



1. Introduction

York was founded by the Romans in AD 71 at the confluence of two rivers giving them a commanding position with good access to the sea. The civilian town of Colonia soon developed to serve the empire. After the Dark Ages the Vikings occupied the area becoming farmers and trading with much of northern Europe. In the Middle Ages the town was surrounded by a medieval city wall which still provides a useful boundary to the historic core. With the advent of the railways and the industrial revolution York expanded and as a result the city contains many fine Georgian buildings and Victorian streetscapes.

During the 1930s, 40s and 50s the city grew to cater for the aspirations of its residents and produced many large housing estates. This growth continued through the latter half of the 20th century resulting in several estates that had no real identity and became isolated and dependent upon the private car for transportation.

This legacy of historic development coupled with urban sprawl has produced a city that is varied and interesting, surrounded by a rural landscape dominated by York Minster. These aspects provide a challenge to any developer who seeks to integrate a new housing development into this environment.

All too often in the past the design of a residential area has been approached by the slavish application of highway design standards, with the result that the residential area is dominated by the highway and not the features of human scale and the surrounding environment.

This Design Guide therefore seeks to change the emphasis away from one dominated by the highway to one where the external and internal environment is dominated by people and their activities.

UK governments guidance, through its publication *Design Bulletin 32 Residential Roads and Footpaths* (second edition) and companion document *Places, Streets and Movement*, offers the opportunity to reduce the scale and impact of roads by applying standards which are responsive and appropriate to different types and levels of development.

The aims of any new development must therefore be to:



- Ensure that new housing estates relate to its context and integrates with its landscape and townscape setting;
- Improve the quality of new estates for the benefit of new residents, adjacent occupiers and existing communities;
- Provide convenient, safe and attractive pedestrian, cycle and public transport links within new estates and to existing communities, and to provide accessible, safe and attractive spaces and road networks with low traffic speeds;
- Ensure that new development provides easy and safe access between footways, car parking areas and dwellings for everyone, including those with impaired mobility; and
- Ensure that new developments are safe, secure and incorporate the principles of sustainability.