

Dear Phil,

Here is my FINAL Main Document:-

An urban neighbourhood should be regarded as both a unit of a larger whole, but also as a distinct entity in itself. Stratford has some variations of housing design, but is increasingly suffering from a factory mass production approach by the national house builders. This leads to a loss of identity and spirit amongst inhabitants as well as visitors.

A neighbourhood firstly needs to have variety of facilities - community centre, workplace of some kind; school; pub; church. With these basic units in place, we have the beginnings of life in a neighbourhood.

Green areas are of prime importance, as well as trees, in each development. Where feasible, shared garden space for growing vegetables could be tried, as in East London last year.

Road gardens and discouragement of hard standing areas around housing, would help in our fight against climate change.

We must improve our environmental standard in both building and town layout (e.g. Groningen in Holland)

Concretely, the layout and the designs need to be approved by residents already living in the area. This would be a 3 way negotiation between residents, developers/builders and planning officers. The purpose would be to reach a consensus before going to committee for final assessment.

The designs of buildings should follow the criteria of due Proportion, Light; Colour (vide Hotwells, Bristol). We should also consider curved buildings (reminiscent of energy). Proportionality also involves height, and the town should only have 3 story housing "in extremis". Tall buildings compress social interaction e..g. Barbican area in London where flats of up to 45 storeys are now becoming common.

Training in aesthetics should be given to both planning officers and councillors. Committee members should reflect more before taking decisions and more site visits should occur. All these points are critical for good decision making.

"Secured by Design" the official police document laying down criteria for good housing layout and design, should be made mandatory as a reference document for all private developments within the town. This reduces both crime figures and carbon waste.

Gated communities should not be allowed, as they create a sense of division in the overall community.

Despite current Government thinking to remove requirements for minimum levels of

social housing in the future, this should be absolutely resisted. As a priority we should start to encourage design students to submit designs for low cost housing ( modern pre-fabs??)

There is at the moment a shortfall of 550 affordable houses in Stratford. 25% of households have an income of less than£20,000, yet to buy a house here, one needs on average £62,000 gross annual income for a mortgage.

Additionally, there is an imbalance between the elderly and the young, not helped by developers building care homes, without having to provide infrastructure benefits.

Empty property, whether commercial or domestic, needs to be more firmly chased by our officers, so that these buildings can be quickly returned to good use for re-housing primarily.

Highlighted areas of landscape sensitivity for development (vide S.D.C. map) should NOT be developed, but respected and not built on.

We need to know who owns undeveloped land,(supermarkets and other big companies); S.D.C. to provide local land registry.

Finally, local "conversation" centres should be used, where people can frequently meet officials and councillors, and get updates on what is going on. (e.g.Shakespeare Trust plans for Henley Street).

Thank you, Tom Baxter