A DESIGN GUIDE
for Rural Northern Ireland
Foreword

As Minister for the Economy and the Environment I have had the pleasure of visiting many parts of Northern Ireland. Everywhere I am struck by the variety and the distinctive quality of the rural landscape.

I appreciate that many Ulster people identify with rural communities and wish to live in the countryside. The countryside, however, can only absorb development that it well designed and fits in to its landscape setting.

The Department of the Environment gave a commitment in the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland to produce guidance to prospective developers and in publishing this Design Guide it is hoped to improve the quality of rural development. I commend it to all who would wish to build in the countryside.

I would encourage prospective developers to study the Guide and to talk to planning staff before submitting a planning application.

The countryside is one of Northern Ireland’s greatest assets and it is in everyone’s interest to protect it from inappropriate or unsympathetic development. District Councils, rural communities, applicants, agents, builders and planners working together can ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the landscape. In this way, the amenity of the countryside will be conserved and developed for the benefit of this and future generations.

TIM SMITH
Minister for the Economy and the Environment
May 1994
Introduction

This Guide is for all those who are thinking of building in the countryside. Its purpose is to improve the quality of design and to help to ensure that new buildings fit into the landscape.

To design means to consider every aspect of the building and its site, and in this you should be helped by your designer. This Guide provides:

- a framework for the development of your design solution;
- illustrations of important aspects of design;
- guidance on the best way of presenting your scheme to the Department of the Environment.

The guidance given here concentrates on houses in the countryside, but the same design process can be applied to any building in our landscape.

The Design Brief

In discussing your scheme the first aim is to make a list of instructions, or a Brief, for your designer to follow. This will take time to agree but is an essential start to the design process.

Finding the Right Site

The design process continues with the selection of the site and you are strongly advised to check any site with your designer before making a final decision, as the choice of the right site is a basic requirement for a successful scheme.

When you are considering the site, make sure to discuss with your designer all of the factors, including access or boundary treatment, which are illustrated in this Guide. This may take time, but you will be rewarded by getting the best out of the site. The illustrations show the factors you need to think about and you should work through these carefully until you are satisfied that the site layout will meet your needs and also the Department's requirements.

Scheme Design

When it comes to planning the building you should resist the temptation to use a standard house plan or a design copied from elsewhere. This might seem a simple approach and a way to reduce costs, but bear in mind that such plans are not designed for your particular site and they can often require expensive and time-consuming re-design.

In Northern Ireland we need to improve the quality of development in the countryside. Standard plans are generally not suitable for use in the countryside since they cannot take account of the surroundings and the special character of each site. Using 'cheap' plans has often resulted in a poor design and in buildings which unfortunately look out of place in our landscape. In addition, badly designed buildings can also prove to be an expensive mistake for the owner, with the result that no-one is satisfied. The designer must aim to satisfy your
requirements whilst safeguarding the countryside, and this demands skill. Skilled
design may take time, but it is a worthwhile investment and is essential for a
successful scheme.

The Department is working to improve the quality of rural design and the Guide
emphasises that buildings should be designed to fit into, rather than dominate,
the landscape.

The Guide will help prospective developers with the process of obtaining planning
permission, but schemes which fail to integrate new buildings with the
surrounding countryside will not be permitted.

It is important to choose your designer wisely. A designer who is a member of a
recognised professional association will work to a Code of Professional Conduct
and will produce a professional standard of work.

Presenting your Proposals
The designers job is to turn your instructions into drawings for consideration by
the Department and you should instruct your designer to present your scheme in
accordance with this Guide.

The Guide aims to provide a straightforward method of working towards a
successful scheme, considering each step along the way, so that poor design can
be avoided at an early stage in the process. Schemes which are prepared and
presented in accordance with this Guide will, as a result, be more likely to avoid
delays during the planning application stage.
A Special Landscape

The countryside is one of our greatest assets and it is important that development should not only provide for our needs, but also enhance the landscape which has been nurtured and shaped by generations of rural people.

Northern Ireland's topography is very varied - typically in the space of a few kilometres there is a great range of types of landform.

Evidence of man's influence is to be found in the patters of the countryside, ancient monuments, homesteads and outbuildings. Some buildings have been in use for centuries, others have become stores or animal houses or have been abandoned. All are familiar elements of the rural scene.

Centuries of evolution have produced a landscape which is:

- cultivated, yet natural,
- picturesque, yet which earns its living,
- ancient, yet worked with modern techniques...
- in a word, unique.

Some Typical Landscapes

Drumlin Country
The rolling hills produce all kinds of slopes with many different vantage points. Stands of mature trees are frequently found, often in association with existing or former homesteads. Integrating new buildings with associated older buildings, especially in well treed areas, may make new development less intrusive in the landscape.

Coastlines
Coasts of Northern Ireland vary from craggy limestone and basalt cliffs to sandy beaches, from river estuaries to rocky bays, from high sand dunes to flat coastal plains. Every type of coastline is attractive to look at and may seem to be an attractive place to build, however the coast is particularly vulnerable to intrusive development.

Upland Areas
These open landscapes of great natural beauty are typified by sparse settlement and a lack of human intervention. The introduction of a new building into such a landscape would require great skill, since the building is likely to intrude into the landscape and will be visible from many different vantage points.

Mountains
Mountains have also tended to be used for recreational purposes. The intrusion of new buildings could spoil the very characteristics of mountains which make them attractive as places to walk and enjoy for recreational purposes.
Forests and Woodland
Northern Ireland has been described as one of the least forested parts of Europe. Forests are rare outside the large estates and tend to be used for commercial production and for recreation. Building in forests has been traditional in many parts of the world, but less so in Northern Ireland. Trees are used as shelter, often in groups around buildings and they generally soften the visual impact.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Northern Ireland is fortunate in having a rich variety of high quality landscapes, within a relatively small land area. The Department has designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to give national recognition to some of the most beautiful landscapes and approximately twenty-six percent of the countryside is within existing or proposed designations. Design guides have been published for the Mournes, and Antrim Coast and Glens AONBs.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas are designated by the Department of Agriculture and they are mainly associated with parts of AONBs. They are areas of special landscape, wildlife or historic interest which can be protected or enhanced by specific agricultural practices.
Traditional Qualities

Much of the character and quality of the countryside in Northern Ireland stems from the presence of a range of traditional buildings, local styles and local materials. These buildings are part of our culture and part of our regional identity. Buildings have evolved in response to their setting and their function on the land and have become familiar features of our rural environment. New buildings should respect that long-established link and not attempt to dominate the landscape.

Siting

Traditional builders knew their landscape and their weather. The concept of view from the house was unimportant when placing a dwelling; much more important was the concept of shelter. The tops of hills were cold and unfriendly places to build, and buildings were carefully sited down the slope, out of the wind, and often with a shelter belt of trees as well.

Dwelling houses normally nestled in sheltered positions using the landscape and planting as protection. A deep understanding of the sites had been gained over many summers and winters and dwellings quite sensibly shunned the prevailing cold winds and hugged the contours to increase comfort and use less fuel for heating.

The traditional rural house was a working dwelling; here the occupants lived and worked. The work may have related directly to the land around about - fruits and vegetables would have been grown and crops or animals may have been raised on the land around the house.
Cottage industries, too, would have been carried on in rural dwellings. Spinning, hand weaving, butter and cheese making were part of the Northern Ireland countryside and the lands surrounding the dwelling houses would have reflected these activities.

As part of the rural economy these buildings sat naturally in the rural landscape - so different from the suburban forms of development which are seen now. Modern designers should show a similar understanding of topography and the traditional approach to siting.

**Boundaries**
The edges of the site, with their drainage ditches and hedges merged naturally with the adjoining fields forming practical, low maintenance boundaries in harmony with the countryside.

**Plan Form**

*Linear*

The plan form of rural buildings arose from the method of roof construction. Because of the limited length of available roofing timbers the span of the roof was restricted, so that buildings had just a single-room depth. A series of rooms then produced the familiar linear plan form.
Square

In later years the use of imported timber and the development of the purlin roof led to wider spans, giving a two room depth to dwellings. This produced the square plan form characteristic of the grander houses.

Evolution

Traditionally, development of a site in a rural area required many years, even generations, of hard work. Technology and materials changed little, but slight improvements and enlargements took place over the years. Limited technology encouraged certain patterns of extension and it was always cheaper to use one wall of the existing building.

It made sense, too, for the newer buildings to be occupied as the dwelling house (generally being bigger and better build). The older dwelling house was therefore often given over to animals or storage. A pattern of steady development of a linked series of buildings emerged, usually starting off in a line and then turning a corner, perhaps forming 3 or even 4 sides of a courtyard.
**Front and Back**
Houses in Northern Ireland have exploited the front and back as two very different areas.

The front presented a clean, straight line to the road with perhaps a porch projecting. The front was more likely to be tidy and symmetrical, presenting an orderly appearance to the visitor.

The rear would be more practical of purpose, allowing the workaday activity to be carried on in private.

**Extensions**
In the country, you would not usually extend to the 'front' of a house, but generally build on the side or at the back. The front might have a wind porch added, but seldom more. An alternative to extension at the sides or the back would be to add another storey to the house.

The house therefore tended to grow longer (and perhaps higher) over time. Rear extensions were added, too, often linked directly to outbuildings.
Roofs
Although it is not a large area, Northern Ireland has considerable variations in climate. Certain areas are much more exposed than others and rainfall in some parts is more than twice that in sheltered areas. For generations Northern Ireland builders have used the pitched roof. Principally, it depends on shedding rainwater quickly. Overlapping units of thin stone (slate) replaced the layers of straw or reeds used in thatching, but the pitch remained the same.

In sheltered areas, traditional materials could be used as low as 30 degrees to the horizontal; exposed conditions could raise this to over 40 degrees; but the range 32-38 degrees covers most circumstances. Galvanised corrugated steel sheet ('corrugated iron') was sometimes used for cheapness, but generally on lean-to sheds (stores) and outbuildings rather than dwelling houses. This thin roofing material could be laid at a lower pitch - and often was.

Wind was another prevalent factor in roof design. The most exposed parts were the edges at the gables (the verges). Thatched roofs are seen with cement or lime render or heavy stones set on the verges to hold them down; sometimes ropes tied down to walls were used to hold the roofing in place.

Latterly, cement render or paving stones were used along the edges of slated or corrugated steel roofs, giving the familiar sight of walls which continue above the roof.
Planning Context


Development in the countryside is controlled on the basis of planning and environmental considerations. The building of single houses is regulated in terms of the capacity of the landscape to absorb further development, due to visual impact, and other environmental consequences. Where it is considered necessary to protect landscapes from excessive or inappropriate development, Green Belts are designated around cities and towns, and Countryside Policy Areas elsewhere. The locations of Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas are established through the development plan process and are generally set out in the relevant Area Plan.

Planning permission will be granted for the erection of a building in the countryside which is:

- in a locality which has the capacity to absorb another building, without adverse impact on visual amenity;
- on a site which can be visually integrated into the landscape; and
- of an appropriate design for the locality;

and provided it meets other planning criteria and policy requirements.

Prominence

In practice, the location of a new development frequently determines its prominence and the degree of visual impact it will have on the landscape. In assessing the potential impact of a development, particular regard will be had to the quality and nature of the landscape in the locality and at the site.

Siting

A new building in the countryside will be acceptable if, when viewed from the surrounding vantage points, it meets all of the following criteria:

- it blends sympathetically with landform;
- it uses existing trees, buildings, slopes or other natural features to provide a backdrop;
- it uses an identifiable site with long established boundaries, which separate the site naturally from the surrounding ground; and
- it does not spoil any scenic aspect or detract from the visual appearance of the countryside.

Each development proposal will be assessed and considered acceptable if:

- it is positioned sensitively along with a group of buildings such as a farm complex;
• it adopts the spacing of a dispersed pattern of settlement and has integrated sensitively with the existing land forms so as to blend unobtrusively with its surroundings, and;
• it avoids contributing to a build up of development in any particular locality, so as to cause a change in the rural character of that area.

**Landscaping**

Landscaping, garden areas and the design and type of site boundaries are all important visual elements in the countryside and can add significantly to the setting and integration of a building.

New buildings should be sited to take advantage of natural or previously planted features which could provide protection and integration.

**Access**

Access should be taken from existing lanes, where available. Otherwise access roads and driveways should respect field boundaries and site contours, thus integrating the dwelling with its entrance and site.

The traditional field pattern should be preserved and roadside and field boundary hedges and stone walls retained or reinstated following any access works.

**Design**

Traditional buildings are a familiar part of the rural scene, and their design follows well understood buildings practices which give the buildings their characteristic appearance. Modern development should respect the rural context and contemporary design solutions should demonstrate an informed use of traditional references.
Finding the Right Site

The assessment of sites demands a professional approach. Your designer will be able to 'read' the landscape, identify the most likely locations and find alternative sites for potential development. Existing buildings are often an excellent starting point. With their developed sites and traditional design they fit into the landscape. Renovation of an existing dwelling or another building could provide a satisfactory design solution. Where additional accommodation is required, it can be provided by extensions. Sometimes existing buildings can be retained as out-buildings with the new dwelling integrated into the group. Even when the original building has fallen derelict or been demolished, a well defined site with mature boundaries can be capable of absorbing and integrating the proposed dwelling.

There may be other instances of such 'natural sites' where existing trees, hedgerows, buildings, slopes or other natural features provide a backdrop to development. Traditional settlement in the area may be of a characteristic pattern and this will give a clue to ways of fitting in new buildings.

The setting of a building affects its appearance and visual impact. One of the least satisfactory aspects of much recent development in the countryside has been the use of road frontage sites, often separated out of larger fields. Here buildings dominate the view and incongruous suburban gardens are introduced into the landscape. Such development changes the character of the countryside and when repeated leads to ribbon development, and a loss of rural amenity.

Your designer should carry out a thorough check for possible problems. For example, the access to a seemingly attractive site may result in the removal of all the roadside hedges and trees. This might expose the new building as a prominent development, unlikely to gain planning permission.

In many cases the obvious solution is to develop further back from the road enabling the building and its garden to be surrounded and absorbed by the rural landscape. Planting can be used to separate a site from the countryside and from the road frontage.
Wrong site between settlements

Prominent corner site

Site with good development potential

Wrong site - Ribbon development
Site Checklist

- Planning Policy/Technical Requirements
- Vantage points
- Access position and standards
- Impact of development

In using this checklist, you will need the help of a skilled designer, who will be familiar with technical concerns, such as access requirements, and will be able to visualise the likely impact of development on the site. This may mean that several sites have to be rejected before a suitable one is found. There is scope here for landowners to examine their holdings and prepare suitable sites by using the checklist and making any necessary adjustments to the access, or by additional planting, or other means to provide sites which, in time, are likely to meet design criteria, subject to complying with planning policies for the locality.

In starting your search for a site it is important to consider the planning policies in your area. These are often illustrated on a map in the Area Plan. Your designer should be clear about these policies and time spent at this stage will be invaluable in providing a sound basis for your scheme.

Having found a site which is likely to meet planning requirements, you should instruct your designer to prepare a Site Analysis.
Site Analysis

The Site Analysis is a record of everything you know about the site which has a bearing on design. Each site is different and the designer needs to analyse its special characteristics. These special qualities, peculiar to the individual site, can be listed and plotted on drawings so that their effect can be assessed.

The extent to which the development on a site might be seen from public roads or public areas and the distance over which it would be visible are important considerations. It is necessary, therefore, to identify the main vantage points of the site. It is particularly helpful to have photographs of the site taken from these points.

The way in which access is provided to a site, in order to meet the Department’s current standards, can have a significant effect on the exposure of the site and on the consequent impact of development.

The Site Analysis should include the identification of neighbouring development and the traditional characteristics of development which are to be found in the locality.

The analysis will bring together a large amount of information about the site as a basis for the design - information such as orientation, aspect, topography, existing buildings and landscape features, boundary treatments, prevailing wind direction, etc.

From this information, which is the essential preliminary to successful design, it is possible to assess the potential impact of development upon the site and the locality.
Scheme Design

Your designer must produce a scheme which meets your needs and also fulfils the planning requirements. Your Design Brief will contain all the information the designer needs to produce a scheme to satisfy your requirements.

The design process is quite complex, taking account of your Brief and the characteristics of the site and the features of the surrounding area.

Skilled design will produce a scheme which suits you and gets the best out of the site. By contrast, the common practice of dropping a standard house on to a site is poor design and fails to exploit the potential of the site.

The Site Analysis described in the previous chapter will have provided significant design clues including the views to the site, the likely position of the access, and many other factors. These clues enable the design process to begin, by indicating possible positions for entrances, gardens, garages, particular rooms and so on, until a house plan and site layout begin to take shape together. The process demands considerable work by both client and designer, but is necessary to achieve a successful scheme.

Scale and Impact

Limited level of design required, as the building is a small scale object in the landscape.

The visual impact of your proposal on the landscape is the primary concern of the Department, and the impact of your scheme will be determined by the exposure of the site and the scale of the development.

The prominence of the development when viewed from key vantage points will determine the extent of the design requirements. Your proposals should present
this information clearly in order to satisfy the Department that the scheme will integrate with the landscape. See 'Presenting your Proposals' later.

Where the site is visible only from some distance away and the house is a small object in the landscape, the Department will be mainly concerned with basic considerations.

In contrast, where a new dwelling of a substantial size is to be sited in the open, close to a public road, the Planning Service will require a comprehensive design dealing with every aspect of the scheme.

Exceptional level of design required, as the building is a large scale object in the landscape.

Development Pattern

Rural Pattern

Suburban Pattern

A major aspect of designing a rural house is the development pattern, which is fundamental to the integration of the finished scheme in the landscape. This should reflect the character of the locality, and it is important to distinguish between rural character and suburban character. The rural pattern is one of buildings surrounded by land, with the buildings always subservient to the landscape, whereas the suburban pattern is of buildings occupying strips of land, having front and back gardens, with buildings forming the dominant image. One of the most destructive design mistakes in recent times has been the attempt to implant the suburban model in the rural scene. This is a basic mis-match and must be avoided.

There is also the opportunity to consider orientation and shelter as a means of making the dwelling more energy efficient. This can be further developed and refined in the layout of the building itself, its detailed design and its construction.
Landscape Design
Landscape design is essential to a successful scheme. The main landscaping of a development site should be part of the overall design reflecting the character of the locality. Professional advice is available to assist with this important aspect of development in the countryside. From the point of view of the Department the emphasis will generally be on the boundaries of the site.

One of the main considerations will be the position of the access and its detailed design. A new access will need to meet the Department's safety requirements, which can often result in the necessary removal of roadside hedges and trees. It is important to make the sight-lines blend in with the existing roadsides by suitable boundary treatment.

New access proposal. Fence and hedging.
Existing boundaries, hedges, walls and other significant landscape features should be retained and protected during construction, wherever possible. When it is necessary to remove such features for example in the provision of visibility splays, they should be reinstated. The existing features should be augmented by appropriate additional landscaping to reinforce boundaries, provide shelter and to screen and integrate buildings. Particular attention should be paid to the hard landscaping of surfaces such as driveways and to the treatment of walls and fences. Suburban boundary features are generally inappropriate in the rural landscape.

With soft landscaping, it is important to identify suitable areas for tree planting for privacy, enclosure, integration or shelter. Rates of growth, height and spread will influence the choice of species. Generally conifers should be used sparingly, with a preference, instead, for broad leafed trees appropriate to the particular locality (See Appendix 3).

Your Site Analysis includes the position of the vantage points in the surrounding area, from which the site and the new buildings will be seen, and in working towards your final layout you must consider these viewpoints carefully and adjust the scheme to obtain the best possible fit between buildings and landscape, with the buildings being always subservient to the landscape.
In the introduction to this Guide we examined the most common traditional buildings and their shape, such as the rectangular plan with a pitched roof. This is the most common shape for buildings in rural Northern Ireland, and the linear plan-form leads to scheme layouts made up of linear blocks. These blocks are versatile in that they may be easily placed in different arrangements such as running along a slope, stepping down a slope, or enclosing spaces such as yards or gardens.

There is only a small range of traditional rural shapes, and these can be readily distinguished from their suburban counterparts. A common design mistake is to implant suburban shapes in the rural context, and this should be avoided.
Linear Plan Concept

The traditional linear plan easily fits into the contours of any site, minimising excavation. It can be easily extended linearly and is adaptable to changes in needs.

Using the linear plan form it is possible to design a scheme for modern living, and arrive at a layout which works, while at the same time integrating the scheme with the site and the wider landscape.

Modern space standards can be achieved with suitable rural designs. However, in the development of some sites, the amount of development which can be accommodated may be limited by its potential visual impact. In some other cases it may be possible to reduce the apparent scale of development by breaking the form down into smaller units, perhaps in a grouping of buildings.

In a successful scheme, the ancillary buildings, such as garages, sheds and other outbuildings will be designed as part of the overall layout, to give an integrated group. Care is taken to avoid elements such as garage doors being placed in an obtrusive position, and small structures such as oil tanks or coal bunkers are located out of public view.

Vernacular Composition

A linear arrangement of gables is a strong vernacular image. These gables are stepped as if the dwelling is in a continuous state of growth.

Architectural Style

Traditionally most houses in the countryside were of a plain, rather austere character. The only exceptions were the mansions of estate owners or some more ornate houses erected in the Victorian period. In recent years however there has been a marked tendency for new dwellings in the countryside to adopt the style and appearance of typical suburban development of the period e.g. mock Georgian ad Tudor with the addition of the Spanish hacienda. While some of
these styles may not look out of place in a housing estate in a town, they are generally incongruous in a rural setting. They have the effect of debasing the distinctive regional character and blurring the contrast between town and country.

Within Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where there is a strong local identity, new buildings should respect and may have need to reflect closely the traditional settlement pattern and architectural style.

In other areas it is not necessary to follow traditional style so closely, and this Guide does not suggest that modern rural dwellings should look like reproductions of traditional houses or cottages. On the contrary, there is no reason why a modern house, design in accordance with this guide, should not look like a modern house at the same time be entirely appropriate to its rural setting.

**Rural Elevation and Details**
When the designer has arrived at a basic arrangement of building blocks on the site, or the site layout, the design process can carry on to finer considerations, including the elevational treatment, which deals with the pattern of windows and doors, the choice of material and colour.

With a rectangular plan form, the overall shape of the building will have a horizontal emphasis especially if it is a single storey dwelling. This emphasis can be balanced by a vertical proportion to window and door openings and by chimneys.

A common feature of badly designed schemes is the attempt to enliven a dull layout and standard blocks with the random addition of architectural bric-a-brac, which shows a lack of response to the rural setting and should be avoided.

Simplicity of elevations is a familiar characteristic of rural buildings and modern schemes should retain this. Where 'add-on' elements such as dormers or porches are part of the design they should be sparingly used.

A common feature of traditional rural buildings is that there are few windows and doors, so that walling is the dominant image. This ratio of solid is a basic part of the rural scene and contemporary designers should respect this image.
Windows
The treatment of windows and doors should be equally simple, with large areas of glass being avoided as far as possible. In some modern schemes, where energy efficiency is a priority, large glazed walls may be necessary but these will be designed as part of the overall form of the building and given a vertical emphasis.

Where large windows are necessary, these can be successfully divided into a number of vertical elements.

Chimneys
Chimneys form a strong vertical contrast to the horizontal shape. They should be placed on the ridge and be visually robust. Lightweight flues can be relatively unobtrusive and may be located on the roof slope, if carefully detailed.

Eaves and Verges
In the countryside, eaves and verges were by tradition plain and simple. In particular the projecting verge or the flush verge and the slightly projecting eaves are 'rural' details which respect local styles.

Materials and Colours
Much of the character of the Northern Ireland landscape has derived from the limited range of traditional materials and colours, usually rendered walls with thatched or slated roofs. A restrained use of materials is quite appropriate for a modern dwelling and is in keeping with the tradition. Too many materials can produce an unsuitable fussy design.

Facing brick which has been increasingly used in recent years, has often proved to be incongruous and inappropriate in particular rural settings. Great care, therefore, should be taken to check if brick is a suitable walling material in the circumstances and that the colour, texture and detailing are appropriate. Artificial slates and plain concrete tiles reflect local characteristics.

The natural colours in the countryside vary from place to place and local characteristics give an indication of suitable colours for new buildings. It is inappropriate to use strong colours on large areas of walls or on roofs. In general, buildings should have roofs which appear darker than the walls. Details are best in a neutral colour such as white, grey or black. Doors can be painted in brighter colours.
**Design Checklist**

The purpose of the checklist is to eliminate poor design at an early stage, and so avoid delays in the planning application process.

The checklist uses two stages:

1. **Site Checklist**
   - Planning Policy/Technical Requirements
   - Vantage points
   - Access position and standards
   - Impact of development

   With your designer, use the site checklist when assessing possible sites. If the check shows up potential planning difficulties, reject the site.

   Using the site checklist and the Scheme Design Checklist, ask your designer to assess the likely scale and impact of your proposed development. If the check shows that the building will be small scale in the landscape, then only basic design considerations may be involved.

   If the building will be prominent, or large scale in the landscape, then comprehensive design will be necessary, using the Scheme Design Checklist.

2. **Scheme Design Check**
   - Perspective sketch views to scheme from vantage points
   - Access proposals
   - Plans
   - Sections
   - Elevations
   - Materials and colour
   - Sketch details
   - Other useful design information
Presenting your Proposals

In considering a proposal, the Department must assess the likely visual impact of the scheme on the landscape and the quality of the design. The drawings for each scheme should provide only relevant information, as shown in this part of the guide.

You should instruct your designer to present your scheme as shown.

Plans

1. Site Location Map

2. Site Layout Drawing

- 1.200 Scale
- Site boundaries
- Site features such as existing trees or buildings
- Access showing sight splays
- Plan of buildings
- Levels
- Drainage arrangement
- Proposed hard and soft landscaping

Together with the drawings you should submit the following information to make your planning application

Forms

- P1 Application for permission to develop land.
- P1C Planning application for a house on a farm necessary if it is located in a Green belt or Countryside Policy Area or taking access from a Main Traffic Route.
- NN1 Neighbour notification
- P1E Planning application fees

Please check that all necessary information is provided, to avoid delay caused by an incomplete application.
Even with an application for outline planning permission, that is, to establish the principle of development, it will be desirable and sometimes necessary to submit a site analysis drawing to enable the Department to access the proposal. In absence of a site analysis drawing the Department may conclude that the development proposed for the particular site would not fit into its rural setting. It will often be helpful to submit photographs of the site including photographs taken from the various vantage points.

The Department does not need detailed construction drawings such as would be submitted for consent under the Building Regulations. The Department is interested in how the proposed buildings would relate to their surroundings and applications which are presented in accordance with this Guide will normally satisfy the requirements for information about design.

3. Site Analysis Drawing

1:500 Scale Photographs are useful

- North Point
- Vantage points to site
- Forms of local development
- Contours, sections and levels
- Access points
- Site features, to include existing buildings, hedges and trees
- Sun and wind
4. Scheme Design Drawing

Various Scales. Photos are useful

- Perspective sketch views from key vantage points
- Plans
- Sections
- Elevations
- Materials, finishes and colours
- Sketch details
- Other useful design information
Appendix 1 – Planning Application Flow Chart

Thinking of Building?

- Appoint Agent
- Handle application yourself

Discuss proposal with a Planning Officer
- Guidance on requirements

Making planning applications submit
- forms, plans and fee

Application advertised
- Neighbours notified

Other agencies consulted
- e.g. Roads Service,
  Water Executive,
  Environmental Health

Site inspected

District Council consulted normally inside two months

Decision issues

Permission

Build

NB Consents under other legislation such as Building Regulations may be required

Refusal

You can appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission against a refusal or condition of permission.

Alternative or amended proposals
Appendix 2: Department of the Environment Planning Offices

A full list of Planning Offices can be found in the key contacts section of the Planning Service web site.
### Native Trees

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<th>Species</th>
<th>Favoured site</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Hints on growing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alder</strong></td>
<td>Streamside, damper woods, waterlogged sites</td>
<td>Fast growing. Flourishes in the wettest of places where little else grows, also on clay and fill</td>
<td>Will not flourish in stagnant water. Easily established and copices well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alnus glutinosa</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ash</strong></td>
<td>Open woodland and hedgerows</td>
<td>Tolerant of cold and exposed sites, including windswept coastal areas</td>
<td>Dislikes waterlogged sites. Best transplanted young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fraxinus excelsior</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birch</strong></td>
<td>Pioneer species: open sites and woodland</td>
<td>Hardy and fast-growing. Shelters slower-growing species wide range of tolerance to exposure, damp ground and poor soils. Dense thicket form makes ideal stock-proof hedge. Tolerates exposed and windswept coastal locations. Provides protection for saplings from grazing</td>
<td>Intolerant of shade, grows best free of rank grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Betula pubescens</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blackthorn</strong></td>
<td>Hedgerows and rough stoney land</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plant as whips or transplant suckers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Prunus spinosa</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cherry</strong></td>
<td>Woods and hedgerows</td>
<td>Attractive blossom, foliage and fruit</td>
<td>Establishes easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(wild) <em>Prunus avium</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab Apple</strong></td>
<td>Hedgerows</td>
<td>Attractive hedgerow free in form, fruit and flower</td>
<td>Requires open situation, easily established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Malus pumila</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot stand dry sites. Some species prone to Dutch Elm Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elm</strong></td>
<td>Hedgerows and woodland</td>
<td>Important hedgerow tree. Fast-growing and tolerant of exposed locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ulmus glabra</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hawthorn</strong></td>
<td>Hedgerows and scrub</td>
<td>Prime hedgerow tree. Provides ideal protection for saplings</td>
<td>Dislikes acid soils and wet sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crataegus monogyna</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hazel</strong></td>
<td>Woodland under-story, and hillsides</td>
<td>Excellent as low growth in woodland Coppices easily and prevents erosion of thin hillside soils.</td>
<td>Intolerant of acid soils. Establish by avoiding competition from grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Corylus avellana</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holly</strong></td>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>Evergreen. Hardy, tolerant of exposure, attractive foliage and berries. Grows well in shade.</td>
<td>Intolerant of wet sites. Difficult to establish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ilex aquifolium</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oak</strong></td>
<td>Individual trees,</td>
<td>Tolerates shallow rocky soils</td>
<td>Grows best when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Type</td>
<td>Location/Use</td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>Hints on growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quercus petraea &amp; Q robur</td>
<td>small groups, woodland</td>
<td>and can grow well on clay. Very wind-firm `nursed' between fast-growing species</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan Sorbus aucuparia</td>
<td>Open woodland, hillsides</td>
<td>Hardy, tolerant of exposure. Will grow on thin soils. Attractive flowers and berries</td>
<td>Prefers dry sites, transplants well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitebeam Sorbus aria</td>
<td>Woodland, rocky ground</td>
<td>Attractive form, foliage, fruit and flowers. Tolerant of coastal exposure</td>
<td>As Rowan but also tolerates damper sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willows Salix (many varities)</td>
<td>Streamsides, damp areas plantations</td>
<td>Rapid growth, attractive form in larger species. Good shelterbelt and screen trees. Coppice readily</td>
<td>Cannot survive permanent waterlogging. Grow from cuttings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native Broadleaves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beech Fagus sylvatica</td>
<td>Single trees, shelterbelts woodland and hedges</td>
<td>Saplings will grow in shade. Salt tolerant. Fine autumn colour.</td>
<td>Best on well-drained sites. Grows best with nurse species Needs shelter when young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime Tilia vulgaris</td>
<td>Single trees, woodland</td>
<td>Attractive woodland and landscape tree</td>
<td>Do not plant near to buildings or drains. Grow from cuttings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplars Populus (many varieties)</td>
<td>Shelterbelts, plantations, streamsides</td>
<td>Fast growth enables rapid establishment for shelterbelts or timber. White Popular salt resistant</td>
<td>Grows well on clay and exposed sites. Liable to suffer from cold and exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Chestnut Aesculus hippocastanum</td>
<td>Woodland. single trees</td>
<td>Ornamental tree with attractive flowers and autumn colour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Chestnut Castanea sativa</td>
<td>Woodland, plantations for coppicing</td>
<td>Rapid growth. Coppices freely in sheltered locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Chestnut Aesculus hippocastanum</td>
<td>Woodland. single trees</td>
<td>Ornamental tree with attractive flowers and autumn colour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus</td>
<td>Hedgerows, woodland</td>
<td>Hardy, invasive species, tolerant of exposed coastal conditions. Shelterbelt tree around upland farms</td>
<td>Worth using in difficult places. Grows easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conifers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scots Pine Pinus sylvestris</td>
<td>Single trees or groups on dry acid soils and rocky ground</td>
<td>Attractive foliage and bark. Previously native. Good shelterbelt tree on lime rich soils and for stabilising sand dunes.</td>
<td>Grows easily. Dislikes lime or wet peat. Not wind-firm on clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Type</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Larch</strong></td>
<td>Larix (several): Single trees or plantations on well drained soils. Deciduous conifer. Deep rooting, withstands exposure, good nurse tree for hardwoods. Particularly suitable for bracken-covered soils.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 – Bibliography

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