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Study pushes for denser suburbia

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A leading British architect and member of the London Development Agency design committee is proposing that suburban housing could be built to much higher densities than previously thought possible.

Sir Richard MacCormac, chairman of MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, claims that mainstream suburban housing could be constructed at more than double the average for new housing in England, which stands at 25 dwellings per hectare, of which more than half is built at less than 20 dwellings per hectare.

In a new study, *Redefining suburbia*, MacCormac says that 50 to 90 homes could be built per hectare, made up of houses and a small number of flats, without losing the characteristics that attract people to suburbia, such as houses with their own front door, private open space and off-street parking. Even more homes - up to 120 dwellings per hectare - could be built based on a split between houses on the one hand and flats and maisonettes on the other.

MJP's designs for low-rise housing show that, even at the lower end of 50 dwellings per hectare, 5,000 homes could create a pedestrian community with a viable public transport system.

"The consequences would be a greatly reduced need for land, walkable communities, sustainable public transport and less reliance on private cars," MacCormac said.

MacCormac said his proposals for achieving these densities, which include terraced houses and mews housing with flats and maisonettes, have important implications for London and for minimising land take-up in the Thames Gateway. The report has been sent to CABE and several major developers.

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