

## **CANF Full Forum – 6 Apr 2025**

### **Feedback from Forum members and guests on Design Codes first draft.**

There should be some standard design features across all individual design codes. The discussion on this was primarily focused on the environmental nature of the property design, incorporating elements such as:

- Solar panels (with an attached battery to make it viable option to heat/power the house)
- Not having a gas boiler as standard
- EV charging points
- Sufficient green spaces around the properties
- Sufficient 'family' etc space where applicable
- Future proof for accessibility needs in the building design/layout (so even if don't have some of the accessible features now, they could be easily adaptable to add them in the future)

Connected to the above environmental points it was suggested that there is some good practice examples of the environmentally friendly aspects of buildings which have been included in new builds to make them sympathetic to the current look of the buildings in the area – these can be found on the Woodlands Estate (see: [103562-Shotley-Bridge-Brochure15.compressed.pdf](#))

There was a suggestion that there should be a mix of housing sizes together which have some consistency across the buildings – to avoid building all the lower cost houses more cheaply, attracting the less affluent and potentially leading to the “slums of the future”.

Not specifically design code related – but there it was noted about the current lack of services in the area for an ever-expanding population. So, when appropriate there should be provision for new service provision to the area (i.e. reserving some of the space/layout of estates, etc., to include such service provision).

It is potentially difficult to attract relevant services even if we have the premises, however, perhaps if the building is designed to attract certain services or there was provision to sell/rent cheaply to certain services as part of the build plan?

Although it was noted that snow only falls on a tiny percentage of the year – Consett is known for heavier than average snowfall, heavily iced roads (estates are typically not cleared), etc., and so some consideration could be given in design/planning – even if this is just the provision (and maintenance) of grit bins in new estates etc. Especially where there are up-slopes

Section 2.1.2: Why is out of town / countryside “no development control required”? Surely this should be the *most* sensitively designed? (e.g., to ensure they blend into the countryside)

Shotley Park House has been abandoned and is now falling apart / being stripped & vandalised. Can we address this?

Lack of parking space means people put cars on pavements and then pedestrians / disabled cannot get through

Stone houses are a big feature of this area, can Design Codes ensure we replicate this?

Need to include examples of streets with trees – this is a real lack in Consett Area

Why do some modern houses seem to have such small windows? Is this a building requirement, or just a design issue?

Can be nice to have variation in house types on an estate, whilst maintaining an overall consistency

Houses are often built too close together – crammed into every inch

Low-rise town houses are not suitable for family homes but might be great for young people, first time buyers, or single occupancy.

Expandability of houses? Is there room for them to be extended/adapted? Previous feedback from HNA was that Forum members believe people want to alter their existing house in preference to moving. This might mean extensions for growing families, or adaptations for the elderly or disabled.

Design for accessibility – e.g., downstairs toilet convertible to wet room, space for fitting lifts, wide enough doors for wheelchairs, no steps at doorways.

There is a “housing for life” standard, but not sure this is being applied – can we emphasise this in the Design Codes?

Individual house access needs to be included. In the Berry Edge estate for example, some houses cannot be accessed without having to go past several other houses. Can this be included as an example of poor practice?

Do houses require large gardens at both front and rear? This design is questionable as it imposes a large maintenance burden on householders (and in reality unlikely to actively use both)

Parking needs to be addressed.

Industrial zones – need to be “good neighbours”, e.g.:

- Limit on proximity of building or other construction close to boundary with residential zones (even if residential zone not yet built)
- Design & light pollution

Environmental and efficiency factors are relevant to design (look and feel)

Streets are often too narrow – need to be wide enough, taking account of likely parking, to allow thoroughfare for both pedestrians and vehicles (including delivery trucks)

Design needs to be future proofed