

LANDFORD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

8 A Design Guide for Non-Domestic Buildings

Contents

- 8.1 Conversion of Farm Buildings
- 8.2 Location, Scale and Form
- 8.3 Walls
- 8.4 Roofs
- 8.5 Eaves & Verges
- 8.6 Windows & Doors
- 8.7 Services
- 8.8 Landscaping
- 8.9 Wildlife Considerations
- 8.10 Signs & Advertisements

Where traditional buildings exist which are no longer in use or required it may be better to encourage their preservation by conversion to other purposes. As a general principle it is preferable to find a new site for new buildings rather than follow a policy of replacing perfectly good buildings that could be converted to other uses.

Small industry can help Landford thrive, and there is no reason why it should not be successfully situated in adapted existing buildings, or appropriate purpose-built ones.

New buildings should be designed with regard to the principles of environmental sustainability. Light, smell and noise pollution can be minimized both through building design and site screening.

Small buildings for craft workshops and light industry should comply with the appropriate design guidelines for new housing. New industrial and business development should respect the small, intimate scale and characteristics of the village and should follow the guidelines set out in this section of the document.

It is especially important where new development is being introduced into an existing area, that the compatibility of the new business is acceptable in relation to existing neighbouring uses and operates without causing disturbance to the neighbours. Consideration must be given to whether or not the scheme complements existing uses and what measures have been taken to reduce environmental concerns of noise, smell or light pollution and its associated nuisance.

8.1 Conversion of Farm Buildings



Farm building

Whilst wishing to encourage the continued agricultural use of farm buildings it is necessary to consider how best to manage any future changes where the farming practice has changed to maintain the viability of the farm. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that the traditional character of the building(s) is retained, whilst allowing for new usage.

When converting an existing building the design issues are an extremely important consideration. For example, the conversion of an agricultural barn or a listed building, which were never originally designed to accommodate commercial activity, may be in close proximity to sensitive housing or land usage areas. In those circumstances there may be very specific specialist work that has to be undertaken and submitted to the local authority to support a planning application. English Heritage have produced a range of detailed guidance notes, including the re-use of historic farmsteads¹

It is essential for a conversion to respect the rural setting and landscape character of its surroundings.

GUIDELINE 8.1.1 - There should be no detrimental effect to the visual quality of the landscape.

The preservation of the character of the existing traditional farm buildings is very important but not if this means the continuance of a rural eyesore. The building must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding. Roof structures and trusses should be retained in their entirety and kept open to view, where appropriate. Surviving arch bracing to the beams should be retained. Avoid piercing the façade and roofline: lighting can be achieved by the minimal use of conservation roof lights and by glazing existing openings.



Example showing minimal changes - before and after

GUIDELINE 8.1.2 - Alterations should be the minimum necessary to accommodate its new use.

A building should be of a suitable size for conversion without the need for extensions and separate outbuildings that would detract from the character and appearance of the building and its setting. An important consideration in this respect is that if the business becomes successful is there room for expansion? Features on the elevations such as patterned brickwork, buttresses, owl windows, date stones and numerals should be retained unaltered. At the same time, avoid introducing new features, such as chimneys, or dormer windows to roof pitches. Similarly, garages that are incongruous with the original outline of the buildings.

GUIDELINE 8.1.3 - Alterations should respect the scale and form of the original building(s).

During the process of converting a building it may be possible to improve its rural appearance and character by replacing inappropriate structures with those detailed in paragraphs 8.2 - 8.10



Where possible retain existing windows and doors

GUIDELINE 8.1.4 - Wherever possible take the opportunity to make more extensive use of traditional materials.

¹ See Reference 9.10

The interior layout should be designed so that the original structure, openings and features can be retained or adapted with as few external changes as possible. Use existing openings to provide access and light.

GUIDELINE 8.1.5 - No attempt should be made to over-domesticate the building.

Original doors and windows, if well maintained, should not normally need to be replaced and should be retained wherever possible. New and replacement doors and windows in old buildings should be of wooden construction. Their size, proportion and style should match those of the original, including the glazing bars.

Fake 'Georgian' doorways and windows are to be avoided. It is unlikely that standard joinery will be acceptable in extensions or alterations to older buildings as the design of the modern window is different to traditional design and the glazing bars are far thicker in the former. Where double-glazed units are used, and intermediate bars are necessary, it is preferable that the size should match the original slim moulding (ovolo or lamb's tongue) and it is often necessary to fix this to the face of the glass.

The increasing prevalence of uPVC windows is cause for concern.

The fitting of modern doors into the façade of older buildings requires great care. Many modern doors, especially those manufactured in uPVC, are unsuitable and damage the appearance of the building.

GUIDELINE 8.1.6 – Retain the original doors and windows if at all possible, and where new doors and windows are fitted, they should be of an appropriate style and material that reflects the age and style of the building.

It is important that any conversions should make provision for nature conservation. For example, bats and barn owls, both of which are nationally protected, often inhabit these buildings.

GUIDELINE 8.1.7 – Every effort should be made to retain or enhance the site as a wildlife habitat.

8.2 Location, Scale & Form

The relationship between a new building and its setting, immediate and the wider landscape, is critical in determining its impact. There are approaches to design which can be adopted to reduce prominence and assist in making a building more acceptable in appearance. New buildings should be of simple design and proportion, reflecting the locality in scale, form and detail.

A building on the skyline will dominate the landscape, introducing hard, straight lines where they would not naturally exist. A building located in a natural fold in the site will be less intrusive. All possible steps should be taken to minimise the impact of any development by subtle use of natural features and local topography. If a site slopes it may be possible to step a building or for it to be cut into the site. If the position of a building requires 'cut and fill' techniques it is important to have regard to existing contours of the land to reduce the extent to which the natural slope is altered around the structure. On steep slopes it will always be difficult to achieve a satisfactory result.



Functional building in a natural setting

It will often be desirable where there are buildings already on an existing site, for a new building to become part of the group rather than stand in isolation. Where a group of buildings exist together their relationship should not be compromised.

GUIDELINE 8.2.1 - Buildings should be located within the site in such a way as to minimise the impact on the landscape and neighbouring buildings.

The use of similar smaller buildings around larger buildings can help break down scale. Access roads should follow the lie of the land. There may be natural features such as trees, embankments, or changes in topography that can be used to provide a backdrop or screen a building.



Good example of scale and form

Where possible the decision to erect a new building should be taken in the context of a long term plan, allowing the layout of possible future buildings to be co-ordinated and avoiding haphazard and fragmented development. This is particularly important for an industrial or commercial complex. The introduction of commercial activities into a rural area is liable to increase the amount of traffic, require road improvements and new access roads, and a need for parking facilities for both staff and customers. The business may also require turning areas sufficient to allow delivery of material supplies or waste disposal.

GUIDELINE 8.2.2 – The location should allow adequate space not only for the building but also for parking and servicing without harming the character of the building setting.

In some circumstances large modern buildings will be unacceptable because of their impact. The size of the building (in particular its height) must be justified by the operations defined by its permitted use.

GUIDELINE 8.2.3 - Industrial units should not be taller than two stories.

The mass of a building may be reduced if it is viewed end on. Environmental or energy saving considerations may also effect this decision.

GUIDELINE 8.2.4 - In a rural setting, buildings should take the form of traditional farm buildings so as best to fit into the countryside.

Where buildings already exist on the site, they should influence the design of new buildings if this is functionally appropriate. If this is not the case, then the use of a modern design using various approaches to minimise its impact may be more acceptable.

GUIDELINE 8.2.5 - Consider form and scale of the development so as to minimise the impact on the surroundings.

The design and construction of a building should be sympathetic to the local style so that it does not look out of place. Features relating to the construction and weathering of a building also need to be sympathetic to the local style. Scale will appear greater if the same materials are used for the roof and walls.



Example of local style

Aim for a balance to avoid issues of unsustainable removal of material from the site, particularly where it is unsuitable for spreading across the ground or is potentially damaging to wildlife. If spreading is required then do so over a large area to avoid producing unnatural earthworks such as bunds. Importation of fill is the least desirable option. All movement or spreading of large amounts of spoil may require planning permission.

GUIDELINE 8.2.6 - The implications of producing large amounts of excavated material should be carefully considered.

8.3 Walls

Traditionally local materials were used because of cheapness and availability. In the New Forest these include timber framing with timber cladding, stained dark brown/black with preservative; brick (red/plum, orange, buff, sometimes in contrasting colours) in smaller quantities for plinths, but also for the whole building, often in Flemish bond with tight joints using lime mortar. The use of corrugated iron was also widespread.

The use of suitable materials will have a major affect on the success of a building or development. Steps need to be taken early on in the design process to identify appropriate materials for the job. Although there is a vast array of materials to choose from, not all are suitable for a rural location.



Use of traditional materials

GUIDELINE 8.3.1 - Make maximum use of suitable traditional materials.



Poor brickwork repair

Limited use of brick or block plinths, or other division of walling materials can reduce impact. Care should be taken to ensure that the different areas are well proportioned. The upper part should be deeper than the lower. This will help relieve the monotony of a long wall.

For a smaller scale building, continuing the use of traditional materials for the whole or part of the building may be the most appropriate option from both a viability and aesthetic point of view.

For mortar, a mixture of lime putty and fine aggregate is recommended varying in proportions between 1:1.5 and 1:3 depending upon the required colour finish. The mortar should be given a rubbed finish, though not flush with the face but to the back edge of the brickwork. The corners or arrises of the bricks will therefore not be covered but appear proud of the mortar.

GUIDELINE 8.3.2 - Brickwork should match the traditional style in colour and texture with tight joints using a light coloured lime based mortar and suitable finish.

Where modern materials are to be used they need to be carefully chosen. Reflective materials draw attention to a building and should therefore be avoided.

GUIDELINE 8.3.3 - Buildings with shiny or light coloured cladding are not considered appropriate.

Some use of brick will assist in relating a new building to existing brick buildings.

GUIDELINE 8.3.4 - The use of a combination of materials (particularly for large buildings) should reduce the impact on its surroundings.

Concrete block used sparingly can be acceptable and its appearance can also be improved to some degree by painting in suitable colours.

Timber cladding, particularly with a dark finish, can be positioned so as to provide a solid, vertical or horizontal appearance. A 'hit and miss' spacing works well in appearance.

Metal sheeting or cladding is available in a variety of profiles, finishes and colours. Simple rounded profiles are best, avoiding the regular and stylised profiles of some of the present day industrial claddings. It can be obtained or painted in appropriate dark colours. Corrugated sheet in granular finishes such as corrugated fibre cement can effectively weather to muted tones.

The type and colour of a building has a marked effect on its location or place in the street scene. Choice of colour can help to reduce the bulk of a building and integrate it into the landscape. Light buildings will look more conspicuous than dark ones and appear larger. This is further exacerbated with a light roof. Generally darker tones are better and roofs should be darker than walls. Inappropriate colours and finishes will always be resisted.

GUIDELINE 8.3.5 - The choice of colour should be guided by the shades of brown, grey, umber and ochre found in the natural landscape. A matt finish is preferred.

8.4 Roofs

The appearance of the roof is often the most important aspect of building design as it is often the most visually prominent part of the new building. This is particularly true when the building is located in a prominent position in an open landscape where it may be visible from some distance. Accordingly great care is required when designing both the roof structure and in the choice of the most appropriate material and colour.

An appropriately pitched roof can help to set a building into the landscape. Where buildings are isolated it will generally be more appropriate to have shallower pitches for flat sites and steeper pitches for sloping sites. This may well determine the type of roofing material used.

GUIDELINE 8.4.1 - Roof structures should be simple pitched roofs, and the pitch should be appropriate for the roof finish.



Good example of stepped roofline

If a particularly wide building is required it would be preferable to consider a stepped roofline so that the appearance and resultant shadow lines created by the eaves will help to reduce the impact of the large roof area. Detailing of roofs can be improved by considering the impact of shadows, bargeboards and the design of gutters and downpipes.

One of the most important rules concerning roof colouring is to ensure that the roof colour is darker than the walls. The only exception to this is when a building will be viewed against the sky, where light colours such as slate blue and light grey should generally be used. Dark colours such as slate grey or brown should be generally used where the roof of a building is being seen against the existing landscape.

GUIDELINE 8.4.2 - As a general rule, roofs should be darker than walls.



Inappropriate roof colour

Whereas some agricultural buildings may well have had traditional timber roofs, more generally larger buildings were roofed with either red/brown plain clay tiles or natural dark grey slates. There is also widespread historic use of corrugated iron in this area.

GUIDELINE 8.4.3 - Roofs should be finished with plain clay tiles, natural slates or corrugated iron sheets, in colours and textures that match existing traditional roofs.

The roof material should have a rough surface attractive to mosses and lichens which readily weathers to give a more natural appearance.

GUIDELINE 8.4.4 - Roofing materials should have a matt rather than gloss appearance. Inappropriate colours and finishes will always be resisted.



Good example of clay tiled roof

Dormers or roof lights are not found on agricultural buildings and small roof lights tend to reflect sunlight providing a disruptive feature. Where roof lights are required they should be flush fitted with internal gutters and non-reflective glass used. Where buildings are arranged in a courtyard the roof lights are best fitted within the courtyard so that externally the roof appears as a continuous feature.

GUIDELINE 8.4.5 - Dormer windows or roof lights should be avoided.

8.5 Eaves & Verges

Attention to detail can significantly affect the character of a building. An overhanging eaves and verge can break up the hard outline of a building and breakdown scale. In particular it creates shadow lines that can enable a new building to merge with its surroundings by giving the effect of reducing the scale of the building. However, care should be taken in exposed conditions as it may increase the potential for wind damage. The eaves of buildings in the parish are generally very modest with narrow fascias and a small overhang.



GUIDELINE 8.5.1 - Eaves depths and projections should be sufficient to break up the outline of the building whilst being practical for the building's use. (Suggest 250mm maximum projection).

Eaves may be open or closed and fitted with black gutters, half round or ogee in cross-section, together with black downpipes. White rainwater goods are not appropriate.

Where bargeboards are used, they should not be too wide and be formed using two lengths of timber, one planted on the other. This will add visual strength and relief to an otherwise plain timber finish and conform to the traditional styles found on local farm buildings. Chamfers can be added to one or both of the timbers for added interest or the barge boards shaped to form a decorative pattern along their length. The practice of extending and cantilevering wall plates and purlins to support the bargeboards is quite common in this area.

GUIDELINE 8.5.2 - Verges may or may not be fitted with bargeboards depending on the best visual option for the building. If fitted they should be carefully and traditionally detailed.

8.6 Windows & Doors

Windows and doors should not impact unfavourably on the neighbouring properties.

GUIDELINE 8.6.1 - Windows and doors should be in scale and keeping with the overall style and other elements of the building.

Problems can arise with large door openings. The upper corners of the door openings should be kept away from the roof.

8.7 Services

Services in buildings have become more complex. Installations can produce some unsightly and often unplanned features. They just 'happen' on site. Invariably they can be avoided if the design of the system is considered early on. Where possible, communications equipment should be sited on existing masts and pylons or suitably disguised.

Ensure that the visual effect of service installations is satisfactory, whether traditional or the latest renewable energy options. Seek products that tone in with adjacent materials and surfaces.

GUIDELINE 8.7.1 - All extraneous equipment or machinery should be suitably screened or hidden from view.

8.8 Landscaping

Landscape schemes are important to the success of a development. Comprehensive landscaping can really soften and enhance a commercial development. Consideration should be given to landscaping at the start of the design process.



Good landscape setting

Simple traditional robust enclosures should be used and not just to the frontage. Prominent hard standings and weak open boundaries should be avoided. The surroundings of new buildings such as hard standings, walls and access roads can be obtrusive, but they can also help reduce impact if considered carefully. Large surface areas of concrete or tarmac are considered inappropriate.

GUIDELINE 8.8.1 - Hedges of native species are the preferred boundary treatment, especially on publicly visible frontages, backed by walls or fencing where security is needed.

For access to new sites, access roads should be as unobtrusive as possible and use materials that will integrate them into the landscape.

GUIDELINE 8.8.2 - Access roads should only use inert materials. Toxic materials such as road planings are not acceptable on environmental grounds.

Suitable planting of mature trees and shrubs can help to integrate a new building into the landscape. It may be used to screen a building or to soften the impact, so that the building is set within a green enclosure. Rigid lines of planting, planting out of scale with the proposed building or quick growing conifers may draw attention to the building rather than disguise it and should therefore be avoided.

GUIDELINE 8.8.3 - Adopt a style of planting that you would find in nature and avoid creating a regimented appearance.

It should be remembered that where trees and shrubs are likely to come into contact with livestock or wildlife, then some form of protection will be necessary. The National Park Tree Officer can give advice on appropriate species and planting.

GUIDELINE 8.8.4 - Species should be selected from those occurring naturally in the area.

8.9 Wildlife Considerations

A building reduces the space available to wildlife. Good design will attempt to compensate for this loss.

For buildings (including industrial/commercial buildings) in rural locations, it is desirable for the provision of wildlife habitats within the site. This can be achieved by suitable planting of native species of trees and shrubs to provide food and shelter for the local wildlife. If sufficient ground is available this can be augmented by creating special wildlife areas for insects and small mammals, or possibly a pond.

It should also be noted that certain species, including bats, are given legal protection and should not be disturbed during building works.

GUIDELINE 8.9.1 - Compensate for the loss of wildlife habitat. Onsite provisions should be made for wildlife to coexist alongside human activities.

For suitably designed buildings it should be possible to incorporate nesting lofts for larger birds of prey or nest boxes for smaller birds. Consideration should also be given to provision for bats. Further information is available from Natural England in various publications.²

8.10 Signs & Advertisements

There are specific planning policies controlling the size and positioning of signs and advertisement hoardings and these must be complied with. Some advertisements may not be displayed without prior approval by the Local Planning Authority. In such cases, the Authority can prosecute persons responsible for displaying an illegal advertisement or serve a Discontinuance Notice (in cases where an advertisement does not need express consent but where it causes offence to amenity or traffic safety).

GUIDELINE 8.10.1 - Check that there are no Covenants placed on the site against the erection of hoardings.

Where commercial signage is required it should be tidy and within the site. If necessary, signs and name plates should be minimal and in keeping with older traditional styles. Shop signs should be discrete, suitably coloured and indirectly lit.

Excessive advertising should be avoided as it usually only serves to clutter the area and is inappropriate in a rural setting.

GUIDELINE 8.10.2 - Ensure that the siting and design of signs and advertisements is legal, appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the area.

Very bright fascias and over large or inappropriately sited signs can seriously detract from the visual quality of the area. Avoid poor and excessive signage, as this will appear cluttered and lead to confusion.

GUIDELINE 8.10.3 - Ensure that the design of signs is proportionate to the scale and character of the buildings and locality.

Lettering using alphabets based on classical proportions and spacing such as Clarendon, Perpetua Roman, Alberta, Egyptian, Rockwell, etc are decorative and easily read.

² See Reference 9.9

Every effort should be made to adapt corporate advertising to suit local circumstances. The visual principle found most applicable in such circumstances is that in order for lettering to show up well from a distance it is better to have light lettering on a dark background.

GUIDELINE 8.10.4 - The use of non-reflective materials in pastel shades of colours in sympathy with their surroundings is preferable to bright garish contrasting colour schemes.

Illuminated signs and advertisements are inappropriate in a rural setting and should be resisted wherever possible.