



# **Building for a Healthy Life**

**A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces**







Can you walk *anywhere*? Would you walk anywhere?

Written with Stefan Kruckzkowski and more,  
in partnership with Homes England  
NHS England and NHS improvement

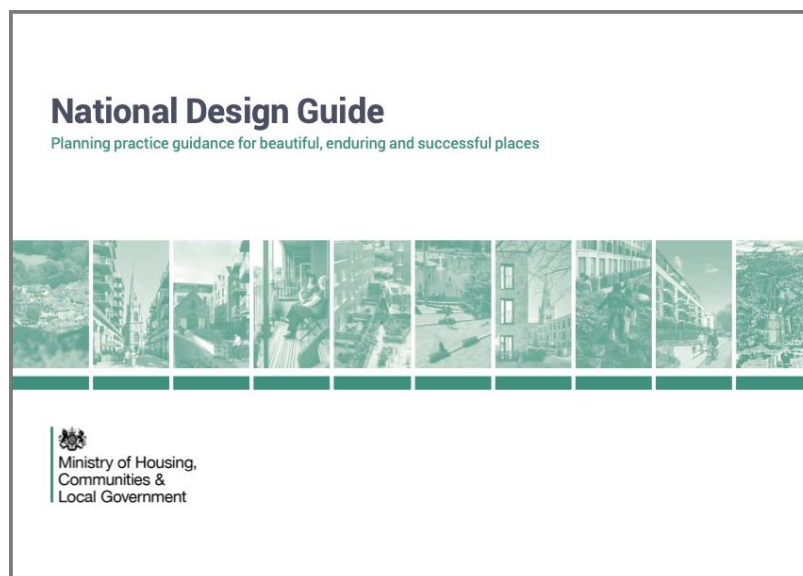


Design Network partners:



# BHL helps you deliver the National Planning Policy Framework and National Design Guide locally

129. Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for Life<sup>47</sup>. These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.



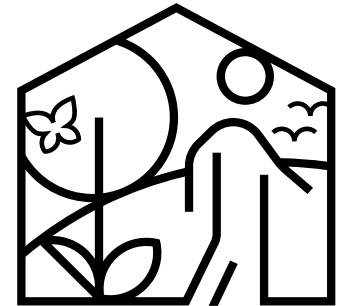
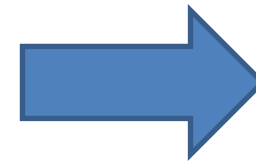


# Healthy New Towns Programme



[england.nhs.uk/publications/putting-health-into-place](http://england.nhs.uk/publications/putting-health-into-place)

- + Environment Act
- + User feedback
- + High levels of physical inactivity\*



**Building  
For a  
Healthy  
Life**

\*6 million adults aged 40-60 (more than 2 in 5) don't take a walk of 10 or minutes in any given month. Source: PHE, 2016

# **NHS has paid to make public realm part of your daily exercise**

**BHL greater focus on active travel – walking and cycling.  
68% of all journeys are less than 5 miles with the most frequent being 1-3 miles (and these are the only journeys increasing in number). One mile in a car generates ‘a bathful of CO<sub>2</sub>’ (Energy Savings Trust way of saying 276g)**

**Edge to edge connectivity and connected movement networks are critical to improving people’s health and wellbeing as well as air quality.**

# Same structure and principles

## Stronger emphasis on health and wellbeing

<b>Building for Life 12</b>	<b>Building for a Healthy Life</b>
<b>Integrating into the neighbourhood</b>	<b>Integrated neighbourhoods</b>
Connections	Natural connections
Facilities and services	Walking, cycling and public transport
Public transport	Facilities and services
Meeting local housing requirements	Homes for everyone
<b>Creating a place</b>	<b>Distinctive places</b>
Character	Making the most of what's there
Working with the site and its context	A memorable character
Creating well defined streets and spaces	Well defined streets and spaces
Easy to find your way around	Easy to find your way around
<b>Street and home</b>	<b>Streets for all</b>
Streets for all	Healthy streets
Car parking	Cycle and car parking
Public and private spaces	Green and blue infrastructure
External storage and amenity space	Back of pavement, front of home



# Users asked us to offer more guidance



## What 'green' looks like

- ✓ Edge to edge connectivity.
- ✓ Respond to pedestrian and cyclist desire lines.
- ✓ Connected street patterns. These work best when they include straight or nearly straight streets to make pedestrian routes as direct as possible.
- ✓ Filtered permeability. A useful technique that designs out 'rat running' and creates a pleasant low traffic environment around people's homes whilst still allowing pedestrian and cycle movement.
- ✓ Continuous streets (with public access) along the edges of a development. Private drives can frustrate pedestrian and cycle movement along the edges of a development.
- ✓ Connecting existing and new habitats; safeguarding existing or creating new movement corridors for nature.
- ✓ Where retained, keeping hedgerows within the public realm, safeguarding their future retention and management.
- ✓ Streets and routes that can be extended in the future.
- ✓ Adoption to site boundaries.



green = go ahead



# So BHL highlights more clearly common pitfalls



## What 'red' looks like

- ✗ Roads for cars.
- ✗ Failure to adhere to the user hierarchy set out in Manual for Streets.
- ✗ Wide and sweeping corner radii (6m or more).
- ✗ 6m+ wide carriageways.
- ✗ Highways engineering details that make pedestrian and cycle movements more complex and difficult.
- ✗ Street trees conveyed to individual occupiers.
- ✗ Distributor roads with limited frontage access, served by private drives.
- ✗ Painted white line cycle routes on pavements or on carriageways.
- ✗ Speed control measures that rely on significant shifts in street alignment that contribute towards wasting land whilst also creating disorientating places.



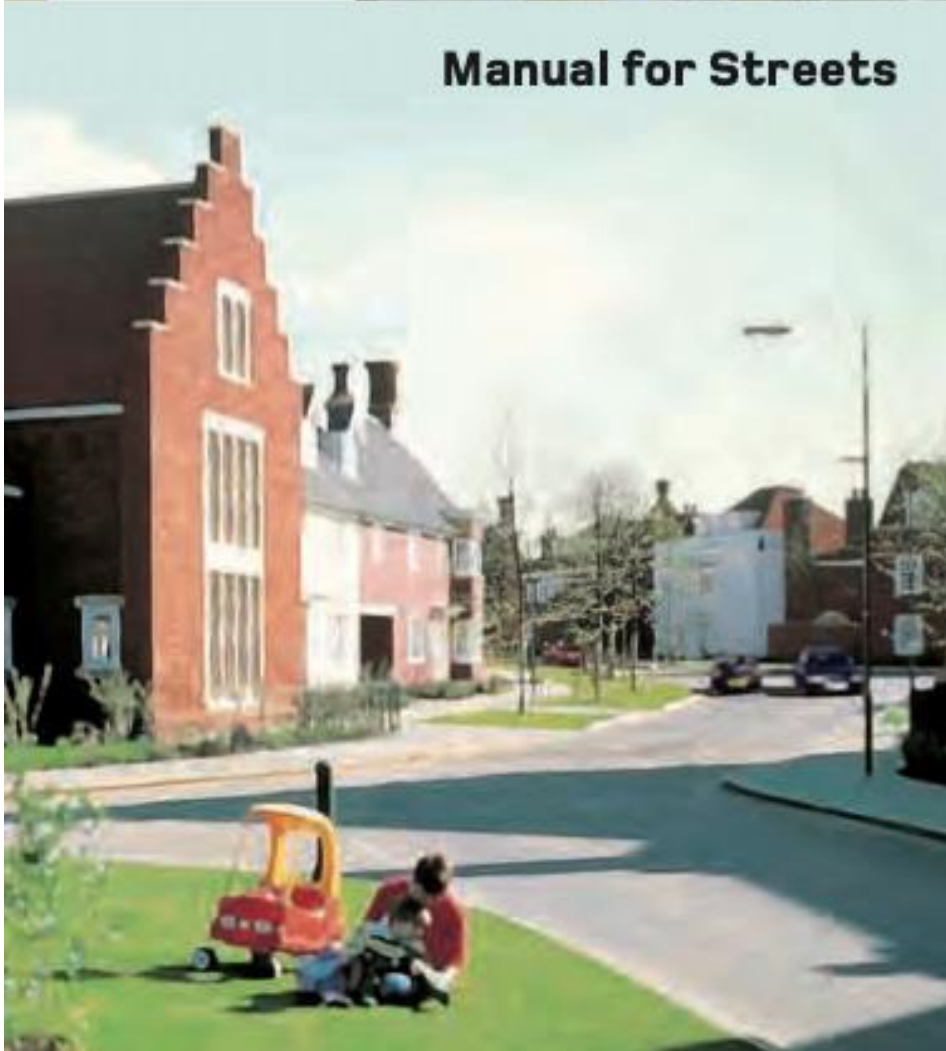
**red = stop & rethink**



Department for  
**Transport**



## Manual for Streets



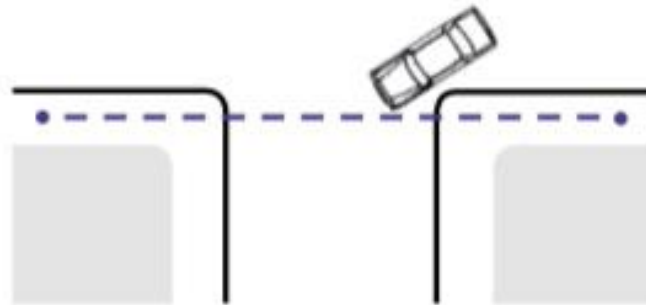
**3 out of the 12  
considerations directly  
relate to Manual for Streets**

**Natural connections**

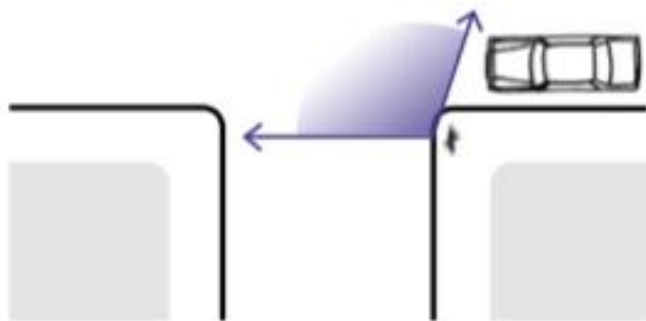
**Walking, cycling and public transport**

**Healthy streets**

### Small radius (eg. 1 metre)

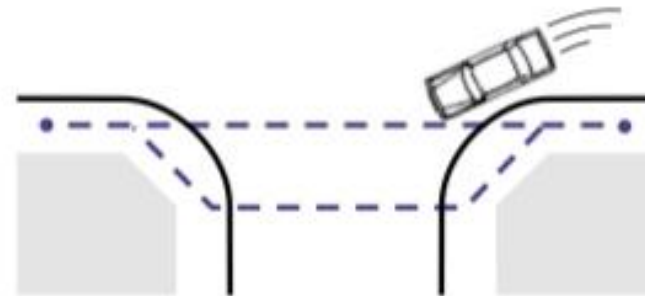


- Pedestrian desire line (---) is maintained.
- Vehicles turn slowly (10 mph – 15 mph).

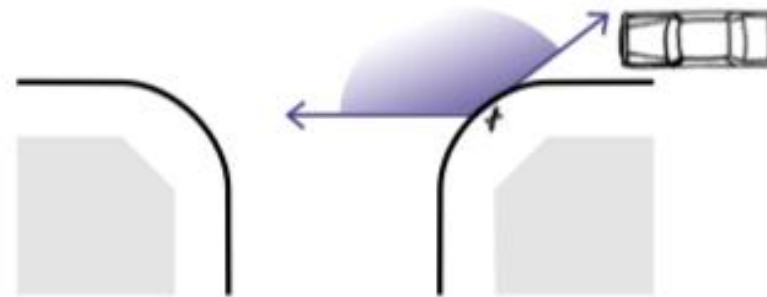


- Pedestrian does not have to look further behind to check for turning vehicles.
- Pedestrian can easily establish priority because vehicles turn slowly.

### Large radius (eg. 7 metres)



- Pedestrian desire line deflected.
- Detour required to minimise crossing distance.
- Vehicles turn faster (20 mph – 30 mph).



- Pedestrian must look further behind to check for fast turning vehicles.
- Pedestrian cannot normally establish priority against fast turning vehicles.

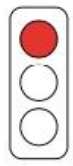
Devon County Council

Figure 6.3 The effects of corner radii on pedestrians.



Tight corner radii (3m or less).





## What 'red' looks like



Roads for cars.



Failure to adhere to the user hierarchy set out in Manual for Streets.



Wide and sweeping corner radii (6m or more).

# We need to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles







## What 'green' looks like







**Frustrated connectivity is widespread**





# Frustrated connections...



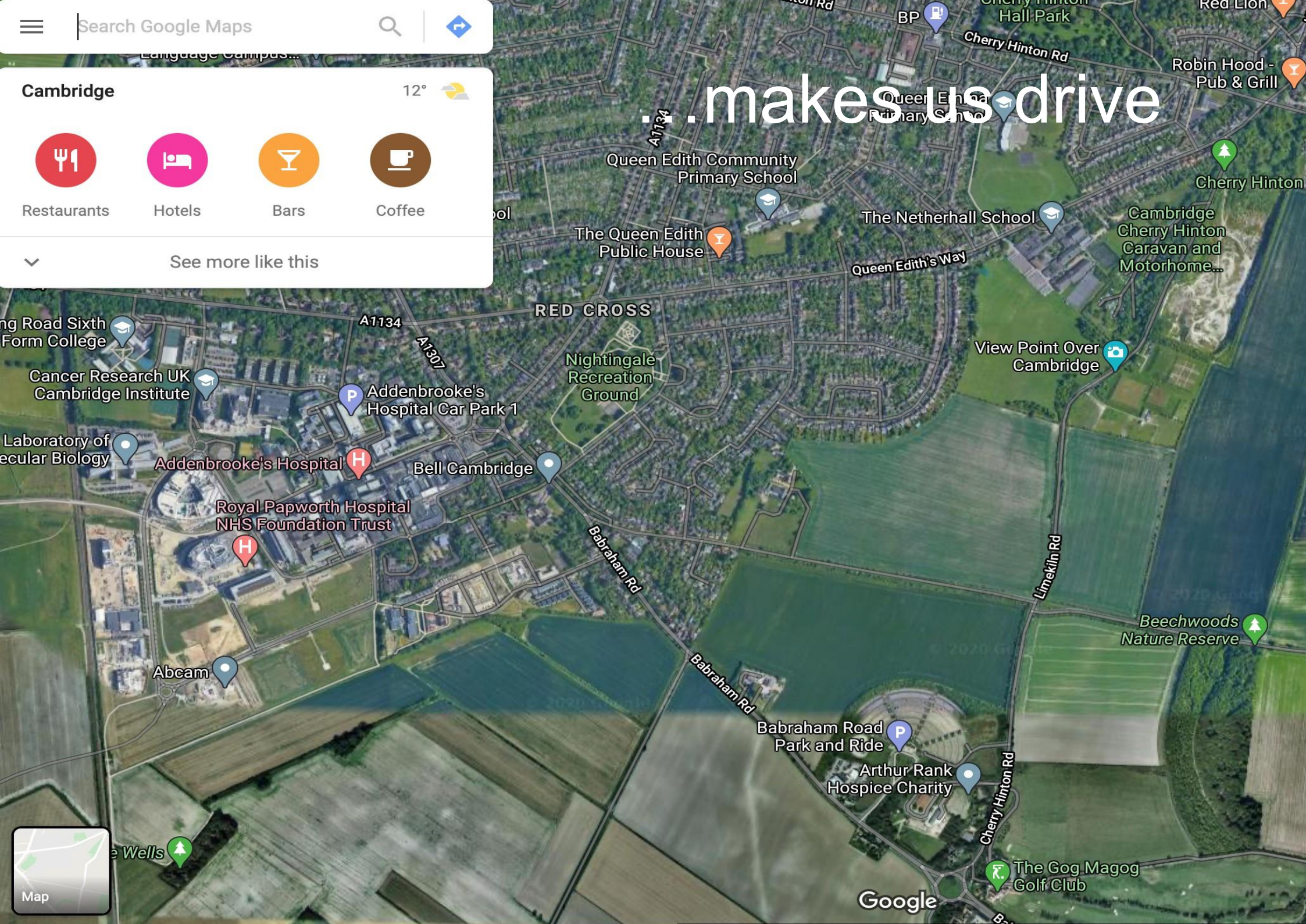


Cambridge 12°

- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Bars
- Coffee

See more like this

...makes us drive





**The design of *streets* (not roads),  
and how they *connect*, will determine how  
much active travel takes place in a new  
neighbourhood and how that contributes to  
fitness, sense of well being and air quality**

**<https://www.designforhomes.org/project/building-for-life/>**

**Free to use** but please let us know if you are using it  
**info@designforhomes.org**

Look out for **training opportunities** in the Autumn and Winter.