



RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE



This guidance addresses design issues of new residential development, house extensions and alterations. Detailed guidance sheets provide all applicants, including landowners, developers and agents, with a clear understanding of what the Council considers to constitute good design in residential development within the Harrogate District.

**CONSERVATION & DESIGN SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES,
KNAPPING MOUNT, WEST GROVE ROAD,
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Harrogate
BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPROVED MARCH 1999

RDGcov.P65 7/01

Introduction

This design guidance has been the subject of public consultation and is supplementary to, and should be used in conjunction with, the policies of the Harrogate District Local Plan.

Harrogate Borough Council is responsible for administering the Town and Country Planning legislation. It is an important instrument for protecting and enhancing the environment in town and country, preserving the built heritage and conserving the rural landscape.

The Council aims to protect and enhance the heritage and character of the District by encouraging high standards of design in new development. The policies which will be used to achieve these objectives are included in the Harrogate District Local Plan and, in particular, in this extract from Policy HD20:

"Proposals for new development or redevelopment, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings which are of poor design or out of scale or character with their surroundings, will not be permitted."



Planning Control assesses all aspects of the environmental impact of new development. Initial concerns are the suitability of the site and whether its area is adequate to allow space for access, parking, and appropriate levels of amenity and landscape provision for the intended occupants. Before reaching its decision on a planning application in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance, the Authority must consider the appearance of the proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings. Planning Authorities thus have a role to play in broad design issues and, where the sensitive character of the site dictates, more detailed issues of style and construction.

In the Harrogate District the quality of much of our built environment lies not only in the merits of individual buildings but also in the degree to which each building blends harmoniously into its surroundings.

The key to good design, which fulfils the Council's objectives, is not only to provide for the needs of the occupants but also to respond sensitively to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. These characteristics will influence the siting of buildings, their form, scale and landscaping. Such factors may limit the development potential of the site and successful negotiations with the Council through the Planning Department can only take place when they have been realistically and sensitively considered.

Genuinely creative and innovative design will be encouraged provided that the principles embodied in this guidance are adopted.

Residential Guidance Available:

Planning Considerations	RDG1
Site Appraisal	RDG2
Site Layout	RDG3
Massing & Form	RDG4
Materials	RDG5
External Appearance	RDG6
Sensitive Locations	RDG7

Future sheets will include design for the disabled, extensions, and Listed Building extensions and alterations.

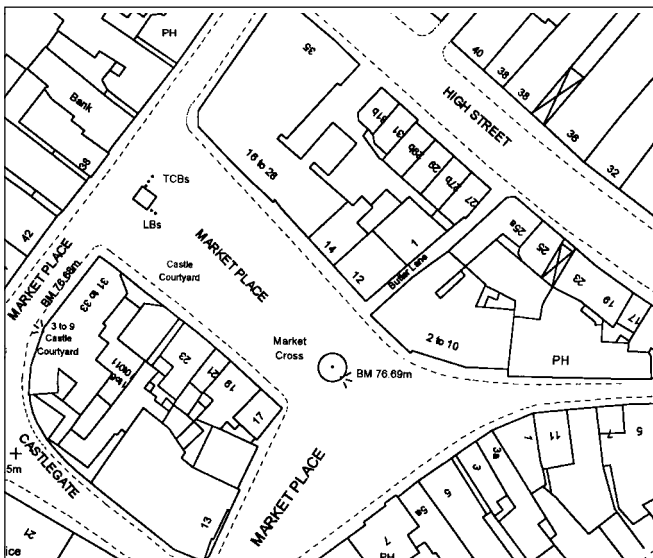
Components of good design



Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon, together with the smaller towns and villages of the District, have distinctive characters derived from the era of their development and the building materials locally available at the time. It is essential to maintain the wealth of variety this District enjoys. The Council's objective is to maintain this local distinctiveness.

Site Planning:

The siting of new buildings should reflect the general context, specifically 'the grain' of the existing settlement which comprises building lines, the pattern of buildings and spaces between them, and the ratio of building to the overall plot size.



Form of Building:

The form and massing of new buildings are most important factors in the successful integration of new houses into established settings. They should be well-proportioned and their elements well-related to form a satisfactory composition in their own right and in their setting.



External Appearance:

Windows and doors should be well proportioned and well-related within the elevation. Roof overhangs, gable treatment and chimneys should be consistent with the building style and proportion. Whether a house reflects its neighbour or is of contemporary design, it must be sympathetic to its surroundings.



Materials & Details:

Materials used for walling and roofs should be sympathetic to the location - the choice should reflect the character of the area. Architectural detail should reinforce the building materials used and the style and character of the building.



Ancillary Information

Planning Legislation:

The principal Acts which provide for the control of residential development are the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Planning permission is required for 'development'. However, some minor developments, such as small house extensions, constitute 'Permitted Development' and do not require formal planning permission. Permitted Development is defined by the General Permitted Development Order 1995.

In addition to such primary and subordinate legislation the Department of the Environment has issued Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Departmental Circulars.

Harrogate District Local Plan:

The Local Plan was adopted on 19 February 2001. Key policies relevant to the design of residential development are:

- H13 Housing Density, Layout & Design**
- HD20 Design of New Development & Redevelopment**

Other policies which may be relevant:

- HD1 Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest**
- HD3 Control of Development in Conservation Areas**
- HD4 Development Affecting Archaeological Sites**
- HD6 Historic Battlefield Sites**
- HD12 Amenity Open Space**
- HD13 Trees and Woodlands**
- HD16 Approaches to Main Settlements**
- H6 Housing Development in the Main Settlements & Villages**
- H15 Extensions to Dwellings**
- H16 Annexes to Dwellings**
- H17 Housing Type**
- H18 Siting & Design of Dwellings in the Countryside**
- H20 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**
- C11 Landscaping of Development Sites**
- R4 Open Space Requirements for New Residential Development**
- GB6 Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt**



Listed Buildings:

A listed building is defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as a building of architectural or historic interest which has been included in a list compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The protection conferred by listing also covers any object or structure fixed to the building or any free-standing object or building within the curtilage. It is a criminal offence to demolish a listed building, or to extend or alter it in a manner that would affect its character without having first obtained listed building consent from the local authority.

Conservation Areas:

These are defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The aim in a Conservation Area is to protect, restore and enhance all the elements (which may include minor buildings, trees, open spaces, walls, paving etc.) which together make up the familiar and cherished local scene. There are additional controls; permitted development differs in a Conservation Area and specific controls apply to the demolition of buildings and walls and any works to trees. Any development in or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must be sensitively designed to ensure that it does not adversely affect the character of the area.

Further advice on Local Plan policies and any of the issues in this document may be obtained from Planning Enquiries at the Department of Technical Services. Planning Forms are available from the Planning Division in the same Department.

For further advice contact: Conservation & Design Section, Harrogate Borough Council, Department of Technical Services, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate. HG1 2AE Tel: (01423) 500600

The use of professionally qualified agents is strongly advised. Provided they have the skills and experience to undertake house design, agents can provide good value for money, and can achieve the best value from the site. Agents are usually pleased to give preliminary advice. 'Package' designs (with building regulation approval) can cause problems at the planning stage, as the Council will expect modifications to suit the needs of the site and its setting. A skilled designer will adapt the client's needs to suit the locality.

Various titles are used by agents and it is useful to understand their meaning:

Chartered Town Planner

Trained to the educational standards regulated by the Royal Town Planning Institute (R.T.P.I.), of whom she or he will be a member. Planners can have architectural qualifications as well (Architect/Planner). (Note: there is no control over the title Town Planner or Planner - an agent with these titles may not necessarily be qualified.)

Chartered Architect

Trained in design matters to a standard set by the Architects Registration Board (A.R.B.), and is a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (R.I.B.A.).

Registered Architect

As above, but not a member of R.I.B.A. Registration with the Architects Registration Board is at present a legal requirement to practise as an architect. The description "Architect" may only be used by chartered and registered architects.

Chartered Surveyor

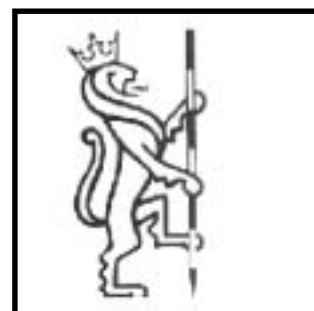
Trained to educational standards regulated by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (R.I.C.S.), of whom he or she will be a member. There are various types of chartered surveyors, not all of whom will be trained in building construction or design.

Surveyor, Architectural Consultant/Designer, Architectural Technician/Technologist

The British Institute of Architectural Technologists (B.I.A.T.) and the Association of Building Engineers (A.B.E.) regulate standards for their members. Other agents may not necessarily have recognised qualifications and enquiries should be made as to the training that such a person has received.

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Addresses and phone numbers for further enquiries:

R.T.P.I.	26 Portland Place, London W1N 4BE. (0207) 636 9107
R.I.B.A.	66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD. (0207) 580 55330
A.R.B.	73 Hallam Street, London W1N 6EE. (0208) 580 5861
R.I.C.S.	12 Great St George Street, London SW1. (0207) 222 7000
B.I.A.T.	397 City Road, London ECN 1NE. (0207) 278 2206
A.B.E.	Jubilee House, Billing Brook Road, Weston Favell, Northampton NN3 8NW. (01604) 404121

Whichever type of professional adviser is chosen, the quality of their previous work should be checked through references. It is important to ascertain whether or not the designer is sympathetic to the client's approach, is familiar with the procedures, and can produce drawings to the standards required by the planning department.

Making a Planning Application:

It is unwise to purchase a site before taking professional advice, and before establishing the potential of the site. It is possible to apply for planning permission *before* buying the land, making any offers for it *subject to planning permission*. If the site is bought and subsequently found to be unsuitable for the purchaser's requirements, problems and delays may be experienced at the planning application stage.

Specific advice on how to make a planning application is available in a booklet from the Planning Department. Fees are payable for planning applications. Location plans, scaled drawings and appropriate reports, clearly showing the proposals, are required.



Development Control Checklist:

This Guidance Sheet will be used by the Planning Department to assess planning applications. The summary below will assist agents in the preparation of applications, and may reduce delays.

- i) **Has the site and the building been surveyed and appraised in accordance with the SITE APPRAISAL Guidance?**
If not, what further information is required?
- ii) **Has the siting and the plan been devised to:**
 - reflect and reinforce general pattern of settlement?
 - provide adequate space around the building?
 - preserve existing valuable site features?
 - give adequate access from the public highway and space for car parking?
 - protect neighbouring amenities?
 - give maximum natural surveillance for crime prevention?
 - provide for disabled access, if necessary?
- iii) **Does the form of the building:**
 - respect the scale and form of adjacent buildings?
 - relate to the existing precedents in the area (where appropriate)?
 - give a satisfactory roofscape?
- iv) **Does the external appearance:**
 - accurately reflect the form and character of the traditional precedent where appropriate?
 - represent a confident and well-resolved new design?
 - have a balanced pattern of windows and doors in the front facade?
 - have well-resolved details, suitable to the chosen form and character?
 - reflect the range of local materials?
 - respect the appearance of adjacent buildings?
- v) **Does the landscaping:**
 - retain existing valuable landscape features?
 - reflect or enhance the landscape or townscape setting of the site (especially boundary treatment)?
 - include an adequate long term scheme of management and maintenance?

Early advice should be sought from the Planning Department after initial site appraisal and research has been carried out. Pre-Application Consultations can save much unnecessary re-design and frustration. Our aim is to assist you to produce good innovative design which will make a positive contribution to our District.

For further advice contact: Conservation & Design Section, Harrogate Borough Council, Department of Technical Services, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate. HG1 2AE Tel: (01423) 500600

Maximum benefit from the site and its features can only be obtained if a full survey of the site and its setting is carried out. When the context and characteristics of the site are fully understood, a design can evolve which reflects the character of the locality, thereby enabling the development to be readily integrated into the environment. Survey information will be used as a basis for the assessment of planning applications.



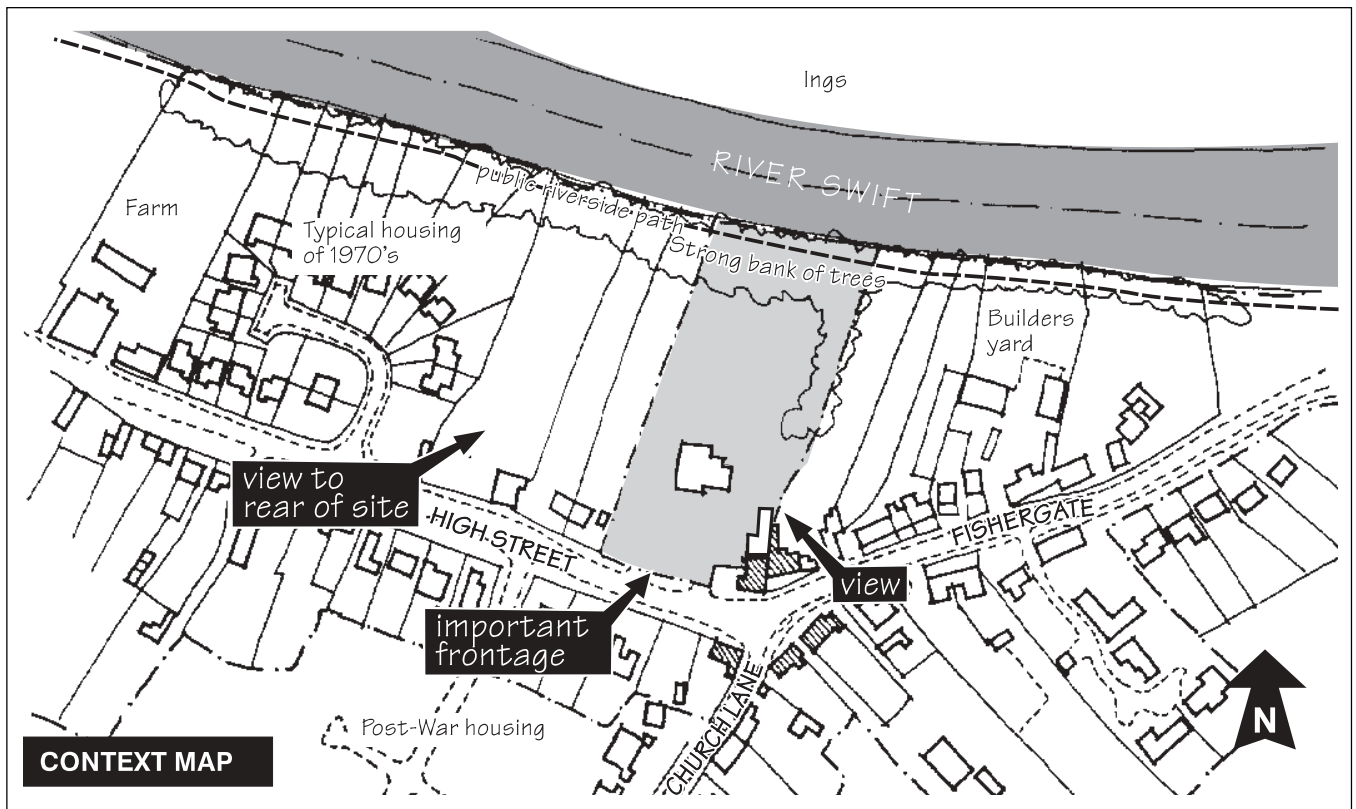
View of junction from High Street

The characteristics of the site should be studied in the context of its surroundings. The basic form, character and use of local buildings should be described giving typical heights, widths, materials and styles. The local grain and pattern should be analysed including the spaces between buildings, their juxtaposition and distances from boundaries.

Views into the site from the settlement and beyond should be considered: for example, will the development affect the setting of an important feature of the settlement? Would the topography result in the roofscape being seen from outside the site? Outward views from the site should also be considered; the future occupants may benefit from the removal of obstacles or conversely the screening of eyesores may be required.

Both the strengths and weaknesses of the site and its surroundings should be assessed. A largely built-up frontage may need further reinforcement, whilst areas of building 'clutter' may benefit from partial demolition and rebuild.

A study of this nature need not be time consuming if carried out when doing the site survey or initial site visit. It will prove invaluable for a full understanding of the potential and limitations of the site.





View of junction from Church Lane

The site survey should show the following:

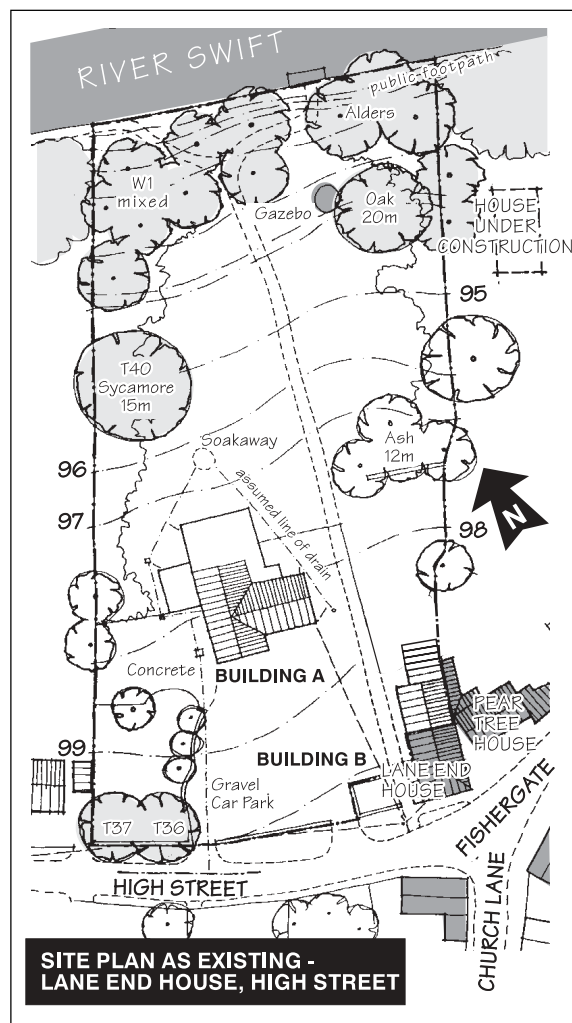
- Site Boundaries - their positions and construction
- Levels - the contours should be shown on a large site or individual spot levels on a small infill site indicating clearly the falls across the site.
- Orientation - the north point should be shown and also the direction of prevailing winds.
- Trees and Hedges - positions, spread and species along with an indication of condition.
- Ponds and Wells - position and depth.
- Ditches/Water Courses - position, depth, normal width and flood levels.
- Overhead Wires - position, height and type.
- Drains, Sewers, Pipelines - position, depth and type.
- Walls/Fences - position, height, construction and condition.
- Existing Buildings - measured survey if to be retained and position on plan if to be demolished.
- Floorscape - the position and construction of paths, drives and Rights of Way.

The survey drawing should encompass sufficient adjacent property to show features of the immediate surroundings including:

- Buildings - size, position and aspects.
- Trees - position, spread and species.
- Water Courses - position, width and depth.
- Roads - width, class and distance to main junction.
- Driveways - positions.
- Other features and adjacent land uses.

Research should be carried out prior to the physical survey of the site to ascertain:

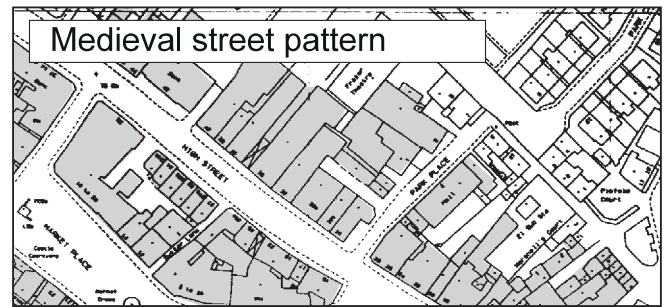
- Ownership of the land and boundary walls. Whether there are rights of way or easements across the site.
- Designations - Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Conservation Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Historic Parks & Gardens, Historic Battlefields.
- Planning consents granted or current applications on the site and adjacent land, including new highways.
- Public Sewers, supply pipelines, major electrical cables.
- Mining works, gypsum or other deposits, or any known contaminants which may affect the stability of the site.



To conclude, the site surveyor must ensure that all features of the site are either measured or noted. Sketches or photographs of particular aspects are crucial to the designer to enable him/her to produce a successful development which harmonises with its environment.

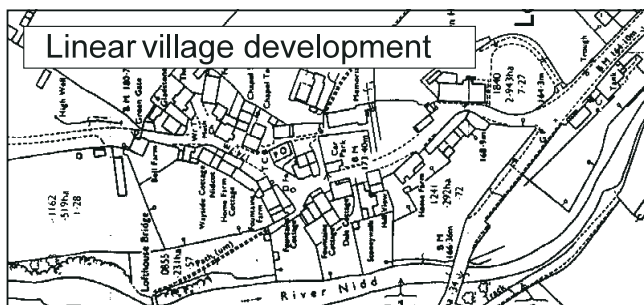
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New buildings should make a positive contribution to the special quality of the area and their siting and density should respect the area's character and layout. The siting of new buildings should not detrimentally affect the occupants of neighbouring buildings. The illustrations on this page show some examples of how the 'grain' of a settlement can affect the character of the spaces around buildings.



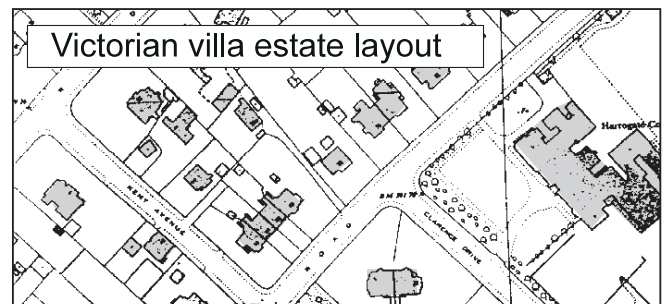
Other important characteristics of the street are that the building types, sizes and shapes may vary.

The characteristics of the layout of a settlement depend on the reason for its development, the era when this took place and the topography. For example, Ripon and Knaresborough retain much of their medieval street pattern where buildings are against footpaths, their narrow, tall frontages giving a strong vertical emphasis. Streets and alleys are narrow enclosed spaces.



The contextual study of the settlement will note the proximity of the existing buildings to the street, their massing and the scale of space between them, i.e. the 'grain'.

Developers are often concerned with the density of developments which is inter-related with the massing of, and spaces between, buildings. The special quality of an area will be clear from the contextual study and an acceptable density will be derived from a site layout which reflects the characteristics of the settlement.



In contrast those towns or areas which developed later in the Georgian era have more space between the buildings, which generally have wider frontages. In the Victorian era estates such as the Duchy in Harrogate were planned with large villas set well back from wide streets.

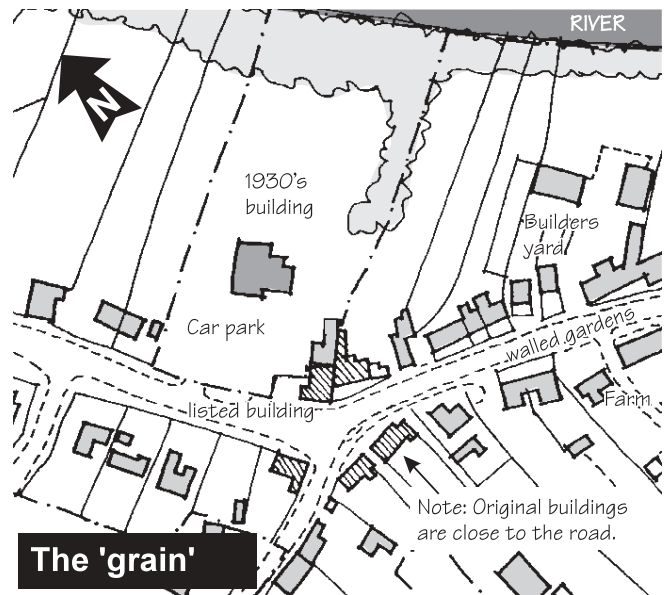
Topography has a great influence on character: a village in a steeply sided valley often has protected, enclosed spaces; a village on a plateau will have more open spaces and tend to be more outward looking. There is a wide variety of settlement patterns within the Harrogate District and each new development should respect and contribute to the character of its locality.



The siting of new buildings should reflect the 'grain' of the existing settlement which comprises building lines, the pattern of buildings and the spaces between them and also the ratio of building to the overall plot size (or density).

New development should take its inspiration from the subtleties of the composition of the original settlement pattern and not simply emulate suburban 20th century development. Where there are poor local precedents, they should be discounted in the interest of the overall character of the settlement.

In addition to siting new buildings to reflect the grain of the settlement, their mass can be utilised to provide stops to vistas or infill a gap in the street. For example, a terraced infill is often recommended in linear villages.



standards for highways must be achieved. In a specific instance, for example the access to a listed building, these standards may be reconsidered in the interests of conservation.

Existing historic buildings, walls or other features should be considered for retention and re-use. The use of, for example, outbuildings as garaging can give immediate character to the site.

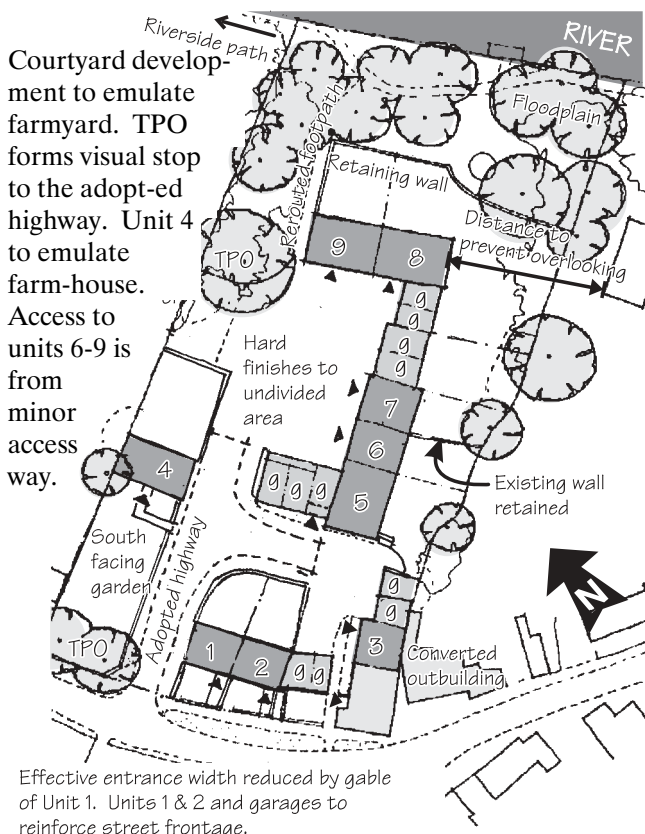
Buildings should be sited to preserve existing trees and hedges which are an asset of the settlement and give maturity to the scheme. Advice on acceptable distances between buildings and trees can be sought from the Council's Arboriculturalist and from BS5837.

The existence of water courses on site will restrict the available building land. Ponds and ditches should not be filled in as they are important to the wildlife potential of the locality, as well as providing natural drainage to the site and surrounding area. Old wells can be attractive when made safe and restored.

The siting and orientation of new dwellings should avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking and overshadowing the private areas of neighbouring houses and gardens. New development should not overbear its neighbours.

Houses should be sited to allow natural overlooking of the front door from the street and/or surrounding properties. This will reduce the chance of criminal behaviour by creating a more friendly open frontage. North Yorkshire Police have a Crime Prevention Officer who will advise on community safety.

These concepts apply equally to sites in areas of differing street patterns. The plot area to building ratio is of fundamental importance to the design of any development and should be the first design consideration.



Access roads and drives should be sited with consideration to the settlement pattern, the retention of trees or buildings and to maximise visibility for the safety of both drivers and pedestrians. North Yorkshire County Council's visibility

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MASSING & FORM

for new residential development

The form and massing of new buildings is one of the most important factors in the successful integration of new houses in established settings.

A contextual study of the settlement will highlight the local distinctiveness of existing buildings with regard to their scale, proportions and height.

Another important characteristic of the street is that the building types, sizes and shapes may vary. The basic attraction of our townscapes (including villages) is that the street scene is so varied.

Rural Design:

Generally villages in the Harrogate District are predominantly two storeyed narrow cottages with outbuildings to the rear. Often farm buildings are within the village giving additional interest due to the juxtaposition of buildings of different sizes.

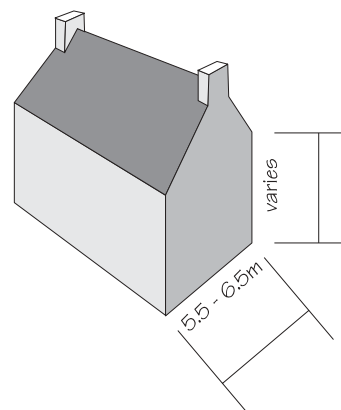
The traditional dwelling of the district evolved from a simple two-up two-down dwelling with a single span roof of up to 6.5 m wide to which subsequent additions were often made.

In designing new houses to fit the village scene, it is useful to start with a small basic house plan and add on elements to meet space requirements. This will result in a collection of building forms rather than an uncharacteristically large mass.

Traditional single storey buildings, such as stables or storage sheds, are usually simple, long, 'L' shaped forms with a width of less than 6 m. They are often sited close to the road boundary or are mixed with two storey buildings in courtyard form.

The position and design of garages should reflect the form of these traditional outbuildings and help to create good townscape compositions.

The roof shape is critical to the massing. Most dwellings have a dual pitch roof with eaves onto the street. Hipped roofs are not typical and should only be used in frontages where they will not disrupt the street roof line. Mono pitch roofs should be limited to outbuildings or small extensions. Dormers are an intrusion into the simple roof mass of traditional buildings and their introduction should be avoided.

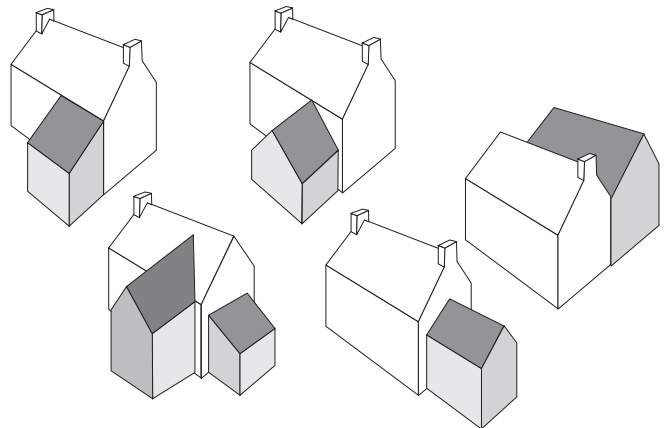


Basic Rural Dwelling

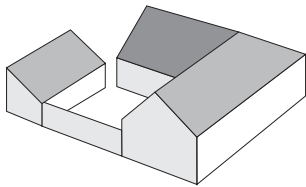
Note the narrow width of the gable which is the equivalent of one generous room depth.

The pitch of the roof is traditionally high. Chimney stacks are at the ridge ends and do not project from the gable wall.

Traditional extensions



A terraced infill is often recommended to reinforce a street frontage. However, a variety of frontage widths, eaves heights and roof pitches should be used as opposed to a formal terrace.



Single storey development based on traditional outbuildings

Single storey dwellings are not a traditional feature of the District although elderly or disabled people need such accommodation. Narrow plan buildings which repeat the traditional form of outbuildings are recommended.



Typical street scene of houses and outbuildings onto a road boundary.

Urban Design

Urban infill with a medieval street pattern, such as can be seen in Knaresborough, requires a very different massing. Development was maximised on small building plots with three storeys on the frontage and one or two storeys in yards to the rear. The result is very intense development with a strong vertical emphasis, often with deep buildings with their gable ends onto the street. Massing is critical to the townscape and development with a horizontal emphasis will be discouraged.



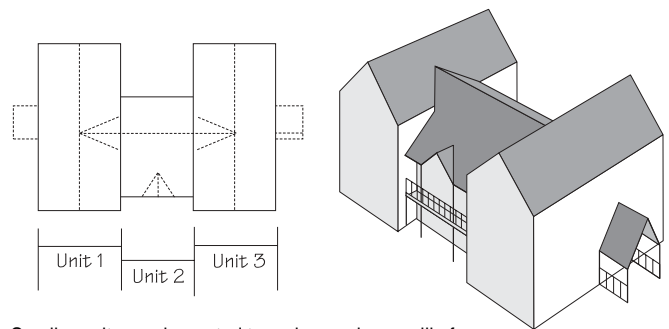
Knaresborough, Medieval street pattern reflected in gables.

New development should reflect the existing massing to reinforce the pattern of street frontage and yard development. However, a variety of frontage widths, eaves heights and roof pitches should be used to maintain an interesting urban roof line.



Infill within townscapes of the Georgian and later eras should reflect their wider streets, private gardens or forecourts and wider street frontages. Often there are large detached houses with hipped roofs and overhanging eaves. Floor to ceiling heights were greater than the current norm and consideration of internal heights is essential in the design of new housing within such settings. Many of the outbuildings are of generous proportion to accommodate carriages.

An area of distinct character within Harrogate town is the Duchy Estate where Edwardian and later villas predominate. These large houses, many of three storeys with a basement, often have deep plans and complex roof shapes. Gables onto the street, bays and turrets are commonplace. Here small houses are unsuitable as infill; larger blocks which can be subdivided into smaller units will be more easily integrated.



Smaller units amalgamated to make one larger villa form.

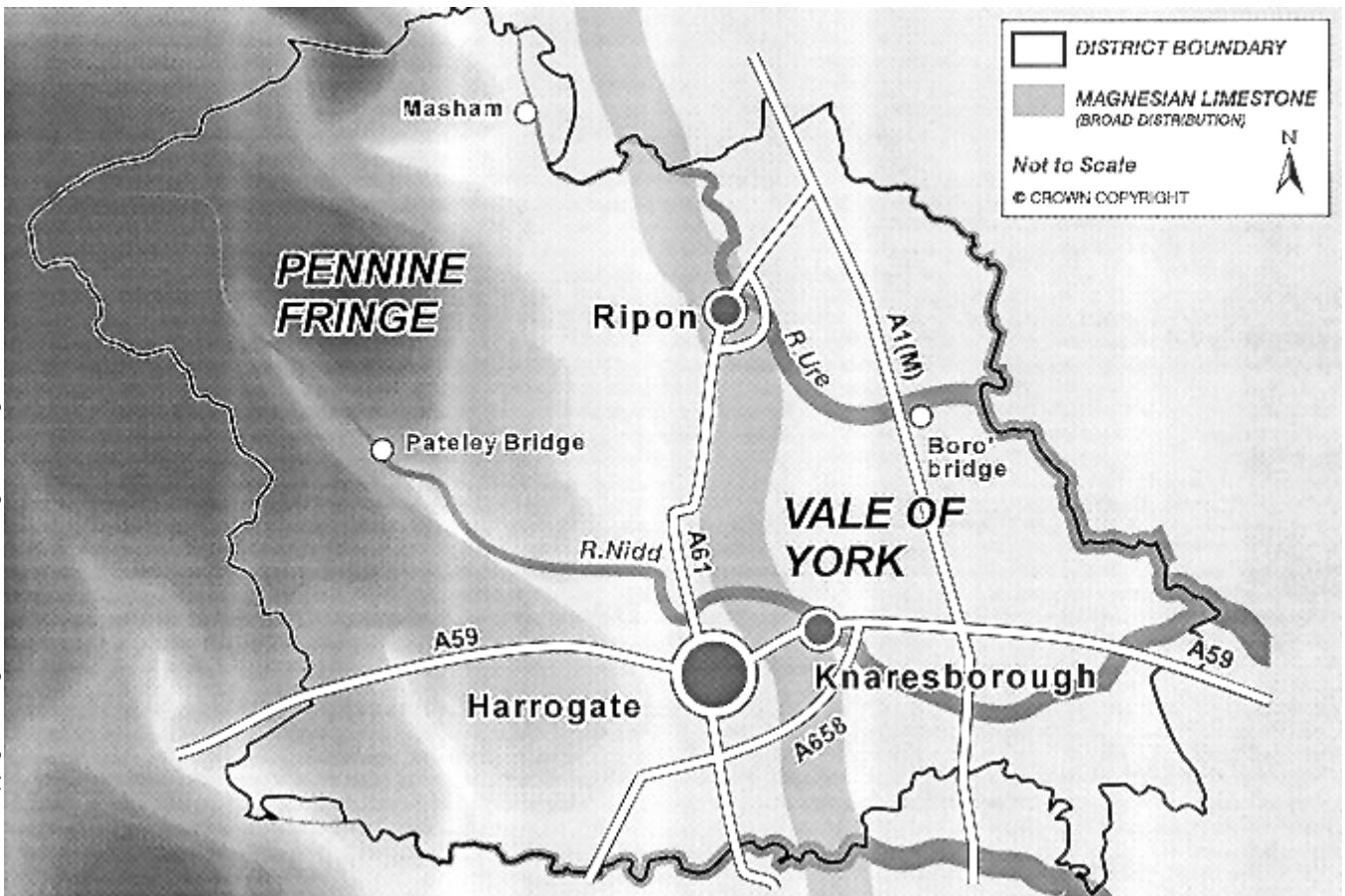
The massing and proportion of buildings reflect the era of their development. The attraction of many settlements in the District lies in accretion of buildings over the centuries, giving variety in scale. New development should enhance the visual composition of the street scene.

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Choice of building materials should reflect and reinforce the character of the District. Their use and application should respect local techniques and traditions and be in sympathy with the appearance of neighbouring properties.



Housing in the Pennine fringe.



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House in the Vale of York.

Buildings of the Harrogate District are constructed of a wide range of materials. Brick walling and clay pantile roofs predominate to the east of the District and stone walling and stone slate roofs to the west. There are exceptions to this; for example, the strip of Magnesian limestone running from Wetherby to Ripon is reflected in the colour of stonework and the variety of materials used in the settlements overlaying it.

The vernacular style of traditional houses stems from the building materials which were available locally at the time of construction. There are two distinct styles in the District, the steeply pitched brick houses to the East and the lower, robust stone houses to the West.

Stone:

The millstone grit to the West of the District may be grey or buff when freshly cut and weathers to dark grey. Magnesian limestone has a light cream/grey colour and erodes rather than changing colour with exposure. Both are always laid to course.



Render:

Many brick buildings are rendered with traditional lime based render. The dark paint around sash windows is a common feature, as are moulded timber surrounds.



Brick:

The colour may vary between orange red and dark brown dependent upon type of clay and temperature of firing. Sometimes stone details, for example lintels, are used in conjunction with brickwork.



Cobble:

Stones were only available close to rivers, laid to courses, but due to small block sizes and inconsistency they were often used in conjunction with brickwork. Snecked squared rubble is not traditional in most parts of the District.

Welsh Slate:

Welsh Slate dominates on roofs built after the C19 and has been used as replacement for pantiles and stone slates on earlier buildings. Due to its relatively light weight deeper overhangs were easier to achieve which led to decorative barge boards etc. on Victorian housing.



Clay Pantile:

Predominantly used in the East, but sometimes found in the West of the District. Steep roof pitches ensured good water run-off; a common feature is the use of two or three stone slate courses at the eaves (where the pitch is lower) to slow down and spread rain water into the gutter.

Stone Slate:

As these are relatively large units the pitch can be lower to reduce overlaps (so minimising the weight). Diminishing courses are often used, consisting of smaller slates at the top and larger slates at the eaves where the pitch is often lower still. Verges are often finished with copings (or tabling) and decorated corbels (kneelers).



The effect of material on style:

As stone is a heavy material, there were limits to the size of block that could be quarried and lifted. Window widths were restricted by the size of the lintel blocks. Often a series of narrow windows, separated by stone mullions, were used when better levels of light were required internally. Also the size of stones, particularly the height of courses, contributes to the character of stone walling and thus is an important consideration.

Brick was much more flexible and more easily transported. Often old timber framed houses were re-clad in brick and the height and massing of traditional brick buildings tend to reflect that trend. Often strong heavy section timber windows were used without external lintels or alternatively rubbed brick cambered arches were used over openings.

Pantiled roofs have a high pitch, very little overhang at the eaves and usually a simple pointed verge. Sometimes the gable walls project above roof level with a coping over. Stone slates can be laid at a lower pitch. Due to the difficulty of weatherproofing, without using expensive lead, the use of dormers was rare, particularly in rural areas.

The type of building material used will affect the style of a building: high quality design should result from the consideration of the local character of the area and careful use of the building material available.

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Externally, new buildings should be well-proportioned, with the fenestration well-balanced within the elevation, and should respect, but not necessarily mimic, the style and character of their surroundings. Genuinely creative and innovative design, which embodies the principles in this guidance, will be encouraged.



Front of Dales stone house.



Rear of Dales stone house.

Generally, new houses should reflect and reinforce local distinctiveness in terms of massing, proportions and openings, (see Guidance Sheet RDG7 for residential design in sensitive locations).

There appears to be a desire to return to historical styles, but there is a lack of understanding of their essential design qualities. Widely available replica 'period' features of poor quality can be found throughout the County. These do not reflect the character of the District and the resulting designs are suburban in effect.



Brick housing in the Vale of York.

Contemporary designs, reinterpreting traditional forms and using local materials creatively, can add to the richness and interest of the District. A sensitive designer can produce a modern house which acknowledges its neighbours. Innovative designs, which acknowledge the particular features of the locality and site, may be of such quality that they make a positive contribution to the area.



Openings:

The proportion of window opening to wall area in vernacular buildings is quite small. Nowadays in order to reduce energy consumption it is important to follow the same principles. Buildings should be orientated and planned to maximise the benefit of the sun and window sizes reduced on the north face or that exposed to the prevailing winds.

Windows:

The majority of the houses in the District were constructed after the 17th century and their appearance was influenced by classical design and proportion, giving a symmetrical window pattern. New buildings in a traditional setting should relate to this symmetrical pattern and proportion. Elevations should be balanced with separate smaller openings in preference to one large opening. Large openings should be located so that they do not form part of the public view of the building.

Generally window frames were positioned back from the face of the wall which provides better protection and an interesting shadow line around the opening.

New buildings in a non-sensitive location can have a more contemporary elevational treatment, although window style should be consistent throughout and the elevation should be well-balanced.



Doors:

The front door of the house should be the focus of attention, positioned in clear view of the street. All too often it is either ill-considered with regard to the elevation (in favour of providing a cloak room) or appears subservient to adjacent integral garage doors. The style of the door and its surround should indicate the status of the building. For example, a richly detailed door with pilasters and portico would be totally out of place on a cottage. The style of the doorway must relate to the house. Emphasis can be given by stone surrounds or quoins, a fanlight over (to give extra height) or, in appropriate cases, by a classically detailed timber surround.



Roofs:

Roof detail, heavily influenced by the material used, affects the house's character. The style must suit the building (a heavily detailed eaves overhang is not suited to a small house or cottage for example). The level of the eaves is crucial to the balance of the elevation and must be considered in conjunction with other elements. Roofs should be kept as simple as possible, with dormers, particularly wide or mock dormers, avoided. Rooflights can be acceptable on certain slopes, but their size should be minimised. The chimney is of great importance as a vertical element and was traditionally sited at the ridge ends. (The chimney is missed, even subconsciously, as the building becomes a 'home without a hearth').



Inappropriate Elements

The use of false shutters, intended to add interest, rarely improves the balance of an elevation; historically, shutters were hardly ever used in rural areas. Genuine bow windows were used in 18th century town shops, but new bow windows can look pretentious on modern houses and can detract from adjacent vertically proportioned windows. Brick or stone built porches almost always appear 'tacked-on' and thoughtful internal planning should make them unnecessary.

Many modern dwellings can look ungainly when the design of all the elements has not been given due consideration. Each element must be well-detailed and arranged in harmony. Symmetry is not essential but well-balanced elevations can only be achieved using consistent proportions and style throughout.

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SENSITIVE LOCATIONS

for new residential development

The development of sites which are in sensitive locations must be very carefully designed. Detailed issues of style and construction should be carefully considered as only buildings of the highest quality will be appropriate to these locations.

Locations which are considered sensitive are those affecting buildings or areas of historic importance, on approaches to main settlements and in areas of important landscape value. Many of these are listed below. Full details of the implications of these designations are included within the Harrogate District Local Plan, published by the Planning Division.

NIDDERDALE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

This designation formally recognises the national importance of the landscape of the area. Where development is permitted, the highest standards of design will be required which should reflect the local distinctiveness of the area.

CONSERVATION AREAS

Development which has an adverse effect on the character or appearance of a conservation area will not be permitted. This includes development within a conservation area as well as development visually affecting it.

There are 52 conservation areas in Harrogate District; these are shown on the Proposals Map in the Local Plan. Proposals within these areas should not only preserve their character but enhance and contribute positively to it.

LISTED BUILDINGS

Development will not be permitted where it would have an adverse effect on the character, physical fabric or setting of a listed building. The Council has a record of all listed buildings in the Harrogate District.

BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST AND MERIT

Proposals for development affecting the setting of a building considered to be of local interest and merit will be permitted provided the highest standards of design are achieved.

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ANCIENT MONUMENTS

Development will not be permitted where it would have an adverse effect on the site or the setting of a scheduled monument or other important archaeological remains.

PARKS AND GARDENS OF VISUAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect the character of setting of historic parks and gardens and strict protection will be given to those on the English Heritage Register.

SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

Where development is permitted, high standards of design, paying due regard to the setting, will be required.

APPROACHES TO MAIN SETTLEMENTS

Proposals for development adjacent to classified roads, railways and waterways which have an adverse effect on the character of a main settlement will not be permitted. Proposals for development along these approaches will be required to have special regard to the quality of design.

THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF SETTLEMENTS

Development which has an adverse effect on the landscape setting of a settlement will not be permitted. Where development is permitted, high standards of design will be required.



The contextual study of a locality is an extremely important design tool and will highlight its local distinctiveness. The massing and form of new development should reflect that of vernacular buildings. The use and application of materials should respect local traditions and techniques.

Site Layout

The siting of buildings in any locality should respect the character and layout of the area in which they are situated (see RDG3). New development affecting the setting of a listed building should not detract from it. The siting of new buildings in Special Landscape Areas should reflect local settlement patterns.

Massing and Form

The form of new houses should reflect that of neighbouring traditional dwellings. In most rural locations this form is derived from a simple two-up two-down having a single span roof of up to 6.5m, with various extensions (see RDG4). In urban areas the massing and form of buildings vary, as will become clear from the contextual study, and the form of new houses should emulate these.

Materials

Choice of construction materials is critical in sensitive locations. Natural materials which were commonly used in vernacular buildings should be used. The use and application of buildings materials should respect local techniques (see RDG5).

External Appearance

The style and character of the local vernacular should be reflected in sensitive areas. Contemporary design, reinterpreting elements of traditional building and using local materials creatively, can contribute positively to an area.

Openings

The proportion of window opening to wall area in rural vernacular buildings is small, usually less than 1:3. The north wall, exposed to the worst of the weather, often has no openings. It is common to have no windows in the gable walls although, occasionally, a window is positioned towards the rear of a house. Ground floor windows are often larger than their first floor counterparts and all openings are regularly placed.

Casement windows have been used on buildings since medieval times; the majority of windows constructed after the 17th century are sash windows with vertical proportions.

New houses in sensitive locations should have their window openings, style of window, and openers in accordance with local tradition or neighbouring buildings. uPVC is not an acceptable alternative to timber in locations which are sensitive due to their historic context.

The front door should be the focus of attention. The door and its surround, or lack of it, should be appropriate to the style of a house and its setting. Often a fanlight above the door giving light into the hall is preferable to glazed panels in the door itself.



Roofs and Chimneys

In most locations it is appropriate for the main part of the house to be two storey with a simple pitched roof and eaves onto the street. However in some areas roof shapes are far more complex and, where ornamental bargeboards to projecting gables and bracketed eaves details contribute to local character, they should be emulated.

Dormer windows should be used very sparingly. The simple clean lines of unbroken roofs, allowing the natural beauty of the roofing materials to be expressed, are an integral part of the local distinctiveness of many areas. Roof lights should be limited to rear slopes and small 'conservation' lights used. The size of the tiles or slates is also important; lower pitches are finished with larger stone slates. Roofs with higher pitches are finished with smaller slates or tiles. Large or simple roof forms should have large slates. Roofs with complex forms should have smaller slates or tiles which are more adaptable.

Chimneys are an important element of the building form and should be placed in accordance with the local tradition, usually at the ridge ends. However, in certain areas the chimneys may be more ornate and placed as appropriate to a more complex roof form.



The intricacy or simplicity of the new buildings should reflect local distinctiveness, both in terms of massing and form, and also in the details of their construction.

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