

The Ladder of Place Quality

The place _____ Postcode _____

REQUIRE

Very strong evidence of positive outcomes



- Greenness
- Mix of uses
- Low levels of traffic
- Walkability

- Compact and coherent pattern of development

- Bikeability
- Public transport connectivity

ASPIRE

Good evidence of positive outcomes



- Visual permeability
- Sense of place
- Pedestrian scale
- Façade continuity
- Natural surveillance
- Street-level activity
- Good street lighting
- Denser street network

- Low traffic speeds
- Low neighbourhood noise
- Attractive and comfortable public spaces
- Social public /private threshold features

- Integration of built heritage
- Integration of natural features and ecosystem
- Architectural quality (beauty)

BEWARE

Association not yet definitive



- Particular architectural styles
- Higher- versus lower-density development
- Extreme densities

- High-rise living
- Street length and connectivity
- Cul-de-sacs
- Shared spaces

- Vehicle/pedestrian separation
- Proximity of retail to residential properties

AVOID

Very strong evidence of negative outcomes



- Car-dependent and extensive suburbanisation
- Absence of local green space
- Rear parking courts and segregated areas

- Poor maintenance and dilapidation
- Overcrowding
- Presence of too many fast-food stores
- Roads with higher traffic loads and speeds

- Wider carriage-way widths
- Roads that are elevated



Very strong evidence of negative outcomes



- 1 **Car-dependent** and extensive forms of single-use suburbanisation
- 2 Relentlessly **hard urban space** with an absence of local green space
- 3 **Too much very local permeability** (connectivity) in the pedestrian path network (e.g. unsurveilled back alleys and routes)
- 4 The presence of **rear parking courts** and other poorly overlooked or segregated areas
- 5 **Poor maintenance and dilapidation** (including of green spaces)

- 6 A **sense of overcrowding** in residential buildings and estates
- 7 Presence in close proximity to homes of **too many unhealthy food options**
- 8 Presence of roads with **higher traffic loads and speeds**, wider carriage-way widths that are elevated or which otherwise cause severance in the local built environment

Through formal tools of design governance (such as planning policy, zoning, street adoption powers or the use of design codes) these tangible and measurable qualities are easily avoided.



Good evidence of positive outcomes



- 1 **Visual permeability** (being able to see into and through a space)
- 2 **Sense of place** (distinctive sense of local character)
- 3 **Pedestrian scale** (design of streets and buildings are clearly oriented to the scale of the pedestrian)
- 4 **Façade continuity** (façades form a continuous and coherent street wall)
- 5 **Natural surveillance** (the creation of space that is well overlooked by surrounding buildings)
- 6 Presence of **street-level activity**
- 7 **Good street lighting** (where streets are well lit to improve street safety, but not over-illuminated, thus creating light pollution)
- 8 A **denser street network** (avoiding large urban blocks in favour of smaller ones)
- 9 **Low vehicular traffic speeds**

- 10 **Low neighbourhood noise**
- 11 Presence of **public spaces** that are attractive, welcoming, comfortable and adaptable
- 12 A positive, **sociable threshold between public and private spaces** (such as front gardens, porches and external seating areas)
- 13 Retention and integration of **built heritage** into new development
- 14 **Natural features** and a **diverse ecosystem** integrated throughout the built environment
- 15 **Architectural quality and beauty** in the built environment

Though some of these qualities (such as façade continuity or traffic speeds) are universally applicable, many require more careful interpretation that is tailored to fit local circumstances. This can be achieved through informal tools of design governance such as design reviews or design guidance.



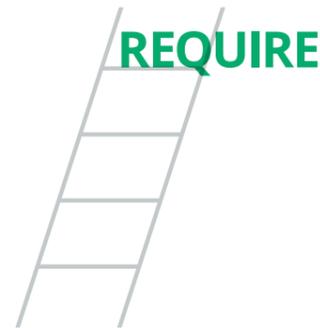
Association not yet definitive



- 1 **Particular architectural styles** (the evidence does not clearly show superiority of any one architectural style over others)
- 2 **Higher- versus lower-density** development (there is conflicting evidence linking both higher- and lower-density living to health outcomes, sociability and perceptions of crime and safety)
- 3 **Extreme densities** (there is conflicting evidence relating extreme densities to carbon reduction, social welfare and ecological richness)
- 4 **High-rise living** (the evidence is unclear regarding the social impact of living in high-rise buildings, although it does seem unsuitable for families with children)
- 5 **Street length and pedestrian connectivity** (the health and crime evidence diverges on the relative benefits and drawbacks of longer versus shorter streets and on how connected street networks need to be)

- 6 **Cul-de-sacs** (there is conflicting evidence on the impact of using cul-de-sacs on crime and safety, property value, sociability and children's play)
- 7 **Separating vehicle and pedestrian routes** through urban areas (the evidence is weak and conflicting regarding pedestrian safety outcomes)
- 8 Use of **shared spaces** (there is conflicting evidence relating use of shared spaces – spaces shared by vehicles and pedestrians – to levels of both actual and perceived safety)
- 9 **Proximity of retail to residential properties** (there are divergences within the economic evidence base on the relative size and impact of negative externalities related to living in extreme proximity to retail)

It is generally best to avoid being too prescriptive in policy or guidance regarding the above qualities, as more research is required to fully understand the impact of the beware place qualities.



Very strong evidence of positive outcomes



- 1 **Greenness** in the built environment (notably the presence of trees and grass, water, and high-quality open space)
- 2 A **mix of uses** (diversity of land uses within a neighbourhood)
- 3 **Low levels of vehicular traffic**
- 4 **Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly design** (including well-connected, safe pedestrian paths and bicycle routes passing through a high-quality local public realm)
- 5 Use of more **compact patterns of development** (that are well connected, less sprawling and not fragmented from other urban areas)

- 6 **Convenient connection to a public transport network**

Only qualities exhibiting the strongest evidence that they improve everyday wellbeing and strongly enhance place value have been included in the require list, making them absolutely essential to the design of the built environment. As this list only includes the absolute essentials – which tend also to be very tangible and objective and therefore measurable – these qualities can be required through the formal tools of design governance (such as in planning policy, zoning, street adoption powers or through the use of design codes).

