



## Understanding good design & how it can help

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- **With the publication of new National Design Guide, it is worth re-stating the key characteristics of well designed places.** As planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, the design guide sets out ten characteristics to consider: context, identify, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes & buildings, resources and lifespan.
- **Whilst the characteristics of a good place have not changed, the terminology has and is important to understand and assess on these terms.** Nature is one of the ten characteristics and highlights the need to address climate change including improving and enhancing water management, supporting a rich and varied biodiversity and providing high quality, green open spaces with a variety of landscapes and activities, including play available.
- **The design guide reiterates that good design is site specific.** Any development needs to understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context, valuing heritage, local history and culture. It is essential to consider surrounding density levels, environmental comfort levels and local characteristics to ensure the design of any site proposal will enhance the neighbourhood.
- **The devil is in the detail and planners must have time to assess, scrutinise and interrogate designs in detail to make great places.** To achieve well-designed places planners must secure the integrity of the design and detailing of materials from procurement to permission and from conditions to completion. Post-permission changes can often lead to lower quality materials in exchange for those given permission.
- **Planning for long-term neighbourhood benefits are essential elements of a well-designed place and maintains value and contributes to the health and well-being of a society.** These elements include careful planning and design to make the best use of the site, responding in context with its neighbours, ensuring quality materials, landscaping and details are provided alongside required community amenities.

**Speakers:**

Esther Kurland, Urban Design London  
Dr Laura Alvarez, Nottingham City Council  
Annabel Keegan, Phil Jones Associates  
Rachel Jones, Urban Design London  
Ione Braddick, Epping Forest District Council  
Lucia Morato, Public Practice

**Attendees: 35**