

Making Higher Densities Work in London



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URBED's recent work



- City of Villages (GLA policy)
- Tomorrow's suburbs (GLA toolkit)
- Neighbourhood revival (SEERA policy)
- Spreading the Benefits of Town and City Centre Renewal (research for LGA)
- Towards Sustainable Suburbs (Built Environment)
- Making Connections between People and Places (research for JRF)



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London is a city of villages



- Car based lifestyles
- Needs to conserve resources
- Neglected centres
- Declining social/environmental capital
- A housing ladder with missing rungs
- European contrasts



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With some scope for intensification



Tomorrow's Suburbs: Tools for Making London's Suburbs More Sustainable [Feedback 2.02]
CONSULTATION DRAFT September 2004

Related Topics:

- Making New Developments Sustainable
- Identifying sites with potential for intensification
- Housing Capacity Study
- Housing Sustainability
- Housing Capacity Study
- Building Sustainable Suburbs
- Living Space, Street Space
- Living with higher density housing and social mix
- Achieving more affordable housing
- Improving sustainability in new developments
- Other Related Themes

Housing Intensification

Increasing the amount of housing in an area, which is usually achieved by increasing the number of storeys, or by reducing the space given over to vehicles or unutilised open spaces.

Benefits: With land in short supply, higher housing densities can reduce urban sprawl and energy consumption, increase the supply of new homes, improve the public realm and make green and water and local buses. A higher population can also help support a wider mix of shops and services and make public transport more viable.

Key Factors: The highest densities need to be closest to transport facilities and services [4.4], [4.6], [4.9], and in areas where demand for property is strong. The government wants at least 20 dwellings to the hectare (roughly double typical suburban densities) and a number of governing schemes have achieved densities of over 40 dwellings per hectare (urban residential capacity [7.6]). However, not every site is urban and to get the right balance of occupiers. Design is only one of a number of factors that determine whether a higher density scheme will work [2.6]. Street parking policies [4.7] can also make a contribution. Policies look at how higher density housing examples and set design guidelines can help to overcome fears about what higher densities involve.

Policy Context: PPS1 advances higher densities in urban areas and making more use of brownfield sites. The London Plan in its Density Matters sets out density standards for both urban and suburban areas, with higher densities to be sought in and around town centres and transport nodes. Diagrams are required to meet housing targets, and the London Plan sets out the expected number of units in each sub-region.

Further Reading: Begin with a Housing Capacity study [2.6] to assess the potential for providing new housing, or look at the GLA's Housing Capacity Study, available at http://www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/being_a_suburban_area.htm, or the CIPD report 'Getting the Planning Available at http://www.cipd.com.uk/london/planning/cipd_publications/being_a_suburban_area.htm

Examples in Action: Building for Life (www.buildingforlife.org) provides a range of case studies of well-designed schemes.

Further Information: CABE is producing a guide to achieving higher densities, which has checklists for each of the elements that are important for creating successful schemes. See <http://www.cabe.org.uk>

Sources: URBED/CABE

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The meaning of density

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Density is relative



Mumbai, India

Density offers benefits

- Increasing value
- Convenient shops and services
- Safer streets
- Design for living
- Energy conservation
- Mixed communities
- 'Somewhere not anywhere'



New England Quarter, Brighton

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And potential costs



- Noise
- Parking
- Rubbish
- Children
- Different lifestyles

Beaufort Court, Fulham

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Major barriers

The top 10 biggest barriers to building higher density development in your district

Concerns about the impact on traffic and parking	62%
Local residents are not in favour	51%
'Out of character' with the local area	44%
Concerns about the impact on local services (e.g. schools, hospitals)	39%
Concerns about the lack of poor public spaces and play areas within the developments	20%
Associated with 'problem' families	16%
Local Councillors not in favour	12%
Perceived to be ugly	11%
Perceived to reduce house prices for current residents	9%
Other	8%

One quarter (26%) say this is the biggest barrier

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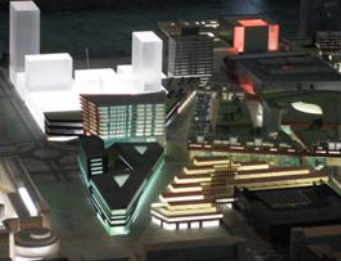
We can learn from new Dutch suburbs




Almere New Town

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Eco houses in Oosterheem



CHP in Oosterheem



Underground waste disposal system in Ypenburg



And from Freiburg in Southern Germany



Vauban, Freiburg



Rieselfeld, Freiburg




Rieselfeld, Freiburg



London needs a charter for smarter suburbs

The 5 C's

- ❑ Connectivity (i.e. streets)
- ❑ Conservation (i.e. sustainability)
- ❑ Character (i.e. sense of place)
- ❑ Choice and community (i.e. social capital)
- ❑ Collaboration (i.e. governance)



Towards a quality charter for growth in the Cambridge area study tour to Freiburg

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