

Countryside

Design Summary for Carlisle District



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This document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the City Council's Environment committee on 8 June 2000
This followed a period of public consultation in April and May 2000



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Introduction

This design guide gives advice on the design of new development in the countryside, and identifies those features which give different areas of the District their special character. It will be used, together with policies in Carlisle District Local Plan and other supplementary planning guidance, to assess planning applications for new development or conversions of buildings in the rural area.

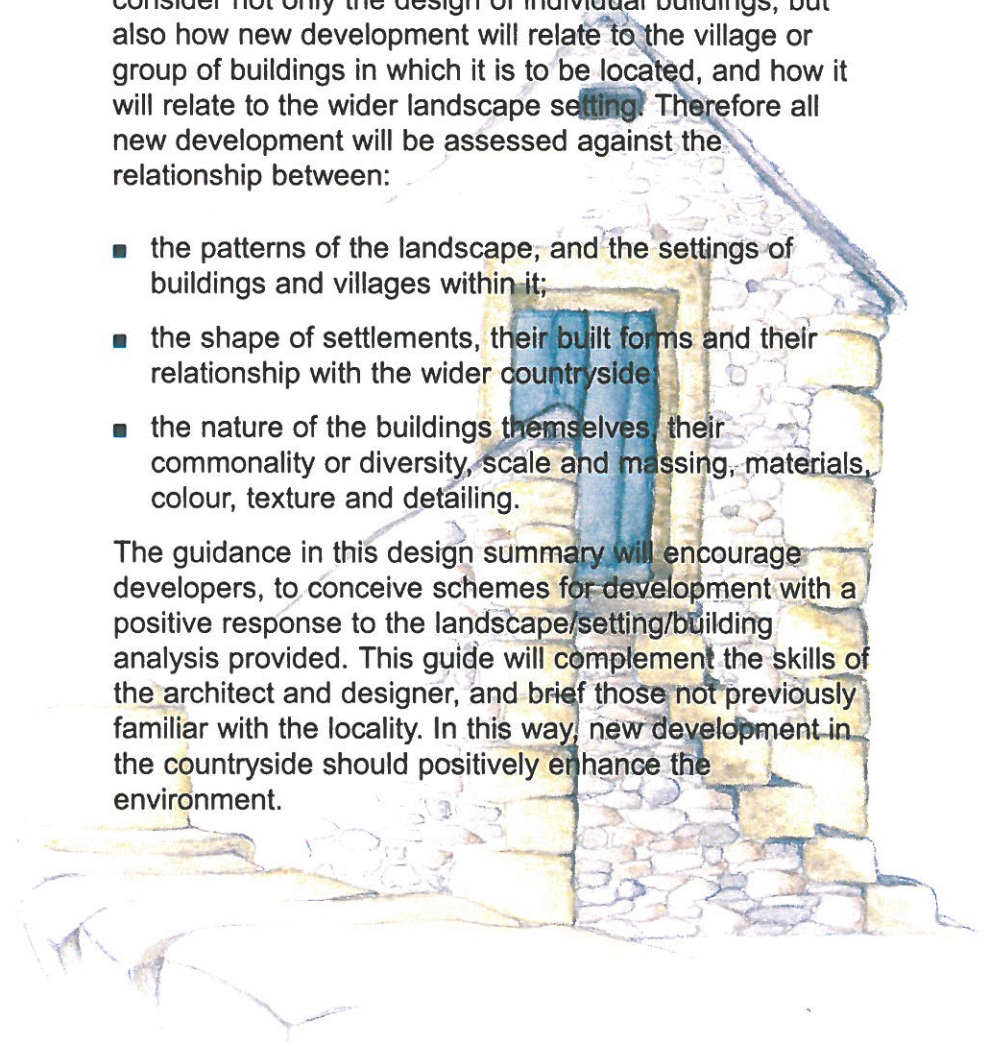
A dynamic and diverse countryside inevitably involves changes and new buildings. Well designed new development can be built within or on the periphery of many villages. New development is needed to provide places in which to live and work, maintain productive and efficient farming methods, boost local services and facilities and bring new life and business into the countryside.

The City Council believes that new development should help safeguard the distinct character and natural beauty of the landscape and villages which make up the countryside. However, achieving this poses special challenges, and the design summary is therefore intended to aid discussions between planners and developers prior to planning applications being submitted.

To achieve high quality design in new development requires a three tiered approach. It is important to consider not only the design of individual buildings, but also how new development will relate to the village or group of buildings in which it is to be located, and how it will relate to the wider landscape setting. Therefore all new development will be assessed against the relationship between:

- the patterns of the landscape, and the settings of buildings and villages within it;
- the shape of settlements, their built forms and their relationship with the wider countryside;
- the nature of the buildings themselves, their commonality or diversity, scale and massing, materials, colour, texture and detailing.

The guidance in this design summary will encourage developers, to conceive schemes for development with a positive response to the landscape/setting/building analysis provided. This guide will complement the skills of the architect and designer, and brief those not previously familiar with the locality. In this way, new development in the countryside should positively enhance the environment.



Current Government Guidance on design

Government guidance on the treatment of design issues in the planning system is set out in Planning Policy Guidance notes, (PPGs). These notes set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning. Local planning authorities must take their content into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance may also be relevant to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

PPG 1 states that the appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are material considerations in determining planning applications. The PPG emphasises that good design should be the aim of all involved in the development process, and should be encouraged everywhere.

Annex A of PPG 1 provides more detailed guidance. It states that applicants for planning permission should, as a minimum, provide a short written statement setting out the design principles adopted, as well as illustrative material in plan and elevation. This material should show the wider context and not just the development site and its immediately adjacent buildings.

PPG 3: *Housing*, requires developers to strive for good design, which is defined as having respect for the qualities of the local environment. With reference to rural areas, the PPG states:

"The character of the particular settlement should always be respected in terms of density, scale and environmental quality. Villages vary in their character and what might be appropriate in one could be out of place in another."

PPG3: Housing

PPG 7: *The Countryside, Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*, states that new buildings in rural areas should contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity, and be of an appropriate design and scale for the location.

On the question of more modern designs, they should have proper regard to their surroundings in relation to both the immediate setting, and the defining characteristics of the wider local area, including local or traditional building materials and styles.

Local Plan Policy

Carlisle District Local Plan contains a number of policies which relate to development in the rural area. Policy H5, makes provision for new housing within the majority of villages excluding very small hamlets which are subject to Policy H7. Policy H5 states the need to take account of the effect of new development on:

- the landscape of the area;
- the scale, form and character of the village;
- the layout of the site and design of the individual buildings.

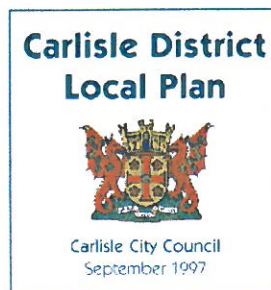
The importance of this three dimensional approach is reflected throughout this design summary.

Policy H7 makes provision for housing development in the remote rural area, defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map. This policy echoes the criteria in Policy H5, and recognises that the setting of new dwellings in relation to existing development and the landscape will be crucial factors in determining whether permission will be granted.

Policy H16, *Design Considerations*, is concerned with the design of new housing sites and dwellings, and notes the particular problems in the rural area of ensuring that new development integrates both with the landscape and the village. It also reproduces the advice from PPG1 that

applicants for planning permission should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their development proposals.

Policies EM10 and EM11 make provision for employment development in the rural area, including rural diversification schemes. Both policies contain measures which seek to ensure that new buildings for commercial, industrial or recreational uses respect local building styles and materials, and integrate with the surrounding settlement and landscape. The guidance in this SPG gives a more detailed explanation of how to reflect local distinctiveness in new development.



Pre – application advice



Applicants should consult at an early stage with the City Council on design aspects of their development proposal. In return, the Council will respond constructively, giving clear indications of our design expectations. Careful and early consideration of design issues can speed up the planning process by helping to make development proposals acceptable both in Local Plan policy terms, and to local communities.

There are many specialists within the City Council who are able to help and give advice to applicants. These include planning officers, conservation officers and those who can give advice on landscaping of new development. Their names and contact numbers are given on the back of this leaflet. With their help, and also advice from your own architect or professional adviser, you should be able to design a development which will make a positive contribution to the landscape, both now and in the future. The selection of an architect and builder with a good track record of well designed buildings which are sympathetic to the environment is important.



The following pages set out the three main aspects against which proposals for new development will be assessed.



The character of the landscape itself.

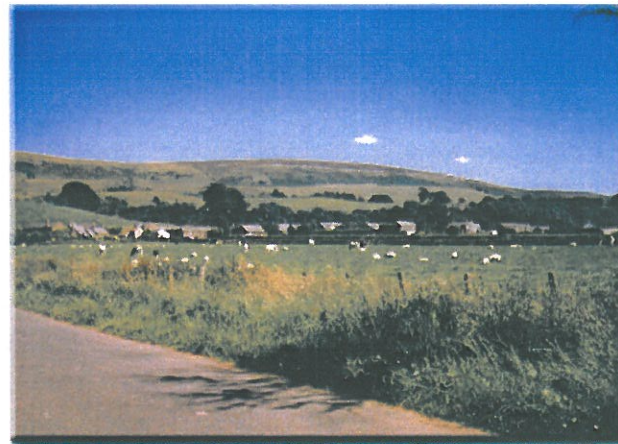
1 Landscape

Apart from a few unmanaged and unenclosed areas of moorland and the coastal marshes, agricultural practices have been the biggest influence on shaping the landscape of the District. The countryside is made up of a variety of different elements including villages, farms, agricultural buildings, hedges, walls, roads, fields, woodlands, hills and valleys.

In the countryside, a building, farmstead or village seen from a distance has an impact on a broad landscape setting. The scale of many villages within the district is small enough for their overall shape and patterns to be seen within the wider landscape. By adding to and adapting these patterns, through the addition of new buildings, the relationship of the village with the landscape changes.

The relationship between a village and the surrounding landscape requires close examination when considering development proposals. Aspects to consider include:

- **topography**, i.e. is the village hidden within the folds of the landscape or visible from a wide surrounding area;
- **natural features** in the landscape such as trees and hedges which could be reflected within the landscaping of the development site;



Landscape which determines the form of settlements

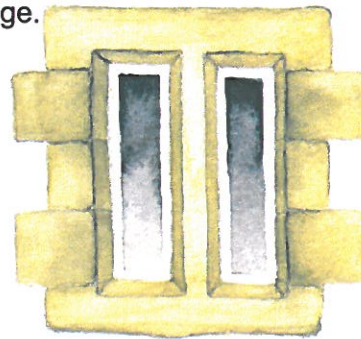


Impact of settlements on the landscape



Impact of settlements on the landscape

- **man made features** in the landscape such as stone walls, sandstone gate posts, field barns etc, the materials of which could be reflected in any new development;
- when considering edge of village development, account should be taken of **short and long distance views** of the settlement from the surrounding area, taking particular account of the impact on the landscape, and whether the development is likely to integrate well with the edge of the village.



2 Settlement

Villages have evolved in response to the landscape, climate, available building materials, development of communications and economic and social factors. An awareness and understanding of these elements needs to be reflected in the development process. Each village has its own

character which requires individual design solutions to ensure that new development appears to belong to the village, and not be a suburban style extension to it.



Settlements dispersed around open green areas

New development should be sited to integrate with the form of the village, and should not interrupt the established or historic appearance of the many elements which make up the overall character.

When considering applications for new development within or at the edge of a village, the form and character of the village must be carefully assessed, taking particular note of the following:

- the overall form of the village, i.e. is it strongly linear, clustered around a village green, centered on a cross roads, or does it lack cohesive form?



.....the shape and form of settlements "linear"

- where a village has a definite form, avoid layouts which would have a jarring effect such as a cul de sac in a village which has a strongly linear form;
- the visual effect of new roads and pavements necessary for larger developments. Avoid an unnecessary urban appearance which will have little in common with traditional housing layouts.
- the quality of public and private open spaces within the village, and views to and from these spaces;
- the presence of any natural features such as trees, hedges, ponds and streams;

- the width and layout of roads and footpaths;
- the layout of the existing buildings and the spaces between them, looking in particular for any repeated patterns such as orientation of ridge lines, terracing or front gardens;
- the relationship between the edge of the settlement and the countryside beyond;
- ground levels, taking account of the impact of buildings on prominent slopes from a wider area.
- the form, colour and materials of surrounding roofscape.



.....the shape and form of settlements ... "grouped around a village green"

3 Buildings

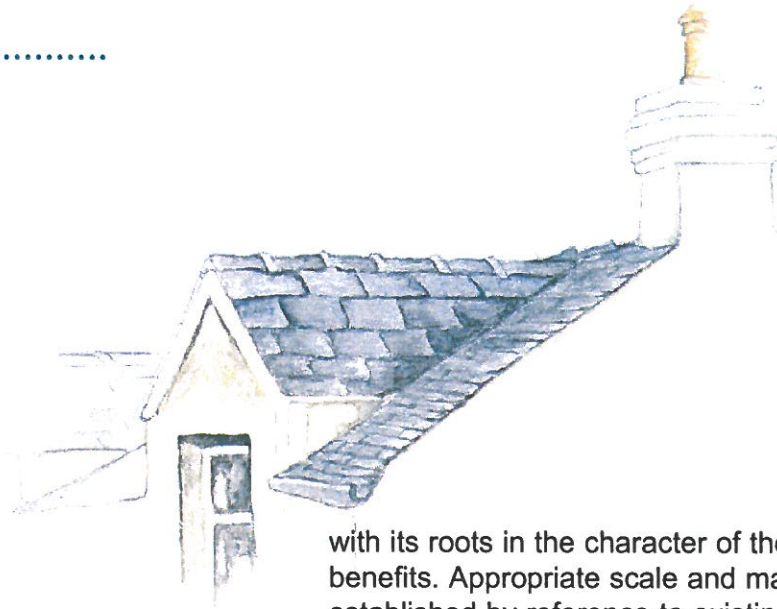


River cobbles, red sandstone and render in the Solway area (1890)

The older buildings in many villages often reflect local materials and cultures. Before transport became widely available, building materials were quarried locally, hence red sandstone in the Eden valley, cobbles obtained from rivers and the boulder clay across the District, the use of clay for walls and render in both the Eden valley and the Solway, and the use of sandstone and slate for roofing materials. In addition, there are a number of cruck framed buildings.

Today, there is a huge range of building materials and styles readily available for use. This is resulting in the gradual erosion of local identity, as standardised building styles are repeated across the whole country.

Direct reproduction of older building styles is not necessary. However, an evolutionary approach to design



with its roots in the character of the area will yield positive benefits. Appropriate scale and massing can often be established by reference to existing buildings, as can the proportions and positioning of window and door openings.

There will be a presumption in favour of natural materials that will mellow with ageing. In many instances, man made materials such as plastics will be inappropriate.



Red sandstone and red brick in the Eden Valley



River cobbles, red sandstone and render in the Solway area (1990s).

The quality of space around buildings is equally important. Development site boundaries can have a significant impact on a village and also (for edge of village developments) the surrounding countryside. Boundaries are often defined by hedges, although stone walls become more common towards the North Pennines. Well designed boundaries can help to integrate new development both with the village and the wider area. Such boundaries are also important in terms of privacy and security for new and existing development.

There may be many natural features within and around a development site, such as mature trees and hedges, which should be retained. Such features can provide instant landscaping, and help to integrate the site with the surrounding area. For more advice on the protection of trees on development sites, the adopted supplementary planning guidance, “*Trees on Development Sites*” should be referred to.



Development site boundary with new tree planting

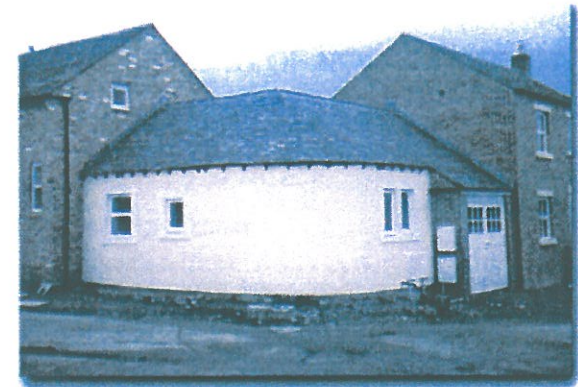


... other features which give a village its character, such as front gardens, boundary walls

It is important that local characteristics are reflected in new buildings. The following aspects should therefore be carefully thought about when considering or drawing up proposals for new development:

- the impact of development site boundaries on the village or the surrounding countryside;
- the use of existing and new landscaping to help integrate new development with the surrounding environment;
- the colour and type of materials used and whether they reflect those used in existing buildings;
- good examples of the simple use of natural paving materials that can be found in many villages. Whilst cost will often preclude extensive use of natural paving or walling materials, a careful mix of traditional and modern will often be effective.
- the roof pitch, orientation of ridge lines, use of chimneys and type of roofing materials on adjacent buildings;

- the contribution made by window and door styles, and the use of porches, to local character, in particular whether windows have a vertical or horizontal emphasis;
- the predominance of other features which give a village its character, such as front gardens, boundary walls, repeated use of certain materials etc;
- the provision of garages, either for existing development or as part of new development, has the potential to blend in if built of matching materials. It is important that such garages are built of sufficient size to include some storage space. Garages provide a good opportunity to reduce the visual impact of parked cars on the rural scene;
- landscaping schemes which include the planting of native trees and hedgerows. These will help with the integration of new development and generally improve the surrounding environment. The adopted SPG 'Trees on Development Sites' should be referred to for more detailed advice.



Garages reduce the impact of parked cars on the rural scene.

Contacts

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