



# Elmbridge

## Borough Council

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# Elmbridge Local Plan

## Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document

### April 2012



# Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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# 1 Introduction

## Purpose of the Document

1.1 The purpose of this Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to secure the delivery of distinctive, high quality development across the Borough, that respects local character. The document provides design guidance relating to all new development in the Borough. Its overall aim is to ensure that the design of future development is more locally responsive, sustainable and built to a high quality. It sets out how the Council will expect the location, form and type of new residential and non residential development in Elmbridge to be considered through the Design Process.

1.2 The need for this SPD has arisen from consultation responses during the preparation of the Core Strategy. Feedback from these consultations highlighted local people's concerns about the impact of future development in their local area. Accommodating new growth in each settlement area means that special care needs to be taken when designing development proposals. This SPD will help address these concerns and ensure that new development reflects people's aspirations for their local area.

1.3 The document should not be seen as imposing a certain design taste or style but promotes a 4 stage design process as a method to ensure all new development respects and enhances the site and surrounding area.

## Ensuring High Quality Design in Elmbridge

1.4 Located immediately to the South West of London, Elmbridge has good accessibility by road and rail to Central London and is within easy reach of Heathrow and Gatwick Airports, the M25 and M3. Its desirability as a place to live is due in part to its accessibility, but also to its high quality environment. This is characterised by its rivers and waterways that flow through the Borough, a rich diversity

of historic buildings as well as an abundance of natural landscapes. Future development should respect and improve this high quality environment.

## Policy Context

1.5 This SPD has been developed in accordance with national and local planning policy.

## National Context

1.6 During the document's production, the Government has released a number of documents that confirm the importance to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design. This commitment is made apparent in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) <sup>(1)</sup> and the Government report 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy' <sup>(2)</sup>. Both documents dedicate specific chapters to design. Reflecting the Government's drive to improve design quality, the Design and Character SPD will deliver more locally distinctive high quality, sustainable design that takes account of local character.

1.7 The approach to the production of the document is also in line with the Government's Localism agenda. Local community groups have been involved in the document's development from the outset, providing valuable local knowledge and helping shape the settlement area character assessments. It is hoped that this experience will encourage local people to continue to be more involved in the long term planning of their local areas.

## Local Context

1.8 The Core Strategy recognises the importance of high quality, sustainable design. Policy CS1, which sets out the spatial strategy for the Borough, aims to protect Elmbridge's Green Infrastructure assets, by directing new development towards previously developed land within the existing built up areas. Within this overarching context, the policy states that,

1 Chapter 7: Requiring good design, National Planning Policy Framework, CLG, March 2012

2 Chapter 7: Quality, sustainability and design, Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England, CLG, Nov 2011

***'All new developments must be high quality, well designed and locally distinctive. They should be sensitive to the character and quality of the area, respecting environmental and historic assets and, where appropriate, introduce contemporary designs that can positively improve local character.'***

1.9 Reference to the delivery of high quality design and the importance of local character features throughout the document. The intention is to provide further details in order to ensure the effective implementation of Core Strategy policy. Whilst Government policy and national advice have been taken into account, this is a local document produced in partnership with local people. It shows how Localism and growth can indeed be compatible objectives that deliver local benefits.

### **Status of the Guide**

1.10 This SPD replaces the Elmbridge Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in 2002.

1.11 The Design and Character SPD was approved by the Council on 18 April 2012. Its adoption means that it is a material consideration which has considerable weight in making decisions on planning applications.

### **Community Involvement**

1.12 During April and May 2011, eight community workshops were held across the Borough and participants played a significant role in identifying the variety of character areas within their particular part of the Borough. Additional feedback sessions held in September 2011 allowed participants to comment on the draft settlement area character assessments. In addition to this, the document was subject to a six week public consultation in November 2011. The SPD has developed throughout these consultation stages and takes account of many of the comments made.

1.13 Further details of the consultation arrangements, including the comments made and how these have been addressed in the document are set out in the Regulation 17 Consultation Statement.

### **The Design Process**

1.14 The design process is a fundamental aspect in the delivery of high quality development. Each stage in the design process should be set out in the Design and Access Statement, to be submitted with the planning application. The step-by-step guide in section 2 explains how this works.

1.15 The SPD is made up of eleven separate documents. This document explains the design process, advising on how to assess character, appraise a site, develop a design concept and design a final scheme for submission. It contains general and specific design guidance and demonstrates this 4 stage design process through a series of case studies.

1.16 The SPD also includes a suite of documents containing companion guides:

- **8 companion guides provide detailed character assessments for each of the Borough's settlement areas.** It is not necessary to read all of these. Make reference to the particular character assessment where you intend to develop.
- **The Character of Elmbridge Companion Guide** provides an overview of the Borough including how Elmbridge has developed over the years.
- **The Home Extensions Companion Guide** provides guidance for householders wishing to extend or modify their property.

1.17 The illustrations which feature in this SPD have been designed and drawn by Richard Guise, Context 4D and are subject to copyright.

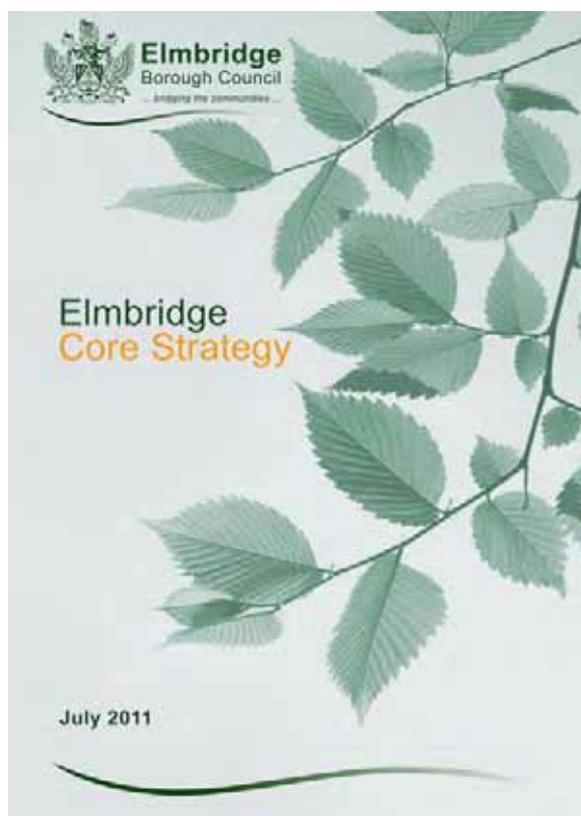
## 2 How to use the SPD

2.1 The following step-by-step guide helps to explain how the SPD works and demonstrates the 4 stage design process required to achieve high quality designed development when developing and submitting proposals.

2.2 As validation requirements, fees and forms can change, this page contains references to the website where you will find up to date information.

### Early Research

2.3 At the outset of this process, conduct some initial research. This could relate to the immediate constraints and capacity of the site, planning history, and the examination of relevant national and local policy.



Elmbridge Local Plan documents can be found at the Planning Policy web pages- [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy)

## The Design Process

### STEP 1: Understand the Context

2.4 Before embarking on a design proposal it is essential to understand the local character of the area. Consult the relevant companion guide for the settlement area you intend to build in and read the detailed character assessment. This will provide links to appropriate design guidance located in the main document.

The 8 companion guides are available on the Design and Character web page at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy)

Please use 'My Elmbridge' to zoom into the maps, which is available at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk)



### STEP 2: Appraise the Site and its Setting

2.5 Conducting a desktop study and on-location survey will help identify important factors that will shape your design proposal. (See section 4 for more detailed advice on appraisal)

2.6 Depending on the size of the development, you are advised to contact the local community to understand their aspirations for the site.

2.7 Begin to develop your Design and Access Statement\* and start early pre-application discussions.

For guidance on how to arrange pre-planning advice and the fee schedule, please see the pre-application advice web page at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning)

### STEP 3: Develop a Design Concept and Design an Indicative Scheme

2.8 To help develop an appropriate design solution it is important to consult relevant design advice. This document contains general design advice including sustainable design principles at section 5. Specific design guidance is also provided with relation to various development types at section 6.

2.9 The case studies at section 7 help to illustrate some of the key issues to take into account.

2.10 Further pre-application discussions and liaison with the local community is recommended at this stage to help you develop the scheme.



### STEP 4: Develop the Full Scheme and Submit the Planning Application

2.11 Develop the full scheme, taking account of all relevant design guidance, and complete the Design and Access Statement\* explaining the process outlined above.

2.12 Make sure that you are aware of all validation requirements and submit your planning application.

For all current validation requirements including an up to date schedule of fees and options for payment please see the 'Fees and Guidance' web page at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning)

### \*Design and Access Statements

**A Design and Access Statement is a written and illustrated report accompanying a planning application. The statement should show how the applicant has analysed the site and its setting and how the applicant has formulated and applied design principles to achieve good design.**

2.13 Design and Access Statements must be submitted for all planning applications, except householder applications. As explained in the step-by-step guide, you should prepare the Design and Access Statement from the start of the process and include the rationale for deciding upon the preferred design solution.



Further information on Design and Access Statements can be found at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning) under applications, fees and guidance.