

Distinctive town identities

HDB's new town design guide aims to strengthen individual town identities, sustain a quality living environment and encourage better community bonding. Here are some of the guidelines for Woodlands, the first town to have a design guide.

TOWN THEME
"Wooded" was chosen as Woodlands' overall theme to reflect the history and greenery of the area.

KEY CORRIDORS
With various activities and pocket spaces along the Social Corridor, residents can come together to enjoy greenery and forge new ties with neighbours.

TOWN SCALE
Overall theme, concept and vision

WOODLANDS

Note: Illustration not drawn to scale.

GATEWAYS AND LANDMARKS
Developments and future landmarks that strongly represent the town.

THEMES BY AREA
Woodlands is proposed to be divided into 5 distinct areas. The neighbourhood themes are identified based on the social and physical features.

FACADE AND ROOFSCAPE FOR 'URBAN' THEME
• Facade design can be varied and dynamic to bring out the 'Urban' theme.
• The landmark development can consider a bold roofscape.

COLOUR PALETTE FOR 'DISCOVERY' THEME
In line with the 'Discovery' theme, the suggested colour palette takes on a rustic mood with light neutral base colours and accents of rustic browns and greens.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE
Here are some examples of the design guidelines that will match the theme of the area

PUBLIC SPACES FOR 'COMMUNITY' THEME
• Pedestrian thoroughfares within precincts with greening activity spaces.
• Playful, interactive spaces for communities of all ages.

LANDSCAPING FOR 'WELLNESS' THEME
• Tall trees with spreading canopies, soothing scents, muted colours and soft textures.
• Some suggested tree species:
• Mempat
• River Tristania
• Golden Tea Tree

COVERED WALKWAYS
• The design should blend with the surroundings.
• A width-to-height ratio of 1:1 is recommended to minimise rainwater splashing.

STREET FURNITURE
• Design of seating should be inclusive, taking into consideration children and the elderly.
• Street furniture should allow for easy maintenance and be hardy against weather and vandalism.

PAVING DESIGN
• Besides its functional purpose, the design of paving can shape the character of a space.
• Paving design and colour should complement the overall design concept.

PRECINCT SCALE
Detailed design of individual projects, in alignment with the town/neighbourhood theme

PLAYGROUNDS
• The design of themed playgrounds can draw reference from the neighbourhood's theme.
• Themed playgrounds provide more interesting and varied play spaces in the housing precincts.
• They can help in creating precinct identity and form part of social memories of residents.

SIGNAGE
• Signs should be designed as part of the overall wayfinding strategy. They should be clear and easy to read for all users.
• To achieve consistency in aesthetics, identity and legibility.
• Each project can customise the design of specific areas of the signage for precinct identity.

SOURCE: HDB STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS; LEE YU HUI, CHNG CHON HIONG

Each HDB town to have its own design guide

Housing agency to launch these manuals over next five years to ensure coherent development of its 24 towns

Rachel Au-Yong Housing Correspondent

The lease on a Housing Board flat may be 99 years, but the town it is in could exist beyond that.

To enhance the distinct identities of these housing estates, the HDB will launch design guides for each of its 24 towns over the next five years.

The guides will also ensure coherent development over the decades to come, Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong said yesterday as he unveiled the first guide for Woodlands, one of four regional centres identified in the Government's land use plan.

Some major cities have pushed out their own guides. Seoul, for example, is said to be the first city in the world, while New York City has a street design manual to guide the improvement of streets and pavements throughout its five boroughs.

Each HDB town guide will chronicle the town's vision and distinct character to help future planners and agencies unify its de-

velopments as it evolves.

The guide offers design principles on three scales: the town, neighbourhood and precinct.

The town layer provides the overall vision for the town such as its landmarks and how cycling paths are laid out.

The neighbourhood layer sets out concepts such as the colour palette for buildings and what trees are planted.

The precinct layer guides the detailed design of individual projects such as the type of playgrounds or how HDB signs look.

In a statement, the HDB spelt out how each of these layers would be applied to Woodlands – a town that got its name from the numerous keranji trees along the coastline. Woodlands is also one of three towns earmarked for the third iteration of the Remaking Our Heartland rejuvenation programme.

At the town level, for example, an upcoming WoodsVista Gallery is among the developments that follow Woodlands' wooded theme. The gallery will be a 1.9km-long, greenery-laden pathway that lets

residents move seamlessly from Woodlands MRT station to Woodlands Waterfront.

At the neighbourhood level, the town has been divided into sub-areas, each with its own theme.

For instance, the guide suggests that Woodlands Central, with its "Urban" theme, should have vibrant streets, and varied and dynamic facade designs, and use light grey colours with contemporary accents of deeper greys and browns.

On the other hand, Woodlands East, anchored by landmark developments Kampung Admiralty and Admiralty Place, has a "Community" theme.

Here, community spaces should encourage interactions among residents such as through community gardens or other activity spaces.

Buildings could be painted in "bright and earthy accent colours" to complement a light base colour.

And at the precinct level, individual housing projects can still have unique design concepts while remaining aligned with the broader themes. Playgrounds in Woodlands Central, for example, could be designed with bright colours and sculptural elements to emphasise the urban theme, while playgrounds in Woodlands East might feature kampung-inspired play equipment in the shape of animals and fruits to strengthen its community theme.

HDB chief executive Cheong Koon Hean said the agency is taking the lead with the guides to align different agencies' efforts and ensure a coherent design and town identity. "In this way, we continue to strengthen the identity of each town, preserve the distinctive local flavour and deepen the sense of belonging among residents to their home," she said.

Singapore University of Technology and Design architecture professor Chong Keng Hua said establishing common principles would help develop towns with coherent identities. "When you love not just your country but also your neighbourhood, it translates into the little things, like picking up the litter," he said. "The town becomes something we love and protect."

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