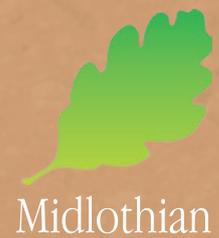


How new streets are designed in Midlothian



How streets have changed over the past 10 years

For anyone living on a new housing development, the street layout can look very different from what we're all used to. Design has changed considerably over the past ten years. Planning authorities, including us, are now following government policy to make sure new streets encourage residents to enjoy outdoor space and socialise. The layouts, while accommodating cars, are not designed for motorists. Instead, the aim is to promote more environmentally friendly and healthy alternatives such as walking, cycling and using public transport.



Figure 1: parking integrated into street layout



Design techniques

Different colours, textures and street widths are used. Some streets have areas, where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles share space. In these cases, footpaths are often not provided. Instead, designers use a different surface material, such as red block paving, to denote the shared space.

Figure 2: shared space street with no footways

Encouraging cars to slow down

The aim is to design streets where vehicles slow down to 20mph or less, giving way to pedestrians, cyclists and other users. Ramped accesses and junctions are often used along with winding, narrow streets. Streets often also have a grass verge for easy access to water, gas, electricity, and communications cables. These are not grass footways.

Residents should take care to park vehicles considerately. Streets are designed to make sure bin lorries and delivery vans can get access. Any cars obstructing essential services such as ambulances and gritters could be subject to police action.



Figure 3: ramped entry treatment from traditional road and footway to shared space area

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Encouraging children to play

As new streets are designed to encourage motorists to slow down, they are much more suitable than older, traditional streets for children's play. However, parents or guardians are still responsible for their child's safety. For example small children running in and out of gardens from behind hedges and trees can be dangerous, even when vehicles are travelling at 20mph. Well-designed layouts should increase safety and reduce accidents.

Road markings and signs

Road markings and signs are kept to a minimum. Not only does this help residential areas look less like roads but it also helps reduce clutter. Recent studies have shown that if there are too many signs, they are often ignored. Less is better, therefore. Too many signs also cause problems with people who are visually impaired, wheelchair users and parents with prams because footway widths are reduced to accommodate the signs. It can also impair visibility for pedestrians and other road users.



Figure 4: raised crossroads junction entering shared space areas with no priority signs or markings

For more information on road markings and signs policy: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/43525/tal-reducing-sign-clutter.pdf.

For more information on the government's street design policy: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/22120652>

Further details contact: 0131 270 7500 or www.midlothian.gov.uk