

Infill Housing in the Countryside

I INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

2 STATUS AND STAGES IN PREPARATION

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by Full Council on January 21st 2003 for use in development control. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Council's response to these representations is available on request.
- 2.2 These Notes have been prepared in accordance with guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales; Unitary Development Plans (Wales); Technical Advice Notes.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The specific purpose of this note is to set out where infill development outside of the development boundaries of main centres, main villages and hamlets, may be considered acceptable in accordance with **Policy HSG 5** in the Unitary Development Plan that was adopted on 3rd July 2002.
- 3.2 The term infill is often misapplied to development proposals. Infill development in the context of the policy refers to the development of one or two dwelling units in a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up residential frontage within a clearly identifiable cohesive group of houses in the countryside. It does not apply to the development of additional dwellings to the end of a line of existing dwellings (ie ribbon development).

4 POLICY

- 4.1 Both National and County Planning policy aims to prevent sporadic development in the countryside, and to concentrate on focusing development within development boundaries. National Planning guidance does allow occasions where the infilling of small gaps within a cohesive group of houses is acceptable. This may also contribute to and strengthen the local area. This note is to guide and assist applicants, and to give illustrative examples on suitable and non suitable development in terms of locations, scale, design, materials etc.

5 GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- 5.1 The acceptability of an individual application will depend on the following factors and must satisfy **all** the following tests:
- A) **An Infill Housing Plot is classified as:**
- A **small gap** capable of accommodating **one or two dwelling units**.
 - The **filling of a small gap** of comparable scale, character and size to surrounding properties.
 - A **small gap between** a continuous line of built up residential frontage.
 - An **infill housing plot** is not classified as being at the end of a line of dwellings which would lead to ribbon development.

B) **The Group of Housing must form:**

- A continuous line of built up residential frontage and / or a focus of dwelling units on an identifiable cross-roads, cul-de-sac.
- A group of housing must not be interspersed by individual field parcels.
- The group must contain 6 or more dwelling units.

5.2 **THE DEFINITION OF A GROUP OF HOUSES DOES NOT IN TERMS OF THIS GUIDANCE NOTE INCLUDE A DWELLING UNIT SUBDIVIDED INTO INDIVIDUAL FLATS, CONVERTED OUTBUILDINGS TO DWELLINGS, CONVERTED CHAPELS, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS, TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR USE AS HOLIDAY LET, CHALET BUILDINGS, CARAVANS OR CHATELLES.**

5.3 Guidance on acceptable and unacceptable forms of infill housing development within a gap of a recognisable group of houses in the countryside are outlined below. These examples are diagrammatic only. Each planning application will be treated on its own merits.

If the Basic Tests as set out in A) and B) above have been met then consideration of the proposal must then meet the following guidance;

5.4 **Site Characteristics**

- a) Provision made for a private amenity space for the dwelling comparable to adjoining properties in the built up frontage.
- b) The special character of the area is not compromised in relation to dwelling size to plot ratio comparable to adjoining properties in the built up frontage.
- c) Separation between dwellings for the infill plot are comparable to adjoining properties in the built up frontage.
- d) The dwelling must not prejudice the amenity space available to an existing dwelling unit.
- e) The dwelling does not take up existing public recreation open space.
- f) The special character of the landscape is not compromised by the development and must have regard to the landscape backdrop, topographical features and levels.

5.5 **Scale, design, character and appearance of the dwelling**

- a) The dwelling must have regard to the existing character of the built frontage (e.g. a two storey dwelling if the built frontage comprises of two storey dwellings)
- b) The design, appearance and the materials of the proposal should be complementary to the character of the existing built frontage, and have regard to the best examples of local distinctiveness, vernacular styles and materials found in the surrounding area.
- c) The proposal should take account of natural landscape features and have regard to the pattern of planting including hedging, walling and other boundary treatments.

5.6 **Site specific considerations**

- a) Safe and satisfactory provision is made for access and parking within the infill plot.
- b) Proposals will be considered against normal planning considerations and landscape issues in accordance with Unitary Development Plan policies to safeguard community and public interests.

5.7 There may be different considerations relevant to applications in Conservation Areas and near to Listed Buildings. Development in Conservation Areas, or development which affects the setting of such areas, will only be permitted where it will preserve or enhance its character or appearance. These requirements are set out and expanded upon in the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, Unitary Development Plan Policies and Government guidance.

6 ACCEPTABLE DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

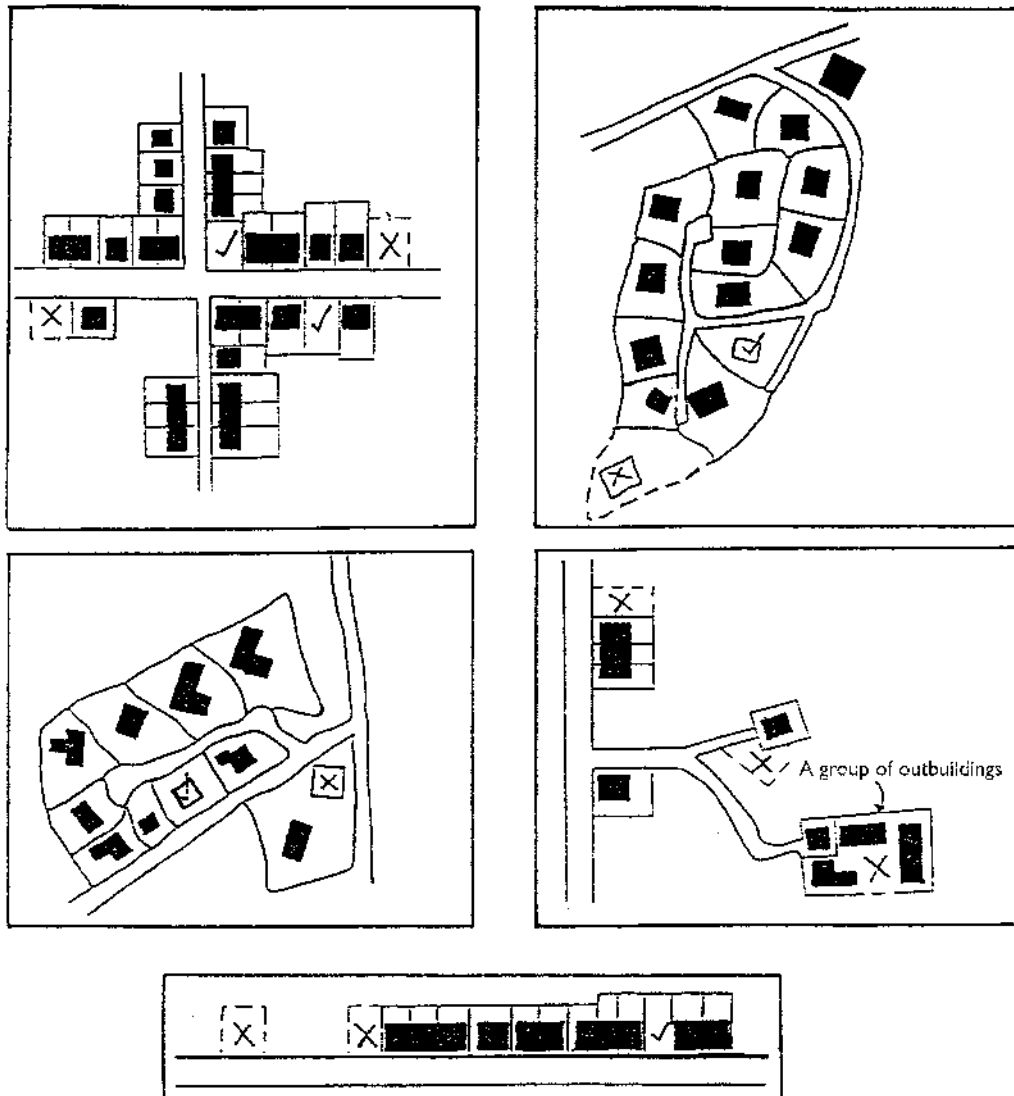
6.1 Examples of what may be considered to be acceptable infill in a recognisable group of houses in the open countryside, are set out in Figure 1.

7 UNACCEPTABLE DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

7.1 Development is NOT ACCEPTABLE in a sporadically sited, loosely related spread of dwellings or outbuildings/other buildings in the open countryside or where the development constitutes the extension of a ribbon form of development. Examples of what is considered to be an unrecognisable group of houses in the open countryside, and also unacceptable infill development, are set out in Figure 1.

Fig.1 AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF INFILL DEVELOPMENT

TICK - MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE
CROSS - WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE



You are advised that the examples shown demonstrate situations that may fall within the criteria for infill, but it does not necessarily follow that the proposals are acceptable in relation to other normal planning considerations

8 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

A full planning application should be submitted for consideration. If an outline application is submitted, details of siting should be included as part of the outline application and not as a reserved matter. In addition sketch details of access, scale, design and materials etc. will also be required. If insufficient details are submitted to enable the Council to determine the application then a Notification to submit details of reserved matters shall be made under Article 3(2) of the 1995 Procedures Orders.

The following minimum details are required for planning applications:

- **Application forms**

- **Plans**

- Site location plan
- Site layout plan (existing and proposed) illustrating the relationship, and layout of surrounding properties, physical features and existing use of the land.
- Plan illustrating existing and proposed levels including final floor levels (where the site is not level)
- Landscaping details
- Elevational and plan drawings (as proposed)
- Cross-sectional drawings (where necessary)
- In Conservation Areas and sites close to listed buildings, a 'streetscape' illustration to show how the dwelling is to be assimilated in the overall perspective.

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