

FINAL REPORT: context for HOUSING STANDARDS INITIATIVES

Historical Perspective 1918-2018

Centennial of Tudor Walters Committee report on 'Homes Fit for Heroes'. With this 100 year perspective what can we learn?

- On min dwelling/room sizes not a lot, the average min area for a three bed 5 person homes is 88.23sm (1.38sm below NDSS mean and overall floorspace for bedrooms has risen by 1.2sm in a century) on a typical three bed shell this represents an 8mm and 140mm increase in width respectively.
- Policy guidance has grown from one document over 20 years to 1 or more per annum over recent decades. However setting aside post war housing periods as exceptional, standards and delivery has weakened.
- Housing Quality mandatory guidance has risen and fallen in line with economic good and bad times. The design and quality advisory agenda also comes and goes dependent on political climate
- Housing policy and guidance often too dominated by London/SE issues
- The market has consolidated so that some 8-10 house builders now dominate the supply of housing in the UK.
- Technical Standards initially within Building Acts & Byelaws until 1965 when first publication of Building Regulations driven by human health and public safety concerns.
- More recently (post 1973 & 79) driven by performance standards/targets allied to national/international concerns(Rio Summit 92) about environmental sustainability both locally and globally.
- Arguable that Ikea and the Building Regs are doing more for liveability than recent housing standards.

Current Context

- Last decade since 2008 crash has seen deregulation and design guidance cull of 2014 as a move to simplify ,remove overlapping and widen the mandatory role of Building Regulations.
- Total of 23.7M homes in UK, 2015-2016 190,000 new build divided 101000 sale,74000 private rented and 12000 social rented.
- Central Government policy climate to restrict mandatory standards move to guidance only with Local Authority as frontline delivery agent
- Recent move to national simplified NDSS standards delivered at the discretion of the LA via Planning and BRegs.
- Drive to urgently increase housing delivery in the teeth of funding and lending restrictions.
- Decades of declining role for SME house builders to be reversed and reinvigorated
- Developers want policy level playing field, complain about over regulation, the quantity of local policy variations, the impact on costs and pre-start programming and see numbers and quality as diametrically opposed.
- LPA's under staffed and under time and cost pressure over twin test of policy necessity and scheme viability
- Pressure to reduce dwelling areas even to micro-living extremes with typical smaller 1/2 bed housetypes only suitable for first time buyer singletons/couples.
- Over 90% of over 55's private households under occupied by 1 or 2 rooms but lack of suitable market alternative to encourage downsizing. Layout, Storage ,accessibility and mobility issues.

- Larger houses for sale often exceed contemporaneous space standard minima.
- Dangers of Building Regs- Planning overlap between matters of principle and product

Why Standards are Necessary?

Since 1918 setting standards for Housing is seen by some as essential and other as undesirable or even unnecessary.

- The Free-Marketeers point to rising sales figures and demand for their product to restrict the scope of further regulation
- Regulators say caveat emptor is a very inadequate response as developers chase each other to the bottom.
- With hindsight they are often Paternalistic, sexist, dated, internally focused and anti-free market.
- Leaving standards to market forces is not tenable for many, because the developer does not suffer the direct loss and low quality housing is the legacy(burden) for buyers and ultimately the State.
- In spite of our numerous standards UK houses are smallest in Europe, have little storage, oversized circulation, unfurnishable rooms and limited opportunities to extend.
- Advisory standards can only work with the right moral, political or economic carrot in a competitive arena. Essential vs desirable
- Mandatory standards provide Developers with a level playing field to frame finance/land bid case and HMG relies upon them to secure adequate response for state support/subsidies
- The public continue to buy homes with less comparative data and testing than their family car. Glass's Guide for Homes? Space labelling?
- Balance between safeguarding standards and design flexibility

Targets v Templates

- Minimum dwelling area targets versus furnished room templates can be seen across a variety of documents throughout the last 100 years of housing quality standards.
- Most notable use of both was Parker Morris with Space in the Home DB6 which influenced SDS, DQS. But put increased burden on Planners to check compliance. Push for simpler cheaper model.
- NDSS avoids use of templates in favour of min room widths for bedrooms (Why only bedrooms?)
- NDSS tries to balance safeguarding with flexibility.

How little it often takes to move an inadequate house floor area or room shape/size to being good often as little as a bay window or a few centimetres on shell width.

Carrot or Stick

- This tension frequently referred to as advisory vs mandatory, regulation v standard, push vs pull factors is at the heart of promoting improved housing quality.
- Is it possible to have mandatory stick with carrot for enhanced response
- Do we aim for a national standard as mandatory (STICK) with local policy (CARROT) for enhanced response.

- How do we reward innovation and insure developer against any extra risk. JV, Investment Bonds, profit share, Community Enterprise Companies.
- Could carrot be in the form of reward for innovation, concessionary fees & planning obligations, fast tracking, sponsored media advertising campaign, housing 'Trip Advisor'?

Future Proofing Challenges

'Almost all of us live in the wrong home' Julia Parker - 100 years of Housing Standards.

Housing Quality Standards will only serve us well if they secure better Housing for Today and Tomorrow.

Future Proofing Challenges include:

- Home deliveries - the Amazon factor
- Impact of new styles of furniture, digital/wireless technology and TV media impacts
- Teleworking lifestyles
- The future of formal dining and the nuclear family lounge v the family Kitchen,
- The wider functions of the Bedroom as satellite living/recreational/sleeping zone.
- The spare bedroom dilemma.
- Outdoor/Patio/Garden Room living

What Shape for the SHAP document

- Standards document or framework for guiding quality advances
- Outward facing to other initiatives Third Party Collaborations. Joint ventures should be explored such as NHBC Home User Guide or BRE Home Quality Mark
- Evidence based role acting as Data Hub promoting Built Case Studies and POE role
- Cross-Tenure approach to standards allowing for design fluidity, construction and procurement simplification and marketing robustness.
- Engage in Wellbeing & Satisfaction research and testing of survey methods and analysis tools.

SHAP Housing Standards should aim for an evidence based, evolutionary, cross tenure approach which augments mandatory targets and provides sound advisory guidance.

SHAP housing performance standard - guidance research

Policy documents/recognised guidance documents

Current:

- NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) - March 2012
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sections on Design, Health & Wellbeing, Housing.
- TCPA (Town and Country Planning Act) 1990
- Building Regulations 2016
 - Part E Acoustics-Part F Ventilation-Part G Water & Sanitation -Part J Combustion Air-Part L Energy - Part M Accessibility- Part Q Security
- Secured by Design 2016
 - <http://www.securedbydesign.com/industry-advice-and-guides/>
- Building for Life. 12 points
 - <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>
 - Case studies: <http://www.builtforlifehomes.org/>
- Lifetime Homes Design Guide 2011 - 16 points
 - <https://www.habinteg.org.uk/lifetime-homes-design-guide>
 - <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/revised-design-criteria.html>
- BREAM
 - Technical Standards New Construction 2014 - non-domestic
 - <https://www.breeam.com/discover/technical-standards/newconstruction/>
 - Note - due update in March 2018
- BRE Home Quality Standard (Beta release) 2018
 - <https://www.homequalitymark.com/standard>
- NDSS Nationally Described Space Standards 2015
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>
- Manual For Streets (2007) + MfS 2 (2010)
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets>
- Places for Living 2001 - contains numerical standards appendices
- Birmingham City Council- Big City Plan 2017
- Measuring wellbeing Series 2 sept 2017 Prof F Huppert
- Measures of Subjective Wellbeing Dolan et al DP3 WWC-WB 2017
- ONS & Public Health England Community Wellbeing Indicators. qualityoflife@ons.org.uk
- ONS Personal Wellbeing Questions - 9 wellbeing domains
- Housing & Wellbeing Prof T Peasgood et al Jan 2017
- Understanding Local Needs for Wellbeing Data 2017 Happy City & What Works - Centre for WellBeing - info@whatworkswellbeing.org
- Health & wellbeing in Homes 2017 UKGBC

Historical/Background Reference material:

- SDS standards 1993 & 2003 (5th edition)
- Ecohomes
- 2009 HATC, CABE, EP & RIBA Residents Satisfaction with Space in New Homes. London +1hr centric
- HQI's 1999
- DQS 2007 CfSH level 3 and BfL 12 of 20 (abolished 2014 higher scores not directly related to higher funding)
- Standards & Quality in Development 1998 incl compliance checklists
- Housing Acts 1985 control of overcrowding similar to HA 1935 abolished 2014
- Places Homes and People EP doc 2005
- Design Bulletin 32 – Residential Roads and Footpaths – Layout Considerations (date) - replaced by Manual for Streets
- People Places and Movement (date)
- Code for Sustainable Homes (date)
- Building in Context - New Development in Historic Areas, Historic England / CABE, 2002
- Civilised Streets, CABE, 2008
- Delivering Great Places to Live, Building for Life, CABE, 2005
- Delivering Quality Places Urban Design Compendium 2, English Partnerships / Housing Corporation, 2007
- Urban Design in the Planning System 2012 withdrawn 2014
- The Lifetime Homes Design Guide, The Lifetime Homes Foundation, 2011
- Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships / Housing Corporation, 2000
- Homes for Today & Tomorrow & DB 6 Space in the Home Parker Morris Report 1961
- Housing Acts 1919 (1918 Tudor Walters Committee) and 1935
- Generic House Plans GLC 1965

Research /Literature / case studies:

- NPPF(National Planning Policy Framework) Consultation Draft March 2018
- 100 years of Housing Space Standards What Now? Jan 2017 Julia Park - excellent overview
- Zero Carbon Hub FEES
 - Closed 2016 - standard still relevant
 - <http://www.zerocarbonhub.org/zero-carbon-policy/fabric-energy-efficiency-standard>
- CABE What Home Buyers Want
 - <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118185910/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/what-home-buyers-want.pdf>
- RIBA Way we Live Now 2012
 - <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/way-we-live-now>
- RIBA Case for Space
- TSB Retrofit for the Future
- Resident Satisfaction with Space in New Homes 2009 HAC/CABE/EP & RIBA
- 2010 London House Design Guide. Flat centric
- 2010 Room to Swing a Cat
- 2014 Morgan & Cruikshank study. Ex and New Home comparisons.
- Zero Carbon Hub - Fabric Energy Efficiency (FEE)
- BRE Green Guide to Specification
 - <https://www.bre.co.uk/greenguide/podpage.jsp?id=2126>