

An Approach to Auditing Quality using Designing Streets

Why?

Quality Auditing can simply be a sequence of checks to inform the design process and provide opportunities for developers to explain their reasoning. A process focusses on integrated design when recording the decision-making process can help to deliver and maintain high quality places, as well as reduce repetition:

Previous approach with multiple audits	v	New approach to auditing quality based on the 18 aspects of design within 'Designing Streets'	
Non-motorised User/ Walking & Cycle Audit, Accessibility & Equality Audit	v	Pedestrians and Cyclists	
Functionality Audit	v	A SINGLE QUALITY AUDIT AGAINST DESIGNING STREETS	
Visual Quality & Amenity Audit, Street Lighting Audit, Street Character Review	v		Block structure, public transport, junction types & arrangements, service and emergency vehicles, connections within a place, Context and Character, streets for people, reducing clutter
Parking Review	v		Integrated parking
Drainage Report	v		Drainage, utilities
Maintenance Audit	v		Materials, planting
Road Safety Audit	v		Achieving appropriate traffic speed
Traffic Generation Report	v		Connections to wider networks, walkable neighbourhoods, orientation
Community Use Audit	v		

10+ audits	v	1 unifying audit
Which audit gets priority?	v	A balanced approach
Duplication and overlap	v	DS is broken down into 18 design aspects that cover everything.
Planning/ roads assessed separately	v	Planning/ roads (layout) assessed in parallel
Design of overall 'place' gets missed	v	Streets contribute to places

Who?

A QA should be begun by the developer's team and shared with local authority officers during pre-application discussions. Engineers make value judgements on appearance, functionality and safety, but collaborative checks by a professional team will verify balanced decisions. This QA process encourages the team to engage as adept positive 'placemakers'. A planning case officer and officers responsible for Roads Construction Consent (RCC) should keep a summary of key stages on file to form a decision-making trail.

When?

QA should be an iterative part of the design, construction and stewardship process. The summary report could be updated a few times but should at least be submitted along with an aligned planning/ RCC application. The same information will sum up the layout of roads/streets and public spaces.

How?

1. Briefing: QA begins by checking against design objectives. Briefs for works that impact on the design of street should relate objectives to the **6 Qualities of Successful Places** as defined in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

2. Design stages: As design progresses, assessing the quality of street design depends on breaking the 6 qualities down into Designing Streets' **18 'key considerations' or aspects of design**. The following four steps describe how to complete a **Quality Audit Summary Report** template:

Step A Project: Refer to brief and annotated plan/'B-Plan to locate specific design issues that the QA deals with.

Step B Qualities: Summarise and record a balanced assessment of each aspect of design, related to the 6 qualities.

Step C Audits: Summarise/ link other audits (part of an overall balanced view – they have no superior status) e.g:
A Road Safety Audit (RSA), if required, to build on **achieving appropriate traffic speed**. Agree scope, identify potential safety problems and assess actions to reduce risk. Included summaries of decisions to mitigate residual conflicts. A **risk assessment** (severity/ likelihood) may be appended.
A Transport Assessment, if required, will appraise the operational implications of development. Mitigations may be physical changes to existing connected networks, or travel plans.
An Equalities Audit, with due regard to the Equalities Act 2010.
Other Audits, depending on the scale and nature of a project. Some aspects such as drainage or materials specification may be agreed in principal at planning then supplemented later.

Step D Assess: End on a balanced judgement, reached by collaborative working, on overall street design quality.

3. Construction: A QA review should ensure recommendations have been taken on-board and objectives delivered. The findings from a post-completion RSA (stage 3), if applicable, can be taken into account.

4. Maintenance and Monitoring: During the maintenance period a review should establish if the objectives and any expected changes in road user behaviour have been achieved. This could include the conclusions of a stage 4 RSA.

Quality Audit Summary Report Template

This QA Summary report template can be used at various stages of the development or design process. It should demonstrate what considerations have been given to the design aspects of **Designing Streets** and provide an audit trail. Summaries of checks against each aspect of design should be added at each stage as far as possible, although street detail matters may not be auditable until later stages. Other specialist technical reports, if required, by a project, should be appended.

Project name/ site:
Local authority area:

Project brief

Outline the aims and objectives of the proposed development with a focus the design of the roads and streets...

Step A: Project
Reference brief and B-Plan to identify issues

Plan in context

Paste in a layout of the proposal showing its extents and the primary routes through. A plan should use the same base as used in the street analysis tool (under development) that uses B-Plan technique.

Outline the main features of the proposal appropriate to the audit at each stage.

For street structure, in particular, the connections to existing street networks to accommodate future adaptation

For street layout or detail (more for later stages) append site sections and detailed layouts for main junctions or spaces as necessary

Aspects of Design – Street Structure

Step B: Qualities
Summarise and record a balanced assessment of each design aspect

Pedestrians and cyclists

Sum up how the proposal places pedestrians first & is inclusive...

Connections to wider networks

Sum up how the proposal integrates with surrounding networks...

Connections within a place

Sum up how the proposal contains good connectivity for all modes and users...

Block Structure

Sum up how the distinctive form of the proposal allows good navigation...

Walkable neighbourhoods

Sum up how streets are configured to walkable access to local amenities...

Public transport

Sum up how public transport has been considered at an early stage

Context and character

Sum up how streets derive value from context and variety is present...

Orientation

Sum up how street and open space maximise environmental benefits...

Aspects of Design – Street Layout

Achieving appropriate traffic speed

Sum up how driver behaviour to reduce speeds is influenced by the proposal...

Junction types and arrangements

Sum up how pedestrian needs, and context, are put first...

Streets for people

Sum up how streets/ spaces within the proposal encourage social interaction...

Integrated parking

Sum up how parking needs are met by a variety of means to provide flexibility

Service and emergency vehicles

Sum up how they are accommodated without dominating the layout...

Aspects of Design – Street Detail

Drainage

Sum up how appropriate SUDS techniques help minimise impacts...

Utilities

Sum up the accommodation of services without determining the layout ...

Planting

Sum up how natural features are integrated and foster biodiversity...

Materials

Sum up contextual specifications as distinctive durable and maintainable...

Reducing clutter

Sum up how signs, marking, lighting and street furniture feature

Additional information (if required)

Step C: Audits
Summarise/ link to additional audits, if necessary

Transport Assessment

Building on 'connections...' – sum up the transport appraisal & mitigations such as physical changes to existing connected networks, or travel plans...

Road safety audit

Building on 'achieving appropriate traffic speed' - sum up additional safety issues and append more detailed information as necessary...

Accessibility and Equality audit

Provide details of key features that ensure the scheme will be functional for people with impaired mobility or other disabilities. Demonstrate that the scheme complies with the Equalities Act 2010

Additional audit(s)

Only as necessary where they impact on overall quality of street design, list then add links or append...

Overall quality assessment of street proposals

Where conflicts arise between different areas of the audit, summarise decision-making leading to a proposed solution.

Refer to multidisciplinary meetings and append a balanced risk assessment with likelihood and severity of the most significant residual risks, if appropriate.

Judging overall quality is especially important at planning application stage when Designing Streets is a material consideration...

Step D: Assess
Form a balanced judgement: streets as part of a place

date	project stage	auditor	notes

Distinctive	Safe & pleasant	Easy to move around	Welcoming	Adaptable	Resource efficient
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