

## **SPG3**

# **Design in the Countryside**

## **General Principles**

- 3.1 The Council strives to promote quality in the design of buildings and their surroundings wherever they are located and this principle forms an underlying theme in all design guidance in the Local Plan. In the countryside it is important that new buildings are designed and sited in harmony with the landscape, reflecting the distinct characteristics of the locality. Reference should be made, especially, to the Rural Development chapter of the Local Plan which outlines the basic principles of design for new buildings in the open countryside; policies RD3, RD7 and RD8 are of particular relevance. Policy DS1 within the Development Standards chapter and guidance in the emerging Countryside Design Summary are also of relevance.
- 3.2 Attention to detailing is important and can determine whether development complements or detracts from the essential character that makes a particular landscape attractive and unique. The following sections apply to development which the local planning authority have control over and give guidance on achieving design quality in the most common types of buildings likely to occur in the countryside. The general principle outlined above can be applied in all situations and bland 'anywhere' design should thus be avoided.

## **Farm Buildings**

- 3.3 Modern farm buildings are unavoidably utilitarian structures but much can be done to incorporate them into the landscape. Where possible farm buildings should be sited within an existing group of buildings rather than standing in isolation unless they would be unduly dominant in relation to the farmstead. A single, large building may have a greater impact on the countryside than a cluster of smaller buildings, which can be more easily incorporated, into their surroundings. The use of dark coloured sheeting can help to prevent large expanses of roof and walls becoming too prominent and assertive. The apparent bulk of a building can often be effectively reduced by breaking it into smaller components, by keeping the overall height to a practical minimum, by careful choice of materials and colour, and by introducing tree planting of a standard appropriate to the landscape character. However, it is appreciated that in some instances for a new building to blend in with existing, neighbouring structures it will be appropriate for the choice of materials and finish to be determined by the external appearance of those buildings.
- 3.4 Dark colours, drawn from the following suggested list of British Standard colours, are recommended for sheeted buildings: 08 B 29 (dark brown); 10 B 25 (dark khaki green); and 00 A 13 (dark grey) /18 B 29 (dark grey). For external walls the use of lighter shades of the colour employed on the roof can help reduce the apparent scale of a building. The following colours may, therefore, be appropriate in construction of external walls of individual buildings: 18 B 25 (slate grey) and 08 B 25 (muddy brown). Yorkshire boarding, often

dark-stained, is usually the best option for wall panels as it assimilates well into the landscape. The use of reflective materials on external elevations and walls should always be avoided.

- 3.5 Lower sections of walls are usually finished in concrete blockwork and it may sometimes be necessary to paint blockwork to complement the panelling above and to achieve a better quality of finish. Where buildings will be prominent from important public vantage points (for example, within a designated conservation area, sited close to a listed building, or in an area important for its view) there may be justification for external elevations to be finished in brick or stone dependent on local building tradition.
- 3.6 Maximum use should always be made of existing natural features to help absorb new farm buildings into the landscape. This could involve setting a building into an existing slope or utilising existing woodland cover as a screen, though new buildings will not necessarily be expected to be totally 'hidden'. New tree and shrub planting can also help to soften the outline of farm buildings: associated landscaping is therefore likely to be welcomed.
- 3.7 Due to planning policy constraints business development in the countryside is likely to occur mainly through the conversion of existing rural buildings. Where new buildings are required their design is likely to be influenced by the developer's functional requirements and may, therefore, be expected to satisfy the requirements of the advice set out in this guidance. Similarly, guidance provided in SPG2 of this document, whilst relating to industrial development, should also be referred to in terms of the design, layout and siting of buildings and regarding parking.

### Dwellings

- 3.8 New dwellings should be well designed and have adequate regard for their setting. Vernacular houses in the countryside are almost always two-storey scale and this is an important guiding principle for new dwellings. To reinforce traditional building character they should be of a simple, rectangular form and constructed in materials of a colour and texture sympathetic with local building tradition and which predominate in that area (generally a red brick or natural stone with pitched roof clad preferably in clay pantiles or Welsh slate, and with white window and door frames). Appropriate external materials should be used and simple, controlled detailing will reinforce the character of the building and the area.
- 3.9 Although the use of 'modern design' techniques will not be precluded it requires the exercise of good taste, cannot ignore the character of the area and, in many instances, requires high standards of professional architectural skill to be successful. In the open countryside only a design of especially good quality in its own right will be acceptable.

### Landscaping Planting

- 3.10 The immediate setting for development in the countryside is defined by the boundaries of the site. Where boundaries are to be created or replaced it is appropriate to use native hedging protected from stock and wildlife as appropriate to the situation, by post and rail fencing and tree guards. In some cases native standard trees may be included as part of the hedge.
- 3.11 In order to maintain local habitats and conserve the distinctive natural heritage of the countryside it is

important that new tree and shrub planting should be of native, predominantly deciduous species. Certain trees relate to specific locations and, if there is any doubt about the most appropriate choice of tree or shrub for a locality, North Lincolnshire Council's Environment Team will be able to provide advice.

- 3.12 Tree planting may be inappropriate on or near to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), or where archaeological remains are likely to be encountered. For advice and/or guidance contact North Lincolnshire Council.
- 3.13 It is of most value to wildlife if planting is undertaken in substantial belts or groups of trees linked to existing hedgerows or copses to provide wildlife corridors. Planting within existing hedgerows and new hedge planting is also important and, if space permits, woodland planting of native species will be encouraged though the design of planting should be in keeping with the local landscape character. The following species will be welcomed for their wildlife value.

### **Large and medium sized trees**

- 3.14 Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*); Aspen (*Populus tremula*); Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*); Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*); Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*); Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*); Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*); Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*); Field Maple (*Acer campestre*); Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*); Large-leaved Lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*); Common Oak (*Quercus robur*); Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*); Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*); Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*); Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*); Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*); Goat Willow

(*Salix caprea*); White Willow (*Salix alba*); Yew (*Taxus baccata*)\*.

\* N.B. Poisonous

### **Small trees and shrubs**

- 3.15 Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*); Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*); Alder Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*); Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*); Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*); Gorse (*Genista*); Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*); Hawthorn (*Craetagus monogyna*); Hazel (*Corylus avellana*); Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*); Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*); Field Rose (*Rosa arvensis*); Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*); Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*).

