy*, Academy, London

Lynch, Kevin
1960   *The image of the city*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachussetts-London (tr. it. *L'immagine della città*, Marsilio, Venezia, 1964)
1981   *A theory of Good City Form*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachussetts (tr. it. *Progettare la città. La qualità della forma urbana*, Etaslibri, Torino, 1996)
1984   *Site Planning*, Third Edition, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachussetts-London

Marchigiani, Elena
2002   "Gordon Cullen, *Townscape,* 1961. I molteplici paesaggi della percezione", in (Di Biagi, a cura di, 2002)

Mattogno, Claudia
2003   "Peculiarità e convergenze nei sistemi di pianificazione europei", *Urbanistica Dossier*, giugno

Nucci, Lucia
2003   "Il rinascimento urbano nell'area metropolitana di Londra", *Urbanistica Dossier*, giugno

Pini, Daniele (a cura di)
2003   *La sicurezza come indicatore per la qualità degli spazi urbani*, Alinea, Firenze (in corso di pubblicazione)

Punter, John
1986   "A history of aesthetic control: Part I, 1909-1953: the control of the external appearanceof development in England and Wales", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 57, n. 4
1987   "A history of aesthetic control: Part II, 1953-1985: the control of the external appearanceof development in England and Wales", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 58, n. 1
1994   "Design Control in England", *Built Environment*, vol. 20, n. 2
1996   "Developments in Urban Design Review: the Lessons of West Coast Cities of the United States for British Practice", *Journal of Urban Design*, vol. 1, n. 1

Punter, John; Bell, Andrew
1999   "The role of policy in design appeals", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 70, n. 2

Punter, John; Carmona, Matthew
1996   "Design policies in English local plans: the search for substantive principles and appropriate procedures", *Urban Design International*, vol. 1, n. 2

11

1997   *The Design Dimension of Planning*, E & FN Spon, London

Punter, John; Carmona, Matthew; Platts, Adam
1994   "Design Policies in Development Plans", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 51

Rowland, John
1995   "The Urban Design Process", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 56

Shaw, Keith; Robinson, Fred
1998   "Learning from experience? Reflections on two decades of British Urban Policy", *Town Planning Review*, vol. 69, n. 1

Sparks, Lee
1994   "The role of briefing in urban regeneration", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 51

Stones, Alan
1997   "The New Essex Design Guide", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 62

Tibbalds, Francis
1988   "Ten Commandments of Urban Design", *The Planner*, vol. 74, n. 12

Tollit, Penelope; Tollit, Michael
1998   "The 'New' Essex Design Guide?", *Urban Design Quarterly*, n. 67

Unwin, Raymond
1909   *Town Planning in Practice*, Benn, London (tr. it. *La pratica della progettazione urbana*, Il Saggiatore, Milano, 1971)

Vignozzi, Alessandro
1997   *Urbanistica e qualità estetica. La lezione della Gran Bretagna*, Angeli, Milano

Planning Policy Guidance Notes and ministerial documents dealing with urban design. Planning Guidelines

Conservation & Design Service, Development Department of Nottingham City Council
1998   *Community Safety in Residential Areas*, Nottingham

Detr (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions)
1998a   *Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice*
1998b   *Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice*
1998c   *Places, Streets & Movement. A Companion Guide to Design Bulletin 32. Residential Roads and Footpaths*
1999   PPG 12 (Planning Policy Guidance Note), *Development plans*
2000a   *Our Towns and Cities: The Future. Delivering an Urban Renaissance*
2000b   PPG3 (Planning Policy Guidance Note), *Housing*

Detr (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions), Cabe (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment)
2000   *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice*

Doe (Department of the Environment)
1992   PPG1 (Planning Policy Guidance Note), *General Policies and Principles*
1994   *Quality in Town and Country. A Discussion Document*
1995a   *Consultation Paper. Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (Revised): Town Centres and Retail Development*
1995b   *Quality in Town and Country Planning. Urban Design Campaign*
1997   PPG1 (Planning Policy Guidance Note), *General Policies and Principles*

Dopde (Department of Planning, Development and Environment, City of Stoke in Trent)
1999   *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development*

Dtlr (Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions) and Llewelyn-Davies, Alan Baxter & Associates
2001   *Better Places to Live by Design: a companion guide to PPG3*

English Partnerships, The Housing Corporation
2000   *Urban Design Compendium*, Llewelyn-Davies, London

Epoa (Essex Planning Officers Association)
1997   *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas,* Essex County Council

Percy Johnson - Marshall & Associates
1978   *Design Briefing in Towns*, Urban Design Unit of the Scottish Development Department, Edinburgh

Kent Association of Local Authorities
2000   *Kent Design: a guide to sustainable development*

Leeds City Council, Department of Planning Environment, Environmental Design Group
2000   *Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy*

Leicester City Council
2001   *St.Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework*

New Forest District Council
1998   *Design for Community Safety*, New Forest

Urban Task Force
1999   *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, E & FN Spon, London

Links

Her Majesty's Stationary Office: **www.hmso.gov.uk**
On this site one can find the texts of British legislation, such as the *Town and Country Planning Act*, 1990 (**www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1990/Ukpga_19900008_en_1.htm**)

English Partnerhip: **www.englishpartnerships.co.uk**

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: **www.odpm.gov.uk**
It refers to competences previously in charge of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (Detr) and of the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Dtlr).
On this site one can also find the links to the ministerial guide edited by Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice*, 2000, and to other planning guides and manuals, research reports and Planning Policy Guidance Notes. Among the others: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, *Our Towns and Cities: The Future. Delivering an Urban Renaissance*, 2000 (**www.odpm.gov.uk - Planning - Planning guidance and advice**) (**www.odpm.gov.uk - Urban policy**).

Kent Association of Local Authorities, *Kent Design: a guide to sustainable development*, 2000: **www.kent.gov.uk/kent_design/**

Rudi (Resource of Urban Design Information): **www.rudi.net**
On this site one can also find the links to the reviews *Urban Design Quarterly* and *Urban Design Today* and to the texts of many planning guides and manuals: Condervation & Design Service, Development Department of Nottingham City Council, *Community Safety in Residential Areas*, 1998; Essex Planning Officers Association, *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas*, Essex County Council, 1997 (abstract); Percy Johnson - Marshall & Associates, *Design Briefing in Towns*, Urban Design Unit of the Scottish Development Department, Edinburgh, 1978; Kent Association of Local Authorities, *Kent Design: a guide to sustainable development*, 2000; Leeds City Council, Department of Planning Environment, Environmental Design Group, Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy, 2000; 1998; Leicester City Council, *St.Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework*, 2001; New Forest District Council, *Design for Community Safety*, 1998.

Urban Design Alliance: **www.udal.org.uk**

Urban Design Group: **www.udg.org.uk**

5. List of figures

Part one.
A recent resurgence of interest in urban form and urban design issues

1.1. The Blair Government "Urban Renaissance" proposals

1. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Cover* – Frontespizio (Urban Task Force 1999)
2. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. The urban structure of dispersed cities* – La struttura urbana delle città diffuse (*Ibid.*, p. 52)
3. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Networks that link together residential areas to public open spaces and natural green corridors* – Reti di connessione tra aree residenziali, spazi aperti pubblici e corridoi verdi naturali (*Ibid.*, p. 58)
4. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. The urban structure of compact cities* – La struttura urbana delle città compatte (*Ibid.*, p. 53)
5. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Mixing uses. Relationships between density and urban form* – Relazioni tra densità e forma urbana (*Ibid.*, p. 62)
6. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Mixing uses. Cross-section through a residential discrict* – Sezione trasversale di un quartiere residenziale (*Ibid.*, p. 63)
7. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Models of urban capacity. Relationships between density, local facilities, public transport network* – Modelli di capacità urbana. Relazioni tra densità, attrezzature locali, reti di trasporto pubblico (*Ibid.*, p. 61)
8. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. The key components of a mixed-used and integrated urban neighbourhood* – Le componenti chiave di un nucleo urbano di vicinato multifunzionale e integrato (*Ibid.*, p. 66)
9. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Spatial masterplanning. Checklist of design issues* – Elenco di temi di progetto (*Ibid.*, p. 74)
10. *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Multidisciplinarity. The Spatial masterplanning process* – Multidisciplinarità. Il processo per la costruzione di uno Spatial masterplan (*Ibid.*, p. 76)

1.2. The debate on urban design issues and the proposals of the Urban Design Group

1. *Urban design considerations and components* – Aspetti e componenti dell'urban design (AA.VV. 1994a, p. 183)
2. *Urban Design Group "Manifesto"* – Il "Manifesto" dell'Urban Design Group (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998, p. 8)
3. Liverpool, Bold Street. *One of the survey layers of the Urban Design Audit* – Un livello di analisi dell'Urban Design Audit (Rowland 1995)
4. Brentford, West London. *Concept and objectives, opportunities for the enhancement of the riverfront* – Concept e obiettivi, opportunità per la riqualificazione del lungofiume (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998, p. 28)
5. Portland (Oregon). *Central City design review. Goals and objectives* – Revisione del progetto per il centro città. Intenti e obiettivi (Rowland 1995) (Punter 1996)
6. Glasgow. *Urban design framework* (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998, p. 58)
7. Birmingham, Jewellery Quarter. *City Centre Design Strategy. Townscape relations and opportunities* – City Centre Design Strategy. Relazioni tra gli spazi urbani e opportunità (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998, p. 30)
8. Portland (Oregon). *Urban design concept for the Downtown area* – Urban design concept per l'area della Downtown (Rowland 1995)
9. South Bridgewater. *Urban design strategy* (Carmona 2001b, p. 322)
10. Brentford, West London. *Urban design framework for the enhancement of the riverfront* – Urban design framework per la riqualificazione del lungofiume (Greed, Roberts, eds., 1998, p. 28)
11. Bristol Harbourside. *Ideas showing how the area could be developed in accordance with the Planning brief* – Idee di come l'area potrebbe essere sviluppata in accordo con il Planning brief (Falk 1955)
12. Cardiff Bay. *Concept* (Falk 1955)
13. Greenwich Site, London. *Vision* (Rowland 1955)
14. Roath Basin, Cardiff Bay. *Design guidelines* (Rowlands 1995)

Part two.
Planning tools
14

2.1. Programming and Land use planning

1. *The planning policy framework in England* – Il quadro della pianificazione in Inghilterra (Cullingworth, Nadin 1997, p. 80)

2.2. Design control process

1. *The hierarchy of design guidance* – La gerarchia degli strumenti di design guidance (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 318)
2. *The hierarchy of design guidance* – La gerarchia degli strumenti di design guidance (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 319)
3. *The hierarchy of design guidance* – La gerarchia degli strumenti di design guidance (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 320)
4. *Items structuring urban design* – Tematiche strutturanti l'urban design (Carmona 1996a; Carmona 1998, p. 49)
5. *Urban design agenda* (Carmona 2001b, p. 282)
6. *The shifting bases of urban/environmental design* – I cambiamenti nelle tematiche fondative dell'urban/environmental design (Punter, Carmona 1996)
7. *Diagram of the relationships between development and design control process* – Diagramma delle relazioni tra design control process e attuazione del progetto (Shaw, Robinson 1998)
8. *Generating design policies: key elements* – La costruzione di design policies: elementi chiave (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 94)
9. *Structure for appraisal* – Struttura della valutazione (Carmona 1998, p. 51)
10. *Method for policy writing* – Metodo per la redazione di politiche urbanistiche (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 85)
11. *The procedures of design control* – Le procedure di design control (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 84)
12. *Local circumstances and their influence on design control* – Circostanze locali e loro influenza sul design control (Carmona 2001b, p. 7)
13. *A 'powergram' for urban design* – Un 'diagramma dei poteri' per l'urban design (Punter, Carmona 1997, p. 86).

Part three.
Planning guidelines

3.2. Ministerial Guides. Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice, 2000

1. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Second cover* – Controcopertina (Detr, Cabe 2000)
2. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. A picture* – Un'immagine (*Ibid.*, p. 6)
3. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Objectives of urban design and aspects of development form* – Obiettivi dell'urban design e aspetti dell'assetto formale (*Ibid.*, p. 15, 16)
4. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Character* – Carattere (*Ibid.*, p. 20)
5. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Continuity and enclosure* – Continuità e chiusura (*Ibid.*, p. 22)
6. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Quality of the public realm* – Qualità dello spazio pubblico (*Ibid.*, p. 25)
7. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Ease of movement* – Facilità di movimento (*Ibid.*, p. 27)
8. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Adaptability* – Flessibilità (*Ibid.*, p. 30)
9. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Diversity* – Differenziazione (*Ibid.*, p. 31)
10. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Thinking Machine* (s.a. 1999)
11. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Identifying constraints and opportunities* – Individuazione di vincoli e opportunità (*Ibid.*, p. 40)
12. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. An urban design vision in the Development plan* – Un'immagine progettuale nel Development plan (*Ibid.*, p. 43)

13. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Preparing an Urban design framework* – La preparazione di un Urban design framework (*Ibid.*, p. 51)
14. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Preparing a Development brief* – La preparazione di un Development brief (*Ibid.*, p. 56)
15. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Preparing a Design guide* – La preparazione di una Design guide (*Ibid.*, p. 60)
16. *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: towards Better Practice. Pre-application design statements* – La presentazione di progetti preliminari (Detr, Cabe 2000, p. 64)

3.3. County Guides. Essex Planning Officers Association, The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas*, 1997*

1. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Cover* – Copertina (Epoa 1997)
2. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Second cover* – Controcopertina (*Ibid.*)
3. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Spectrum of visual density* – Gamma della densità visiva (*Ibid.*, p. 6-7)
4. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Site appraisal* – Lettura del sito (*Ibid.*, p. 6-7)
5. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Permeability and legibility of layout* – Permeabilità e leggibilità della struttura insediativa ("Criteria for development sites larger than 1 hectare", *Ibid.*, p. 11)
6. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Arcadia, Boulevard planning* ("Criteria for layout at densities below 20 dwellings per hectare", *Ibid.*, p. 18)
7. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Pedestrian scale* – La scala del pedone ("Criteria for the creation of urban space at densities over 20 dwellings/hectare", *Ibid.*, p. 21)
8. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Relationships of house to road* – Relazioni tra casa e strada ("Criteria for placing buildings at densities over 20 dwellings/hectare", *Ibid.*, p. 28)
9. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Solid and void* – Pieno e vuoto ("Building form", *Ibid.*, p. 43)
10. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Modelling* – Andamento volumetrico ("Building form", *Ibid.*, p. 45)
11. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Appropriate use of materials, appropriate detailing for the materials used* – Uso appropriato dei materiali e dei relativi dettagli costruttivi ("Building form", *Ibid.*, p. 47-48)
12. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Vehicular movement* – Movimento veicolare ("Service and Access", *Ibid.*, p. 55)
13. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Road types* – Tipologie di strada ("Service and Access", *Ibid.*, p. 57-59)
14. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Location of case studies* – Localizzazione dei casi studio ("Case studies", *Ibid.*, p. 81)
15. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Large development comprising case studies* – Insediamento di gandi dimensioni comprendente i casi studio ("Case studies", *Ibid.*, p. 80)
16. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Case study* – Caso studio ("Case studies", *Ibid.*, p. 83)
17. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Example of unsatisfactory solution* – Esempio di soluzione insoddisfacente ("Case studies", *Ibid.*, p. 85)
18. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Case study* – Caso studio ("Case studies", *Ibid.*, p. 93)
19. *The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas. Case study* – Caso studio ("Case studies", *Ibid.*, p. 97)

3.4. City Guides. Department of Planning, Development and Environment, City of Stoke on Trent, Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development*, 1999*

1. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Cover* – Copertina (Dopde 1999)
2. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. A picture* – Un'immagine ("2. Detailed Guidance. Urban Design", *Ibid.*)
3. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. A picture* – Un'immagine ("2. Detailed Guidance. Context and Local Distinctiveness", *Ibid.*)

16

4. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Appendix A. Layout* – Organizzazione ("Appendix A. Urban structure", *extract* – estratto, *Ibid.*)

5. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Appendix A. The Image of the City. Legibility* – L'immagine della città. Leggibilità ("Appendix A. Urban Character and Legibility", *extract* – estratto, *Ibid.*)

6. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Appendix A. Permeability* – Permeabilità ("Appendix A. Movement Through the Urban Environment - Permeability", *extract* – estratto, *Ibid.*)

7. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Appendix B. Strengths and opportunities for improving the quality of the built environment* – Punti di forza e opportunità per il miglioramento della qualità dell'ambiente costruito ("Appendix B. Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats", *Ibid.*)

8. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Appendix B. Weaknesses and threats to the quality of the built environment* – Punti di debolezza e rischi per la qualità dell'ambiente costruito ("Appendix B. Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats", *Ibid.*)

9. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Design Policy. Urban Design* – Progetto urbano ("1. Design Policy. DP2 Urban Design", *extract* – estratto, *Ibid.*)

10. *Design Strategy for the Built Environment. Policy and Guidance for the Design of New Development. Detailed Guidance. Urban Design* – Progetto urbano ("2. Detailed Guidance. 2.2. DP2 Urban Design", *extract* – estratto, *Ibid.*)

3.5. Site-specific Guides. Percy Johnson - Marshall & Associates, Design Briefing in Towns, 1978

1. *Design Briefing in Towns.* Copertina – *Cover* (Johnson – Marshall & Assiociates 1978)

2. *Design Briefing in Towns. A Picture* – Un'Immagine ("3. Working examples. Inverderran", Fig. 3/35, *Ibid.*)

3. *Design Briefing in Towns. A Picture* – Un'Immagine ("3. Working examples. Inverderran", Fig. 3/41, *Ibid.*)

4. *Design Briefing in Towns. Stages of the design process at which a Design brief may intervene* – Fasi del processo progettuale in cui può intervenire un Design brief ("1. The working context. How Briefs Interact With The Development Process", Fig. 1/1, *Ibid.*)

5. *Design Briefing in Towns. Types of requirements that different actors may have for information in a brief* – Tipi di informazioni richieste da diversi attori a un Design brief ("2. The preparation of Design briefs. The decision to prepare a Brief", Fig. 2.1, *Ibid.*)

6. *Design Briefing in Towns. Historical stages in development of gap sites and limits of future growth* – Fasi del processo storico di costruzione interna al lotto e limitazioni alla crescita futura ("2. The preparation of Design briefs. Identifying frameworks", Fig. 2.5, *Ibid.*)

7. *Design Briefing in Towns. Study of urban skyline* – Studio dello skyline urbano ("2. The preparation of Design briefs. Skylines", Fig. 2.6, *Ibid.*)

8. *Design Briefing in Towns. Dundron: West Port block site. Analysis of primary characteristics of the urban design context* – Analisi delle principali caratteristiche del contesto di progettazione ("3. Worked examples. Dundron: the West Port block site", Fig. 3/2, 3/3, 2/3, *Ibid.*)

9. *Design Briefing in Towns. Dundron: West Port block site. Urban design objectives* – Obiettivi di progetto ("3. Worked examples. Dundron: the West Port block site", Fig. 3/4, 2/3, *Ibid.*)

10. *Design Briefing in Towns. Dundron: West Port block site. Two and three dimensional framework controls* – Norme di assetto planimetrico e volumetrico ("3. Worked examples. Dundron: the West Port block site", Fig. 3/5, *Ibid.*)

11. *Design Briefing in Towns. Dundron: West Port block site. Two and three dimensional framework controls* – Norme di assetto planimetrico e volumetrico ("3. Worked examples. Dundron: the West Port block site", Fig. 3/6, *Ibid.*)

12. *Design Briefing in Towns. Corbiehill: Conservation Area. Analysis of primary characteristics of the urban design context* – Analisi delle principali caratteristiche del contesto di progettazione ("3. Worked examples. Corbiehill Conservation Area Design brief", Fig. 3/13, 3/14, 2/3, *Ibid.*)

13. *Design Briefing in Towns. Corbiehill: Conservation Area. Urban design objectives* – Obiettivi di progetto ("3. Worked examples. Corbiehill Conservation Area Design brief", Fig. 3/15, 2/3, *Ibid.*)

14. *Design Briefing in Towns. Corbiehill: Conservation Area. Tables for the execution of extensions and roofs, doors and windows, openings of garages and stores* – Abachi relativi all'esecuzione di sopraelevazioni e tetti, porte e finestre, aperture di garage e negozi ("3. Worked examples. Corbiehill Conservation Area Design brief", Fig. 3/17-3/30, *Ibid.*) (*unsatisfactory examples are marked with a cross* – gli esempi negativi sono contrassegnati da una croce)

3.6. Site-specific Guides. Leicester City Council, St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework, 2001

1. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. Cover* – Copertina (Leicester City Council 2001)
2. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. A picture* – Un'immagine ("2. Description and Analysis. 2.1. Location and boundaries", Diagr. 1, *Ibid.*)
3. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. City centre influences* – Relazioni con il centro città ("2. Description and Analysis. 2.3. City Centre Context and Infuences", Diagr. 2, *Ibid.*)
4. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. Existing movement* – Circolazione esistente ("2. Description and Analysis. 2.7. Existing Movement", Diagr. 6, *Ibid.*)
5. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. Site Analysis: Legibility, views, vistas and gateways* – Analisi del sito: leggibilità, punti di vista, vedute, accessi ("2. Description and Analysis. 2.6. Townscape Qualities", Diagr. 5, *Ibid.*)
6. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. Public reaml plan* – Il piano degli spazi pubblici ("6. Public Realm", Diagr. 11, *Ibid.*)
7. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. Development opportunities: indicative illustration* – Opportunità di sviluppo: immagine indicativa ("11. Development Opportunities", Sketch, *Ibid.*)
8. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. St.George's South. Area analysis* – Analisi dell'area ("11. Development Opportunities. St.George's South: S.W.O.T Analysis", Diagr. 13, *Ibid.*)
9. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. St.George's South. St.George's street and church. Sketch indicating how the urban design principles may be implemented* – Schizzo indicativo dell'applicazione dei principi di progettazione urbana ("11. Development Opportunities. 11.1 St.George's South", Site 2, Sketch, *Ibid.*)
10. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. St.George's South. Nichols street. Sketch indicating how the urban design principles may be implemented* – Schizzo indicativo dell'applicazione dei principi di progettazione urbana ("11. Development Opportunities. 11.1 St.George's South", Site 12, Sketch, *Ibid.*)
11. *St. Georges, Leicester: Strategic Regeneration Area Framework. St.George's South. Queen Street. Sketch indicating how the urban design principles may be implemented* – Schizzo indicativo dell'applicazione dei principi di progettazione urbana ("11. Development Opportunities. 11.1 St.George's South", Site 3, Sketches, *Ibid.*)