

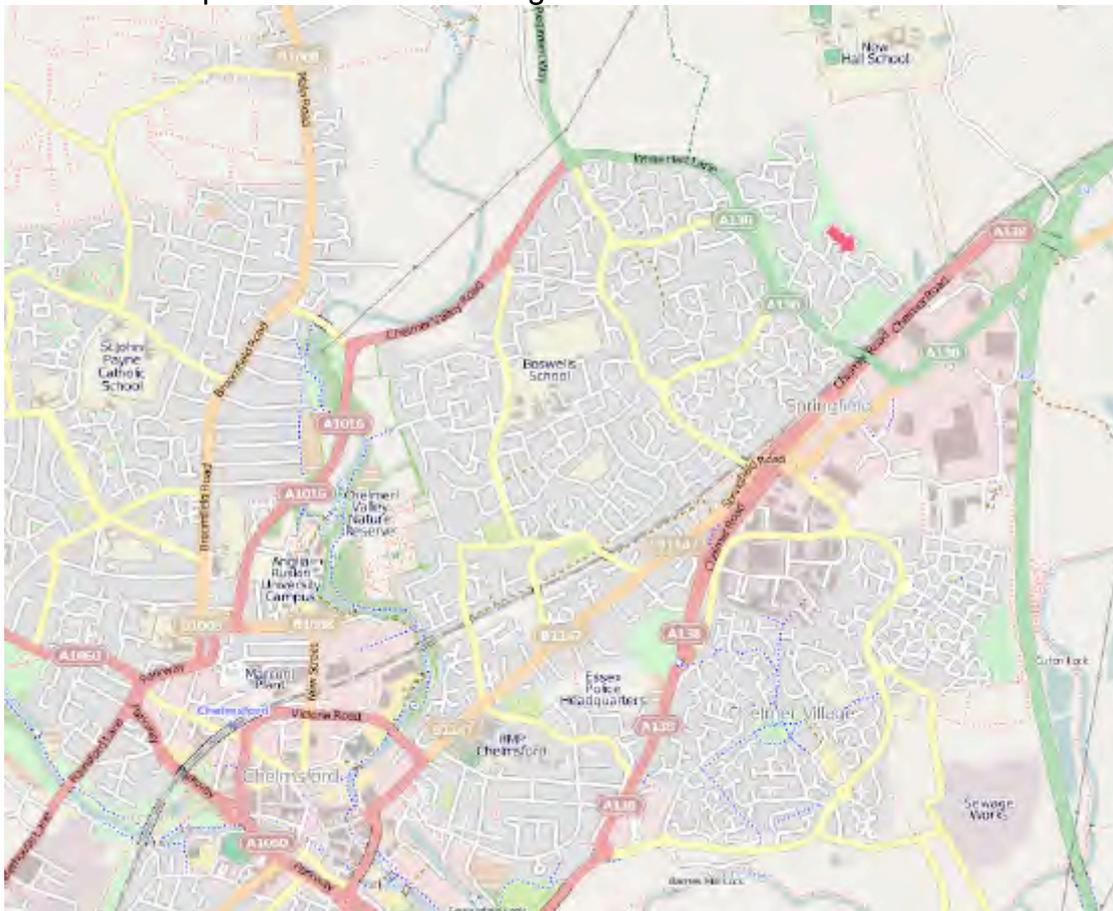
# MANUAL FOR STREETS CASE STUDY

## Chelmsford Beaulieu Park

### 1. Key information

- The case study scheme is part of the Beaulieu Park urban extension on the northeast edge of Chelmsford, Essex. The scheme, known as Sovereigns, was planned and built by Wimpey and has 91 dwellings on 3.56 hectares with a gross density within the site of 25.6 dwellings per hectare. Phase One of the urban extension (as shown on the plans below) comprise over 550 dwellings, of which 20% are “affordable”.
- It is an urban extension on a green field site, providing mostly single-family dwellings.
- Date of development 2001-2003
- Planning authority: Chelmsford Borough Council
- Concept plan: Chelmsford Borough Council and Countryside Properties
- Developer: George Wimpey with local architect Ken Philpot
- Highway Authority: Chelmsford Borough Council acting as agents for Essex County Council (at the time of the development)
- Link to location map: <http://tinyurl.com/87axx3x>

Map of Colchester showing the location of Beaulieu Park



Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA

## 2. Reasons for choice of case study

The site was chosen because of a commitment to high quality design, and a non-standard street layout that goes beyond DB32 criteria.

## 3. Objectives and guiding principles of the scheme

- An over-arching objective was to achieve a high quality scheme within the overall development. The aim was to create streets rather than roads, and places for people.
- Links to existing developments were sought across a major road (A130), which separates the urban extension from the rest of the town.
- Principles applied to meet these objectives included “active” frontage throughout, and an informal street layout including shared surfaces.

## 4. Process

- The Essex Design Guide had an influence on the design and architecture. DB32 sightline standards were avoided in the shared surfaces streets.
- The scheme had strong political direction from a committed cabinet member in charge, and the developer, Wimpey, chose a local architect who supported use of the local vernacular.
- At the time, highways responsibilities were dealt with by Chelmsford Borough Council on an agency basis for Essex County Council, and this meant that the staff involved were working alongside planning colleagues. This made for good dialogue and joint working. The arrangement ended a short time later, however.
- The Beaulieu Park scheme featured highly in the events of 2003/4, the year in which Chelmsford was appointed a Beacon Council for Quality of the Built Environment.

## 5. Key lessons to be learnt

1. Active frontage to all streets and to neighbouring open space was mostly achieved. This depended on securing suitable street block dimensions so that continuous building frontage could be provided.
2. Rear private space is enclosed while in shared surface streets there is a subtle demarcation of public and private space.
3. Turning space was incorporated within the shared surface design, rather than using unsightly turning heads demarcated with kerbs.
4. Dimensions of sight lines and radii were not applied where shared surfaces were used and this has produced an attractive streetscape.
5. Some access ways from driveways onto 20 mph streets also have been sensitively designed.
6. Blank walls, even on the building “return” at junctions are avoided, with specially-designed house types.
7. Officers felt that the achievements were hard won, but helped to generate commitment at the political level as well as between highways and planning officers.

## 6. The wider context

The case study focused on the internal design of the development. The less successful aspect of the urban extension is that it is remote from local facilities, and is separated from adjacent areas by busy roads (A130 and A138). The adjacent residential area to the west is of more conventional DB32 design, design for cars not people. It is an unattractive area to walk through to reach what limited services are available.

The future for the Phase One residents could be more interesting, however, with major new development planned to the north and east, with up to 4,000 homes together with community and recreation facilities, new schools and some employment. Provision is also to be made for a new railway station on the Great Eastern mainline. More information is available from Countryside Properties (link here [here](#)).



Turning space “hidden” within the shared space design, rather than demarcated with unsightly kerbs.



Active frontage to neighbouring open space with pedestrian and vehicular access



Continuous paving with discreet indication of public-private space. Building lines rather than vehicle sightlines define the character of the street



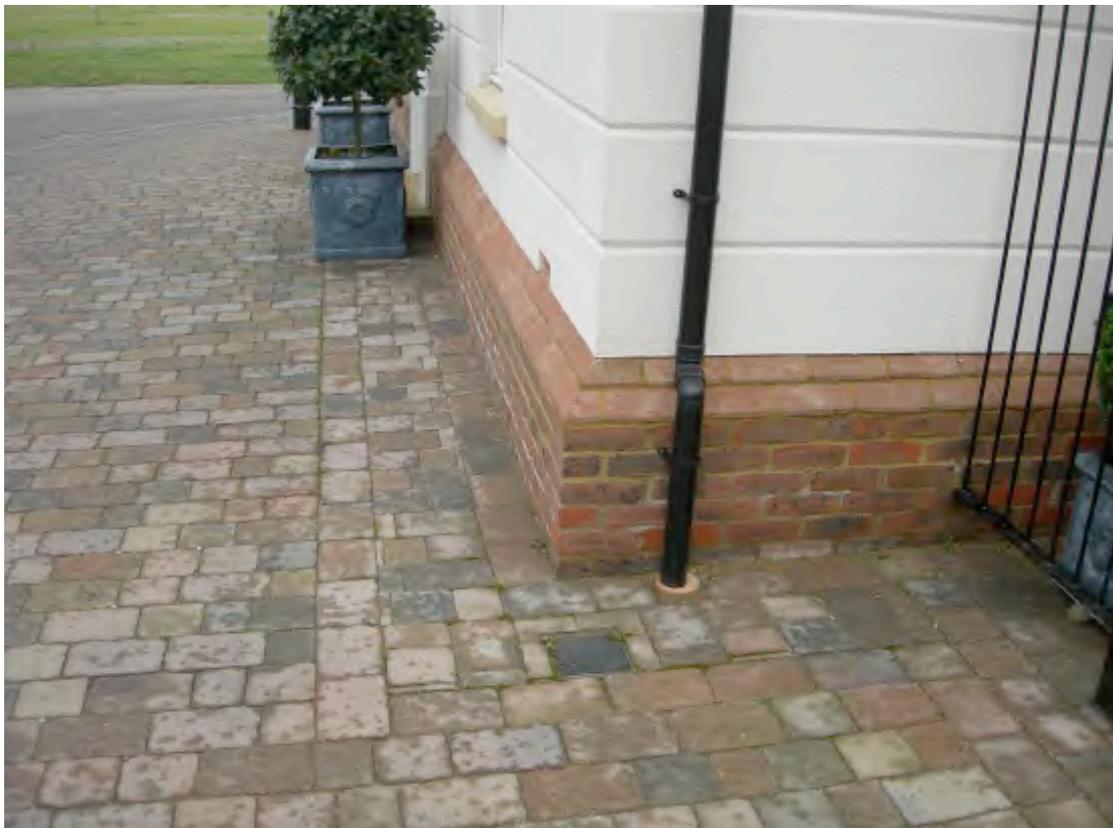
Continuity and enclosure: Continuous building frontage, enclosure and subtle demarcation of public and private space



Discreet handling of sightlines from access way to 20 mph street



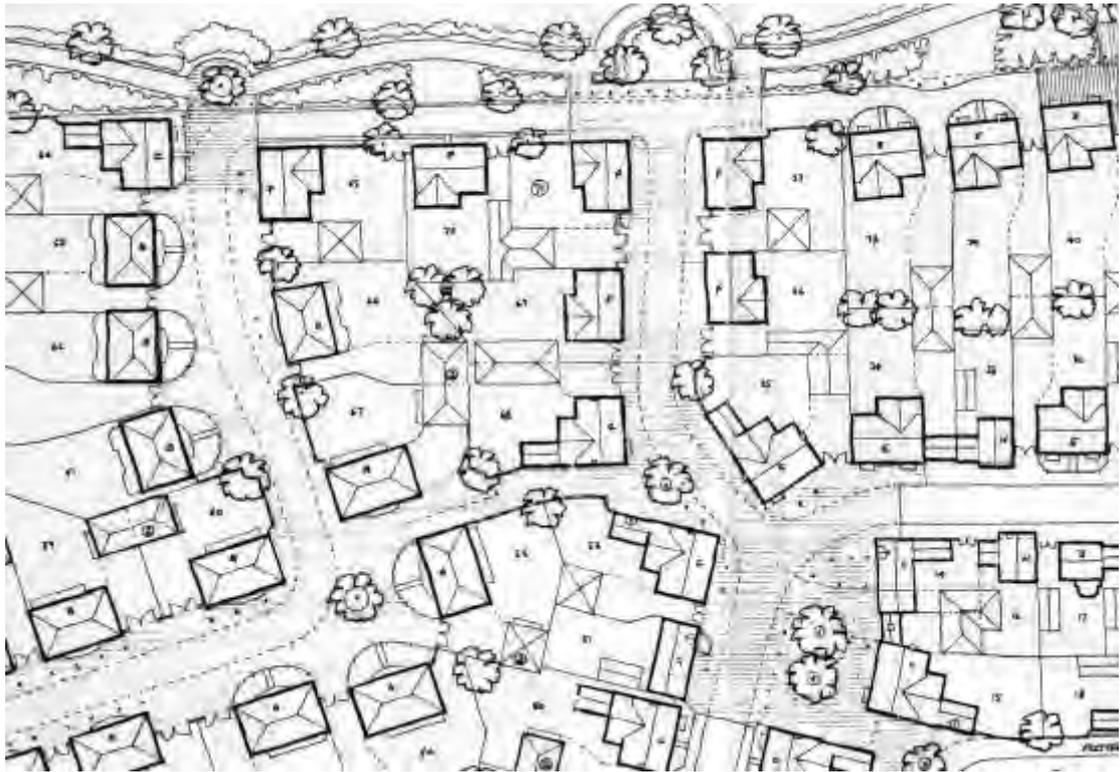
Blank walls, even on the “return” at junctions are avoided, thus improving overlooking and surveillance, and adding visual interest



Subtle demarcation of public and private space



~ Bus ROUTE  
- - - CASE STUDY  
- - - AREA



Part of the layout plan



LAND AT WHITE HART LANE - SPRINGFIELD  
BEAULIEU PARK  
DRAFT COPY

**Chelmsford**  
SOUTH Essex Council  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES GROUP  
Head of Municipal Engineering Services  
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Plan of entire Beaulieu Park urban extension Phase One

Tim Pharoah – 2007, further editing 2012  
The views expressed are personal and are not necessarily endorsed by the authorities concerned.