

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1 The design of new development has a significant effect on environmental quality. In PPG1 the Government expresses its commitment to good design and in its White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' states that good design is important and is the responsibility of anyone who commissions a building. Good design will therefore be an essential requirement for all developments.
- 6.2 PPG1 states that development plans should include design policies which will encourage good design and that local planning authorities should reject poor designs such as those which are out of scale or character with their surroundings. The planning system is not concerned with the detailed design of buildings unless this is justified by a sensitive location. Aspects of design which plan policies should concentrate on include scale, density, massing, height, location in relation to other buildings and overall relationship to the surroundings.
- 6.3 It is important that new buildings respect and retain the patterns of regional diversity and local distinctiveness and the harmony between buildings, their settlements and the landscape. New buildings need to respond to local traditions of design and materials, and should display an understanding of, and association with, their local setting.
- 6.4 Within the District, four distinct areas provide the regional diversity: the Pennine foothills to the west, the North York Moors to the east, the Howardian Hills to the south east and the lowland Vales of York and Mowbray between. Within each of these larger areas can be distinguished areas of local diversity, characterised by particular types of landscapes, building styles and materials.
- 6.5 Materials vary across the District, from creamy limestone west of Bedale, across the clay Vales where brick dominates, to the North York Moors fringes where sandstone is the main material. Glacial cobbles are a characteristic material of the Vales, used for garden walls and cottages, which are often rendered in a traditional manner.
- 6.6 New development should also take full account of the large number of listed buildings; the range of architectural styles and periods of buildings; the many groups of buildings and open spaces which contribute towards townscape quality, particularly in conservation areas; and the areas of high landscape value, including AONBs, Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest and Special Landscape Areas.

OBJECTIVES

6.7 The Design Policies of the Plan have the following main objectives:

1. To encourage a high standard of design in new buildings, alterations to buildings and advertisements.
2. To ensure that new development respects the regional diversity of the District and the local distinctiveness of existing buildings, settlements and their landscape setting.
3. To ensure that new development does not disrupt established views of landmark buildings and skylines.

POLICY BD1**GENERAL POLICY ON DESIGN**

New development should be of a high standard of design and should respect regional diversity and the local distinctiveness, diversity and character of existing buildings, settlements and their landscape settings.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.8 The District contains several regional character areas identified on the basis of landscape character and dominant building materials:
- Vales of York and Mowbray
 - Western Magnesian Pennine Foothills
 - North Yorkshire Moors and Escarpment Fringe
 - Howardian Hills.
- 6.9 At a more local scale, its buildings, settlements and their local landscape settings display a varied character. It is important that new development respects and relates to this character, and that all new development is of a high standard of design.
- 6.10 The Council has published a Countryside Design Summary as Supplementary Planning Guidance which describes the essential characteristics of the regional character areas. It also provides guidance to assist new development respond to the landscape setting, settlement pattern and surrounding buildings and spaces.
- 6.11 It is intended that the Countryside Design Summary should also form a framework within which local communities can produce their own Village Design Statements which will provide a more detailed understanding of the character of individual villages.

POLICY BD2**THE CONTEXT FOR DESIGN**

Development proposals in the countryside should respect the diversity and distinctiveness of local landscape character.

In towns and villages, proposals should relate to the context provided by buildings, street and plot patterns, building frontages, topography, established public views, landmark buildings and other townscape elements.

Proposals which do not respect the local context or the scale, height, proportion and materials of surrounding buildings and development which constitutes over development of the site by virtue of scale, height or bulk will not be permitted.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.12 The existing streetscene or local landscape provides the context to which new development must relate. In many towns and villages this is provided by a pattern of long narrow plots enclosed by hedges or walls and bounded by a back lane and a front street along which the principal buildings are ranged (see Policy HH5).
- 6.13 It is especially important that the character of conservation areas is maintained, and in order to identify those elements which contribute to character, detailed conservation area assessments will be undertaken.
- 6.14 Buildings, even in town centres, rarely exceed three storeys and the parish church is usually the significant landmark building, often visible from the surrounding countryside. The scale and height of new development, particularly in the market towns, is an important design consideration. The increased floor to ceiling height of modern buildings means

that new or replacement buildings are often taller than older ones. Shallow pitched widespan roof trusses increase the overall bulk of new buildings, to the detriment of the surroundings. Careful design is required to break down large bulky buildings into smaller units in order to reduce the impact of such schemes.

- 6.15 The Council will encourage local communities to produce their own Village Design Statements. These will describe the features and qualities of a village that make up its particular character and will demonstrate how new development can be designed to protect local character and distinctiveness. Village Design Statements will provide the context for the design of new development as required by the Policy. They will be approved by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

POLICY BD3**VIEWS, ROOFSCAPE AND SKYLINES**

New development which would adversely affect public views of skylines, roofscapes, landmark buildings and vistas of towns and villages will not be permitted. Where alterations are proposed, skyline or rooftop features such as chimneys, cupolas, spires, towers or domes should be retained. Consideration should be given to their use in new development. Roofs of a design inappropriate to the character and appearance of an area will not be permitted.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.16 Skylines, roofscapes and landmark buildings are important components in the character of many places. In most towns and villages of the District, the dominant landmark building is the tower of the parish church, usually visible from many points in the locality, particularly from the surrounding countryside. It is especially important that the long established visual relationship between the church towers and the wider landscape is maintained. Proposals which introduce tall or particularly bulky buildings which would disrupt this relationship will be resisted.
- 6.17 Within towns and villages, skyline features such as chimney stacks and clay pantile roofscapes are essential elements in the townscape which need to be retained or introduced into new development. Variations in the height of buildings and the angle of roof pitch impart character and interest to skylines. However, some types of roof design, notably mansard or flat roofs, are clearly out of place in the District where pitched roofs covered in slate or pantiles predominate.

POLICY BD4**THE USE OF BUILDING MATERIALS**

Building materials used in new developments should be appropriate in the locality and should be used in a traditional manner. The colour and texture of bricks should match those traditionally used in the area and new stone buildings should be built of stone of the type found locally. All stone and cobble walling must be traditionally coursed and jointed with correct mortar joints and mix. Building materials may be subject to the prior approval of a sample panel.

Where new development is proposed, developers may be required to retain within the development existing buildings and walls constructed of local materials.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.18 Local building materials give a distinct local character to many of the towns and villages in the District. It is important that this is retained by ensuring that new development is constructed of appropriate materials. Brick is the most widespread walling material and dominates the towns and villages of the central vales. Bricks were locally made in small brickyards, giving some variation across the District. It is important that new brick buildings pay due regard to the local tradition in the use of brick for certain details and that they blend with local buildings.
- 6.19 It is important that traditional materials are properly used. Stone should be correctly coursed, and where necessary, brick lacing courses provided in cobble walling.
- 6.20 In the Bedale area where cobbles are used for building, lime renders were traditionally applied to protect this inferior masonry from the weather. However, not all cobble buildings were rendered, frequently only the front elevations were treated in this way. It is important that renders are retained as an appropriate detail.
- 6.21 Stone buildings are mainly confined to the eastern and western fringes of the District, with sandstones to the east and magnesian limestone and millstone grit to the west.
- 6.22 In the stone villages on the east side of the District, sandstone is used, laid to regular courses and dressed with herringbone tooling. In the Howardian Hills garden walls are often built of thin limestone flags, while west of the Swale, small blocks of limestone are used often in association with regularly coursed cobbles.
- 6.23 The sandstones of the Cleveland Hills weather to a rusty brown colour, very different to the creamy limestone and dark gritstones of the west of the District. The use of alien imported stone would be very discordant in villages characterised by one of the local materials.
- 6.24 Random walling and rock faced finishes to stonework are not traditional techniques in the area and should not be used.
- 6.25 Because of the problems in obtaining and using certain traditional materials, notably stone and cobbles, it is important that the existing stock of traditional buildings and walls is maintained. Wherever possible, new development should attempt to retain boundary walls and buildings in order that the special spirit of place is maintained.

POLICY BD5**SPACES OF 'TOWNSCAPE' IMPORTANCE**

Development will not be permitted which would result in the loss of, or damage to, important spaces in settlements, as defined on the Inset Maps, or other spaces, which:

1. Make a significant contribution to the character or setting of the settlement; or
2. Provide an attractive setting for buildings within it; or
3. Are important to the historic form and layout of the settlement.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.26 Spaces can make an important contribution to the character of towns and villages. These include paddocks, orchards, large gardens, groups of cottage gardens, village greens and churchyards in a variety of forms (see Policies H7, H8, H9 and BD2).
- 6.27 The infilling of such spaces in villages with new buildings would lead to the erosion of the character of settlements. PPG17 states that open space in towns and villages enhances the character of conservation areas, listed buildings and historic landscapes, and is important in contributing to the quality of life.
- 6.28 The larger or more significant areas are shown on the Inset Maps and development will not be permitted on these areas which would materially harm the contribution these spaces make to the character, setting or historic form and layout of the settlement. In addition there may be other gaps or spaces which should also be protected. These may be subsequently identified through Village Design Statements or Conservation Area Assessments.
- 6.29 Development which will not adversely affect the contribution such spaces make to the character, setting or historic form and layout of the settlement or to the settings of buildings within it, will be permitted.

POLICY BD6**ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS**

New developments to which the public has access, especially shops, sport, recreation and community facilities should be designed to cater for the needs of people with mobility problems.

New developments should be provided with adequate access and parking places for people with mobility problems. Open spaces, paths and parking areas in general need to be designed to cater for the needs of people with mobility problems.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.30 It is important that buildings open to the public, footpaths, open spaces and parking areas are designed to be accessible to all people, as a significant proportion of the community has mobility problems.
- 6.31 Consideration should be given to the needs of people with different mobility problems: people in wheelchairs or with walking difficulties, people who are blind or partially sighted, deaf or hard of hearing, as well as people with children in prams or pushchairs.
- 6.32 Buildings open to the public and shops should have a level or ramped access and an entrance suitable for wheelchair users. Footpaths and pedestrian routes through open spaces and from parking areas should be level; any ramps should be easily negotiable by wheelchair users. Parking spaces for people with disabilities should be provided close to building entrances. For detailed standards, reference should be made to The Building Regulations (1991) as amended.
- 6.33 Street furniture and crossing points should be sited and designed to ensure ease of movement by people with different mobility problems.

POLICY BD7**THE DISPLAY OF ADVERTISEMENTS**

Poorly designed or badly sited advertisements which would adversely affect amenity or highway safety will not be permitted. Particular regard will be paid to cases where:

- a. A rural or residential location is proposed;
- b. Illumination is proposed;
- c. The proposal is situated within a conservation area or affects the setting of a listed building.

Applications for advertisements will be judged against the following criteria:

1. The size of the advertisement should relate to the form and character of the particular building, its location and the streetscene;
2. Consent will not be granted for any sign above the level of an existing shop fascia;
3. The use of painted timber fascias and signs will be encouraged in sensitive areas where advertisements need to be carefully designed to relate to period conservation area settings or nearby listed buildings.
4. All lettering should be of good quality materials, simple in style and appropriate to the architectural character of the building involved;
5. Particular care will be paid to proposals involving projecting box signs and illuminated signs in conservation areas and on or in the vicinity of listed buildings.
6. The number of advertisements or external lights displayed on a building should be kept to a minimum.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.34 Advertisements can have a considerable impact on the visual amenity of both rural and urban areas. It is essential that great care and attention is given to all advertisement proposals. In considering the impact on amenity, regard will be paid to the impact of the proposal on the appearance of the building and on the immediate neighbourhood. Relevant considerations are the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, including scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features which contribute to the distinctive character of the locality.
- 6.35 The aim of the Policy is to protect visual amenity and highway safety, to reduce unsightly clutter on buildings and to protect the architectural character and quality of buildings and townscapes in general. Particular regard will be paid to proposals in conservation areas, in AONBs or on or near listed buildings.
- 6.36 Oversized and poorly designed signs can detract from the general quality of the environment, deface the building to which they are fixed, present a confused picture to passers-by and may cause road safety problems.
- 6.37 Single advertisements by themselves may not be unduly harmful, but the cumulative impact of a number of brash or similarly inappropriate displays can be very detrimental.
- 6.38 Internally lit signs can be obtrusive because of their lighting and their use of translucent materials and bright colours. The increased use of externally mounted wall lights is adding to the visual clutter which can disfigure the appearance of buildings.

Advice on advertisements is provided in a Supplementary Planning Guidance Note entitled 'Advertisements and Shop Fronts' produced by the Council.

POLICY BD8

THE DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS

Where an existing shopfront contributes positively to the character of a building or area it should be retained and repaired rather than being replaced. New shopfronts or alterations and additions to existing shopfronts should, where appropriate:

1. Respect the period and style of the building in which they are fitted and display a unity with its architecture;
2. Consist of historically accurate elements of traditional shopfront design;
3. Be constructed of traditional materials;
4. Reflect the scale and proportions of traditional shopfronts in the streetscene;
5. Reflect traditional frontage widths of the area and relate to individual property units;
6. Enhance the visual amenities of the area; and
7. Cater for access by wheelchair, pushchair or pram, using a level access or ramp provided with handrails. Doors should be of adequate width without strong door closers.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.39 All the shopping centres in the District are located within conservation areas. Shopfronts have a considerable impact on the appearance of the historic town centres and a vital role in preserving and enhancing their character. Good shopfront design is essential if the character and appearance of historic shopping areas is to be conserved.
- 6.40 Where an existing shopfront contributes to the character of a building or area, it should normally be kept and refurbished rather than replaced. Every effort should be made to retain original glazing and joinery. Such shopfronts should only be replaced when they are not physically capable of refurbishment.
- 6.41 The use of traditional designs and materials is most appropriate to the shopping centres of the District because of the period and style of buildings and the overall character of these areas. Historically accurate details are essential since where these are misunderstood or incorrectly used the result may be unconvincing and ugly. Additions to shopfronts such as canopies, awnings and blinds should also adhere to these principles and relate satisfactorily to the shopfront of which they are part. The addition of Dutch blinds (fixed plastic canopies) or external security blinds will not normally be acceptable on historic buildings or in conservation areas.
- 6.42 Shopfronts cannot be designed in isolation and must be considered as part of the architectural composition of the building of which they are a part. The design of the shopfront should reflect the age and architecture of the building and should not divorce the ground floor from the rest of the building.
- 6.43 There has been a trend to link adjoining shops to form larger units. Where this occurs it can destroy the existing "grain" of the street frontage. Accordingly, shopfronts should reflect the traditional frontage widths and relate to individual property units.
- 6.44 New shopfronts should be designed to allow access for people with disabilities and shoppers with prams or pushchairs. Particular care needs to be taken with the details of schemes in conservation areas or involving listed buildings.

Advice on shopfront design is provided in a Supplementary Planning Guidance Note entitled 'Advertisements and Shop Fronts' produced by the Council.