

Swindon Southern
Development Area: Design
Codes

Public Consultation Statement

October 2004

Contents

Background	3
Methodology and Design	4
Focus Groups	5
Community Involvement Day	6
Questionnaires	6
Website	6
Advertising	6
Media Liaison/Editorial Coverage	7
Presentations	7
Newsletter	7
Results of the Public Consultation	8
Focus Groups	8
Questionnaire	9
Response to the Public Consultaion	12
What next?	18
Conclusion	19
Appendix 1 (questionnaire)	20
Appendix 2 (comments from Focus Groups)	23
Appendix 3 (comments from Community Involvement Day)	28

Background

The Swindon Southern Development Area (SDA) has been included as part of the Design Coding Pilot Programme launched by the Government in May 2004. This seeks to deliver the step change set out in the Communities Plan by exploring how design coding might be used to accelerate the delivery of high quality housing, while retaining the high levels of design input necessary for good quality place-making.

A design code is a set of specific rules or requirements to guide the physical development of a site. It aims to provide clarity about what constitutes acceptable design quality for developers and local communities. This assists in accelerating the delivery of good quality new development.

The design codes for the SDA will build on the aspiration of the masterplan and provide a vision, a rationale and a set of requirements (the codes themselves). These can be urban design principles aimed at delivering better quality places and include requirements for streets, blocks, massing and so on, or may be focused more on architectural or building performance.

PPS (Local and Regional) Ltd was commissioned by Taylor Woodrow to undertake a public consultation in relation to the design codes for the SDA, to give people living and working in Swindon the opportunity to help influence the detailed development of the site.

This Public Consultation Statement describes the methodology used; outlines the views expressed by local people and stakeholders during the consultation process; and highlights how the design codes have responded to key issues raised during the public consultation.

Methodology and Design

PPS was appointed to carry out the consultation on the design codes for the Swindon SDA because of the company's experience in implementing community and stakeholder consultation programmes for key development proposals throughout the UK.

In order to ensure that stakeholders and the local community were provided with every opportunity to contribute to the detailed development of the scheme, PPS applied the Company's seven-point programme for effective communication:

1. **Notify** – the community must be made aware of the consultation programme along with a timescale of different activities.
2. **Inform** – having notified people of the consultation process, information is then provided on the background of the proposed development and any constraints that may be influential.
3. **Consult** – members of the public and key stakeholder groups to liaise with the project team and put forward ideas and aspirations for the development.
4. **Measure and analyse results** – having allowed an acceptable timeframe for everyone with an interest to comment, the results of the consultation are then quantified.
5. **Report back** – feedback is then analysed and the results publicised within the community and through stakeholder groups.
6. **Respond and change** – the client responds to the views of the community and incorporates changes into the scheme.
7. **Publish proposals** – at the end of the process the proposals are published and the community and key stakeholders are informed about how their views have influenced the process.

By involving the local community the development team was able to find out which issues are important to the community and respond to these when creating the design codes for the site. In this way the architects are able to design a scheme that will reflect local views when the development is completed.

The programme of consultation for the SDA design codes employed the following techniques:

- Focus groups
- Community Involvement Day
- Questionnaires
- Website
- Advertising
- Media liaison/editorial coverage
- Presentations
- Newsletter

Focus Groups

Three focus groups were held at the beginning of the consultation process to help gain a better understanding of some of the key issues for the design codes.

Martin Trewhella (Swindon Borough Council) gave a brief background introduction to the SDA and John Simpson (John Simpson & Partners) provided a brief explanation of design codes and the three key areas that needed to be addressed: built environment relationships; movement and architectural character/identity.

Each focus group was organised and facilitated by PPS.

The first two were held on the 16 and 17 August and were representative of those living within a one-mile radius of the site and those living further afield, who may be interested in moving to the area. There were 12 attendees at each of these focus groups. Each group consisted of a mixture of men and women, age groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The third group was held for local stakeholders. 51 people were invited with 18 attending. The following groups and organisations were represented: Chiseldon Parish Council; CPRE; Croft and Larra Council; Front Garden Action Group; Great Western Enterprise; Haydon Wick Parish Council; Liddington Parish Council; New Mechanics Institute; Pipers Residents Association; Swindon Civic Trust; Swindon Federation of Community Organisations; Swindon Police; Wanborough Parish Council; Wilts and Berks Canal Trust; and, Wroughton Parish Council.

Community Involvement Day

A Community Involvement Day was held on Wednesday, 8 September 2004 at the Ellendune Community Hall, Wroughton from 10am to 8pm to give everyone interested the opportunity to attend at a convenient time.

The Community Involvement Day included an exhibition with detailed information on the design codes, the parameters of the consultation and some of the key findings from the focus groups.

Members of the project team were also available throughout the day to discuss people's thoughts and ideas for the detailed design of the site.

Around 50 people attended the Community Involvement Day, with most staying at least 15 minutes to discuss the design codes and fill in the questionnaire.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was produced to gain a better understanding of how people would like to see the design codes developed. These included questions on the three main elements of the scheme: built environment relationships; movement and architectural character/identity. There was also a comments box so people could include additional thoughts and ideas.

See appendix 1.

Website

The exhibition from the Community Involvement Day and questionnaire were put on the project website – www.swindonsda.co.uk - for anyone unable to attend but interested in participating.

Advertising

The Community Involvement Day was advertised in the Swindon Evening Advertiser, letters were sent to all stakeholders and notices regarding the event were put up in shops and other public buildings around the borough.

Media liaison/editorial coverage

The local media were kept informed of the Swindon SDA design code public consultation exercise. The Swindon Evening Advertiser featured a couple of articles: one on the SDA's inclusion in the design code pilot project and another on the details of the public consultation.

The local radio station, BBC Radio Swindon, also covered the story and included an interview with the project spokesperson.

Presentations

Following the focus groups and the Community Involvement Day, presentations were made to local stakeholder groups (28 September) and Swindon Borough Council Members and Officers serving on the Southern Development Area Taskforce (14 October).

These were an opportunity to provide an update on the consultation undertaken and the results to date.

Newsletter

A newsletter, the fifth in a series of newsletters issued to keep interested parties living and working in Swindon up to date on developments regarding the Swindon SDA, will be issued later in the year to report back on the consultation undertaken on the design codes, the results received and information on the next stage of the design code process.

A downloadable version of the newsletter will also be available on the project website.

Results of the Public Consultation

Focus Groups

The section below provides a summary and interpretation of some of the key issues that came out of the focus groups. Details of all the comments received at the three focus groups can be viewed in Appendix Two.

Built Environment Relationships

- A mix of public space types – ranging from central squares to children’s play areas and country parks
- A range of communal public space types that will appeal to all age groups, with different spaces for different needs
- A permeable and legible street pattern, with identifiable centres
- A range of housing types to attract all different ages to the development
- Desire for a street life with activities for day and evening
- It was felt that encouraging people to walk would help foster a community spirit
- Canal to be used as a social space – an opportunity for lots of activity

Movement

- We need to shift the balance away from the car – with better public transport, cycle ways and footpaths. Safe, well lit streets are essential to achieve this
- Services and daily needs within walking distance, promoting a reduced dependence on the car
- Preference against on street parking – possibly mews and alleys, with concern that hidden parking would encourage crime
- Traffic calming disliked but seen as a necessity – controlled speed resulted in better safety
- A permeable street network free of cul-de-sac and roundabouts

Architectural Character/Identity

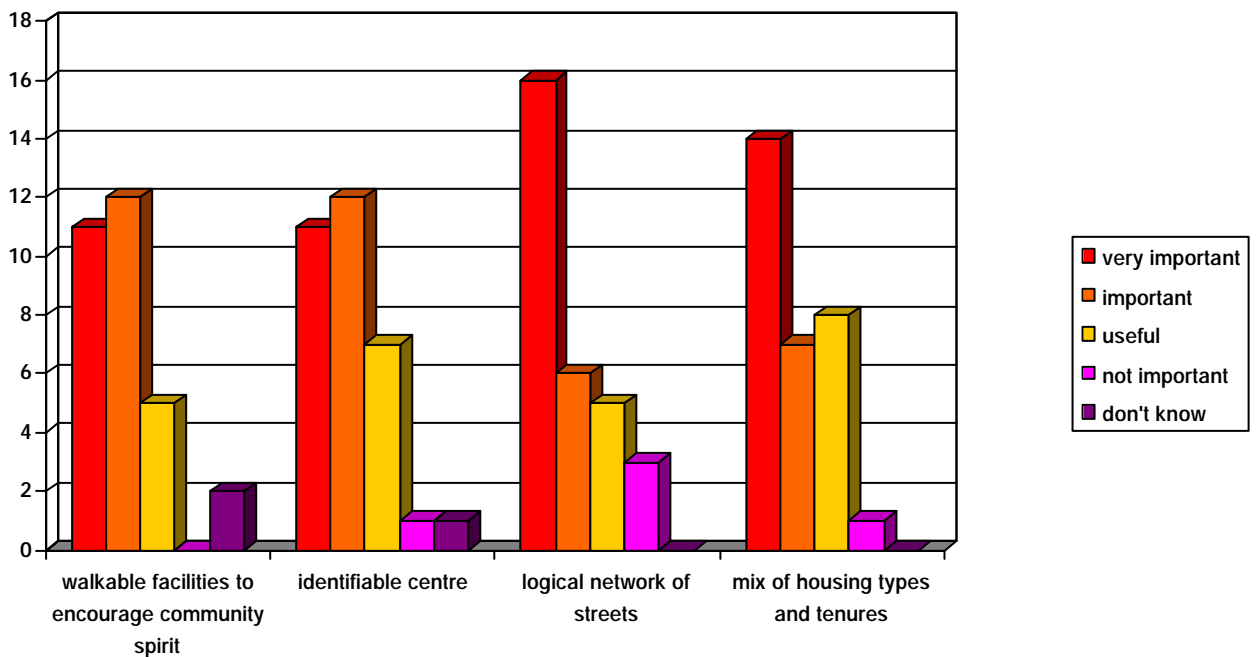
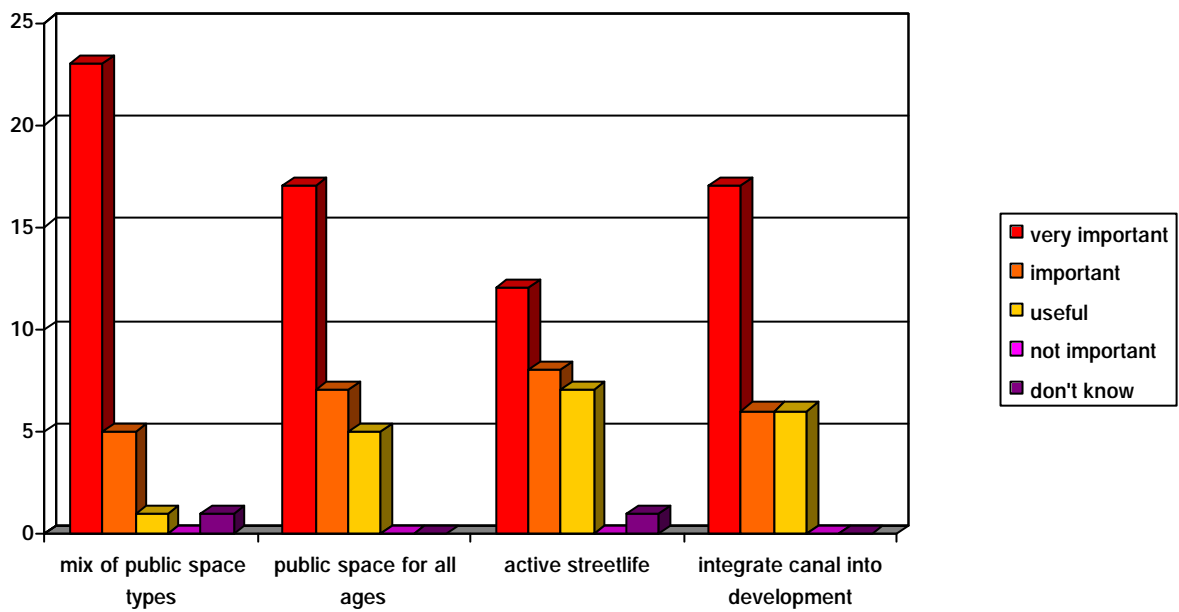
- Not important that the SDA has its own unique identity
- The SDA should be recognisably part of its locality
- It is not necessary that SDA resemble Swindon, as the town centre and some of the red brick terraces were not considered to be the best possible models to emulate

- Examples liked were buildings with steep roofs and natural materials, typical of Wiltshire

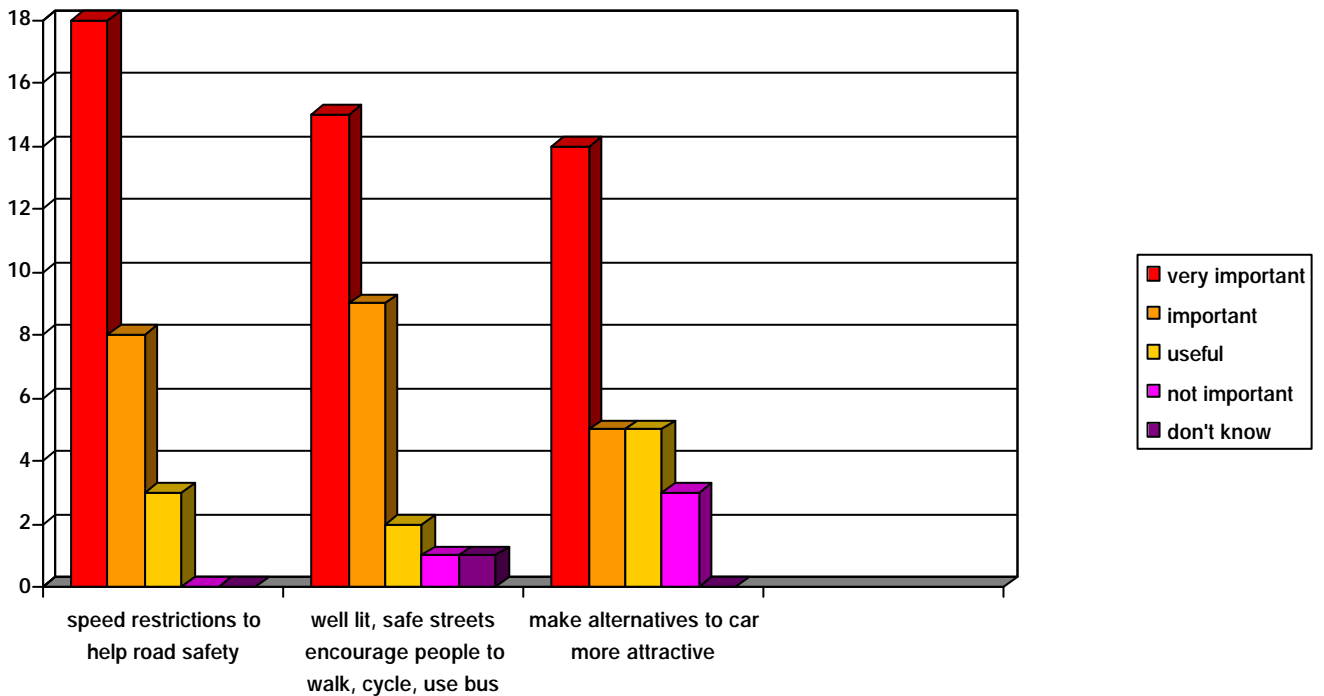
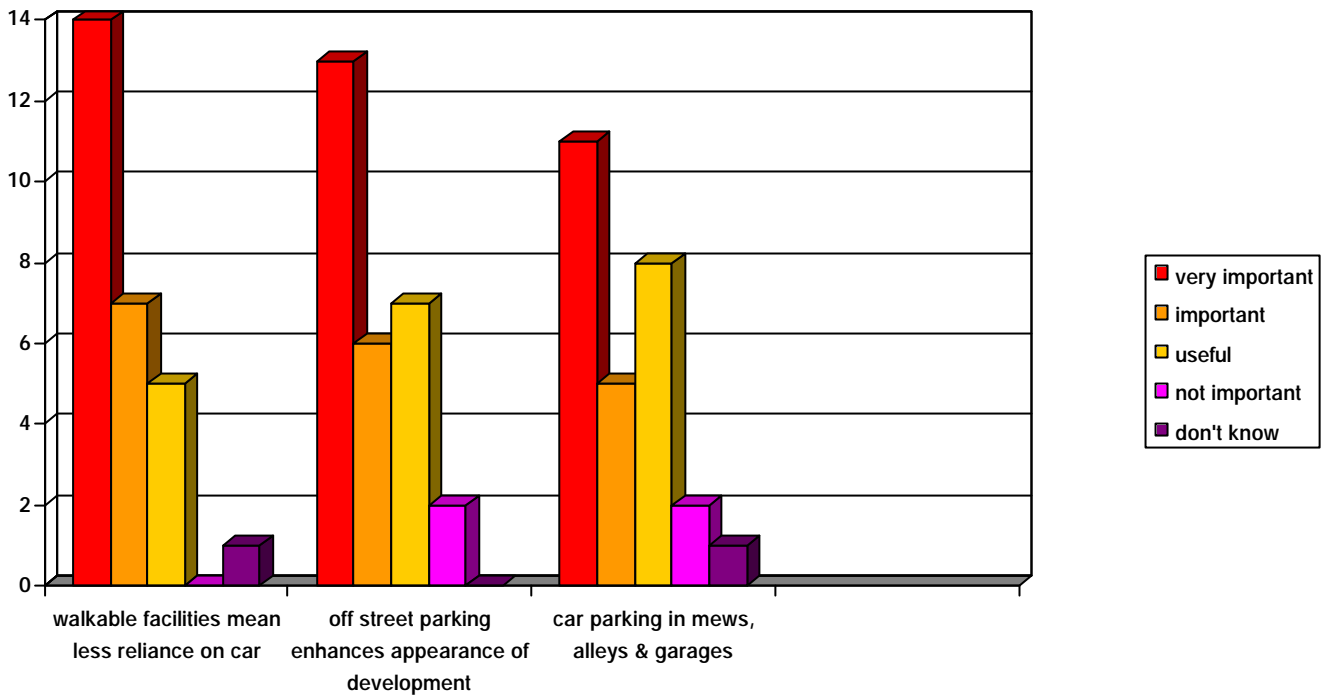
Questionnaire

32 completed questionnaires/comments sheets were returned, with the following results. Views written in the comments box are appended to this report – Appendix 3.

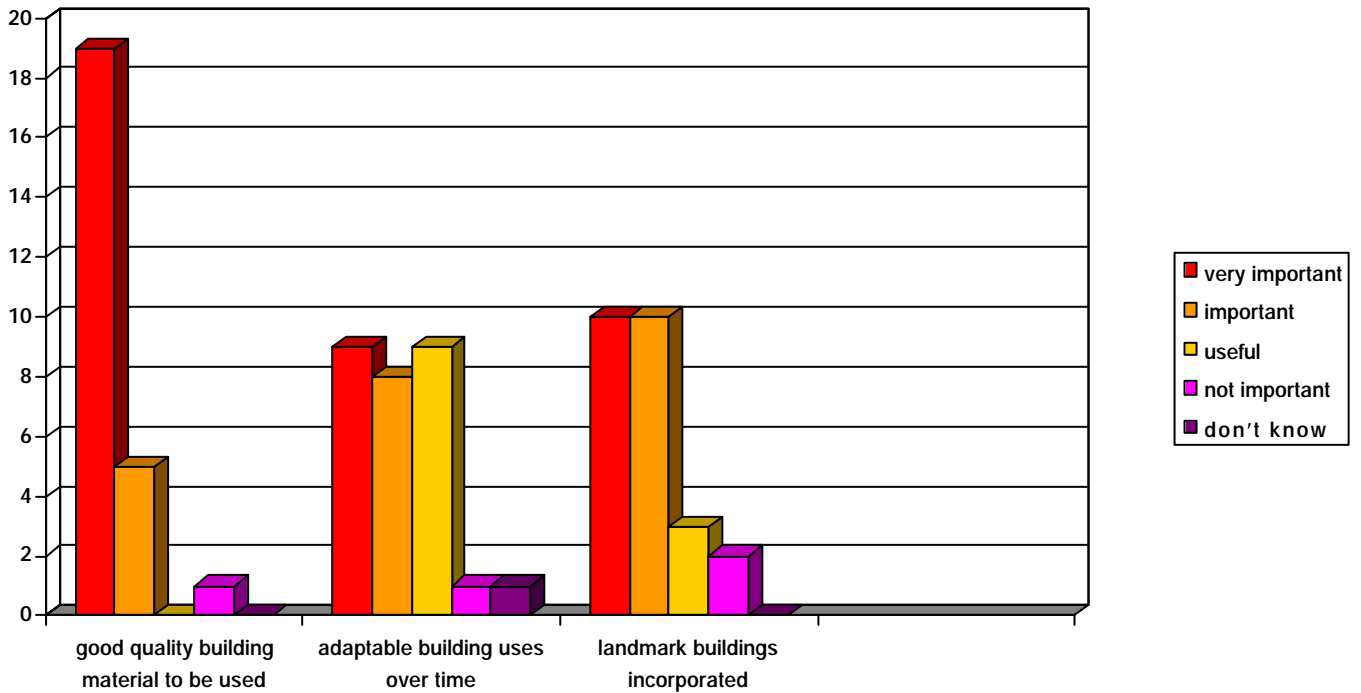
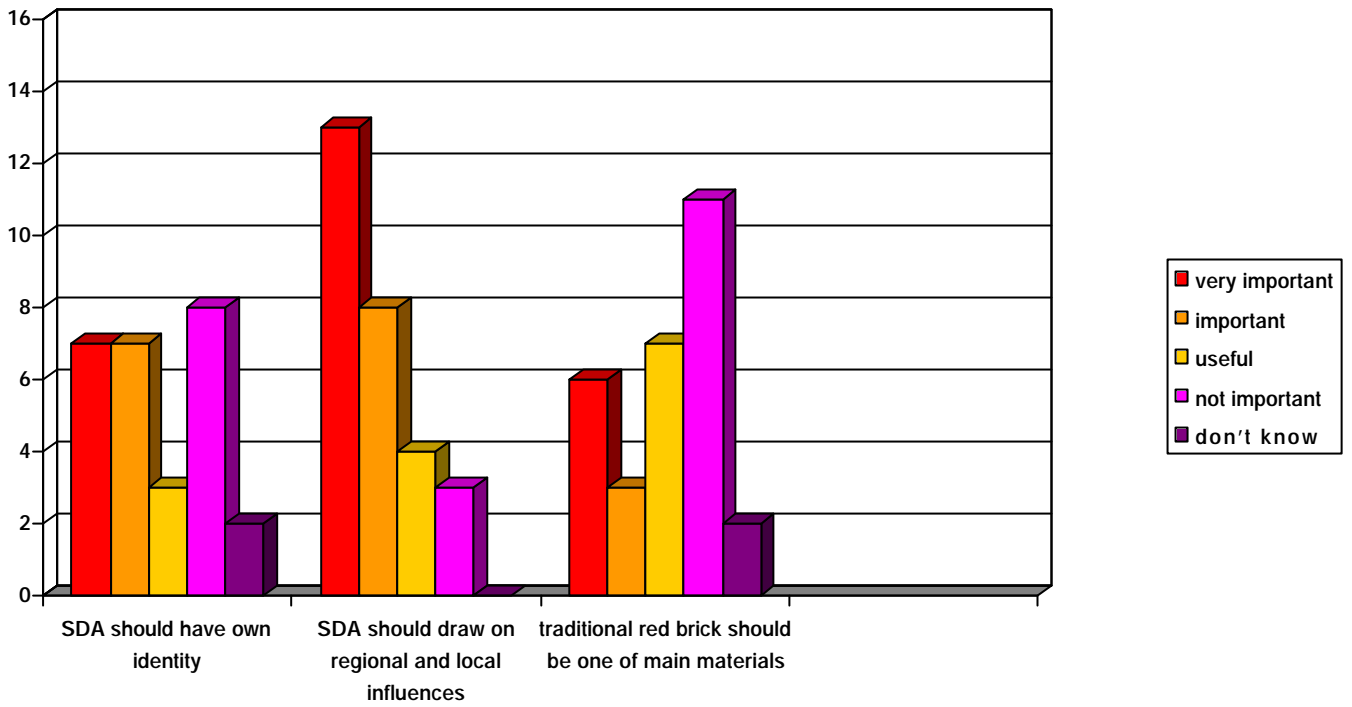
Built Environment Relationships



Movement



Architectural Character/Identity



Response to Public Consultation

The developer and his professional team have reviewed all the comments made at the focus groups and on the questionnaires, available at the Community Involvement Day and on the website.

The table below summarises the main issues raised during the consultation process and outlines the developer's response to these. The third column indicates how the consultation exercise will influence the architect in drawing up the detailed design codes for consideration by Swindon Borough Council.

Issue/comments	Developer's response	Design codes
<p>Built Environment Relationships:</p> <p><u>Housing</u> – A range of housing types is desirable but there was a mix of attitudes about whether social housing should be pepper-potted around the development or in clusters.</p> <p>There was also a desire for properties to have good-sized back gardens and privacy to be considered so houses don't overlook each other too much.</p> <p><u>Street networks</u> – There was general support for an easy to understand street network throughout the development, although concern was expressed that too much grid systems can feel over controlled.</p>	<p>Through the Sustainable Communities Agenda the government has advised that affordable housing is pepper-potted in clusters throughout the development to create the most successful communities.</p> <p>A mixture of properties will be provided, some with good sized back gardens, others with smaller back gardens to ensure a range of housing types are provided.</p> <p>The SDA's street pattern will be permeable and legible, allowing connectivity. The pattern is an organic, deformed grid rather than rigid grid system.</p>	<p>The code will set densities and house types per block. Densities will vary throughout the site.</p> <p>The code does not determine the design of the private realm; therefore back garden size will not be specified. Garden area is related to block density – for example, denser blocks will have smaller gardens, etc.</p> <p>The code will set the street pattern, which will be integrally designed as part of the traffic calming strategy.</p>

<p><u>Street life</u> –</p> <p>There was a desire for a street life with activities for day and evening. Swindon criticised for effectively shutting down after 6pm.</p> <p><u>Community spirit</u> –</p> <p>Several people expressed a desire for community spirit to somehow be designed into the development. It was suggested that encouraging people to walk would help foster community spirit, as would the reduction of cul-de-sacs so small groups didn't segregate themselves from the rest of the community. More community facilities were also requested.</p>	<p>As per the Land Use Master Plan, the SDA will be a mixed use development with the mix of uses clustered around the high street and local centres.</p> <p>The development team agree that creating a walkable neighbourhood would help to foster a community spirit. By walking as opposed to using a car individuals are more likely to interact with each other on the streets and within the public realm. Encouraging walkable neighbourhoods also creates a more attractive environment for the pedestrian without traffic dominating. The Master Plan includes community facilities such as play areas, which will be designated within the design code to ensure a mix of uses other than residential are provided.</p>	<p>The design code's development of the SDA will be consistent with the Land Use Master Plan.</p> <p>The street pattern will be free of cul-de-sacs and dead ends. The streets will be designed to give priority to the pedestrian.</p> <p>Local centres will always be within five minutes walk from all dwellings.</p>
<p><u>Green spaces</u> –</p> <p>The majority of people were in favour of incorporating as much green space as possible into the SDA. These included village greens, allotments and 'leisure gardens'. There was also a desire for a wild/natural to be kept in some of these. There was a feeling that public green spaces should be attractive to all age groups.</p>	<p>As per the Land Use Master Plan, nearly half of the overall site is reserved for open space of varying types. The developed area will be compact and dense to achieve this.</p>	<p>Following the Land Use Master Plan, the design code will require a range of green spaces to be provided from the more wild/natural local open spaces, to the more formal urban green squares.</p> <p>Green spaces with play facilities and a skate park will also be specified within the code.</p>

<p><u>Public squares</u> –</p> <p>There was support for public squares with a mix of uses in them so people would naturally gravitate towards them.</p> <p><u>Canal</u> –</p> <p>Local people are keen to see the canal as a vibrant part of the development with local pubs and cycle/footpaths beside them. A waterbus service was also mentioned.</p>	<p>Public squares with a mix of uses will be provided in South Lease, West Lease and Westlecott village, as per the Land Use Master Plan. These urban squares will be the local centre for each of the areas.</p> <p>The development team is consulting with English Nature to provide a suitable approach to treating the land adjacent to the existing and new canals.</p>	<p>The design code includes the setting out of urban squares at each local centre, and at the centre of West Lease.</p> <p>Where allowable by ecological constraints, the code will include foot/cycle ways as well as mixed and residential uses along the canal.</p>
<p>Movement:</p> <p><u>Car usage</u> –</p> <p>There was general support for encouraging people to use their cars less. It was felt this could be achieved by providing better public transport, cycle ways and footpaths. There was, however, a general agreement that some people need their cars in order to get about – e.g. the elderly, mobility impaired etc.</p> <p>It was felt that if services and daily shopping requirements could be within walking distance this would also help reduce the dependence on the private car.</p>	<p>The development will be designed to accommodate the car both in terms of through traffic and in terms of parking. The development takes into account the need for cars, however, it also tries to make alternative methods of transport more attractive.</p> <p>Local centres, within five minutes walk from all dwelling, will have shops and services.</p>	<p>The design code will require a mix of bus priority routes, footpaths, cycleways and road networks to be incorporated into the development, providing as wide a transport choice as possible for future users.</p> <p>The design code will include these local centres and their mixed uses.</p>

<p><u>Traffic calming</u> –</p> <p>Although some people were against the use of speed humps there was a general consensus that safety was important and reducing car speeds would help.</p> <p><u>Roundabouts</u> –</p> <p>There was a dislike of roundabouts from people living and working in Swindon with the general feeling that there are too many of them and they should only be included in the SDA when absolutely necessary.</p> <p><u>Parking</u> –</p> <p>There was a general agreement that the development would be more attractive if cars were parked out of sight rather than on the roads – suggestions included mews, alleyways and underground parking. There was also the suggestion that garages should be bigger so can get cars in. There was also concern that there wasn't enough parking on the SDA – that there should be more than 1.5spaces per household and sufficient visitor parking.</p>	<p>Traffic calming will be incorporated within the development by the careful setting out of the roads, intersections, and street pattern. Speed humps will not be used. The development team's highways engineers have worked carefully with the Highways Agency to ensure that safety within the design is paramount.</p> <p>The SDA has no proposals for roundabouts in the urban development areas.</p> <p>A variety of parking options will be provided within the SDA including on-street parking, mews and courtyard parking. Garages may also be provided throughout the development. Due to the comprehensive provision of other transport options, and to comply with government guidance, an average of 1.5 spaces per household (plus an additional allowance for visitors) will be provided.</p>	<p>The design codes will ensure that the street layout, which has been designed specifically to reduce the speed of traffic, will be implemented.</p> <p>The code will ensure that roundabouts are not used in the urban development areas.</p> <p>The design code will reflect the variety of parking options that are desired, in a comprehensive way. The code will ensure that local and national government guidance regarding parking requirements is met.</p>
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<p><u>Traffic –</u> There was concern that the SDA will put extra pressure on the existing road networks.</p>	<p>This was addressed in the outline planning application's Environmental Impact Assessment, Transport Assessment and Sustainability Statement.</p>	<p>The design code will not address areas outside the SDA.</p>
<p>Architectural Character and Identity:</p> <p><u>Identity of SDA –</u> There was a difference in opinions over whether the SDA should have its own identity or be an extension of Swindon.</p> <p><u>Future use of buildings –</u> It is believed that it is important to consider the future use of buildings, allowing for natural economic/cultural growth – particularly in public buildings.</p> <p><u>Architectural style –</u> There was general support for a mix of styles that complement each other (with Poundbury given as an example). There was, however, some concern about doing anything too modern that might look dated after a period of time. Steep roofscapes and strong facades, especially onto</p>	<p>The development team have tried to create a development that has an identity separate from that of Swindon but which is in keeping with the character of a Wiltshire town.</p> <p>The buildings along the high street and mixed use areas will be designed with flexibility in mind to allow for changes of use over time.</p> <p>The development team have used character studies of local Wiltshire towns and villages to inform the character of the development. The research completed will be used as the basis for the design code.</p>	<p>A section on architectural character will be included within the design codes and development is required to adhere to its criteria.</p> <p>The code will include these requirements. The residential building types the code will require have proven historically to be readily adaptable to changes in use.</p> <p>The code will not prescribe an architectural style, but rather character features. It will allow individual architects/developers to respond creatively within the codes. This will ensure variety within the buildings but an overall unity to the development.</p>

<p>public squares, were also favoured.</p> <p><u>Materials</u> –</p> <p>There was a mixed reaction to the use of red bricks on the development, although Goddard Avenue was sited as a good example if red brick is to be used.</p>	<p>The SDA will not be predominately red brick. A mixture of materials, including various colours of brick, painted brick, render, and timber will be used.</p>	<p>The design code will stipulate which materials would be appropriate for each different building type and location within the development, thus restricting any possible monotony.</p>
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What next?

The table below provides details of the next stages in the design code process:

Timing	Activity
December 2004	Submission of the design codes for the SDA to Swindon Borough Council
December 2004/January 2005	Swindon Borough Council's consultation on the design code
Early February 2005	Publication of revised design codes
Mid February 2005	Public exhibition on the revised design codes
End February 2005	SDA design codes referred to the planning committee for approval

Conclusion

The consultation exercise undertaken by Taylor Woodrow has been part of an ongoing attempt to work in genuine partnership with the people of Swindon and key stakeholders to bring forward the best possible scheme for this important site.

The consultation findings have proved very useful in informing the architects of key issues that are important to the people of Swindon. Where possible, comments received will be incorporated into the final design codes for the Southern Development Area.

Key messages from the consultation included:

- The desire for the SDA to reflect the architecture of the surrounding Wiltshire area, while avoiding rows of identical, box-shaped houses.
- The importance of having a good street system and public open spaces that will engender a strong community spirit.
- The need to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by making them an attractive alternative to the private car.

Appendix One

Questionnaire

We would appreciate it if you could fill in this questionnaire to help us gain a better understanding of how the people of Swindon would like to see the design codes for the Southern Development Area structured.

For the following three sections, please tick the box that most reflects how you would rate the statements below.

Built Environment Relationships (streetscape, frontage, scale, mix of uses)

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Useful</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
There should be a mix of public space types – from central squares to green areas and well formed streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public spaces should be attractive to all ages groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating an active street life via shops, cafes etc will make the area more vibrant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The canal should be used as a social space, with waterside activities – eg cyclepaths, pubs etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having facilities within walking distance will encourage community spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The development should have an identifiable centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It should be easy to find your way around the development through a logical network of streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There should be a mix of accommodation types (flats, family houses etc) and tenures (private, social, rental) to create a mixed community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Movement (transport, highways, parking, canal)

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Useful</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
Being able to walk to local facilities will make people less reliant on their car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing off street parking will enhance the appearance of the development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car parking should be provided in mews, alleys and garages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enforcing speed restrictions will help improve road safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating well lit, safe streets will encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of the private car should be discouraged by making walking, cycling and public transport a more attractive alternative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Architectural Character and Identity

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Useful</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
The SDA should be have its own, distinct identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The SDA should draw on regional and local influences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The traditional red brick of Swindon should be used as one of the main building materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good quality building materials should be incorporated into the site's development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The use of buildings should be adaptable to allow for the changing needs of the community over a period of time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landmark buildings should be included in the development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Many thanks for filling in the questionnaire. If you would like to expand on any of the statements made above or have any additional comments/suggestions please write them in the box below. Additional comments sheets are available on request.

If you would like to be kept up to date on the SDA design codes, please fill in your details below:

Name

.....

Address

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.....

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.....

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If you do not have time to fill in this questionnaire today, please send the completed form back to Design Codes Questionnaire, c/o PPS, 9 North Court, The Courtyard, Bristol, BS32 4NQ or fax to 01454 275636 by the 27 September 2004.

Appendix Two

Comments from Focus Groups

Group One (16 August 2004)

Attendees: 12 people living within one mile of the Southern Development Area
Facilitator: Richard Evans
Observers: Martin Trehwella (Swindon Borough Council); Nick Sedgwick (Taylor Woodrow); John Simpson and Christopher Pizzi (John Simpson & Partners); Charles St George (PPS); Tom Farrow (Trench Farrow)

Built Environment Relationships

- Should be a mixture of types, there isn't a real character to Swindon
- Swindon had character of open space – Front Garden was part of that
- Red brick style – don't like identical looking buildings without character. West Swindon doesn't look solid
- Swindon hasn't got good character in first place. Needs to be spaced out
- Character of Old Town – style to spill down into new development
- Swindon doesn't have its own character but can take bits out of Old Town. Not copying but taking aspects of what it looks like into the rest of Swindon
- Character is rows of terraced houses
- Perception of new housing is can't find way around them. Want features within landscape to define area. Canal, central square, cathedral etc
- Green space in with buildings
- Some green bits dense and some natural habitats
- Frontage of buildings around public space define its liveliness rather than the old versus modern architecture. Some areas could be ultra modern if they have good function
- Trees are very important to giving character
- Like idea of life spilling out into pavement but want quiet squares as well
- Important to have a mix. Need to accommodate facilities with children and cafes for families and young professionals. Must avoid no-go areas and 'yobbos' spilling out onto street after 8pm. Do this badly in Swindon
- Problem is that shops on the continent open late. Swindon dead after 6pm. People living above. Lots of doors
- Partly is the culture of the country. Greenfield site cannot be sold as market town like Marlborough
- Allowing people to use space
- Facades of buildings are important. Building heights not so much of a problem if well designed
- Old Town gardens with bandstand – something to give it character. Use the natural landscape but give it character that the rest of Swindon is sadly lacking
- Opportunity to develop bits similar to Marlborough and Cirencester. Art and craft workshops. Walks by the water. Real potential in the area#
- The site is a nice part of Swindon. Don't want Matalan, Walmart of North Swindon
- Worried about business units. Need to be sympathetic to surrounding area
- Smaller units will attract local employment rather than big office blocks
- Bigger employment units at odds with pedestrian friendly policy

Movement

- Can't cycle in Swindon and want to get people out of cars
- Safety is a big consideration. Example of Holland where people can walk and cycle in safety
- Should restrict parking on street. Dangerous - roads are wide and straight with cars speeding alongside them. Parking underneath the housing is one solution. Get cars off the street
- Wonderful to go somewhere where didn't have to drive. Cars hidden away
- Lovely if kids could play in streets. Cycle to shops. Very attractive if didn't have to take the car
- Opportunity to design in age where car not dominant
- Council parking areas underground
- People use garages to store things and not to park. Communal parking spaces rather than garages
- Narrow streets work where hustle and bustle and activity
- Make the canal a focal point. Flooding in area in Old Town with recent storms
- Town with history better suited by pedestrian areas. In modern towns, tends to be dead. People more sedentary. Don't think it should be pedestrianised at night
- Attractive parts of Italy ban cars
- Too many roundabouts

Architectural Character and Identity

- Swindon doesn't have distinctive architectural character other than railway village – matured separately
- Hate modern 'Tudor' houses
- Tree houses - green. Georgian
- Needs to have its own character that builds on Old Town but moves away from that style of architecture
- Don't want town of identical houses. Change roof and frontage to give variety
- Crescent in Bath – curving away and looking upwards to the escarpment
- Different angles of houses but doesn't give it overall character. Variety of design, style and materials needed
- Broome manor good example
- Problem with visitor parking – chain across it
- Have drives to get cars off roads
- Get cars off the street in most appropriate fashion for type of housing
- Against on-street parking. Cars out of sight
- Wonderful opportunity to sell site as a car free and pedestrian friendly facility. Special place. Do something special and make it up front
- Character of area should be limited use of cars
- How can you create ambient environment next to motorway? How can you create peace and quiet next to M4? Is there a through route from Croft Road to the other end?
- Public services needed – schools, hospitals, emergency services etc
- Smaller blocks of apartments rather than tower blocks
- Some good examples of high density that works. Railway villages
- Higher density means more green and more shops
- Traffic impact on Old Town and Croft Road – views at exhibition taken into account

Group Two (17 August 2004)

Attendees: 12 people living further afield, who may be interested in moving to area
Facilitator: Richard Evans
Observers: Martin Trehwella (Swindon Borough Council); Nick Sedgwick (Taylor Woodrow); John Simpson and Christopher Pizzi (John Simpson & Partners); Johanna Hatton (PPS); Tom Farrow (Trench Farrow)

Built Environment Relationships

- Narrow frontages – not destination shopping – broken up frontages rather than vast blocks
- Use natural landscape to compliment height variations
- Distinction between flats and houses – like shops to be distinct – needs to be done right to get mix – will keep area lively in the evenings
- Variety of uses – Marlborough Square works well
- Central communal area – safety important to it – mix of all types of people so not just gangs of kids – need to have careful balance
- Not big imposing buildings
- Buildings around squares
- Wide open spaces with character – something interesting to look at – not bland and dull
- Life important – big concrete buildings sap life out of area

Movement

- Walking encourages community
- Road humps generally disliked - traffic calming important in residential areas
- Compromise between pedestrianised zones and those where can take cars to pick up heavy stuff
- Car restrictions in high street shopping areas
- Supermarket schemes whereby will box it up and free delivery if over £x
- Security issue of remote parking
- Canal – eg of city canal network with water buses – public spaces – some area around the canal for people to walk alongside + a pub
- No cul-de-sacs = isolated pockets and no big, overall community feel
- Easily navigable areas – not just huge housing estate with no landmarks
- Too many roundabouts in Swindon – but better than lights – should only be put where necessary

Architectural Character/Identity

- Building materials – natural, no red bricks (lego bricks!)
- If done properly (eg Goddard Avenue) would work
- Swindon = lots of red brick. But not sure it is important to have red brick on the SDA
- Place for modern materials but big concern about it looking like West Swindon – eg boxes all looking the same
- Design is the issue more than the materials used
- SDA not the place for a modern landmark
- Suitability of the design for the location is important
- Height debate – up to four storeys acceptable – don't want to obscure views of escarpment from M4
- Important to include lots of variety
- Space in front of houses for gardens important – so not straight onto road/pavements
- Bigger pavements
- Distinctive classical buildings
- Trees/green spaces = universal endorsement

Group Three (25 August 2004)

Attendees: 18 people representing local groups and organisations in Swindon
Facilitator: Richard Evans
Observers: Martin Trehwella (Swindon Borough Council); Nick Sedgwick (Taylor Woodrow); John Simpson and Christopher Pizzi (John Simpson & Partners); Charles St George (PPS); Tom Farrow (Trench Farrow)

Built Environment Relationships

- Canal – need to go somewhere and have boats to be canal – should go to Swindon town centre. Should have a marina of some kind with nightlife - eg theatres, pubs and restaurants. A good example is Stratford – wonderful atmosphere. A waterbus service would also be good. Need to have a cycle route next to them.
- Public squares need something in them. The Octagon in Swindon only has offices - need a mix of uses including houses in them. A mix ensures it is used all day. Not zoned development.
- People don't necessarily want to travel to a designated place of work anymore. Live/work – prefer to work where they live – to create a sense of community.
- Needs to feel safe – where concentration of clubs can be frightening at night. In an entertainment area it needs to be controlled to stop it overwhelming the area – mix will only happen if it works in commercial terms
- Including hotels in the development would help keep the place alive in the evening
- Like permeability to a place – and also the ability to know whether you are going in the right direction - legibility?
- Only want alleyways if there are houses either side, and they are short and you can see a way out at the end – that way they are safer.
- Can you limit the number of single uses (e.g bars, offices) that are concentrated in one area through a design code?
- Need a mix of housing types to attract different age groups – want grannies as well as teenagers
- The social housing needs to be pepper-potted throughout the development.
- Think it should be a little town in its own right that doesn't need to have great access to the rest of Swindon. It is in Wroughton, not Swindon. Think of them as separate entities – needs it's own identity too.

Movement

- How will the villages of the new development be integrated into existing Swindon?
- Poundbury is a good example of how to camouflage vehicles.
- To have a mixed community you do need cars – for older and mobility impaired people as well as parents with children. But also a good quality transport system.
- More use of garages and hiding cars behind the houses. Off road parking is essential – residents parking doesn't work
- Could develop a row of terrace houses with an archway to the back and parking in the back gardens.
- This development should give 70% priority to cycles and pedestrians and 30% for vehicles making necessary journeys.
- It's absolutely essential to give pedestrians priority in this development.
- It can't be rocket science to make a community where it is easier to cycle and walk then when it's made easy people will do it.

- Issue of cycle routes is very important - part of the No. 45 National Cycle network – make more of it.
- How will the new development/villages be integrated into existing Swindon?

Architectural Character and Identity

- Buildings must be flexible to allow for change over time, as community needs change.
- We need to think of the new development as a separate entity with its own identity.
- Doesn't have to be one style but a variety of styles that relate to each other.
- Modern designs by their very nature go out of fashion, a house that has been there for 200 years is part of the vernacular.
- Idea of narrow shop frontages is good.
- No monstrosities
- Poundbury has a variety of styles that are sympathetic to each other.
- Could we have a crescent now and again in the development – a bold gesture – like a Nash terrace?
- If you ask someone what the character of new Swindon is, it is lack of quality and mediocrity.
- 100 year old houses are interesting because of their detail – devil is in the detail. Modern buildings are so often bland.
- Buildings are so mean nowadays, windowsills are not even big enough.
- Character is key to this development.
- Could we have landmark buildings – possibly designed through competitions?
- Existing buildings on site should be allowed to stay, even if they aren't particularly of merit, to add to character and to add to the idea of building throughout history.
- Should be a variety of materials, not just brick.
- Can we have Georgian windows? We want oblong windows not those square ones like all modern houses, and not plastic. Windows are so important. Can they be set back and not flat?
- Roofs also very important – need proper roofs for roofscapes. In Wiltshire we have lovely steep roofs – stone tiled. Need to be careful with the colour.
- We don't want too much hard surfacing. Adds to flooding – prefer gravel to hard surfacing.
- Doesn't need architectural link between new development and Swindon.
- Old Town was built on quarries of limestone – red brick came later – want a mixture within the scheme
- Don't want rows of red brick terraces. Want an individual place in itself
- We want somewhere we can be proud of. Design form over function.
- Modern designs do go out of fashion. Like glass and concrete in isolation. Need a cross of styles and designs.
- Decent modern is okay as long as there are other houses with details – it's the blandness of modernism which is the problem.
- Poundbury – a wonderful mix of stone, brick, colour, roofs – all different but all mixed together.
- Will building performance be included in the design codes?
- Don't think a particular style is necessary but it needs character. Place on own merits – shouldn't try to be anything else

Appendix 3

Comments from Questionnaire

Built Environment Relationships

- Instead of the doughnut effect of development, the heart of Swindon should be re-peopled
- Try to avoid houses being randomly aligned, so that someone is always facing into another's back garden
- I thought the development was supposed to have 3 identifiable centres – Southleaze, Westleaze and Westlecot
- The development should have a public building as the identifiable centre
- No development around Coate or south of M4 to spoil the Downs area
- Easy to understand street system – corner shop rather than complete emphasis on village centres
- Streets and dwellings - terraces are good but too much grid system leads to over 'controlled' impression
- Important for future community to feel part of the design code – need a view from the escarpment, to help identify the future build in the environment
- As much green space as possible please - picnic areas and woodland walks
- The green spaces should have a wild/natural feel to them. After carrying out surveys in other areas of Swindon local people valued their areas for their countryside rural feel. They valued seeing deer, foxes and birds in particular kingfishers and songbirds
- Small village greens
- Is anywhere earmarked for allotments or leisure gardens?
- Public spaces should be attractive to all age groups, but not necessarily put all together and there should be different spaces for different needs
- Green areas/parks would make the area more attractive
- I think it is as important to have enough space in a back garden as it is to have public open space. I don't agree with high density housing. I would rather have parking near the front door, not at the back of the house – if you have children or heavy shopping you don't want to be tramping through a soaking wet, cold garden at times in the middle of winter. I think practicality is more important than how something appears.
- Variety and safety are the most important aspects for me
- Make best of the canal to enhance waterside areas, houses and public green spaces, cafes etc.
- Develop the waterside into an attractive public space (see Nottingham, Birmingham, Liverpool) eg. Waterfront bars and cafes.
- Widen river for premium usage such as fishing, boating
- Design Codes - Castle Combe, Bath Circus. These sites are out of context and inappropriate for site. Wrong concept
- Having recently driven through the Dorchester 'new town' (castle view), it would be lovely to have the new development like that!
- Tewksbury. Is a good model. Streets should be narrowed and give priority to people, markets and public activities. Goddard Avenue model is too period and more urban than the SDA should be. This is effectively a large village/small market town OUTSIDE Swindon and does not look toward Swindon as its role model. It looks physically in concept towards Wootton Bassett/Malmesbury

- Mixed uses at ground floor - Sloane square, Duke of York development is good
- Have mixed usage ie, vibrant usage at ground floor, eg. Shops/bars.with housing /offices above
- Community centres needed. Sporting facilities too; tennis courts, basketball, skateboard, swimming
- Street architecture such as specially commissioned works of art to give character to the area
- The number of pubs should be limited to prevent drunken youths to spoil this facility. Areas should be family friendly
- The development should have a community hall for local residents to rent for meetings etc.
- There should be bungalows in the mix of accommodation types. Not all retired and disabled people wish to live in a flat. Many prefer a small private garden with space for mobility transport. As people live longer and alone, and wish to be nearer to their family. Small areas of bungalows should be included to enable this. We don't feel that this section of the community is catered for, and no consideration has been given for people wishing to live in an area with neighbours in the same age group. This applies particularly to retired residents. With the closure of numerous sheltered homes etc. we feel this is important to enable them to have friends next door

Movement

- Development in Swindon area should stop now until a sensible cohesive traffic plan and community spirit is developed. The Wilts & Berks canal & Swindon Stroud canal should be brought back into the town centre to create a green lung through the town and to encourage visitors. The Steam Museum should be linked with the Swindon Cricklade Railway to encourage visitors to 'steam'
- Please develop the canal area with cafes, activities etc. Bear in mind the noise and pollution if too near the motorway, the noise levels are very high now
- Mixed use and employment to west - The tunnel and new roundabout to the south of M4 will be vulnerable to congestion if the employment site goes to HGV served use. Does the traffic modelling for this site calculate 1 HGV road space as 3, allowing for cars. This roundabout could suffer some problems as J16 does now. Better site for high tech labour intensive use
- I was still a little perturbed to see in your plans that the car still seems to be the main feature. Should this be the case as the road system cannot take it shouldn't public transport be more to the fore?
- Adequate footpaths, eg rights of way are very important – ie keeping the connections between development and Wroughton
- On the development, there is a big problem with car parking. SDA is a satellite development that is a long way from the town centre. Not only should the 1.5 cars per house guideline be increased but a serious effort must be made to provide visitor parking. A halfway decent party can easily attract 10 or 15 cars. The parking for these cars need not be very close but it must exist somewhere
- We are very concerned about traffic and construction traffic hitting Wroughton, this needs to be sorted out very quickly, not 5 years in, as quoted by senior manager. Please take note there are deer there. Please be aware
- Traffic – a. The plan for a road under the M4 leading AWAY from the development is ridiculous. What is needed is a road which leads directly to Swindon e.g over/under the railway onto 4 Western Way.

- b. The road via Rushey Platt should be widened and be available for all traffic at all times.
- c. The traffic impact on Croft Road and Pipers Way has been underestimated
- As an owner of property shown on the plan as coloured light grey, and designated as land for the most part left disturbed. I am concerned that Mill Lane is to be changed to proposed bridleway. At present I can drive to my property and also bring in agriculture machinery to service my property. Can you assure me that my right of access will not be disturbed and that the metalled road will be maintained? On the plan there seems to be no access to proposed bridleway for vehicles etc.
 - It is very important that walkways and cycleways through to Old Town, to the Maninston area retail outlets and other facilities are with access further onto Rodbourne/outlet villas
 - An area of land suitable for a rapid light transport/rail link station. In the Blagrove area, SDA side of railway link which should/most also be available from Westlea/Toothill areas
 - The proposed link road to J16 under the motorway should be rethought to go to J16 on the Blagrove roundabout under or over the railway, to eliminate cross cutting by traffic at J16 to the bottom of Croft Road causing gridlock
 - Croft road should be 'access only' to residents and for Park & Ride buses only and traffic from and SDA Development directed along Pipers Way
 - WALKING – Don't expect many people to walk more than about 400 yards, especially with shopping bags!
 - The site should be integrated with the rest of Swindon by having a road that links across the railway, and a possible rail halt/station, instead of tunnelling the M4 which would link with J16 and so encourage more car journeys. Also have adequate cycle and walk ways to Swindon
 - Comment on potential gridlock - Croft Rd/Old Town, difficulty in access and egress from side roads off Croft etc.
 - Car parking should be provided in underground parks
 - I know that your remit is the actual development, not highways, but I am concerned that these villages/towns will not be sustainable independent settlements if they have inadequate links with Swindon. The present route of the SRR does not channel traffic north to link with Swindon but sends it East/West, has been changed from the original scheme of some years ago which linked with Great Western Way, with no consultation at all is routed south of the motorway which we were expressly promised would not happen
 - Regarding the encouragement of people to walk, rather than use cars, what about the elderly, infirm and very young? It's not always practical to assume everyone can/should walk
 - The site should be intergrated with the rest of Swindon. It is preferable to have road links across the railway, instead of tunnelling under the M4
 - Using cars is individual choice, which would depend on public transport provided in area

Architectural Character and Identity

- Due consideration should be given to a quality designed community school
- It's important to consider the future use of buildings – allowing for natural economic/cultural growth
- Please make this development an example in architecture and attractiveness
- Please use stone and flint coloured wash walls etc. as well as red brick
- If there are 3 distinct developments, why identify?
- The traditional red brick of Swindon from a distance would look horrendous

- Red brick – partly, a mix of materials is better as it gives a more acceptable overall view
- Although red brick is a traditional building material here, some beautiful houses can be made with fake stone and even timber
- If you have to ruin more fields, at least do so discreetly and politely. NO rows of red boxes with ginger roofs, no ‘outlets’ full of Pizza Huts and chip papers...and above all, some way of containing traffic so that Old Town is not completely gridlocked at all hours (instead of for about 6 hours a day, as at present)
- Landmarks – yes, but not high or glitzy ‘carbuncles’ that would be out of place here
- Only public and commercial buildings should be adaptable to allow for the changing needs of the community over a period of time
- Encourage energy efficient design, but this does not mean having turf roofs, as I read in the paper!
- Definitely NO steel and glass monstrosities, that look out of date immediately after they’re finished, and cost a fortune to heat in winter and air condition in summer. Just like where I work!
- House should be in keeping with area ie, Okus Road, Westlecot Road, Croft Road
- If possible householders should be responsible for the outside appearance of their property ie driveway stones spilling onto the carriageway, hedges kept trimmed
- The traditional red brick of Swindon should not necessarily be used as one of the main building materials, because these are supposed to be sustainable towns/villages which would be better constructed using models of local villages/small towns – eg Wootton Bassett, Wroughton
- Off street parking should not be blocks of paving
- Be adaptable over time to different needs etc, ie community/public buildings
- Have prominent landmark buildings to give the area character eg. Conference centre or hotel
- It is important that houses and flats are large enough, between 2000/3000 sq. feet. Bedrooms should have room for more than a bed. Children should be able to play in their rooms, ie room to lay out a train set
- Garages should be 3m wide so that one can open car doors and get out

Miscellaneous

- All homes to be fitted with water sprinkler systems to improve fire safety
- Consideration for recycled materials
- Make use of passive solar design, everyone loves a south facing garden with a patio
- Housing within SDA should be environmentally friendly with self sufficient of electricity (solar) water (recycling and rainwater use) with adequate areas for recycling waste i.e aluminium, paper, plastics, etc. on site so that journeys to Swindon centre are eliminated
- The development should incorporate green building design with renewable energy use where possible. Leaflets should be provided on how to reduce rubbish and on composting and the developer could provide a cheap compost bin offer when residents move in. A designated compost bin area could be designed into the gardens
- A chance to comment - buildings to produce and conserve energy, conserve and re-use of water. Have storage space for recyclables
- Football/sports stadium possible location adjacent Park and Ride site

- Swindon, apart from Wood St. and some other parts of Old Town, is not attractive and more and more people from attractive surrounding areas are actively avoiding it
- Do you realise, by the way, that the area is full of badgers – and badgers just love digging under foundations? Personally, I'm on the side of the badger.
- This development should not go ahead because a). the Health Impact Assessment has been completely ignored by Swindon Borough Council, about the infant mortality rate on low-lying wet boggy areas. Swindon Borough Council have a conflict of interest because they voted on the land that they own 75% of. b). the causes of traffic impact and pollution with traffic congestion
- I do not agree with the development on this site, everyone knows it is a flood plain, and a land slip area, the seam of silica sand is like grease on a floor, the escarpment has been slipping for years, Pleydell Road has a kink in it where part of the road slid down the hill. As this development slides into the valley it will give more land to build on I suppose
- There is an abundance of rare wildlife and flowers that will disappear, you can build new ponds but no way can you make animals move and stay put
- The developers play down the flood danger, but those of us who have been here many years and walked the land know different, they seem to think the canal will solve the flooding, but it won't. It is a dead end both ends, the overflow from it drains into stream W29/2, this floods West Swindon as well.
- The stream that runs through the Front Garden, ref.W29/2, Swin Bourne, has been reclassified as a red high flood risk by the Environment Agency, area 06/1, map W29
- Has anyone considered the health problems? Infant mortality for one, low in Highworth a dry area, 4 miles away in Lechlade it is higher, wet with river Thames running through
- Homeowners will not be able to get insurance living on a flood plain, that is if they are told about it, when they have bought the properties it will be too late.
- Why did Swindon Council fight tooth and nail to stop Wiltshire County Council from developing this site then when it is given over to them sell at the first opportunity?