National Forest Design Charter
Design Principles for The National Forest
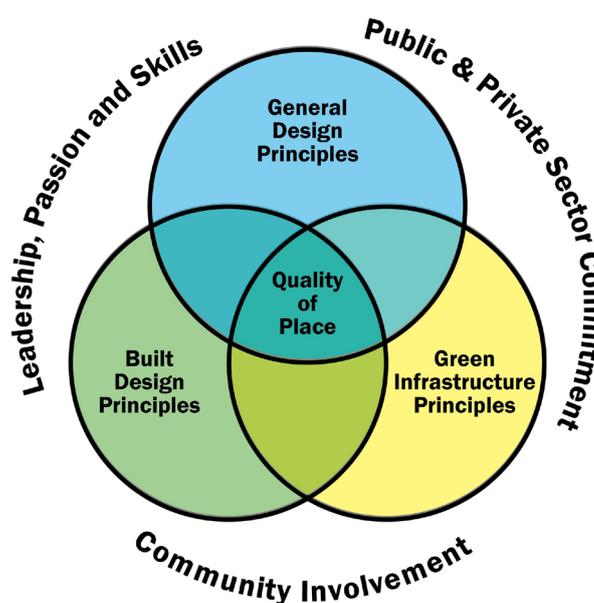
THE NATIONAL FOREST

Creating quality places through the growth agenda, which people are proud to call home.

General Design Principles

- **Distinctive character** – development should help to create a new identity and 'sense of place', that reflects The National Forest as a changing place.
- **Sustainable** – materials and design should last well with least cost to the planet and promote sustainable communities.
- **Inspiring places** – urban design should uplift the spirits, provide imagination and a variety of experiences – to create truly memorable places.
- **Integrated design** – built design and green infrastructure must function together – reinforcing one another to create quality of place.
- **People focused** – urban and green spaces should be designed to look good, work well, feel safe and be welcoming.
- **Legibility and connectivity** – new developments should be easy to navigate and find your way around – connecting homes and workplaces to green space 'from your doorstep'.

Built Design Principles

Building 'greener'

- Use natural and local materials associated with the area.
- Source materials sustainably (e.g. Forestry Stewardship Council certified timber).
- Adopt low carbon building construction.
- Design for low energy use and efficiency.
- Incorporate renewable energy, especially wood fuel heating systems.
- Design for water efficiency, including rainwater harvesting systems and grey water recycling.
- Design building foundations to be able to accommodate trees.
- Promote sustainable transport, cycling and walking.

Creating a Forest identity

- Use and showcase more timber in building design.
- Incorporate green walls and roofs where appropriate.
- Design sustainable urban drainage for biodiversity, landscape and recreation benefits.
- Reflect the Forest theme through landscape design of the public realm and green spaces (see Green Infrastructure principles below).

Building innovation

- Use the Forest as a location to encourage and trial 'green' construction technology and building techniques.

Achieving national excellence

- Design and build significantly above the 'ordinary', to make meeting national standards common place - for BREEAM, Code for Sustainable Homes and Building for Life.

Green Infrastructure Principles

Creating a National Forest setting

- Apply the National Forest green infrastructure guidelines, to create strongly wooded settings for development and a 'treed' theme for the public realm and local green space.

Proportions of Forest green space		
20%	-	housing sites 0.5ha – 10ha.
20%	-	employment sites 1ha – 10ha.
30%	-	all development sites over 10ha.

- National Forest green infrastructure can include creating new and managing existing assets - woodland, landscaped areas with trees, other wildlife habitats, recreation areas and routes, heritage and landscape features – as appropriate to each site. (For further information see the National Forest Developers and Planners Guide at *www.nationalforest.org/document/guides.php*).

Landscape design

- Reflect the landscape, ecological and historic character of the area when designing green infrastructure (e.g. tree species selection).
- 'Capture' on-site green infrastructure features wherever possible – consolidating and adding to them (e.g. trees, hedgerows and water features).
- Exploit 'borrowed' landscape assets on adjoining sites (e.g. visually prominent trees and countryside views).
- Achieve a high quality interface between the built environment and its wider landscape setting (e.g. housing to face on to green space).
- Avoid fragmentation of green infrastructure across development sites (e.g. achieve connectivity for landscape, ecological, recreation and public access benefits).
- Consolidate green space into large areas, capable of accommodating forest-scale trees (e.g. Oak, Ash, Lime).
- Design green space to achieve sustainable, cost effective, long-term management (e.g. use an annual residents charge and/or commuted sums for green space management).

Ecological design

- Habitat creation and management should relate to the ecological character of the sites' setting - meeting the objectives of the National Forest Biodiversity Action Plan (available at *www.nationalforest.org/document/*).
- Use woodland belts, hedgerows, other habitat strips, water courses and greenways to achieve habitat connectivity.

Accessibility

- Design green infrastructure to meet Access for All standards – with walkers, cyclists, disabled and horse riders considered, as appropriate to each site.
- Create networks of greenways, cycle routes and footpaths to link green spaces, residential neighbourhoods and workplaces – contributing to sustainable transport.

For more information, contact:

Simon Evans
Chief Officer, Land Use
National Forest Company
Bath Yard, Moira, Swadlincote,
Derbyshire, DE12 6BA
01283 551211
sevans@nationalforest.org