

Staffordshire Moorlands design guide



Staffordshire Moorlands
District Council
Design Guide

Adopted as Supplementary Planning Document
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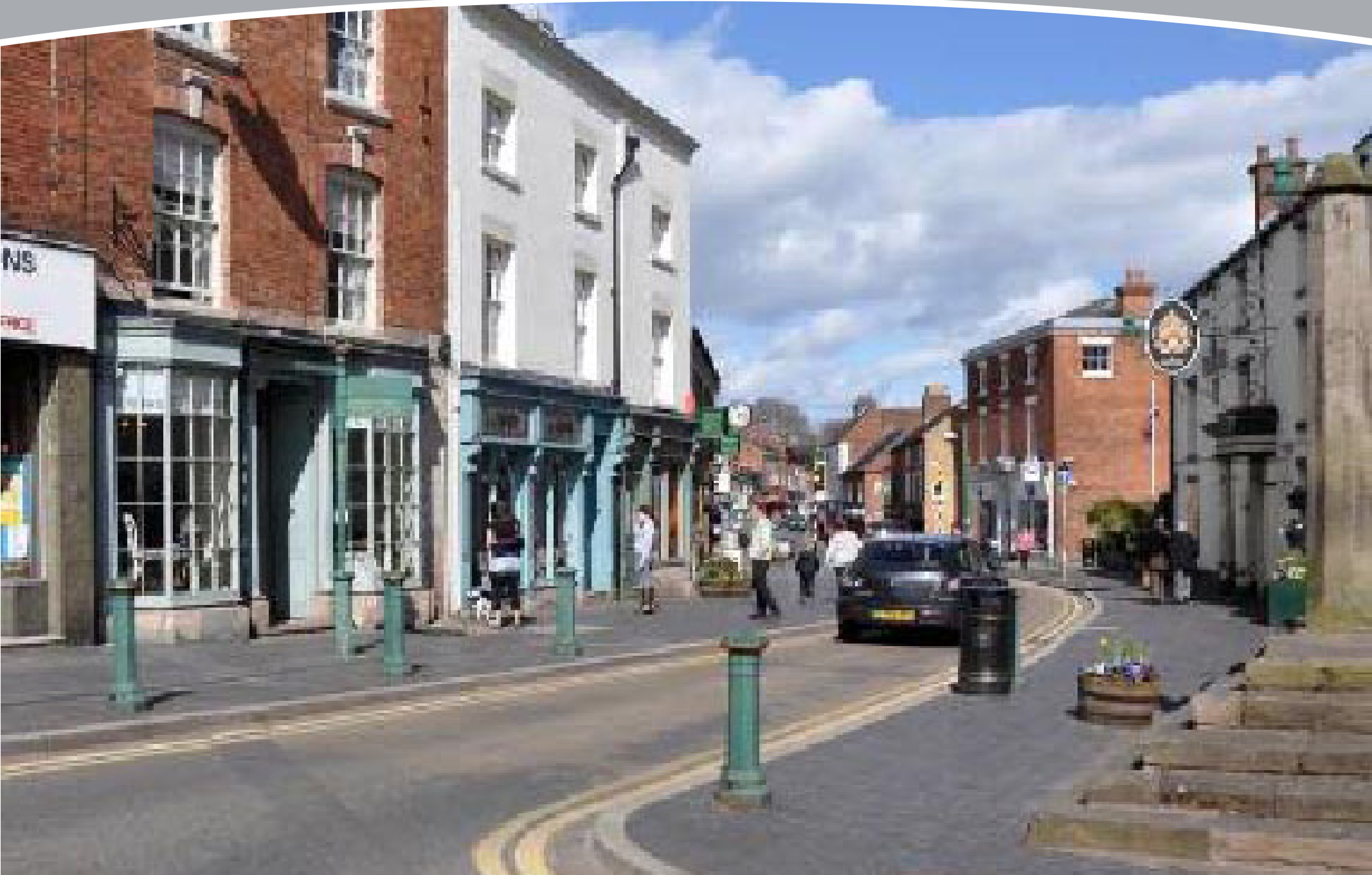
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I. Introduction



The status of the design guide

- I.1 The importance of good design is recognised by the Government in its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012):
- “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people” (NPPF, paragraph 56)
- The need for high quality development is also emphasised in the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Policy DC1 – Design Considerations). These set out what the Council would expect to see in terms of securing good design within Staffordshire Moorlands.
- I.2 The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and identifies the overarching principles in securing good design. Because of Staffordshire Moorland’s high quality natural environment, historic towns and villages, there is an emphasis on respecting traditional built forms. This should not rule out high quality contemporary design and innovative solutions that respond to the context. The Council has, and will continue to, produce more detailed technical guidance that supplements this document. Details of these are set out in the following chapters.
- I.3 The Design Guide will be a material consideration in all relevant planning decisions.



New residential development in Waterhouses

The Challenge of Good Design

- I.4 Staffordshire Moorlands is a place of exceptional beauty. Buildings, either singly within the landscape or collectively in towns and villages, contribute greatly to that beauty. The way they can appear to grow naturally out of the landscape or relate to public space such as a street or square in a town or village contributes to the sense of delight. In adding new buildings we have the power to enhance or harm the special characteristics of the area.
- I.5 The design quality of new development is perhaps the most obvious measure by which people judge the planning system. The public’s expectations in this respect have been rising. Planning decisions taken now, result in development that will last well into the future.
- I.6 The Design Guide has been produced to help applicants, agents and others, to inspire and to raise standards. It sets out to define the characteristics of buildings in the Moorlands, how these characteristics were a response to people’s needs and aspirations of the time and how they made use of the available resources and technology.
- I.7 Good design is derived from a combination of a building’s fitness for purpose and the context of its site. Fitness for purpose is concerned with creating environments in which different activities can take place and accommodating these in a way that responds to today’s lifestyles and improves the quality of people’s lives. It follows, therefore, that the good design of buildings should maximise accessibility, should ensure sustainability in terms of fuel efficiency and sensitivity to climate change and should be robust in terms of allowing future adaptation to other uses.
- I.8 Principles of sustainable development should guide all stages of the design process, from the orientation of the building, its use of energy and water, to the selection of materials for construction.
- I.9 Listed Buildings are not covered by this guide. Specialist advice is available from the Council.



2. The Staffordshire Moorlands Tradition



Landscape and Settlements

- 2.1 Well-designed buildings respond to the character and setting of their surroundings and make a positive contribution to making places better for people. Towns and villages in the Staffordshire Moorlands have a distinct local character, which has been defined by their high density, form and their architectural and historic development, as well as by the use of natural and traditional materials such as stone and Staffordshire blue clay tiles. It is these characteristics which lend a sense of place to the settlement within the surrounding landscape.
- 2.2 It is important therefore that any new development in the area is capable of achieving a high standard of design that meets the demands of today's lifestyles. The rich variety of architectural styles and historic features in the Staffordshire Moorlands area needs to be protected and enhanced. Alterations to existing buildings and new development should be designed to complement the area.
- 2.3 The Council supports use of sustainable design and construction methods and is committed to delivering new homes with environmentally sustainable design. New development must be durable and flexible enough to accommodate adaptations over time. It should also take account of the challenges of climate change and natural hazards such as flood risk.
- 2.4 Staffordshire Moorlands' landscapes provide some of the defining characteristics of the area and have been instrumental in shaping local settlement patterns. In order to protect, and where possible enhance, the landscape character, development should assimilate into the landscape and avoid adverse impact on landscape quality.





An informal arrangement of buildings flanking the roadside



Biddulph



Endon

Building Style and Form

- 2.6 Traditional buildings within the Staffordshire Moorlands area have their own distinct character and style. The Moorlands is an area of dispersed settlement with small hamlets, scattered farms and the three market towns. The towns share certain characteristics. All have streets and spaces that are clearly defined by rear of the pavement built frontages, with buildings usually of between two and three stories in height. In Leek there is a tendency for slightly higher buildings, and a tendency for lower ones in Biddulph.
- 2.7 Leek and Cheadle town centres demonstrate past phases of growth outwards from their historic cores. Immediately adjacent to the historic cores are areas of 19th century and early 20th century terraced housing. These maintain the character of the centres in terms of scale and providing strong enclosure and definition of streets. Beyond these are areas of interwar housing. These are far more suburban in character, with housing often comprising semi-detached dwellings, set back from the road behind front gardens. Further out, there are more varied areas of post-war expansion.
- 2.8 The villages in the area vary in character. Earlier development tends to comprise dispersed stone buildings with later 19th and 20th century development comprising red brick, small scale buildings. The layout and form of various villages is a mix of rear of the pavement frontages (such as Alton) and more fragmented and dispersed patterns of development (such as Oakamoor). Varied topography adds considerably to the character and townscape interest.



Clerk Bank, Leek



Ipstones



Traditional moorlands farmstead, Bagnall

Farmsteads

- 2.9 Traditional farmsteads in North Staffordshire consist of a detached house and one or more detached outbuildings serving a variety of functions. There is no set pattern to their arrangement, which is designed to fit the lie of the land. On steep slopes large buildings will lie along the contours, on gentler ground they may be arranged round a farmyard.
- 2.10 Large outbuildings are called barns, irrespective of function. They may be cattle sheds with three or five smaller entrances and have haylofts with pitching holes. Threshing barns have a cart arch and threshing floor flanked by full-height storage space for grain crops with narrow ventilation slits. Some have a granary on an upper floor accessed by an external staircase. Smaller ancillary buildings may include shelter sheds, cart sheds, and bull pens. All have openings designed for a specific purpose, and large areas of unbroken walling particularly on the gable ends.
- 2.11 Historic England has carried out an assessment of farmsteads in the West Midlands and identified that the Staffordshire Moorlands has a high survival rate of early farmsteads.

Early Domestic Buildings

- 2.12 Domestic buildings pre-dating 1500 are rare in the Moorlands and are always of timber. Features include arch-brace trusses, curved windbraces, smoke-blackened roofs trusses, and a late-medieval ground plan including a hall and cross-passage. Examples include Mosslee Hall, and the Hall House (Cheddleton). Stone foundations, re-used timberwork, and good documentation single out Manor Farm (Checkley) as a further example.
- 2.13 Small cruck-framed buildings survive from the 16th century. These had steep pitched thatched roofs reflecting the shape of the cruck blades, and little room for an upper floor. The White House (Gillow Heath) is the best-preserved example, retaining its thatch, outer walls, original ground plan with opposing entrances, and its timber-framed firehood (an internal chimney stack). The lack of upper floor headroom means most crucks survive on interior walls of building that have subsequently been enlarged.
- 2.14 Timber-framed houses of box-frame design were built in both town and country, several with highly decorative framing. In Leek (the Roebuck), Cheadle (the Tudor Tearooms) and Upper Tean (Tean Hall) all date from the late 16th or early 17th centuries. Other examples are now encased in stone as at Stanlowe Hall (Longsdon).
- 2.15 The relative importance and size of rooms was reflected in the windows size and spacing, resulting in an irregular façade. Windows were divided into 'lights' by mullions.

18th and 19th Century Houses

- 2.16 New plan forms and new window styles made their appearance in the 18th and 19th centuries as the wealthier members of society built brick or stone buildings with symmetrical facades, and with double room plans.
- 2.17 Houses built in the earlier part of the 18th century had cruciform windows with side-hung casements. By the mid-18th century sash windows were becoming the most common choice.

Polite Architecture

- 2.18 Pevsner described North Staffordshire as 'Pugin-Land' because of his immense contribution to the area. By the mid-19th century he had built Alton Castle, the Hospital of St John, made major alterations and extensions to Alton Towers, added a new range and chapel to Cotton College, and built the Roman Catholic church of St Giles at Cheadle, considered by Pugin to be his finest work.
- 2.19 William and Larner Sugden made a major contribution to Leek, through a range of public and domestic buildings, including the Nicholson Institute, and the former District Bank on Derby Street. Hallmarks of their work are their command of a wide range of styles, their use of moulded brickwork, particularly on domestic buildings, and the style and prominence of their chimneys.



*The White House, Gillow Heath, Biddulph.
15th Century with cruck frame*



*No 77 and 79 High Street, Cheadle.
17th Century House*



*Greystones, Stockwell Street, Leek.
Late 17th Century house*



*The Old Coffee Tavern, Alton.
Mid 18th Century house*



*Former District Bank, Leek.
Dated 1882 by William Larner Sugden*

Industrial Architecture and Housing

- 2.20 The Industrial Revolution brought a substantial legacy of both industrial and domestic buildings, as the towns and villages expanded to house the workers. Upper Tean is an outstanding example, and includes the Tean Hall Mills, whose 1824 Cross Mill is a fine example of a fireproof mill. The village was planned to support the mill community with the mill owners providing housing, schools and churches. These mill communities have a strong local character.
- 2.21 In Leek the original part of Albion Mill is a good example of the simple architecture favoured by the earlier mill builders. The later mills tended to be more elaborate and architecturally self-conscious. Once again the Sugden's were major contributors, their work including Big Mill, and the Cross Street Mills (Leek) and the Finishing Mill (Tean).
- 2.22 There are many examples of worker's cottages associated with the District's mills and their appearance was influenced by their date of construction, function, the aspirations of the mill owners and the status of the workers. The higher the status of the worker the more elaborate the housing. Mill owners and more affluent businessmen resided in grander houses and villas set in landscaped parks and estates on the edge of the main towns. Leek was once ringed with large houses but with urban expansion most have been absorbed into the built up area. Pickwood Hall in Leek is an example of a property which retains its rural isolation. Development in these areas needs great sensitivity to conserve the landscape setting of settlements and have an awareness of the importance of these historic estates.



Wellington Mill flanked by mill worker's houses

Weaver's Cottages, Leek

Style and Role of Modern Architecture

- 2.23 The design of new development into an area of traditional buildings requires considerable skill. Whilst there may be a desire to replicate traditional styles, if executed badly, the result can be a bland version that devalues the original.
- 2.24 Previous generations of designers and builders were able to produce buildings that related well to the past without relying on imitation. This was achieved through the use of common materials, care in ensuring that the form and detailing were in harmony with older buildings and a high standard of workmanship. The new development was complementary, rather than identical to, surrounding buildings.
- 2.25 Polite architecture (which particularly in the 19th century produced one-off buildings such as churches or town halls) is based on academic tradition rather than the vernacular, and on national rather than regional styles. It is only the use of local materials that links such buildings to the area.
- 2.26 It may be preferable to find a design solution which responds to the traditional context but is also a work of architecture in its own right and a product of our time. This is not an easy option. As well as requiring good design skills, it needs an in-depth knowledge of what defines the character of the development site before going on to reshape it to meet today's needs and those of future generations.

Further information:

Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

Historic England West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscape Project

3. New Development - Designing in Context



Setting

- 3.1 The setting of any building should be carefully considered. Attention should be paid to its impact on views into, over and out of the site.
- 3.2 In the countryside or on the edge of settlements, buildings should sit comfortably in the landscape. This is best achieved by emulating the horizontal, ground-hugging form of traditional buildings with their strong eaves and ridge lines and simple, low silhouettes parallel with the contours.
- 3.3 When sites are in villages or towns, the pattern for new development will depend on the nature of that settlement. It is often the case that village and town centres will have designated conservation area with character appraisals that set out detailed descriptions of the nature of a settlement.
- 3.4 Settlements contain a variety of building forms ranging in scale from two to four storeys. The relationship of one to the other creates a sense of rhythm, balance and good neighbourliness that should be maintained. There is usually an intricate pattern of roofs at different heights but with a common roof pitch and similar length of ridge. The palette of roof materials is often limited. New roofs should fit in with the existing roofscape of an area by respecting these traditional characteristics. The rhythm established by chimneys and coped gables present a similar opportunity.
- 3.5 New development, be it a single building or a group, must respect the 'grain' of the settlement. By this is meant the relationship buildings have to the street and to each other. A new house adjacent to the footpath in a high density, close-knit village is likely to be designed very differently from one in a more open village where properties are spaced apart and set back from the road.

Large Buildings

- 3.6 Accommodating large buildings within the area needs to be handled carefully. Their appearance is usually driven by their use and may not sit comfortably within a more traditional context. However, they are often essential to the local economy and should be designed to be as inconspicuous as possible. This can be achieved by giving them a low profile, a shallow pitched roof to reduce the ridge height, and ensuring they are in dark or recessive colours. For very wide buildings, creating a series of parallel roofs rather than one enormous roof will help to break down the apparent bulk of the building. Sites on the skyline should be avoided. Instead, wherever possible, such buildings should be sited in shallow depressions or otherwise positioned to fit into the landform. Extensive landscaping, in the form of a wide shelterbelt will normally be required to reduce their impact further.



Primary Care Trust, Biddulph



Good composition and landscape design helps the former Britannia Building Society headquarters, Leek to integrate with its surrounding landscape

New Development

- 3.7 The architectural style of new development should be guided through an assessment and understanding of the character and context of the area. Sites may be capable of accommodating both contemporary and traditional forms of development that are high quality and functional. Design solutions should respond to the local tradition but without slavishly copying it.

Scale

- 3.8 A new building should respect the scale of those surrounding it. Jumps in scale can sometimes be acceptable and can be justified if the development occurs at key locations such as on corners or at the end of vistas.

Materials

- 3.9 New buildings should use facing materials that either match or complement those of the surroundings. Under certain circumstances, new materials can sometimes be used as a foil to more traditional materials to highlight and bring out their qualities. The use of materials is covered in more detail in Section 7.

Proportion

- 3.10 Where possible new buildings should pick up on the proportions of neighbouring buildings in some way. This need not necessarily mean replicating the disposition of openings, but could be a more subtle interpretation.
- 3.11 There are some basic principles that need to be respected if the new is to harmonise successfully with the old. These relate to the three main characteristics of traditional elevations:
- A balance of proportions between the overall shape of the walls and the openings they contain.
 - A high solid to void ratio in which the wall dominates
 - A simple arrangement of openings, usually formal (often symmetrical) in the case of houses, and informal in the case of outbuildings.
- 3.12 New buildings should be well proportioned and relate to the human scale.
- 3.13 The use of one design theory – the Golden Section – has left its mark on buildings from the mid 18th century onwards. This is a harmonious relationship of dimensions which was known to the Greeks and expressed as the ratio 5:8. Applying the ratio to one dimension generates a second dimension that will relate harmoniously with the first.



Rural housing schemes which illustrate how a modest and creative design approach can help maintain local distinctiveness

12 pane sash windows: each pane has the same vertical proportions as the window opening itself

Form

- 3.14 The form of a new building can often be a specific response to the brief or the particular setting. This may result in a form that is similar to those of the surrounding buildings but equally could also be different to meet the scheme's specific requirements. The merits of a building's form would have to be judged on its individual qualities in terms of its suitability in the site's context.

Details

- 3.15 Details are often the identifying factor for the age of the building and often result from a particular method of construction or skill. Depending on the sensitivity of the site, designers may choose to reinterpret the detailing of surrounding buildings in new ways or, they may choose to adopt modern construction details to help meet today's high standards for the performance of the building envelope.
- 3.16 Critical factors that need to be taken into account in approaching the detailed treatment of elevations include the solid to void ratio, that is how blank or windowed a building looks, and the disposition of openings. In terms of the solid to void ratio, traditional construction techniques effectively limited the width of openings, making them vertical in proportion and relatively small. For structural reasons, openings were kept well clear of corners or verges. As a result, doors and windows were surrounded by large areas of masonry making the wall the dominant element.

This gave the building a high solid to void ratio. With disposition of openings, traditional buildings tend to have a simple, restful appearance as a result of:

- Using a similar size and proportion of opening throughout.
- Limiting the number of openings.
- Arranging the openings harmoniously, often in a formal, symmetrical manner.
- Keeping them away from corners.

- 3.17 Modern construction and materials allows for much larger openings. The walls can become mostly windows or dispensed with altogether by supporting the roof on an independent structural frame. This design feature has become particularly desirable as it provides light habitable spaces. It may often be difficult to accommodate this feature in sensitive or more traditional forms of development. However, its insertion may prove acceptable when considering the design of new contemporary buildings or extensions.



The Ornuo office building, Leek



Largely blank rear elevation of a traditional house

Sustainable development of new homes and buildings

- 3.18 We should be planning for new development to aim for zero carbon emissions. A goal that is eminently achievable through a combination of sustainable design principles including the following:
- Siting ideally within a settlement with good access to public transport.
 - Maximising solar gain and increasing the proportion of glazing on south facing elevations.
 - Minimising heat loss by limiting openings to the north.
 - Avoiding exposed sites, frost hollows and flood risk areas.
 - Maximising the use of trees for shelter, privacy and air cleaning, but avoiding over-shading the south elevation.
 - Aligning the building with the contours to avoid artificial mounding or wasteful under-building.

Points to remember:

- Consider views into and out of the site.
- In rural areas use ground hugging forms of development.
- In towns and villages be guided by the existing context, pattern and grain of development and building heights.
- Respect the existing roofscape in term of pitch, materials and details.
- Large buildings are often difficult to accommodate so consider a low profile, shallow roof and the use of recessive colours.
- Site large buildings in shallow depressions and use extensive landscaping to reduce their impact.
- New development should be guided by the existing character and context. Consider both contemporary and traditional forms that are high quality and functional
- Respect surrounding scale but jumps in scale may be acceptable at key locations.
- Reflect the proportions of neighbouring buildings. Respect the solid to wall ratio and arrangement of windows.
- Modern materials allow for larger glazed openings. This is a desirable feature but care needs to be taken over their insertion in traditional forms of development.
- Aim for zero carbon emissions on new development.

Further Information:

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Guidance note 3 – New Buildings



Design Principles for Development in Staffordshire Moorlands

New Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings

4. Access Space and External Works



4.1 Well-designed places are successful and valued. They exhibit qualities that benefit users and the wider area and should:

- be functional;
- support mixed uses and tenures;
- include successful inclusive public spaces;
- be adaptable and resilient;
- have a distinctive character;
- be attractive; and encourage ease of movement.

4.2 Urban design is the art of making attractive, lively and above all distinctive places for people to use and identify with. Responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development in a town or village is the obvious starting point. Some places have a very enclosed, urban feel; others are more open in character with the surrounding landscape flowing in between the buildings. In both places, the continuity of street frontage, or lack of it, needs to be maintained.

4.3 Typically, towns and villages within Staffordshire Moorlands have a complex arrangement of streets and enclosed spaces that create a sense of place and individuality. New development needs to be integrated with the old if the character of our towns and villages is to be maintained and strengthened.

4.4 Some of our greatest challenges come from public infrastructure such as highway improvements and the accumulation of clutter in the public domain. With care, however, these can be integrated satisfactorily into the rural and urban scene.

4.5 Developments, which have high amenity value, are pleasant and agreeable. A well planned scheme works well and adds to the economic attractiveness of an area. The challenge is to retain high amenity without sacrificing density. This is what often occurred traditionally in towns and villages through good urban design and is characterised by:

- Strong local identity which is publicly celebrated.
- Valued public buildings.
- A mix of compatible land uses such as shops, residential and businesses.
- Well positioned trees and landscape features with associated high levels of biodiversity.
- High levels of personal privacy within houses and an element of private outdoor space.
- Pleasant views, especially from domestic buildings.
- Appropriate lighting.
- Safe and accessible environments.



Alton's distinctive buildings make junctions more recognisable

Getliffe's Yard, Leek

- 4.6 In Staffordshire Moorlands, most settlements have a high amenity value and meet the above criteria. Many traditional houses are situated close to a road or footpath but small or vertically proportioned windows afford privacy, as do walled rear gardens and yards.
- 4.7 Crime and fear of crime can greatly affect quality of life. Streets should be designed to ensure that everyone can use them safely. Public areas and especially places where people gather need to be designed to be overlooked without undue loss of privacy to the buildings involved.
- 4.9 It will be expected that, where appropriate, pedestrians and cyclists will be given precedence over vehicles. Careful landscaping can help to achieve these objectives. For example, the use of stone setts at junctions can slow vehicles and define pedestrian routes.
- 4.10 Buildings, streets and public spaces should be designed to allow equal, independent and dignified access for all. Everyone should be able to use the same entrances, corridors and rooms irrespective of their mobility.
- 4.11 In a move to improve the quality of our built environment, all major planning applications require a Design and Access Statement to be submitted as an accompanying document.
- 4.12 Statements should show how proposals relate to and help conserve and enhance their immediate setting and the wider area. In doing so, they should refer to the use of relevant evidence such as landscape and conservation area appraisals. They should set out how fully accessibility has been achieved.

Integration with the Landscape

- 4.14 Good landscaping greatly enhances the setting and appearance of buildings and should not be regarded as an afterthought.
- 4.15 A careful analysis of the site and its context, including its wider landscape setting, is essential. Further guidance on the character areas of Staffordshire Moorlands is contained in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment. Character. This identifies key landscape characteristics and their implications for the siting, design and appearance of new development.

Hard Landscaping

- 4.16 Pedestrian paving traditionally uses Yorkstone slabs, or gritstone or limestone setts or Staffordshire blue clay tiles.
- 4.17 In terms of new materials, concrete block paving should be used with care. It is often better to choose natural stone for edgings and to infill with tarmac with a top dressing.
- 4.18 Boundaries were nearly always formed by stone walls of either gritstone or limestone depending on location. The detail and finish (particularly of the copings) varied according to the character and status of the property.
- 4.19 The omission of boundary walls from a development results in an environment that looks alien to the area. Similarly, insensitive alterations to the character of a street or public domain such as road improvements, signage, lighting and clutter can be very harmful.



Historic surfacing

Soft Landscaping and Wildlife

- 4.20 This covers all 'growing' landscape features including earth modelling, soil and grass as well as trees and shrubs.
- 4.21 Trees and hedges are slow growing in Staffordshire Moorlands, so their retention where they exist helps to assimilate a new building into its setting.
- 4.22 New tree and shrub planting can provide screening for privacy, enclosure or shelter or just to 'fix' the buildings into the landscape in a traditional way. Wherever possible, preference should be given to using locally indigenous species and varieties of plants.
- 4.23 The countryside surrounding the towns and villages comprise a patchwork of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites for their nature conservation value. Wildlife conservation is important to us in providing life support services (clean air, water and soil formation), providing pleasure, contributing to economic prosperity, affording scientific understanding of our environment, controlling pest species and reducing climate change.
- 4.24 All development proposals are therefore expected to conserve existing wildlife interest as far as possible and to show that consideration has been given to enhancing/creating new opportunities for wildlife.
- 4.25 Wherever possible, opportunities for enhancement must be considered, for example the provision of roosting/nesting spaces for bats/birds, use of sustainable drainage systems or landscaping to create new habitat or managing an area for wildlife purposes.
- 4.26 As a minimum, the legal safeguards which give statutory protection to habitats and species will need to be observed.
- 4.27 Further contacts and links for wildlife and habitats can be found in Appendix I.

Points to remember:

- **Respecting distinctive patterns of development and density create attractive and lively places.**
- **Limit and integrate highway improvements, signs and street clutter.**
- **Areas of high amenity are attractive and must not be sacrificed for density.**
- **Create physical environments that promote safe living and minimise anti-social behaviour.**
- **Public spaces should be well overlooked without loss of privacy.**
- **The right landscaping can promote pedestrian and cyclist priority over vehicles.**
- **Design public spaces to allow dignified access for all.**
- **Plan for good landscaping at the outset.**
- **Incorporate boundary and paving features that are locally distinctive.**
- **The retention of existing landscaping can help assimilate a building into its setting.**
- **Local species of planting can engage the building into the landscape.**
- **New development should conserve or create new opportunities for wildlife.**

Further Information:

Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

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Tree Strategy

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Trees and Development – Practice Guide 3

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5. Alterations, Extensions and Conversions



Alterations

- 5.1 The improvement or renovation of an existing property is generally preferable, both on cost and visual grounds, to redeveloping the site afresh. It is often also the more sustainable option. An old building will have features and detailing that cannot easily be rebuilt today.
- 5.2 Alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building. The key to a sensitive approach is to take note of what is there already before preparing the design and to work with and not against the building's character (accurate survey drawings are essential in this respect). The aim should be to revitalise the building without altering its fundamental character.
- 5.3 Certain alterations may require planning permission depending on the extent and nature of the works.
- 5.4 It is best to use existing openings to the full, if necessary rearranging the functions of the rooms to suit, before considering their alteration.

Extensions

- 5.5 All extensions should harmonise with the parent building. An extension should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing. Setting back the new section from the building line and keeping the eaves and ridge lower than the parent building will help.
- 5.6 In some circumstances it may be acceptable to consider extensions which do not emulate the style of the original building. A more contemporary approach to extension in terms of style and materials will provide a more honest recognition of the building's evolution and retain its historic integrity. These need to be handled carefully and must respond to the scale and character of the host building.
- 5.7 The smaller the parent building, the fewer the options for extension. A two storey rear extension to a small cottage is unlikely to be acceptable, even on the rear.
- 5.8 Irrespective of size, however, all buildings can reach a threshold point beyond which further extension is just not possible without destroying their character. A large house can all too easily begin to look like a terrace of houses if it is extended too far from either gable.



A well proportioned side extension in Ipstones

Porches

- 5.9 Porches must be appropriate to the property and well designed. They rarely look right on small cottages and often spoil terraced properties. They detract from the basic simplicity of such buildings. In these cases, an internal porch is the better solution.

Garages

- 5.10 These need to be designed and built in sympathy with the properties they serve. Materials and roof pitch should generally match those of the parent building. If attached to the building, the new garage should be clearly subordinate. A separate garage building is however often the better solution particularly where more than one garage is needed.

Conservatories

- 5.11 Historically, these only occurred on larger houses from later architectural periods. Like porches, they can be out of keeping on small cottages or houses where simplicity of form is an important characteristic. In sensitive historical locations, upvc is unlikely to be a suitable material for conservatories that are located in a prominent position.

Conversions

- 5.12 Historically, buildings have always been converted to new uses when circumstances dictated. It may have been an old farmhouse becoming a cow-house or shippoon when a replacement farmhouse was built, or the ground floor of a town house becoming a shop. Today the demand is flowing the other way – for conversion to residential use.
- 5.13 Mills, chapels, churches, shippoons, hay barns and shops often become redundant. Without maintenance such buildings quickly fall into disrepair. Conversion is often the only feasible way of securing a viable future for the buildings. Although the main demand is for residential use, this is not always suitable or desirable, or indeed permitted in policy terms – particularly if the building is in the open countryside, or is a listed building.
- 5.14 Planning permission is normally needed for a change of use. Factors such as location, size and character of the building and its means of access will all be assessed. The opportunity should be taken to improve full access into and within the building where feasible.
- 5.15 The guiding principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained. This means that in most cases the barn, mill or chapel should afterwards look like a converted barn, mill or chapel, and not like a new house or a new block of flats. When converting traditional buildings, new uses should not normally require the construction of extensions or ancillary buildings. However, if alterations are necessary and approached carefully, it may be possible to bring about a new understanding of historic buildings by making a clear distinction between what is old and what is new.



The Ashes, Endon. Conversion of a 17th Century farmstead



Sympathetic barn conversion, Blore



Tean Hall Mill complex, Upper Tean. Converted to residential apartments



The Old Coffee Tavern, Alton. Mid 18th Century house

Sustainability and existing buildings

- 5.16 Improving the energy efficiency of existing or converted buildings needs to be considered at the design stage. Draught-stripping, loft and cavity insulation and more efficient boilers are the obvious first measures. Loft insulation in particular should be increased in thickness.
- 5.17 The double-glazing of windows may also be required. This can be at odds with historic buildings or within conservation areas, and is certainly the case in terms of listed buildings. Here, one solution is to retain traditional single glazed windows as the outer barrier but to add a double glazed inner window internally, where the inner window opens inwards.



Points to remember:

- **Always consider the renovation of an existing building rather than build new.**
- **Make sure alterations work with the building's character.**
- **Arrange rooms to suit existing openings to avoid creating new.**
- **Extensions should be subordinate - set back building line and keep ridge and eaves height lower.**
- **Contemporary extensions need to be handled carefully, responding to scale and character of the host building.**
- **Unless part of the character, avoid porches on terraced properties.**
- **Garages must be subordinate with material and roof pitch that match the dwelling.**
- **Avoid upvc conservatories in prominent positions.**
- **Conversions to residential use should respect the original character of the building. When extending, make a clear distinction between the old and new.**
- **Include energy efficiency measures at the design stage.**
- **Be careful when installing double glazed units on historic properties. On listed buildings this is likely to be an unacceptable alteration.**

Further Information:

Design principles for Development in Staffordshire Moorlands

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New Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings

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Conversions

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Design Guidance Note 5 – Extensions

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Design Guidance Note 9 – Conversions

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6. Shop fronts



- 6.1 The design of shop fronts and their signage has a major impact on the appearance of town and village centres. Good shop front design and sympathetic signage proposals can greatly enhance the shopping experience and strengthen the area's appeal. Corporate design and signage may need to be adapted to avoid harm to local identity.
- 6.2 Both traditional or modern shop fronts can be appropriate. However, they should:
- reflect the character and architectural style of the upper floors and the area generally;
 - maintain the rhythm of the individual buildings in the street;
 - be constructed in appropriate materials and have appropriate finishes; and be well proportioned and well detailed.
 - In designing or adapting shop fronts the opportunity should be taken to improve full access wherever possible.
- 6.3 Advertisements and signs should always be designed to complement the appearance of the shop front, building and character of the area. Fascia signs should be slim and not be a dominant feature of the frontage. Hanging signs offer a more traditional approach and add interest and individuality to the street scene.
- 6.4 The security needs of shopkeepers must be balanced against the detrimental visual effect caused by certain types of shutters. More appropriate ways of securing contents are the use of laminated glass or internal lattice grilles.

Points to remember:

- **Adapt corporate signs and colour schemes to suit the local area.**
- **Shopfronts should respect the host building and street scene.**
- **Use traditional materials and finishes – timber with a painted finish.**
- **Improve access wherever possible.**
- **Signage should complement the frontage and be well proportioned.**
- **Illumination of signs should be discreet.**
- **Consider security measures at the design stage.**

Further Information:

Design Guidance Note 2 – Shopfront and Signs



1-6 Market Place, Cheadle



Leek Market Place



Getliffe's Yard, Leek

7. Details and Materials



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- 7.1 The details of a building – its windows, doors, chimneys etc – have an importance that belies their size. Such features add interest to the building. The eye is instinctively drawn towards them as towards the features of a face. Details also give the best clues to a property's date and history.
- 7.2 Details have evolved in response to climate, function and the building materials available locally.
- 7.3 As a consequence, door and window frames are well recessed to improve weather protection. Coped gables are there to protect the edge of the roof that would otherwise be exposed to high winds. The design guide is not prescribing a slavish copying of all traditional details. However, particularly in historically sensitive areas, if a new building is to blend successfully, designers should be aware of why and how such traditional detailing has evolved and whether it is appropriate today.



Windows

- 7.4 Windows are among the most important features of an elevation. They are the building's eyes, and as such deserve special care and attention.
- 7.5 There are many traditional window patterns found locally. Nearly all however have a vertical emphasis to their overall shape as well as some degree of subdivision to the frame.
- 7.6 The traditional materials used in window construction are timber, cast metal or lead. In sustainability terms, timber is today by far the best material to use. Upvc by contrast, is often inappropriate as an alternative to more traditional materials - particularly in historically sensitive areas such as in conservation areas or on listed buildings. They often have very chunky sections and profiles and lack the detail and finesse of their timber equivalents.
- 7.7 The design of replacement or new windows needs to relate to the age and style of the property in question as well as to the local context. Modern windows often do not look appropriate when the subdivision of panes is handles badly and lacking a vertical emphasis.

Doors

- 7.8 Doors are an important feature, particularly to a front elevation. They relate the building to both the human scale and to ground level outside. Main elevations without doors look very unsatisfactory. The choice of door will depend on the facades composition and should rely on the proportions and materials and avoid fussy detailing.

Colour

- 7.9 Historically, external joinery was either painted, or if it was oak it was left to weather to a natural silver grey. Although white is a relatively recent addition to the colour palette, it is now the predominant finish for windows to houses. It has the obvious advantage of reflecting light into rooms but can sometimes look too stark and harsh.
- 7.10 The doors and windows of traditional farm outbuildings are best finished in either a traditional farm colour (which may be a dull red or green) or a suitably recessive, neutral tone which picks up the colour and warmth of the stone. Taking a paint scrape from an existing door or window will often reveal the original colour scheme.
- 7.11 For new farm buildings or industrial units, the recommendation would be to use dark, recessive colours or a neutral tone.
- 7.12 While gloss paint is obviously an option, microporous coating systems which are in effect opaque stains have a great many maintenance advantages. They look like a satin paint and come in a range of colours. Their opacity helps to protect the timber to a greater extent than do transparent stains.



Brook House, Ipstones. White painted sash windows with central dark blue door



Using a soft, neutral tone for windows and doors of the barn conversion

Ornamentation

- 7.13 As a general principle, the design of new buildings should avoid ornamentation or over-fussy detailing. There is however still scope for variety. There are rarely two identical cottages or houses alongside each other. It is the details of stonework, the style of windows, or the nature of the door surrounds, not to mention the variation in eaves heights and roofs that create this interest.



Materials

- 7.14 New buildings should ideally be constructed from the same palette of materials used traditionally in the area. This means for the most part natural stone or brick for walling and Staffordshire blue clay tiles or slate for roofs.
- 7.15 Traditionally, materials have been selected and used in a way that promotes their durability in a harsh climate and ensures that buildings meet the purpose for which they were intended in the most economical way possible. Consequently, walling stone is laid horizontally, retaining the orientation it had in the quarry, with through-stones bonding the inner and outer skins of the wall. Corners are strengthened by the use of large quoin stones. Roofs pitches are dictated by the angle required to securely fix tiles with a slightly lesser pitch required for slates depending on their size.

Stone

- 7.16 Stone replaced timber-framing as the main exterior walling material from around 1600, and remained predominant in the rural areas throughout the 19th century. The predominant building stone in the Staffordshire Moorlands is gritstone and sandstone which vary in quality and appearance. At Leek the local stone was poor and rarely used unless lime-rendered. At Alton and Hollington the finer grained Hollington stone is of excellent quality and is highly durable.
- 7.17 While the exterior walling of a vernacular building was always built of the nearest available stone, the better quality Hollington stone was transported widely for dressings such as quoins and window surrounds. The humbler buildings and outbuildings were often built entirely of rubble and without quoins.
- 7.18 Most walling is of coursed rubble, finely-tooled ashlar being reserved for the grander houses except where the underlying rock is high quality sandstone such as at Alton, Hollington and Endon, where humbler buildings might also be of ashlar.

- 7.19 To the south-east of the District carboniferous limestone (a hard, grey stone) is the predominant building material. Limestone is harder to dress and is gritstone is often used instead.
- 7.20 It is important that the correct type, colour and finish of stone is chosen for each locality, especially when adding to, or altering, an existing building.
- 7.21 Pointing to stonework should be similar in colour to the stone using an appropriate lime mortar mix. The wider the joint, the coarser the aggregate should be to give the mortar a rougher texture.



St. Chad's House, Bagnall

Brick

- 7.22 Brick made its appearance in the second quarter of the 18th century in high status rural houses such as Harracles Hall (Longsdon) and Manor Farm (Checkley) and was soon in regular use in the towns. Elsewhere it was rapidly taken up at Cheddleton and Upper Tean where the local stone was poor or difficult to obtain. The early bricks were hand made locally and have a subtlety of texture and colour that is lacking from later mass-produced brick. In the 19th century the canals and railways allowed mass produced brick to be brought in. At its best this might be coupled with fine terracotta elements, or combined with stone dressings as in the Sugden buildings in Leek. Many of the 19th and early 20th century terraces in the District's towns have good quality detailing which makes a major contribution to the street scene.
- 7.23 In specifying the use of brick it is important to have regard to the colour and texture of the local bricks. Second-hand bricks should be used with caution as there may be problems with the durability of the material and tend to give a very rustic finish. There is now a wide choice of new bricks which will fit into historic areas as long as they are carefully selected. Pointing should be undertaken with care to ensure the most appropriate mix, colour and finish.



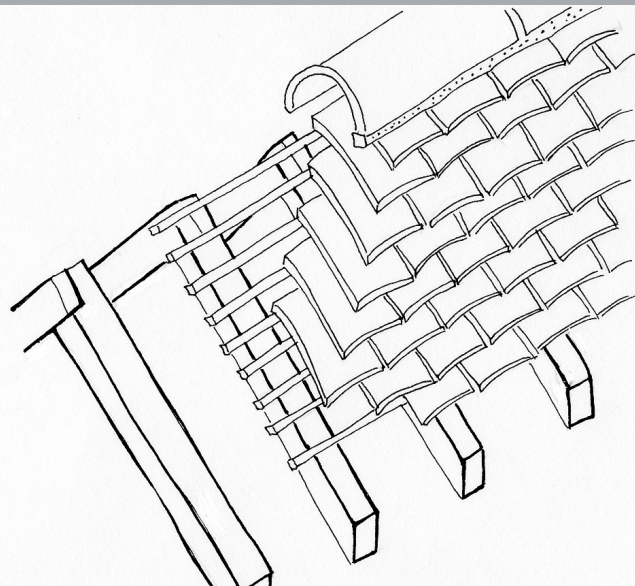
St. Edward Street, Leek

Render

- 7.24 Lime render was used over porous or inferior rubble stonework to give added protection to the wall. From the 18th century onwards, however, it was sometimes used for aesthetic reasons – to give a building more presence and a smarter appearance closer to the fashionable look of stucco. The use of traditional renders has a role in sensitive locations such as in conservation areas and on listed buildings although they have maintenance implications. Elsewhere, modern through-coloured acrylic render systems may be acceptable in certain circumstances.

Roofing Materials

- 7.25 The historic roofing material in the District was thatch, giving a characteristic pitch of about 40 degrees. More prestigious buildings used stone tiles of gritstone which generally had to be brought in to the area. They are laid in diminishing courses with large slates near the eaves rising to smaller slates near the ridge to make best use of the material available. The usual pitch is a relatively low 30 degrees.



Clay tile roof construction

- 7.26 The 19th century witnessed the mass production in the Potteries of Staffordshire blue clay roofing tiles, now regarded as the typical local roofing material. Early tiles were handmade with a distinctive camber and rougher texture whilst later machine made tiles have a more even profile and smooth sheen. A roof pitch of around 35 degrees is required to fix the tiles, which gives the characteristic narrow gable and steeply pitched roof. Some Victorian buildings can have very decorative roofs with elaborate fish-scale tiles. The improvement in road and rail networks also allowed for the import of Welsh slate which is seen on some Victorian properties and was useful for slightly shallower pitches.



Mixture of traditional roofing materials in Cheddleton

New Materials

- 7.27 New materials need to respect the building and its setting. Occasionally, high quality modern materials may be used as substitutes or replacements for traditional materials in exceptional circumstances where appropriate to the design or setting, provided they harmonise well. An example would be terne-coated steel instead of lead for flat roofs. More commonly, modern substitute materials are less appropriate and often less durable. Reconstituted stone weathers poorly and is not recommended in the open countryside or in protected areas such as conservation areas. In similar locations, upvc should not be used on environmental and aesthetic grounds whether in the form of windows, doors, barge boards or conservatories.
- 7.28 There is no tradition of external timber boarding in Staffordshire Moorlands. It was used as horizontal cladding on some early (14th and 15th century) cruck barns but by the 17th century such walls had been overclad with stone. Vertical boarding has been used more recently on large agricultural sheds as an alternative to metal sheeting but such buildings are regarded exceptions, as the development is seen in the context of traditional buildings or open landscape.



Decorative Staffordshire blue clay tiles

Craftsmanship

- 7.29 The Staffordshire Moorlands has a long tradition of craftsmanship in building. The skills and knowledge of generations of local builders are evident throughout the area. Such skills need to be nurtured and passed on at the local level. Without them, our architectural heritage will suffer.
- 7.30 These skills are needed not just for the repair and alteration of historic buildings but also for new buildings. Otherwise, new development will not take the local tradition into the future as seamlessly as it should.
- 7.31 Building materials, particularly stone, should be used in the traditional manner. With stonework, the bedding, width and height of courses, colour and finish all need the mason's careful attention. Other specialist skills include stone slate roofing, the use of lime mortars and plasters, the repair and renewal of traditional sash windows and the construction of dry-stone walls.



*Cross restoration at Her Ladyship's Oratory,
Alton Towers*



Farley

Sustainable Use of Materials

- 7.32 It is possible to source materials and products from all over the world. The extent to which this is damaging to the environment is becoming increasingly apparent. By exercising choice we can have a direct influence on the situation.
- 7.33 Some general principles to bear in mind:
- Design first to reduce demand for energy and to improve energy efficiency.
 - Repair rather than renew.
 - Use salvaged or recycled products/materials, including aggregates.
 - Buy locally.
 - Minimise the use of non-renewable resources.
 - Avoid products whose manufacture, use or disposal causes harmful by-products.
 - Choose materials with low embodied energy (the energy needed for extraction, processing, manufacture and transportation).

Points to Remember:

- New windows and doors need to relate to the age and style of the property.
- Avoid the use of upvc for windows and doors
- Proportion and subdivision of windows should have a vertical emphasis.
- Consider the use of colour for window frames and doors in relation to its use.
- Ornamentation and subtle variations can be applied to window and door surrounds
- Stone, slate, tile and brick are the predominant materials for roofs and walls in Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Read the Council's pointing leaflet for appropriate finishes and mortar mixes.
- In certain circumstances limited use of render is acceptable.
- Staffordshire blue clay tile is the predominate roofing material but stone still exists on older buildings.
- High quality modern materials may be acceptable in certain circumstances
- Use or specify sustainable materials.

Further Information:

Repairs and Alterations to Historic Buildings

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Windows and Doors Repair and Replacement

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Pointing Leaflet

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Design Guidance Note 1 – Windows and Doors

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Design Guidance Note 6 – Materials, finishes and colour

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Appendix I – Related Topics and Further Advice

The following topics are not covered by the guide but advice on them is available from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council or other agencies

Archaeology

If a proposed development is likely to affect a site of archaeological interest, the Council can require measures to be taken to protect or record the site. In some cases this may involve conservation of the remains in situ; in others, professional archaeologists may need to record what is found on site before it is lost. If appropriate, the Council can require developers to undertake an archaeological evaluation of their site before the application is determined. The results of this will inform how the remains are dealt with at later stages in the development. We strongly advise contacting the Council's archaeologists regarding the archaeological potential of any site as soon as a development is being considered and certainly before an application is made.

Further information can be obtained from the [County Archaeologist](#)

Planning

Guidance on planning permission and pre-application advice is available from the [Council Planning Department](#).

Design and Access Statement

Further information on [Design and Access Statements](#), what they should include and when they are required, can be found on the gov.uk web site.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

The Staffordshire Moorlands has a number of Conservation Areas. As each designation is reviewed, Conservation Area Appraisals are being published. They cover the history and development of the settlement, local architectural character, prevalent building materials, important trees, landscape features and open spaces. The appraisals aim to promote a better understanding of the special character of a settlement and to inform decision-making when new development is proposed. Adopted [character appraisals](#) are available to view on the Council's web site.

Landscape Character Assessment

[The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment](#) identifies key landscape characteristics and their implications for the siting, design and appearance of new development.

Building Regulations

Designers and applicants should ensure that [Building Regulations](#) requirements have been fully complied with and all necessary consents obtained. Approval under Building Regulations does not constitute planning permission, and vice versa.

Highways

Designers are advised to take into account the requirements of the [Highway Authority](#) (Staffordshire County Council) in a manner that is compatible with the principles set out in this document.

Pollution

In situations where development proposals could generate noise or other forms of disturbance or involves building on contaminated land, designers or applicants should contact the Council's [Environmental Health Service](#). In some instances, a contamination report will be expected as part of a planning application.

Flood Risk

Some parts of Staffordshire Moorlands lie within flood risk areas. You can view the areas on the [Council's interactive planning map](#).

Tree Management

How the Council manage trees is set out in the [Council's Tree Strategy and associated good practice guides](#). The Council's Tree Strategy sets out the issues, general principles and best practice for managing both protected and Council trees. The documents that make up the strategy specifically include a Good Practice Guide on trees on Development sites.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The trust is a registered charity that work to promote and care for the natural environment and raise awareness of wildlife issues across Staffordshire. They offer a range of [planning advice](#) on wildlife issues and work to ensure that wildlife and valuable habitats are fully considered within the planning system.

Historic England

There are a significant number of Heritage Assets within Staffordshire Moorlands (conservation areas and listed building). If development proposals affect these or their setting further information and advice can be obtained from [Historic England](#)

