

Gedling Borough Council – Design Code

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Aim of Design Code

- To set out clear requirements and guidance for the design of new residential development.
- Emphasis on practical and usable document
- To support DM officers in their decision making, without slowing time taken to determine planning applications
- Clarity for developers
- Clarity for local communities (timing helpful)
- Importance of viability (deliverability of sites)

Analysis of applications 2019 - 2023

- Majority of housing allocations in the Local Plan have planning permission.
- Within the last 5 years, only 2.3% of residential applications have been for housing development on large sites.
- As such, the focus of planning applications in the next few years will continue to be on small sites.



Analysis of refusals 2019 - 2023

(i) Small sites (1-9 dwellings):

77 out of 98 refusals were on design related grounds **(79%)**



(ii) Householder development (extensions/alterations):

141 out of 186 refusals were on design related grounds **(76%)**



Design Code Framework

- For ease of use, draft design code is structured into three separate documents:-
 - (i) Major Sites document (10+ dwelling)
 - (ii) Small sites document (1-9 dwellings)
 - (ii) Extensions and Alterations document
- Each document includes design 'requirements' (Design Principles) which are expressed either as 'musts' or 'should'.
- Each document includes on those Design Principles that are applicable to that site size.

Design Code Framework

The Design Code Framework is supported by two background documents:-

(iv) Core Document

- Outlines the content, purpose and structure of the Design Code Framework.
- Introduces the Vision and Themes (Characterful Gedling, Greener Gedling, Connected and Healthy Gedling)
- Coding plan to identify settlement types and area types, ie area of similar character

(v) Observation Library

- Contains background information to help users understand sites and their contexts. Includes a glossary of technical terms

Design Code Principles



Characterful Gedling Principles

- C1 - Development Patterns
- C2 - Characterful Homes: Design for new homes
- C3 - Densities
- C4 - Boundaries & Thresholds
- C5 - Materials



Greener Gedling Principles

- G1 - Topography
- G2 - Green & Blue Infrastructure
- G3 - Interfaces
- G4 - Micro-climate
- G5 - Low Carbon Homes
- G6 - Water
- G7 - Biodiversity & Ecology
- G8 - Open Space



Connected & Healthy Gedling Principles

- C+H1 - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- C+H2 - Legibility
- C+H3 - Liveable Homes
- C+H4 - Street Design
- C+H5 - Cycle Parking
- C+H6 - Car Parking
- C+H7 - Waste Storage & Collection

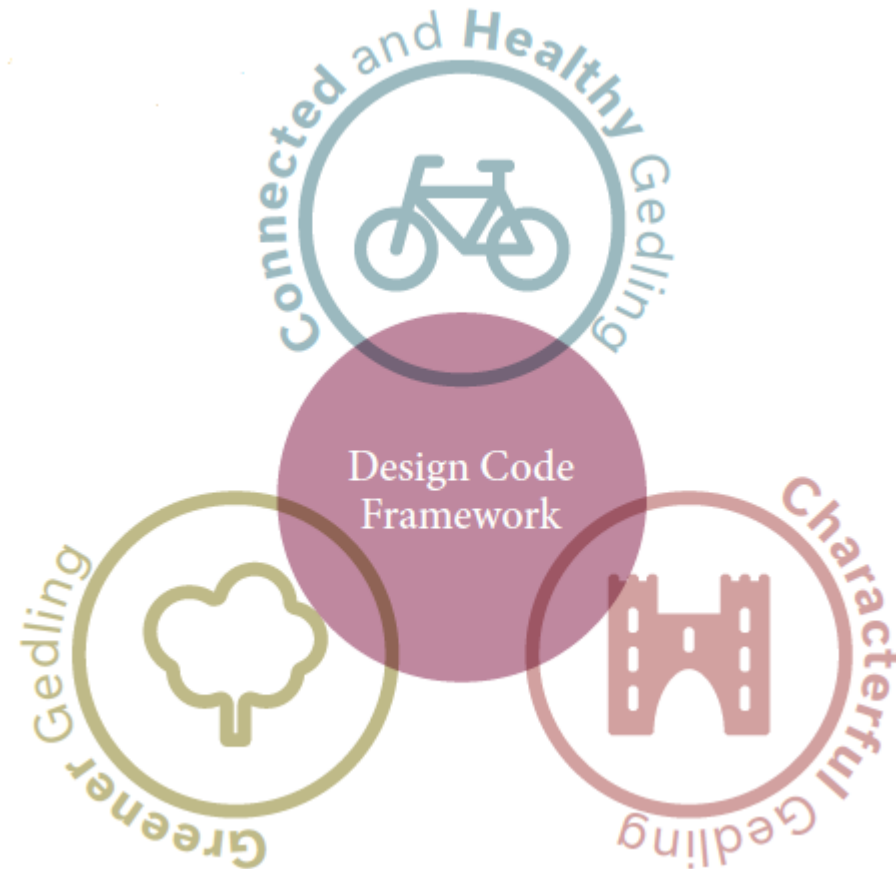


Figure 5: Relationship between the three themes and the Design Code Framework

Design Code Framework - scope

- Focuses solely on design matters, building on existing planning policy.
- Applicants will still need to refer to other SPDs/guidance, such as:-
 - Parking SPD
 - Notts Highway Design Guide
 - Low carbon planning guidance
 - Open space SPG
- Recognise that not everything can be coded (binary), needs to be a clear distinction between 'must' and 'should'.
- Two stage process
 - Observation stage, to show understand local area
 - Demonstrate that design requirements met (through checklist submitted as part of planning application)

Integration with DM process

- Involvement of DM officers
 - Two workshops with consultants
 - Identifying key issues in Borough
 - Discussion of character areas
 - Piloting (over 3 month period)
 - By Planning Policy initially (historic and current application)
 - By DM
 - Comments on draft code from design lead and head of department, at two key stages
- Workshop with Planning Committee
- Developer engagement
 - Ongoing updates via our active Developer Forum
 - Developer piloting of draft code

Issues raised through piloting process

- How to respond to previous development that conflicts with the Code?
- Overlooking - Code includes precise distances but key issue is whether the amenity of neighbours is harmed.
- Unacceptable level of outdoor amenity - Code includes reference to plot ratios and the need to protect the character of the local area
- Overshadowing – how to calculate the 45-degree test
- Materials and roof types – clarification of when match the main/original dwelling
- Use of check lists – to show how accord with design code (opportunity justify non-compliance)

Benefits of Design Code Framework

- Provides clarity to applicants before applications are submitted as to what is acceptable design.
- Useful tool for officers in discussions around design, thereby assisting in negotiations.
- Expecting a reduction in refusals on design grounds following adoption of the Design Code.
 - Since 2019, approx. 78% refusals were on design related grounds.
- May be a useful resource for residents to inform development that doesn't need planning permission.

Hoping to achieve improvements in design quality without impacting on delivery of new development or time taken to determine planning applications

Public Consultation and next steps

- Public consultation between 12th July and 23rd August.
- Workshop with key agents on 25th July
- Consideration of comments received. Key issues include:-
 - encouraging creativity, exemplar and innovative designs whilst reflecting distinctive character
 - Viability concerns of local materials and renewable or lower carbon technologies
 - tackling development under PD rights without following the design code
 - older spatial typologies/development patterns vs technical highway standards
- Adoption anticipated November 2024
- Consider presentation of Design Code on Council webpages
- Validation list will need updating