

# Supplementary Planning Document

**DESIGN GUIDE**

January 2008



# Planning and Development Services

## West Lancashire Design Guide

### Foreword

This design guide provides an overview of the design principles and sets down the expectations the Council will have when considering planning applications and carrying out its duty as a Local Planning Authority. The document was approved by the Council on the 22nd January 2008 and has been adopted for use as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).



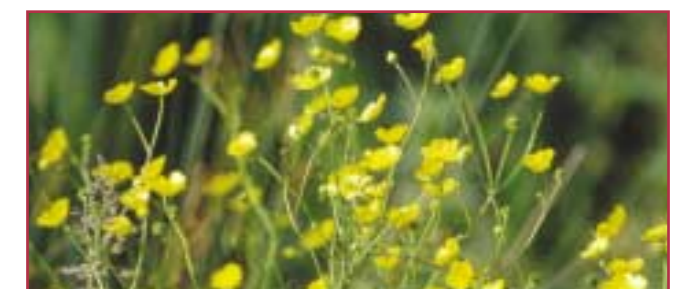
West Lancashire is an attractive place to live, work and visit and development should reflect and draw on the local distinctiveness of the area. All development proposals, from a basic house extension to the erection of a large commercial unit or residential estate require a proper understanding of the site, its surroundings and the distinctive nature of the place. Consideration should always be given to the local landscape, its history, the built form and character of the settlement, the typical building type, its architecture and the materials used in its construction.

It is hoped that the design guide will raise the general awareness of the value of good design and importantly provide advice on how this might be best achieved. The guidance is intended to assist and give assurance to developers and

architects on the design expectations of the Council and provide valuable help to property owners on the issues relating to good design.

The 3 key aims are - to promote the highest standard of building design for all types of developments, to provide a 'good practice' benchmark to guide prospective developers and assist in the assessment of planning proposals and to help deliver a more attractive and sustainable environment in West Lancashire.

The design guide has four main parts, part one deals with why we need to invest in good design including encouraging sustainable development and the use of renewable energy. Part two deals with applying general design principles and follows through the process of appraising a site, producing a concept and then designing a building. Part three relates to raising the standard of development and is split into 5 sections relating to new residential development and house extensions, commercial development, designing for the historic environment, trees and the natural environment, drainage and flooding. It is intended that each section will be available as a separate document to allow residents, architects and agents to access specific information/guidance without having to download the whole document. The last part looks at how we intend to use the guidance and includes a list of useful appendices including contacts, information on building control matters and further reading.



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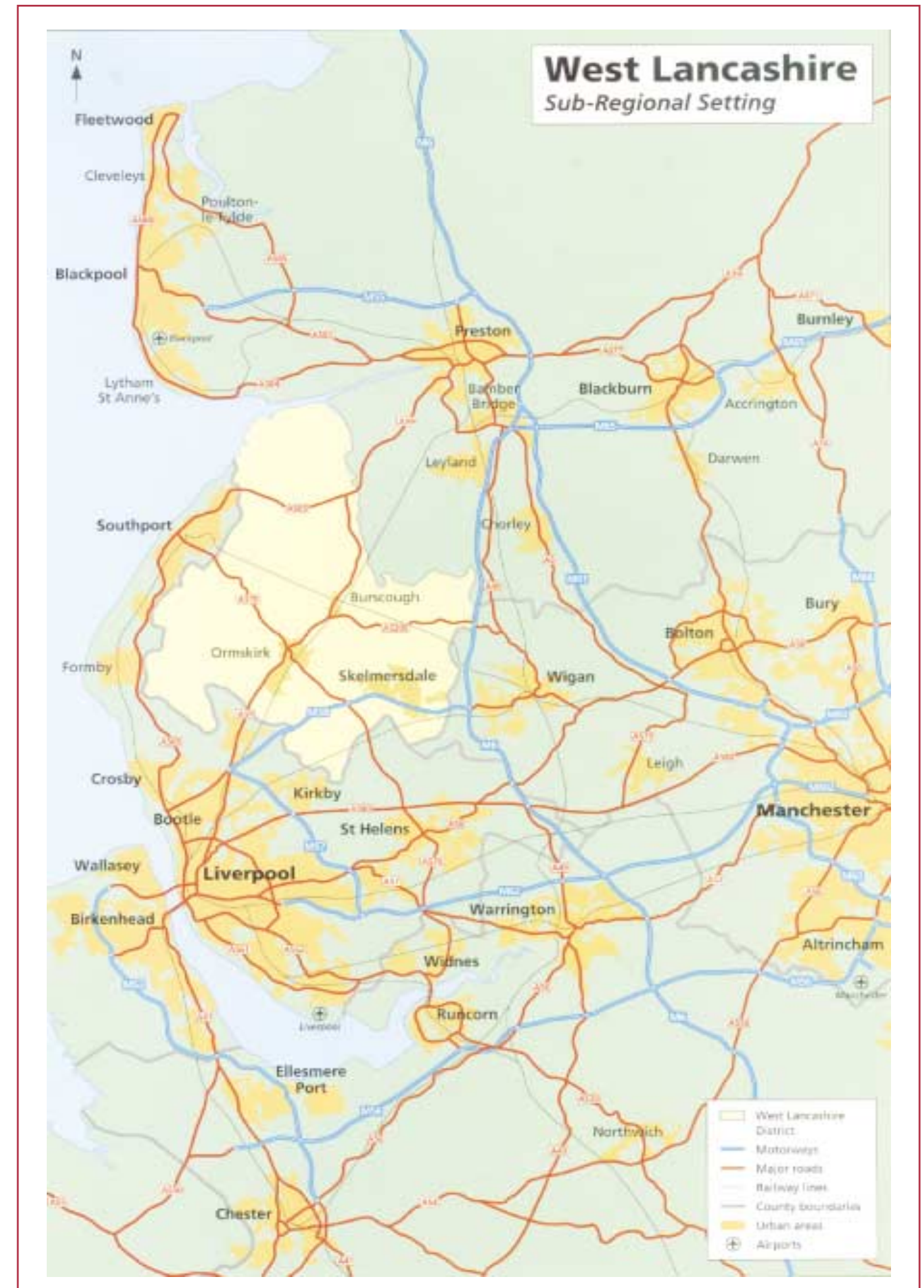
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# Part One – Why we need to achieve good design

## 1. Introduction

### The purpose of the guide

The Government's champion on design matters, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), believes that good design should be a necessity and not an occasional outcome of the development process. Architecture affects everyone and the appearance and quality of our environment is important. It can be used to uplift communities and give civic pride.

**“By Good design we mean design that is fit for purpose, sustainable, efficient, coherent, flexible, responsive to context, good looking and a clear expression of the requirements of the brief.”**

(The Design Review (CABE – 2002).



The guide has been produced to give an overview of the design principles and

expectations the Council will employ when considering planning applications and will be used as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). In this respect the guidance will support the policies and guidance provided by the Government both nationally and at a regional level through the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West and those contained in the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan and Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.

Particular attention should be paid to the guidance contained in PPS 1 *Delivering Sustainable Development*, Policy DP3 (Quality in New Development) of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West and Policy GD 1 (Design of Development) of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan.

It is also intended that the guide will help raise general awareness of the value of good design and importantly how this might be best achieved. The 4 key aims can be summarised as follows:

- To provide a 'good practice' guide to help owners and prospective developers and help the Council to assess the quality in the design of new development.
- To promote a commitment to encourage a high standard of design for all types of developments to improve the District's image and create a more attractive and sustainable place to live.
- To ensure that the likely impact of development on the environment of West Lancashire and its residents are fully considered in the design of new buildings.
- To set down the Council's aims in relation to design issues in new development and how this relates to the Replacement Local Plan and wider Government guidance.

## The importance of good design

This guidance has been produced to help all those involved in the 'development' process, from the construction of a small residential extension to the principles used in planning a residential estate or commercial building achieve a better quality of design.



The Council is committed to improving the design of all forms of development, to provide better homes, business premises and public spaces and to enhance the overall quality of the District's built environment.

Achieving high quality development is a key objective of the planning process and good design is indivisible from good planning.

Government guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) states that –

**“Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.”**

**“Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people.”**

Development proposals that are not based on a good understanding of the local context are often unsympathetic and poorly designed. A major part of the design process is the assessment of the local context and a careful evaluation of the constraints and opportunities available when formulating the design.

Housing development in particular should have a clear *identity* and should be of a design which is easy to understand for residents and visitors. The layout for new housing should be a priority in any housing scheme and should create an attractive and user-friendly place to live.





West Lancashire District Council in producing this document is signalling its intent to drive forward better and more innovative and sustainable design. In doing so it will seek to refuse Planning Permission for any development proposals which it considers to be poorly designed and which does not meet the objectives laid down in this design guide.

West Lancashire District Council believes that improving the design of development benefits the wider community and how the district is viewed as a place to come and live, work in and visit. In providing the guide the we are not seeking to prevent owners from extending their property or the proper development of sites and land but want to ensure the highest quality

sustainable development is achieved across the District.

In doing so the Council wants to engage with developers, land owners and architects, at the very earliest stage, to ensure development incorporates superior environment designs and the use of renewable energy technologies to produce buildings which are energy efficient and are located in the most sustainable locations.

The Council recognises and acknowledges good building design through the running of its design award scheme. The West Lancashire Design Awards, started in 1989, are run every two years to promote the best designed development and buildings within the District. The awards scheme forms an important part of the Council's commitment to work with developers and property owners to improve the quality of the built environment.

## Making design sustainable

Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.

The policy context for sustainable development is provided by the national sustainability strategy and Planning Policy Statement 1 ('Delivering sustainable development'). The four priorities of Government policy in relation to sustainable development are:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities



The built environment plays a key role in sustainability. The way that our homes and communities are designed has a wide range of impacts on sustainability, affecting the economic, social and environmental well-being of both the local and wider area.

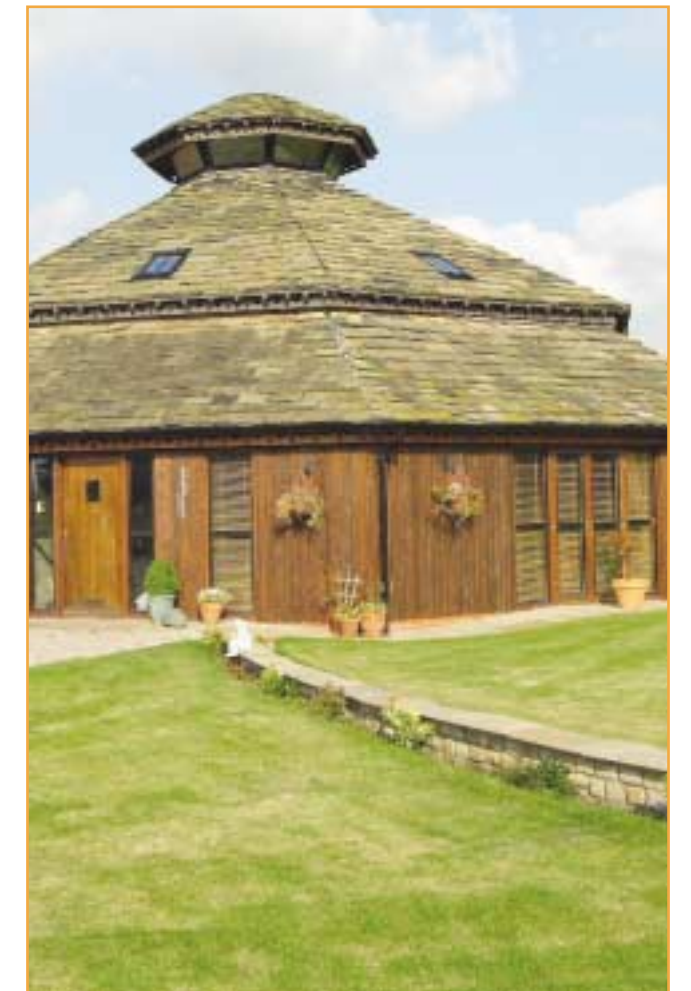
New development should aim to be as sustainable as possible and the Council will strongly support schemes that incorporate environmentally sustainable design features. For development proposals involving ten or fewer dwellings, a floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or less or a site area of 0.5ha or less, applicants are encouraged to submit a sustainability appraisal as supporting documentation for planning

applications, setting out how the development has taken account of the following aspects of sustainability:

- Energy efficiency
- Renewable and low emission energy sources
- Water usage
- Treatment of surface water run-off
- Environmental impact of materials
- Responsible sourcing of materials

Guidance on all these issues can be obtained from the WWF's One Million Homes toolkit website at

[www.wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes/toolkit.asp](http://www.wwf.org.uk/sustainablehomes/toolkit.asp). The toolkit signposts useful sources of information that can be used by housebuilders to inform their general approach to sustainability as well as providing specific guidance on particular aspects of sustainability.



For larger developments involving more than ten dwellings, more than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> floorspace or a site area of more than 0.5 ha, applicants are encouraged to complete and submit the Regional Sustainability Checklist for Developments as supporting documentation for planning applications. This checklist has been developed by WWF and the Dept. for Communities and Local Government, and co-ordinated by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA). It includes 8 sections:

- Climate change – adaptation, mitigation and energy
- Community
- Place making
- Transport
- Ecology
- Resources
- Business and economy
- Buildings

The checklist is available for use in the form of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and can be obtained electronically from two sources: Via email by contacting the NWRA Sustainability Team ([sustainability@nwra.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@nwra.gov.uk) or tel. 01942 776738) or by downloading from [www.sdchecklist-northwest.org.uk](http://www.sdchecklist-northwest.org.uk).



The checklist builds on well known industry standards such as BREEAM, Eco homes, the Urban Design Compendium and the National Standards Framework, and has been designed for use on housing and mixed use developments. It enables developers and architects to see what is required for good and

best practice, while leaving them the freedom to design as they see fit to achieve the required standard. The checklist has been weighted to reflect regional sustainability priorities.



In relation to the incorporation of renewable energy technologies into new developments, the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) contains relevant policy. The RSS will become part of the statutory development plan for every local authority in the North West against which planning applications are determined, and it should be adopted in late 2008. The January 2006 draft of the strategy document contains the following target:

“All proposals and schemes for new non-residential developments above a threshold of 1,000 sq metres and all residential developments comprising 10 or more units, should incorporate renewable energy production to provide at least 10% of the development’s predicted energy requirements.”

Following the RSS Examination in Public, the Panel Report (March 2007) recommended that the above paragraph be made a separate policy in its own right. However the published RSS Proposed Changes (March 2008) removed reference to a specific target being necessary and recommended that a target should be brought forward through the Council’s own Local Development Framework.

## 2. Design principles

### What is urban design?

“Urban design is the art of making places for people.”

(Phrasing used by CABI in ‘By Design: Urban Design in the planning system: towards better practice’ (2000)).

Urban design is without doubt about making places but this can be simply put as *the relationship between buildings and spaces, the look and character of a place and how the form of a place affects the way people live*. The Urban Design Alliance (The Place Check Project 2000) summed up urban design as people, places and movement where the physical form and appearance of a building or space was influenced by people and the network of streets an movement around or through it.

CABI in its ‘By Design’ publication lists the 7 principles of urban design as:

1. The character of a place or group of buildings.
2. The spaces and gaps between buildings and in particular the enclosure of space.
3. The quality of the public space, streetscene and public realm.
4. The ease of movement for people and vehicles.
5. The distinctive identity and legibility of a place and the ease in which people can find their way around.
6. The adaptability of an area to respond to change.
7. The diversity of uses.

These principles can readily be expanded upon and transferred into the design of most if not all

types of development. The following aspects are considered to be ‘good practice checklist’ when designing and bringing forward any new development proposal:

- Look at how the development fits in and reinforces the local characteristics of the area. Does the development respond to its context and the local distinctiveness?
- Consider carefully the scale of new development and ensure the height and massing is appropriate in relation to the neighbouring properties and the surrounding environment.
- Create attractive and architecturally consistent extensions, buildings and development. New development should ‘delight the eye’.
- Always consider the ‘grain’ of the development; the scale of the surrounding buildings and spaces.
- Try to ensure the development is sustainable in relation to energy use, its effect on the natural environment and surface water drainage patterns.
- Promote a legible layout, which allows easily recognisable routes between buildings or spaces.
- Create continuity in the streetscene ensuring that development is sited appropriately in relation with the neighbouring properties.
- Maintain views and important spaces and consider the development including the spaces around it from public viewpoints.
- Create buildings and spaces that allow movement between them and that integrate fully with the existing built environment.
- Design buildings and spaces which are adaptable.
- Think carefully about the choice of materials and their likely maintenance and life long costs.
- Ensure a clear distinction is made between the public and private areas of the development or building.



### 3. West Lancashire – the context for the guidance

**“Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.”**

**PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development**

West Lancashire is the most southerly of the 14 local authorities in Lancashire. The District covers an area of largely flat, high quality agricultural land on the Lancashire coastal plain bounded by the Ribble estuary in the north and the Rivers Douglas and Yarrow and Tawd in the east. The majority of the land lies below 100 metres above sea level (AOD), with most of the mosslands and coastal marshes to the north and west of Ormskirk being substantially lower at between 10 - 20 metres (AOD).

The area has an underlying geology of glacial sands and till deposits left by the retreating ice sheet at the end of the last age. The subsequent postglacial accumulations of lowland peat occurred when a rise in sea level flooded much of the coastal plain. Today the lowland peat and mosslands produce rich and fertile soils and have helped shape the pattern and nature of the

- Utilise wherever possible a variety of buildings types, densities and uses.

For more information/reading on urban design read *By Design – Urban Design and the planning system: towards better practice* (DTL and CABE, 2000) or contact CABE at [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)



development across the District. Much of the landscape shares a common character typified by low-lying farmland crossed by an intricate pattern of drainage ditches. Many small settlements, such as Halsall, Scarisbrick and Rufford developed on the higher ground just above the surrounding mosslands and the pattern of isolated villages largely remains intact today.

On the land above the coastal plain to the east of Ormskirk the older farming communities of Up Holland and Skelmersdale changed dramatically with the growth of coal mining and industrialisation. The population of Skelmersdale grew from 414 in 1801 to 6627 in 1891. In the Victorian period Skelmersdale was a prosperous industrial town. However by the 1930s most of the coal- mines had been closed as a result of flooding. In 1962 Skelmersdale Development Corporation was set up to build a new town. The new town was designed to provide for all of the needs of the population including housing, shops, schools and employment opportunities.

The prosperity of the area grew on the cultivation of the land and Ormskirk soon became an important market town on the route between Liverpool and Preston. Historically, the importance and wealth in the area can be seen in the legacy of historic buildings and places, which are still prevalent in the landscape.

The local distinctiveness and identity of West Lancashire is important and is an attraction for visitors to the area. All proposals for development, from an extension to an existing property to a housing estate, require a proper understanding of the distinctive nature of the place. Careful consideration should always be given to the local landscape, its history, the built form and character of the settlement, the typical building type, its architecture and the materials used in its construction.

In some circumstances where an area is lacking a typical or distinctive character an assessment will need to be made of how the development can contribute to making a ‘place’ utilising contemporary and sustainable designs. In such circumstances the principles set out in the following pages should be applied.



## Part Two - Applying good design principles: the process

### 1. Site appraisal

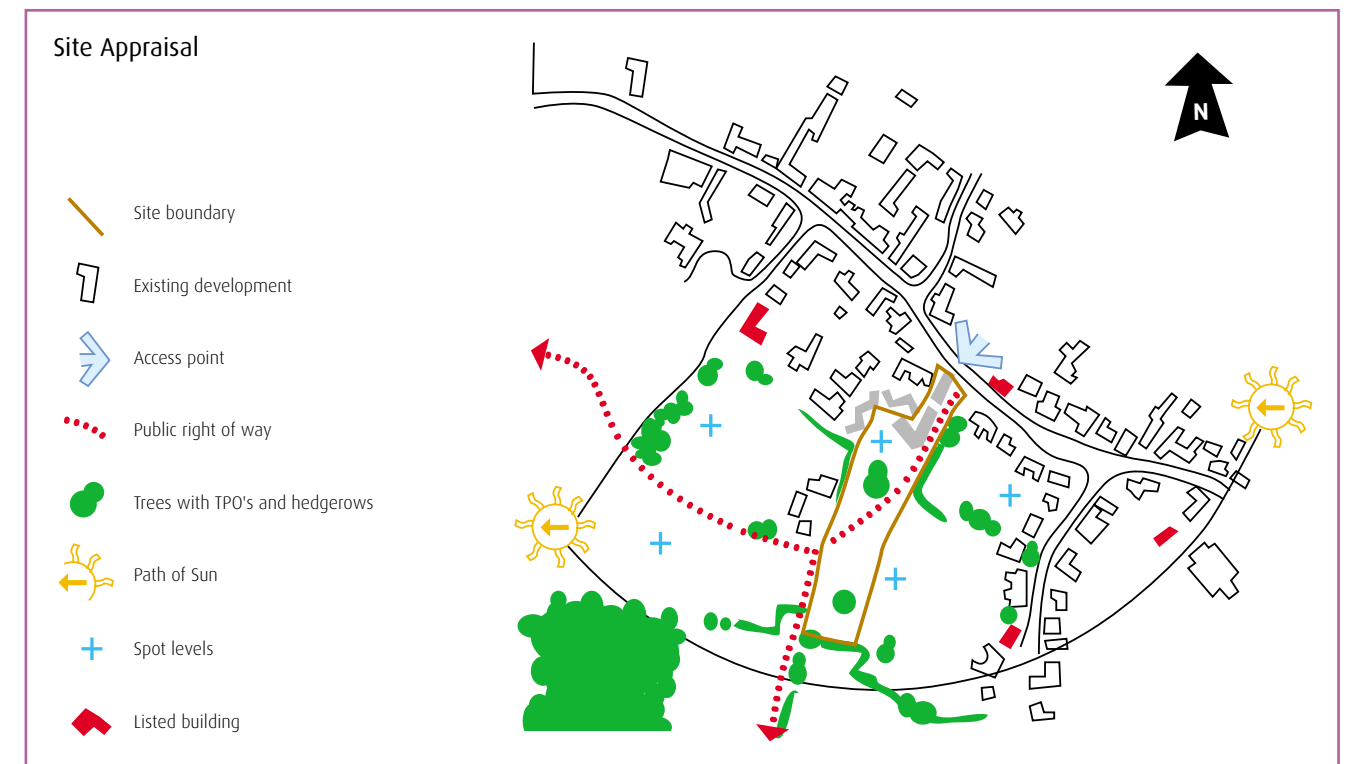
Each building site or development has its own characteristics and it is vital that a full survey of the site and its setting is undertaken as a first phase to any proposals. The context of a site and its immediate and wider setting are important to making decisions about the form, character, materials and style of development. The local grain and the pattern or type of development surrounding the area should be analysed and their value assessed. The information gathered can also be useful in the production of a Design and Access Statement, which will need to be submitted with many planning submissions. See Appendices F and H for further advice.



A site appraisal should include the following:

- **Site context** - The context of the site, beyond its boundaries. Its location in relation to other development. How visible is the site? Are there any significant views into or out of the site?
- **Landscape form** - The general landscape form and levels of the site. The topography of a site can be used to add interest and achieve a distinctive scheme. Levels should be noted extending beyond the site boundaries.

- **Existing buildings** - The position, form, scale, style and condition of existing buildings and structures should be noted and assessed. Buildings should be clearly marked for either potential re-use or removal. The distance between buildings, particularly those on adjoining land.
- **Access** - The position of roads, drives, existing rights of way and paths. Are there any informal pedestrian routes, which need to be recognised?
- **Landscape features** - Are there existing trees, hedgerows, ponds or ditches on the site? The positions, spread and species of trees should be accurately marked.
- **Aspect** - The orientation of the site will often influence the location of development. The microclimate of a site together with aspect can be used to maximise sustainable energy systems i.e. location and orientation of solar panels or the use of passive solar design (PSD).
- **Site boundaries** - The position, condition and type of boundaries.



It is also important that the appropriate research should also be carried out, in conjunction with the appraisal to ascertain the following:

- **Planning history** - Whether there is any history in relation to planning approvals or refusals on the site or adjoining sites.
- **Planning policy** - The current local plan policies, which affect the area or the type of development proposed.
- **Protected species** - are there likely to be any protected species using this site, what surveys need to be done and over what time period.
- **Designations** - Is the site or building located in a conservation area or historic park & garden? Does the development affect a SSSI, nature conservation site, statutory designated listed building or scheduled monument? What is the importance of the designation and how is the proposal likely to impact upon it?

It is recognised that even for smaller development sites i.e. single residential plots and/or the proposed extensions to existing buildings or premises, a full appraisal of the existing site and its immediate setting should

still be carried out. The survey should indicate clearly the context for the site and the characteristics of the site and any existing buildings. It is important that the local 'grain' should be identified and understood as this potentially affects the massing of buildings and the importance of the spaces and gaps between them. The appraisal could involve a photographic survey of the site and surroundings to help in the understanding of the site context.

#### Guidance

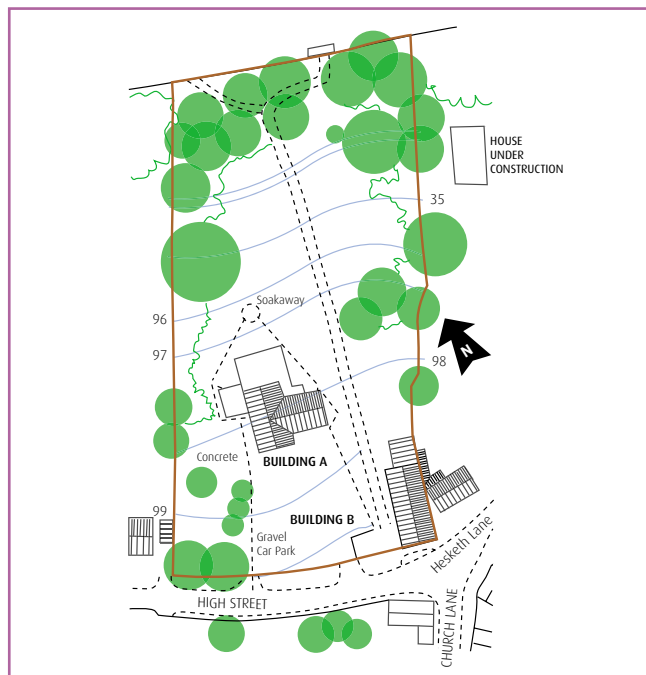
DP 1. All proposals for development should include a proper and detailed site appraisal or survey, which identifies the attributes of the site and its immediate surroundings. The site appraisal should address the aspects raised in the section above (pages 16-17) and ideally should include annotated plans to a suitable scale and sketches and/or photographs to illustrate the site context or highlight issues or points of interest.

## 2. Site layout

All new development needs to contribute to the local distinctiveness of West Lancashire and in doing so needs to respect the character of particular areas or the local neighbourhood. Many of the settlements and villages within West Lancashire are typified by incorporating development from different periods of history and their particular character has evolved over a long period of time.



Visual studies of a settlement or neighbourhood should note its 'grain' - the street pattern and layout, the scale and massing of the buildings and the spaces between them. The differences between the characteristics of an area, with another should be emphasised in any development. It is important that the 'grain' of the surrounding development should be reflected in any new development.



The siting or layout of new buildings should meet the needs of the residents, the amenity of adjoining properties as well as integrating carefully into the existing environment. New development should always respect the pattern of surrounding buildings and the spaces between them. Development which is poorly sited, or has a layout which is overtly inward looking, or relates little to its surroundings, is likely to be contrary to the guidance contained in PPS 1 and may not be allowed.

New development should always take inspiration from the character of the surrounding area, its buildings, the form of the settlement and landscape to ensure it has a sense of 'place'.

Where the proposed site lies within a business park and/or an area which has no defined character it is important to design to a high standard to create a sense of place. This will ensure the distinctive nature of West Lancashire is retained and enhanced by future development.

### Developing a concept plan

Producing a concept plan that shows how a site might be developed is a useful tool for articulating ideas and designs for new development and how they respond to the site appraisal. The concept plan should look at potential access routes and identify the potential areas of the site for development. Open spaces and natural features should form focal points and areas of different 'character' should be identified.

Consideration will need to be given to the type and form of uses and how relationship issues on the edges of the site, especially with other residential properties might be addressed.

The concept plan may form the basis for early discussions with the Planning Department before more detailed and expensive plans are drawn up.



The concept plan might focus on looking at how the principles of urban design (e.g. those identified in CABE – By Design 2000) and environmental sustainability might be used to produce good design.

### Providing a sense of enclosure

Enclosed streets and spaces often have a more comfortable and secure feel to them, whereas those which are open feel exposed and are less inviting. Buildings which relate well to each other and create a sense of enclosure often provide a natural surveillance for residents and have a better 'community' feel.

The layout of new development should try to achieve a sense of enclosure by incorporating buildings which terminate views, limit the street width or lead the eye on to other spaces. The spaces between buildings and their siting in relation to the pavement or roadway should be carefully considered in any design and ideally help to produce a continuous rather than an open frontage.

Road layouts and site entrances play a key role in providing *enclosure* and maintaining frontage. Traffic speeds and a safe and pleasant street environment can be achieved by changes in road direction and alignment.

### Public realm and landscaping

The layout of new development should always be considered in relation to the existing landscape and street environment. The public realm and the degree of landscaping contribute greatly to the overall quality and success of a development and the 'sense of place' it creates. These aspects of layout design should never be left to the end of the design process and should be considered at the outset and fully integrated into the initial design.

Landscaping can be specifically used to reinforce boundaries and differentiate spaces, soften the impact of buildings, provide new views and frame existing features.

Particular points to consider are:

- The potential users of the spaces and the uses it might be put to. Is the public realm going to be focal point for residents or activity? Will the space be used informally or in a formal manner? Will the users want to spill out into the space i.e. seating areas for bars/cafes?
- The space created and whether hard or soft landscape would contribute to the character of the overall development.
- Materials used should complement those used elsewhere in the development and the surrounding area.
- The transition zones between the public and

private areas and how they might be detailed.

- The promotion of safe pedestrian and cycle routes and wider links with the community.
- The maintenance of the works and the needs for it to be practical, hard wearing and vandal resistant.
- Limit the use or need for blank featureless walls or security fences by designing fully integrated landscapes.
- The use of sustainable drainage systems and permeable hard surfacing materials to help reduce or maintain rates of surface water run-off to existing drainage systems.

## Boundary treatment

The treatment of existing boundaries and the provision of new ones can be vital to the overall success of a development. Visually boundaries form the natural link to other sites and spaces and can help integrate the development within the immediate streetscene or wider environment. Existing natural boundaries such as hedgerows and trees help soften the appearance of development and should be kept and supplemented, with new planting, where necessary.

Care should be taken to limit the need, in development proposals, for long sections of new walls or high close boarded fences, especially where these bound public areas. Where new boundary walls/fences are required their design should match those used elsewhere locally and in particular comprise materials and detailing which relate to the context of the site.

The need for security fences should be carefully considered and should only be considered where a proven problem exists. In cases where no other solutions are available the position, height and design of any new security fence should be chosen to limit its impact on the visual amenities of the area. In business and employment sites the Council encourages the

use of powder coated mesh type fencing, which is less conspicuous and allows views through.

The use of palisade and/or untreated steel fences provides a stark and poor appearance and will generally not be permitted.

### Guidance

DP 2. New development should always add to the local distinctiveness of an area and proposals should show clearly how the general character, scale, mass, and layout of the site and/or buildings fits in with the 'grain' of the surrounding area. Development, buildings or layouts which are inward facing and do not contribute to the streetscene should be avoided. In residential developments the use of standard or universal house types which take no or little account of a site and its local context will not be acceptable.

DP 3. All development should fully integrate into the existing landscape or streetscene and any landscape works, whether hard or soft, should reinforce the character of the area and contribute to the quality of the scheme.

DP 4. The boundaries to sites play an important role and often define the space between the public and private realms. Layouts that rely on the use of tall, blank, featureless walls or fences (including palisade fencing) bounding public areas create an intimidating environment and should be avoided.

## 3. The principles of scale, mass and form

The scale, form and massing of new buildings are some of the most important factors in producing good design and ensuring

development integrates into its setting within the wider environment. A proper site appraisal or context study should highlight what aspects contribute to the local distinctiveness of the surrounding area or settlement with regard to their scale, mass and form.

The massing of a building can be expressed as the combined effect of the height and bulk of a building when viewed in 3-dimensions. The mass of a building, in this respect, might not simply be dealt with by reducing the overall height of a building if the general bulk of the building remains unaltered. The proportions of a building and in particular its gable width will often dictate its form and its perceived mass within a streetscene. Modern buildings tend to have deeper gable widths and this generally produces a greater building mass.

## Rural areas

Generally development within the villages and rural areas of West Lancashire is based largely on traditional building forms. New development within and immediately adjacent to these areas, should always follow the general mass and traditional form of existing development and be of a scale which relates to the surrounding area and/or settlement pattern. The use of sub-urban or standard house types and/or standard detailing should be avoided.

The designs for new houses should avoid the use of overly wide gables and unless the building is part of a terrace group, it is important to ensure that the eaves walls are longer than the gable width to produce a well-proportioned building. New house designs should start with a small house plan with traditional building elements added to meet larger space requirements. Building heights and forms should be varied.

The roof shape is critical to the mass of a building. Most dwellings have duo pitched roofs, which are sited eaves on to the street or road

frontage. Gable frontages are not typical to West Lancashire and should ideally be avoided, unless they can be justified by historical precedence within the area. Similarly hipped roofs are not traditional features to the area and disrupt the street roof line. It is important that roof lines should be varied especially when viewing the dwelling or development within the wider environment.

The position and design of garages should always complement the form of the group of buildings and in most cases should reflect the form of traditional outbuildings.



The location of agricultural, small scale commercial or buildings used for employment purposes should avoid prominent or exposed sites and respond to the landscape setting utilising natural vegetation wherever possible. Buildings should be in scale with their surroundings and have a simple built form, ideally using materials, which reflect those commonly found locally.

Works involving the conversion or re-use of existing buildings in the countryside should retain the essential form and character of the building and its value within the wider local environment. Care should be taken to produce designs which would limit the need for external changes, preserve the 'openness' of buildings, use materials which reflect the local distinctiveness of the building and not cause harm to any existing wildlife or habitats.

The Council supports the re-use of rural buildings for small scale industrial, tourism and non-retail commercial purposes. Residential uses, except those to meet a specific local need, will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the building is inherently unsuitable for any other use. Applications for buildings' re-use will need to conform to the criteria laid down in Policies DE6, DS2 and GD1 of the Replacement Local Plan.

#### Guidance

DP 5. New development should be of an overall scale, mass and built form, which responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Care should be taken to ensure that building(s) height, scale and form, including the roofline, do not disrupt the visual amenities of the streetscene and impact on any significant wider landscape views.

## 4. External appearance and materials

All new buildings should be well proportioned and have a well-balanced and attractive, external appearance. New development need not mimic buildings from an earlier architectural period or style but should have a well thought out design, which embodies the principles in this guidance. The use of replica 'period' designs or details is common throughout the country and generally adds little to the local distinctiveness of West Lancashire.

Many modern buildings can look ungainly or out of context with their surroundings when the external appearance has not been given due consideration. Good design requires a harmonious and consistent approach to the proportions of details, the position, style and location of windows and doors (referred to as a building's fenestration), the type and use of

materials and the treatment to the roof, its eaves and verges. Most traditional forms of residential development look better when chimneys are part of the design as they help provide a more varied and broken roofline.

Contemporary and innovative designs, which creatively reinterpret traditional forms using high quality materials add to the overall attractiveness of the District and contribute to its overall character. A sensitive architect, with an appropriate brief, should be able to produce a suitable modern design, which acknowledges its local context, materials and typical building forms.

Traditional building style or the local '*vernacular*' varies depending on which part of the District you are in. Historically to the east and south, traditionally local stone was used to construct simple styled farmhouses, cottages and houses. Windows on such properties tend to be squat and dressed or worked stone is used to highlight window and door surrounds or the corner of elevations (quoins). The emphasis was given to placing the better and more expensive materials on the frontage of the property with often lesser quality (rubble walling) used to the side and rear. In many cases the use of 'mock' or overly ornate or formal architectural detailing on such properties can detract from the relatively simple architecture. The windows in particular should remain set back from the face of the walling (set in reveal) to give weather protection and provide shadow and interest to the elevation.



In the northern parts of the District, stone was a much less common building material and is very often only seen for detailing on buildings. Hand made bricks, made locally from the glacial boulder clay deposits are the predominant material on older properties in these areas. The orange/red bricks made from the stony clays are still commonly found on buildings today and are very often difficult to match up.

Throughout the District natural grey slate roofs replaced stone flag as the most common building material. During the industrialised Victorian period slate and machined red brick prevailed on most buildings constructed and the legacy of this period can be seen throughout the District. Visually grey slate remains the most appropriate roofing material with the use of red clay tiles being limited to buildings of a specific period (mainly inter war properties).

The emphasis in the choice of materials should always be on the quality of the product. Preference should be given, when selecting materials, for using materials produced with the greatest consideration given to their environmental impacts, for example timber and timber products from forests certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), re-used or reclaimed materials, locally produced materials and those products comprising recycled materials.

#### Guidance

DP 6. Good design requires a proper understanding of proportion and detailing and all new buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, its fenestration and the roofline to the building.

DP 7. New development proposals need not imitate earlier architectural periods or styles and could be the stimulus for the use of imaginative modern design using high quality materials in innovative ways.

DP 8. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of a development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment. The Council promotes the use of natural materials from environmentally responsible sources and materials of high quality, which have been reclaimed, salvaged or recycled.



## Part Three – Raising the standard

### 1. New residential development including extensions to existing properties

This section is intended to deal with design issues relating to residential development. This part of the guidance is a companion to parts one and two and is aimed specifically at providing further advice to developers and homeowners wishing to build new properties or extend their homes.



The Council recognise that more people are finding the need to extend their homes in order to meet their own aspirations and needs, the number of planning applications submitted to Local Planning Authorities over the last ten years has doubled nationally. The Government has also recognised the need to relax some of the planning rules for home improvements as part of the recently produced White Paper. Whilst this guidance note may appear daunting reading to some embarking upon a simple house extension, it is important to note that many of the points raised, will have already been thought of when first considering an extension.

It is also worth noting that the vast majority of householders planning applications, received by the Council, are approved within the Government's time scale target of 8 weeks without significant modification. Generally those applications which are refused are because their size or scale would result in a harmful impact on a neighbour or the surrounding countryside, or because they are of such a poor design. In many cases, through negotiation with Planning Officers many of the problems and planning issues, which result in a refusal, can be overcome with negotiated changes to the design. Issues relating to the scale, form, appearance and relationship with neighbouring properties of any extension need careful consideration. However minor the extension or alteration may seem it is always best to gain the services of a qualified Architect to help you visualise your ideas and produce plans and to speak to your neighbours regarding your ideas.

Good design is the aim of the development process and in achieving this it benefits everyone within West Lancashire. A well designed building or extension will function better, will complement the appearance of the existing property and will contribute to the overall character of the surrounding area. New development and extensions to existing properties, which do not accord with the guidance, will generally not be allowed.

The four basic components to consider in all proposals are:

- Provision of an accurate site survey.
- The position of the building and the site layout.
- The scale and form of the building.
- External appearance.

### (i). Site appraisal and site survey

All development proposals however small should start from an understanding of the existing property and garden and the immediate neighbourhood. A site appraisal should look at the context for the site and the essential characteristics ('local grain') of the area.



Survey material should ensure that any buildings on the site are accurately plotted together with features like trees, hedges, ponds and watercourses. The position and type of site boundaries and existing ground levels should also be shown. The survey should also include buildings and features on adjoining sites. The appraisal of the setting is a visual/photographic survey carried out to provide the designer with an understanding of the context.

Full knowledge and understanding of the site and its surroundings is critical for a successful design which will contribute to the area and not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours. This is particularly important when the development relates to a historic building or

site or affects a designated conservation area. A study of this nature need not be time consuming if carried out when doing the site survey or initial site visit, but will prove invaluable for a full understanding of the site.

### (ii). The siting / layout of development

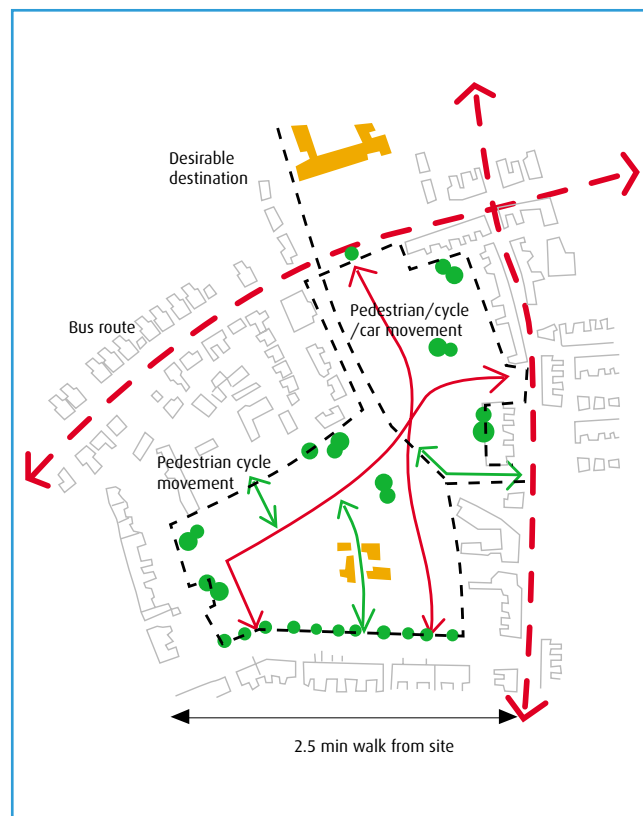
The siting and layout of new housing or extensions should respect the area's character and make a positive contribution to the area. Quite often, the contextual study of the area's development will note the historic street pattern, the connections between key facilities, the massing and spacing of development. For example, Newburgh and parts of Ormskirk retain some of their medieval layouts where buildings are not uniform in character and streets and alleys are narrow enclosed spaces. In contrast places such as Aughton, which developed later, has more space between the buildings, which generally gives wider frontages.

There are a wide variety of settlement patterns in West Lancashire and each new development should respect and contribute to the defined character of its locality. This is also relevant when looking at sites or property which lie within a town centre, edge of urban area or within the countryside.

Density of developments is inter-related with the massing of, and spaces between buildings. An acceptable density will normally be derived from a site layout which reflects the character of the area. Generally, higher density development is found within the more urban parts of the District.

Generally, the layout for new residential development should consider the following:

- Connectivity – the site should be well connected to local services, which promote direct and overlooked routes for walking and hence safe and secure neighbourhoods.



- Provision should be made for playing space in accordance with the Council's SPG on Public Open Space.
- The topography should influence the layout and built form.
- The landscape elements of a layout should be considered as an integral part of the layout design
- A clear hierarchy of avenues, streets, squares and courts. Focal points and pinch points can reinforce an effective streetscene.
- Ensure adequate space is provided for servicing, refuse and bin collection, recycling facilities and cycle storage.
- Aim for clearly defined public and private areas.
- Create a good sense of enclosure – buildings which terminate views can help to enclose spaces and reduce traffic speed.
- Buildings should be sited to preserve existing trees and hedges, which are an asset of the area, and give maturity to the development.

Advice on acceptable distances between buildings and trees can be sought from the Council's Arboriculturalist.

- Natural features such as ponds and ditches should not be filled in as they are important to the wildlife of the locality and help maintain the natural drainage of sites.
- Siting and orientation should avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking and overshadowing and new buildings should not overbear neighbours.
- Frontage widths to properties, plot sizes and the pattern and rhythm of buildings.
- Any unusual features and views, which make the site distinctive.
- Opportunities for nocturnal surveillance, designing out crime and integrating community safety into the design. ([www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com))

The position or location for extensions should respect the existing space and pattern of development. When discussing new buildings, including extensions to existing properties consideration should be given to the following:

- Maintain the gaps between buildings especially where the regular spacing contributes to the character of the area.
- New properties or extensions to existing dwellings, which are sited in front of those adjacent and would protrude into the streetscene are rarely successful and would not normally be permitted.



- Generally rear extensions are preferable because they preserve the spacing between buildings and generally have less impact.
- Extensions to the side of houses should not dominate the existing building or effectively fill or significantly reduce the amount of space between the house and its neighbour. Where a row or terrace of buildings exists or the property forms one of a distinct line of similar development (linear development), two storey extensions that promote a *terracing effect* will be resisted.
- All development should be positioned to preserve existing trees and hedges and accord with the advice contained in *BS 5837 – Guide to Trees in relation to construction (2005)*. Advice on trees and the distance between trees and development can be obtained from the Council's Arboricultural Officer.
- The siting of buildings and extensions should limit the loss of off-street parking provision and will normally not be permitted where new provisions result in the significant loss of garden or amenity space.

### (iii). The principles of form

The form and massing of new development, including extensions, is an important factor in the successful integration of new houses and extensions in to existing residential or landscape settings. As highlighted in parts one and two above, a contextual study and site appraisal will highlight the local distinctiveness of existing surrounding buildings with regard to their scale, proportions and height. However, it is also worth noting that an attractive layout or settlement often has a varied form with buildings of different types, sizes and shapes.

As a general rule, a new building's height should be determined by the character or type of the building, that of the surrounding environment and its relationship to the street or other public

space. New development should always aim to enhance the visual composition of the streetscene and not detract from it.



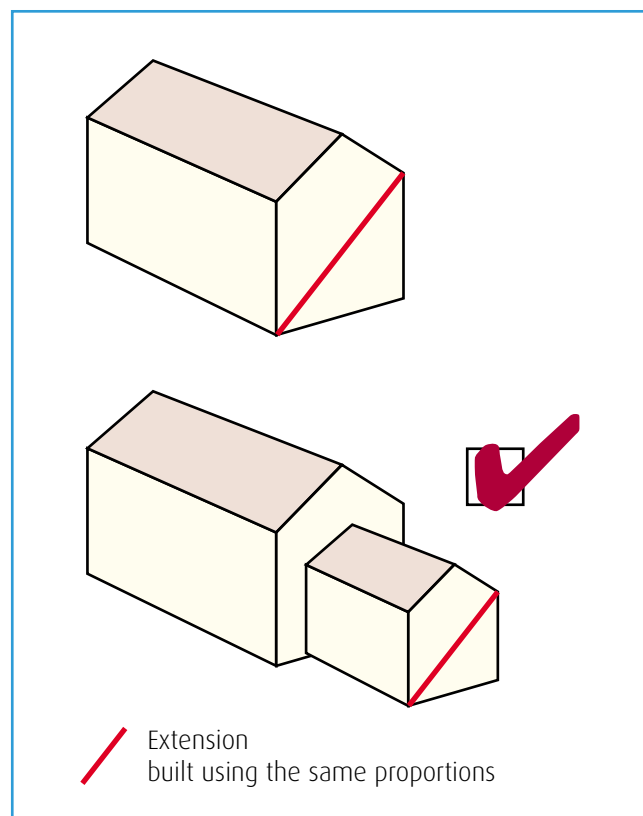
With this in mind all types of new development, including extensions, should conform to the general advice contained in this design guide and specifically the numbered points DP 1 –10 highlighted in the coloured boxes and included in Appendix B at the end of the guide.

Within the Green Belt the erection of new buildings including replacement dwellings and extensions to existing buildings will only be allowed where the development meets the requirements laid down in Policy DS2 - *Protecting the Green Belt* of the West Lancashire Replacement Plan and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Replacement Dwelling and Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt. Replacement dwellings will only be allowed where the new dwelling is not materially larger than the original dwelling to the extent that it would harm the openness of the Green Belt.

Extensions to dwellings within the Green Belt will only be allowed where they "do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling to the extent that the building would detract from the openness of the Green Belt." As a guide, extensions to existing properties, including those carried out previously should normally not exceed 50% of the volume of the original dwelling. However care should always be taken to consider the scale of any proposed extension and its impact upon the form and character of the existing property and the wider landscape

setting. In some instances a *disproportionate* extension could represent a substantially lower volume increase.

The form of an extension is one of the most important factors in obtaining a successful design. Extensions, as with any other development should reflect the local distinctiveness of the area and have a scale, mass and form, which responds to the characteristics of the existing building. Extensions should be designed to satisfy the following points:



- Be subservient in size, scale and mass to the original dwelling and never dominate or be disproportionate to the existing property.
- Should have a proportion and built form, which relates to the character and appearance of the existing property.
- Have a built form, which does not unduly harm the symmetry of a building or appear discordant in location, appearance or materials.
- Avoid the use of continuous or incremental extensions or additions added over time. Remember to look at how the new work,

however small, may further mask the character of the original building.

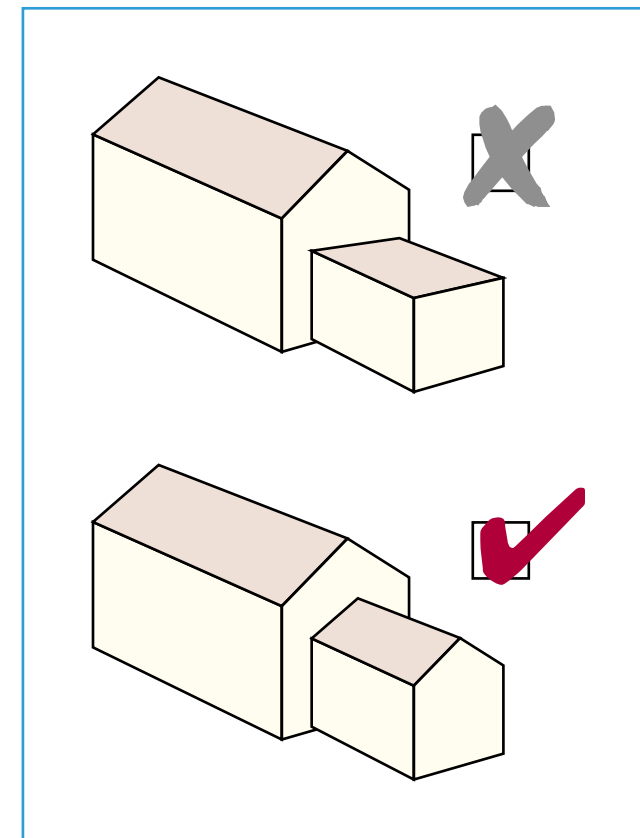
- The scale and or form of the extension should never cause an unacceptable overshadowing to neighbours properties.

*The term 'subservient' in the context above relates to the need for extensions to appear smaller than the existing property. Extensions should, on the whole always be set behind the front face of the existing dwelling. Extensions that join flush with the front face of a building or come forward should be avoided. Roof and eave heights should never run through at the same level and should be lower. The use of simpler designs or a different facing material can reinforce the sense of the extension being subservient to the main dwelling.*

#### (iv). External appearance

The external treatment of the facing elevations of new dwellings or extensions should take into account the appearance and proportions of the character of their surroundings or the main house. New dwellings and extensions in this respect should be designed so as to:

- Embrace local distinctiveness or vernacular building styles
- Avoid imitating 'period' building styles or using mock or confused architectural detailing
- Aim for an overall simplicity of form and design (however avoid 'stuckon' elements especially flat roofs).
- Carefully consider the proportions of surrounding properties and any window or door openings. In most cases avoid the casual arrangement of windows and try not to vary the size/proportion of any window openings.
- Avoid altering the roof pitches prevalent in the area.
- Avoid locating windows, which may affect a neighbour's privacy.



- Incorporate innovative designs, which acknowledge the particular features of the locality and the site.

#### Materials

The long-term appearance of a building and its impact on the character of an area is greatly influenced by the type of materials used. The selection of materials for new dwellings and extensions should accord with DP 6, 7, and 8 of this guidance.

The materials used should, in most cases closely match those on the main dwelling and complement those commonly used in the area. However in some instances materials which contrast with those used on the main property can be effective in helping distinguish the new work from the old and help break the mass of a building. In conservation areas and on listed buildings materials should generally be sourced which maintain the traditional and/or historic character of the buildings.

The use of contemporary materials and/or those associated with sustainability and energy efficiency are encouraged where these contribute to and are consistent with the overall design of the building.

#### Building details

Architectural detailing and composition is important to the overall success and appearance of a building. It is vital to reinforce the pattern or rhythm of windows in the surrounding area and generally avoid mixing and matching details from different architectural periods or styles.

Most buildings look best with a prominent entrance door. Care should be taken to ensure that the entrance to a building is conveniently located and ideally located on the front elevation. Porches should ideally reinforce the entrance and be 'additive' in size, scale and design to the architectural style of the main property.





Roof, gable and eave details should be similarly consistent with those commonly used in the surrounding area and match that of the main dwelling. The use of overly large or conspicuous boxed soffits to the eaves and/or ornate fascia boards should be avoided and will generally not be allowed in conservation areas or on historic buildings. Gutters and rainwater goods should ideally be fixed to a simple, shallow, painted, timber fascia. Gable ends, on the whole, look better with a simple 'dry-verge' finish (where mortar is used to seal the junction between the roof structure and the wall).

Roof lights should lie flat against the roof plane, rather than stand on top of it and be of a size, scale and proportion, which relates to the overall composition of the building. In conservation areas and/or on listed buildings the Council would expect the use of flush fitting 'conservation type' roof lights.

## Windows and doors

The style of windows and doors are perhaps one of the most important factors when considering a new building or extension. The following aspects should be carefully considered in any design:

- Windows generally have a vertical emphasis (taller than they are wide) although this is far from being universal in older buildings. Ideally the proportions of windows should be maintained and be consistent in any design. In larger windows the emphasis should be maintained by subdividing the window into smaller elements.
- The frame size, pane sub-division (if any) and ventilation including the method of opening. In Conservation Areas existing styles in the area, including the method of opening, should be replicated.
- Traditional window forms (e.g. sliding sash windows) should be maintained wherever possible and replicated on a 'like for like' basis. The use of mock window styles, incorporating different opening methods, should be avoided.
- On the whole windows look best, especially on historic or traditional buildings, set in reveal, back behind the front face of the elevation.
- Doors should be solid, in construction, ideally with no or minimal glazing.
- The location and proportions of any patio or French doors should relate to the overall appearance or composition of the building.
- The amount of daylight afforded the property and the need to avoid excessive solar gain.
- The materials used in their construction and in particular the need to carefully consider the 'character' of the existing property. In general the Council encourages the use of timber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).



- The finish to doors and windows should always complement the age and character of the building. Generally a painted finish is preferable to the use of wood stains and varnishes.
- In conservation areas and on listed buildings the use of uPVC products is generally not permitted and can rarely replicate the intricate designs, depth and overall look of a painted timber window.



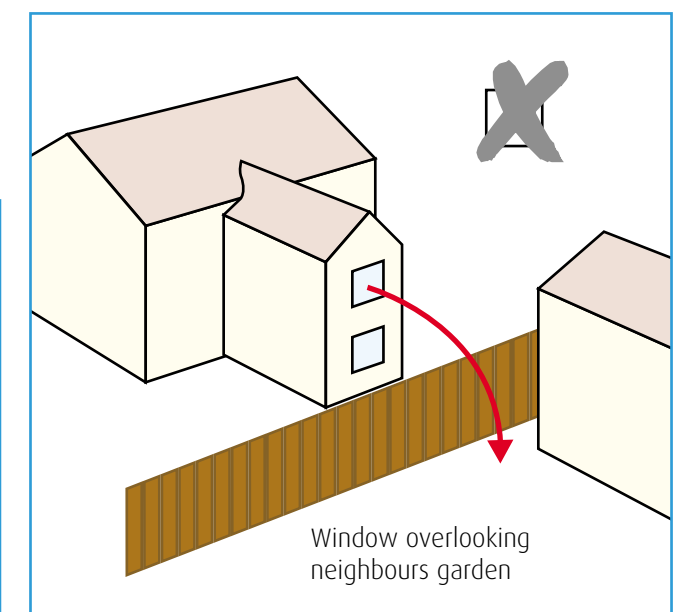
## (v). Neighbour amenity

Any new development including extensions requires a careful assessment of its likely impact on the amenities of the neighbouring properties. Issues of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impact need to be addressed as part of any design. Indeed it is worthwhile discussing the possible effects of a proposal with your neighbour(s) before formally submitting a planning application to avoid any misunderstanding.

It is important to note that, in relation to neighbour amenity, the following advice is for guidance only and that each application or proposal for development needs to be appraised individually in relation to its likely impact. The figures given may in some circumstances be increased to ensure reasonable levels of amenity are maintained. Planning Legislation does not lay down minimum levels of amenity, however the Council will always aim to ensure that neighbours retain a reasonable degree of privacy and daylight.

## Overlooking

This is where there is inadequate distance between windows in a new development and a





neighbouring house or private amenity space. The result can be an unreasonable loss of privacy.

The distance between properties is important, as this lets people enjoy their properties and gardens without being unduly overlooked. However the level of amenity afforded a property is affected by a number of factors, of which one is the distance between the buildings. Overlooking and privacy issues can also be influenced by the aspect of the properties, any level changes across the site, whether the properties face each other directly or are somewhat offset and the type and use of rooms facing each other. For example privacy issues are not as critical in secondary rooms i.e. bathrooms and utility rooms as compared with lounges, dining-kitchens or bedrooms.

As a general guide the following should be applied when locating new development and/or extensions adjacent to existing properties.

- The minimum distance between buildings, on similar levels, facing back to back is 21 metres. However, in town centres or areas of high density, this distance may be impracticable and may also be inappropriate to the character of the area. In such instances, or in other areas where justified, this distance can be reduced.
- Where two buildings are off set and direct

overlooking is clearly reduced by the oblique angle between windows the distance between buildings can be reduced.

- Where there is a change in ground or floor levels between properties as a general rule it is necessary to increase the level of separation to avoid overlooking.
- Views of windows to bathrooms or landings, which area usually obscurely glazed, are not so sensitive and distances can be reduced significantly.
- The use of screen walls or fences at ground level can provide privacy.
- Side facing windows serving habitable rooms should be avoided.
- The minimum distance between main elevations and those that do not contain primary windows of habitable rooms is 12m. However, this distance could be reduced in areas of high density or where the proposal is designed or oriented in such a way to avoid the development appearing over-dominant from the neighbouring properties.
- The minimum rear garden depth will generally be 10m unless the particular merits of the case, in terms of the character of the setting, can be proved to warrant a reduction in this requirement.

It should be noted that the above figures are for guidance only and that in some cases the distance standards may vary. If it can be demonstrated that by observing these amenity standards the development will be detrimental to existing design or adversely affect the essential character of the area, a flexible interpretation of these criteria may be permissible.

## Overshadowing

This commonly occurs when development is in a location or is of a size that would cause significant overshadowing of a neighbour's property or garden space. The extent of overshadowing will depend largely on:

- The size of the new dwelling.
- Its position in relation to the neighbour's property.
- The nature and use of the rooms affected.
- The orientation of the dwelling and the aspect of the properties.
- Existing ground levels.

All new development including extensions and garages should be designed to ensure that they do not have a significant and detrimental impact on a neighbour's property due to overshadowing.

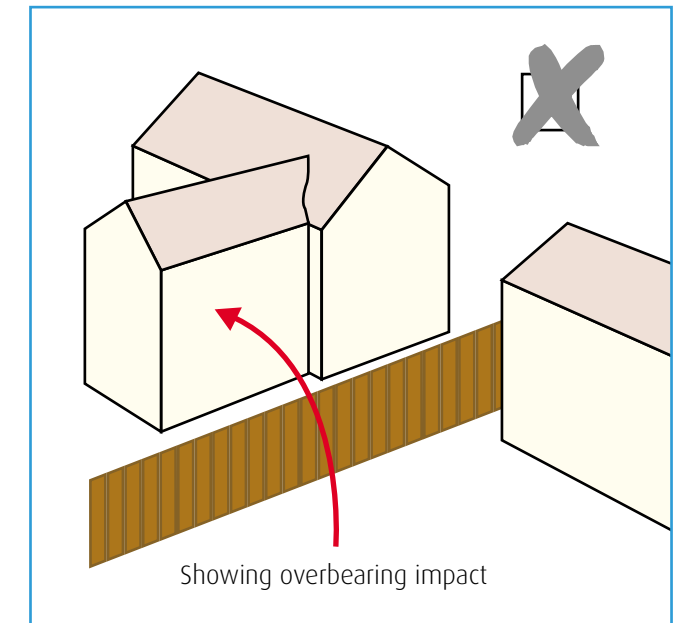
Generally the rule is, *the larger the extension and the closer to the neighbour's property, the greater its effect will be.* Each case will be different depending upon window orientation and the type and use of the room the window is in. As a general rule, a two-storey rear extension along the common boundary of a pair of semi-detached or terraced properties is likely to cause overshadowing problems if it projects outwards by more than 3 metres. A single-storey rear extension along a common boundary may begin to cause overshadowing if it projects outwards, beyond the neighbours own building, by more than 4 metres. One way of reducing the impact, and hence potentially increase the length of an

extension, is to set it in from the boundary.

Overshadowing may be exacerbated if a habitable room window looks out between extensions, thus creating a tunnel effect.

## Overbearing impact

This arises when the sheer physical presence of a development or extension is such that its overall mass (size, height and form) results in a serious loss of amenity. Overbearing problems to a property often occur in association with overshadowing issues.

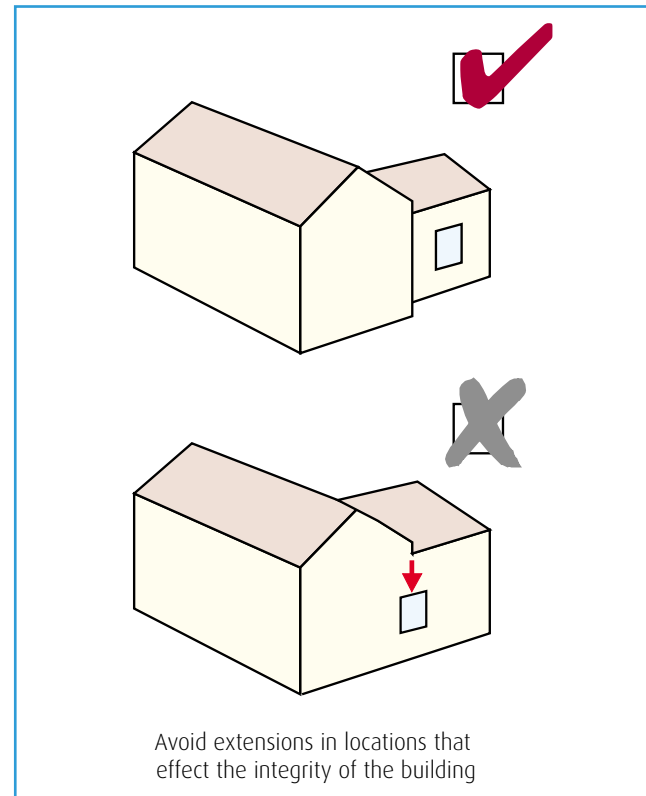


The acceptable size of a new building including an extension will be determined by its height; the adjacent ground levels; the distance from the boundary and also the size of the neighbouring garden/amenity space and orientation.

*It is important to note that the distances given are a guide only and may need to be increased due to the scale and mass of the building proposed, the orientation of the site, the aspect of the neighbour's property and whether there are any changes in levels.*

## (vi). Guiding principles for extensions

Generally when designing extensions of any sort, including garages and out buildings, it is important to consider the following points:



- Maintain the proportions of the existing property through into the extension i.e. the ratio of the width to the height of the building.
- Extensions, measured in length or width should generally not exceed 2/3rds of the corresponding dimension of the existing property.
- Maintain the same roof pitch angle for any extensions to match the existing property.
- The gable width of any extension should be narrower than that of the existing property.
- Maintain the architectural integrity of the original property and incorporate a lower ridge and eave height, unless this would result in the unbalanced appearance of the dwelling.
- Ensure extensions are set off or behind any face of the existing building.

- *Lean-to* (those with a single roof pitch) extensions should have a length or projection no greater than 1/2 that of the existing property.
- Wherever possible use quality matching materials or ones which complement the character of the existing property.
- Always consider the amenities of the residents of adjoining properties in the designs of extensions.
- Retain any important trees and hedges on the site and ensure that any extensions are sited so not to damage their canopies and roots.

## Front extensions

Extensions on the front of properties are often the most difficult to design because they can drastically change the character of a building and the wider streetscene. Two storey extensions, which project forward of the existing property are rarely successful in design terms and should be avoided.

Front extensions or extensions to properties, which affect a facade of a building which fronts on to public space should always be of a scale and form which is in keeping with the style of the property.

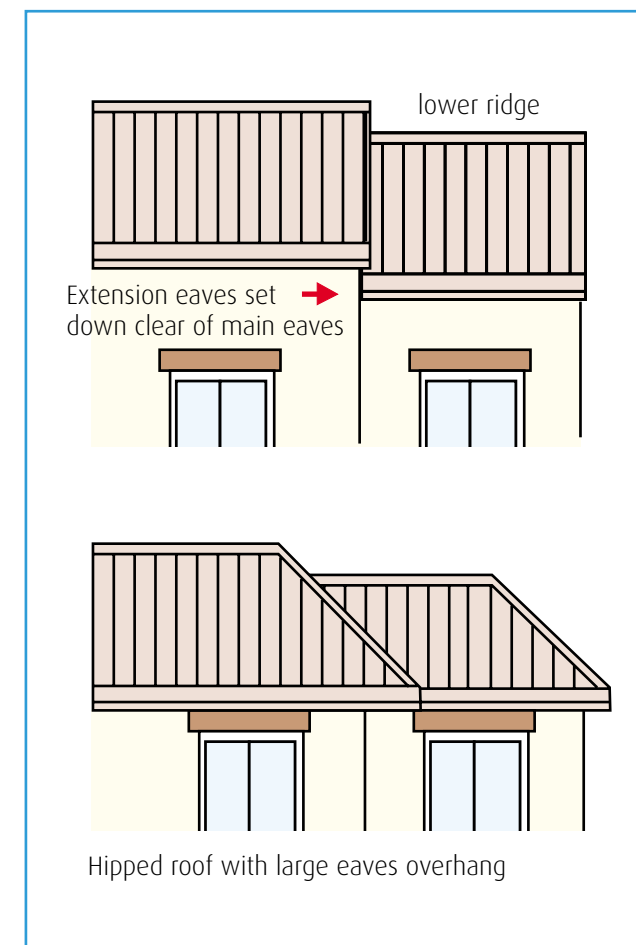
Porches are the most common of front extensions and are acceptable where they do not project excessively and are of a size and form, which respects the proportions and appearance of the original dwelling. Any extensions on the front of a property that appear unduly prominent or incongruous within the street or affect its cohesive character will generally not be allowed.



## Side extensions

Maintaining the gaps and spaces between buildings is important to the character of the streetscene. Single storey side extensions are likely to be acceptable so long as the extension does not impact significantly on the space between adjacent buildings.

When assessing proposals for two storey side extensions the Council will need to carefully consider the distance separation between any neighbours and the importance of the space between buildings on the character of the streetscene. Development that produces a *terracing effect* (where an extension, by visually closing the gap between properties, results in a perceived continuous line of development) or worsens an existing problem will normally not be permitted. To help lessen the impact of a side extension and disguise the junction between the existing property and the new they should



always be set back from the front face of the building.

Extensions to the side of properties on corner plots should be set well behind the principal elevations of the property and should respect the openness of the corner space. Extensions which come up to or close to the side boundary on a corner plot are likely to dominate the immediate streetscene.

Side extensions should largely appear subservient in scale to the existing dwelling and incorporate a roof and eaves level which is lower in height. The proportions, external appearance and materials of the extension should match the architectural style of the existing property and draw on the characteristics of the wider area. Windows should be located to avoid directly overlooking onto a neighbour's garden or property.

It is important that side extensions also respect existing boundary treatments and not result in the substantial loss or removal of existing hedges, trees or walls.

To avoid problems arising, side extensions and in particular two storey side extensions should normally meet the following criteria:

- Be positioned well back from the front face of the property, unless this results in an unbalanced appearance.
- Not result in a significant loss of parking provision or the need to reposition parking provision within the front garden of a property.
- Preserve the gaps between buildings especially where this is characteristic of the area.
- Have a design and a layout, which do not have or require side-facing windows.
- Retain any worthwhile hedges, trees or walls, which form the boundaries between buildings.

## Rear extensions

Common with all extensions it is important that rear extensions have a size, scale, form and external appearance, which do not compromise the existing architectural style or character of the existing property. Generally rear extensions have less impact on the streetscene than extensions to either the front or side of a property.



When designing a rear extension you should consider the following points:

- The use of 'additive' or complimentary building forms, which maintain the same proportions as the existing building.
- Extensions should normally have a lower ridge height than the main roof.
- On historic properties, avoid extensions which involve 'masking' or covering up the rear elevation of the existing property.
- The side walls of rear extensions should be set behind the corner of the existing property to preserve its integrity and avoid unsightly build joints.



## Dormer and roof extensions

Dormer extensions rarely contribute to the overall character of a building and can cause unacceptable levels of overlooking. In many cases dormer extensions appear somewhat incongruous within the streetscene, especially ones which completely alter the shape of the existing roof to the dwelling.

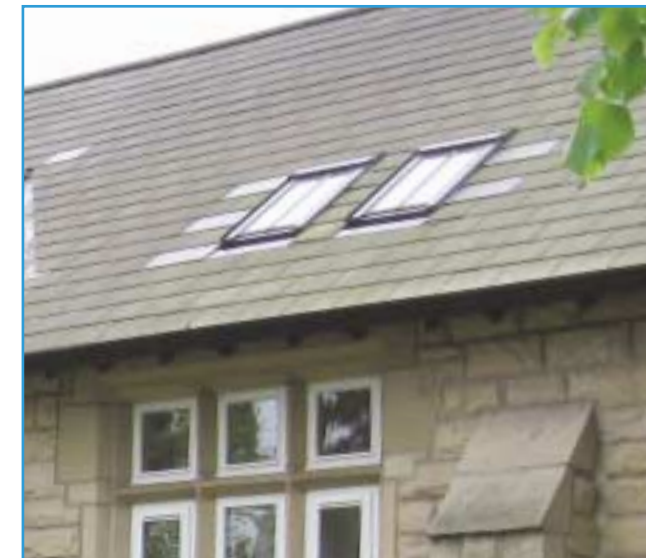
The use of dormer or roof extensions needs careful consideration and should follow the guidance set out below:

- Ideally they should be used sparingly and be confined to rear roof slopes only.
- The use of small pitched roof dormers, set well back from the eaves and down from the ridge to the roof, is generally acceptable.
- Dormer extensions should never be built straight off an elevation (front or rear) of the existing property.
- The use of wide flat roofed dormer extensions is visually unacceptable and will generally not be allowed.
- Dormer or roof extensions, which project above the ridge height of the existing building, should be avoided and are not appropriate.

## Rooflights and solar panels

Rooflights should ideally be placed on the rear or least visible roof slopes wherever possible and should not result in unacceptable loss of neighbours' privacy. The size and number of rooflights should generally be restricted to the minimum required under Building Regulations.

Overly wide rooflights are generally more detrimental to the appearance of a roof. Rooflights should ideally be set within the middle third of the roof slope and should be set away from the verges, eaves and chimneys. If there is to be more than one rooflight, they should be set at the same level and evenly spaced.



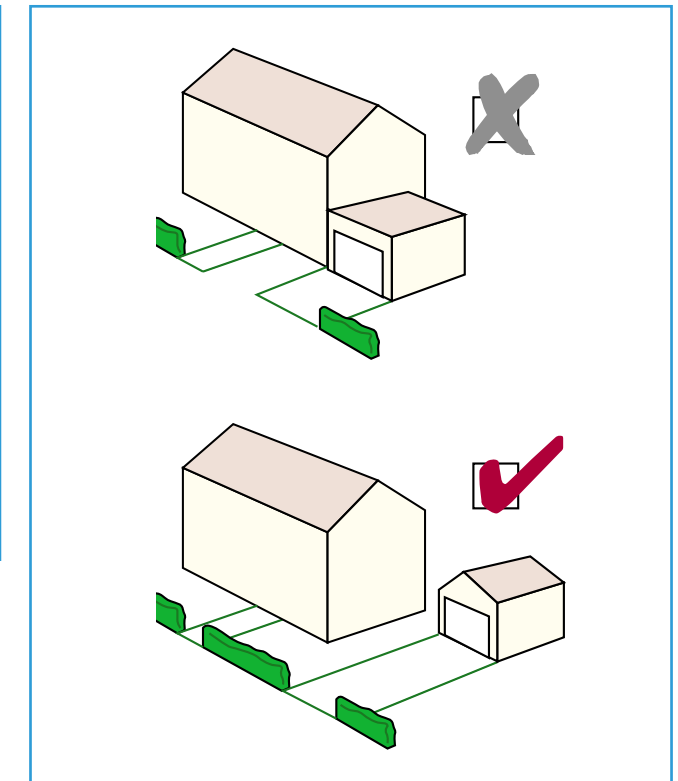
To minimise their impact on the roof shape of properties, rooflights should be laid as flat against the roof as possible. Flashings are commonly available which provide a flush finish rather than have an up stand above the roof. Where there is a need for a more discrete flatter appearance (i.e. in a conservation area or on work to a listed building) it is advisable to use conservation type rooflights or products which incorporate a similar flashing system and flush finish.

The positioning of solar panels should ideally follow the same general principles as those indicated for rooflights. However, as their efficiency is largely dependent on orientation and aspect, siting on the rear slope might prove not to be a viable option. Consideration in such circumstances may be given to the energy benefits obtained from installing solar panels on more visible slopes and a schemes contribution to providing a renewable energy source.

Highly visible solar panels may not be acceptable in sensitive locations, such as Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings.

## Garages and outbuildings

The erection of garaging for residential development can significantly affect the character of a neighbourhood.



Ideally proposals for garaging in new residential developments should follow the guidelines set out below:

- Be detached from the property and be positioned so as to contribute to the 'group' setting.
- Use 'additive' building forms, which relate to the character of the main property in relation particularly to its scale, proportions and external materials.
- In suburban or urban situations garages are best located behind the main property, incorporating a side drive.
- Avoid the use of flat roof, sectional or pre-fabricated garages as they rarely contribute to the appearance of the area.
- In rural areas, try and design bespoke garages and/or outbuildings which relate to and are architecturally consistent with the development.
- Avoid the use of designs, which incorporate double width *up and over* doors.
- On traditional or historic properties, designs should ideally incorporate timber doors.



## 2. Commercial development

This section is intended to deal with design issues relating to various types of commercial development, including retail, leisure and industrial. This part of the guidance is a companion to parts one and two and is aimed specifically at providing further advice to developers building new or extensions to existing commercial properties.

Buildings erected for commercial or employment uses are often grouped within business parks or industrial estates. However, in the quest to design these buildings to meet the functional



requirements of the business and staff, the principles of good design are often ignored or given lesser weight by the designers/developers and end users. The principles of good design apply equally to retail uses or development for employment, education or mixed purposes. Commercial development, regardless of location, should be a focus to promote high quality design in order to enhance the overall quality of the built environment, both aesthetically and functionally.

There will often be different requirements between commercial developments in rural and urban areas, with rural development clearly respecting the surrounding countryside it is located within.

As with residential developments, the four basic components to consider in all proposals are:

- Provision of an accurate site survey.
- The position of the building and the site layout.
- The scale and form of the building.
- External appearance.

Reference should also be made to guidance provided in Part Two - *Applying good design principles: the process* (pages 16-22) and Part Three - *Raising the Standard* (pages 24-37 of the guide) and specifically to the sections regarding the provision of an accurate site appraisal and site survey (page 25) and the issues relating to the proper siting and layout of development (pages 25-26).

Generally, the layout for commercial development should consider the following:

- Connectivity – the site should be well connected to local services which promote direct and overlooked routes for walking and hence safe and secure neighbourhoods.
- Topography of the site and surroundings should influence the layout and built form.
- The landscape elements of a layout should be considered as an integral part of the layout design. A Landscape Management Plan should be prepared for significant projects to ensure that they can be sustainably maintained for the future.
- Loading bays, refuse facilities, outdoor storage (where allowed), mechanical plant and other operational requirements must be incorporated into the overall design of the building and its landscaping.
- Aim for clearly defined public and private areas.
- Create a good sense of enclosure – buildings which terminate views can help to enclose spaces and reduce traffic speed
- Buildings should be sited to preserve existing trees and hedges which are an asset of the area and give maturity to the development. Advice on acceptable distances between distances and trees can be sought from the Council’s Arboriculturalist.
- Ponds and ditches should not be filled in as they are important to the wildlife potential of the locality and provide natural drainage.
- Siting and orientation should avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking and overshadowing, particularly where a site is adjacent to residential properties.
- Create appropriate frontage widths, plot sizes and rhythm.
- Any unusual features and views which make the site distinctive should be retained.



- Layouts should be flexible and should not lose the potential for linkage with future development sites subject to any environmental constraints.
- On site parking must be kept to a minimum to help achieve a sustainable development. Other forms of public transport incentives and good pedestrian links must be well integrated into the development to further reduce the demand for cars.
- The visual and environmental impact of large areas of large surface car parks must be improved by substantial elements of planting and a quality landscaping scheme within the space and along the boundaries. Opportunities may also exist to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to reduce surface water run off from the parking areas.
- Boundary fencing should be set behind landscaping and should not be of an overbearing form.
- Large-scale single buildings can appear out of context with their surroundings and visually and aesthetically can impose themselves on the landscape rather than integrate with it. Commercial development does, however, provide an opportunity for the use of bespoke, creative and innovative building design. New development, in these instances, can be a “showcase” and can provide



economic benefits for a business, community or wider area.

- Designs should aim to break up the mass and scale of the building, avoiding large expanses of single span roof structures.
- Using designs with a variety of building forms, heights and materials can produce more attractive results.
- Designs should provide good frontage development (i.e. active frontages - there should be natural surveillance along streets, spaces, car parks and pedestrian routes).
- Any public frontage and/or shopfront including signage should contribute to creating an attractive streetscene and accord with the Council's published 'Design Guide – for Shop Fronts, Advertisements and Shop Security in West Lancashire'.
- Materials should be appropriate to their context and should be of good quality; be easily maintainable for future years; regard should be had of the sustainability of the product related to its production, supply or recycling and the visual impact of colours and finishes of wall and roof cladding should be considered in relation to the background and context of the building and its impact upon

the townscape or countryside as assessed in long views and views from higher ground.

- The potential for retaining, conserving and re-using existing buildings on a site must always be assessed as part of a sustainable approach to development.
- The use of contemporary materials and/or those associated with sustainability and energy efficiency are encouraged where these contribute to and are consistent with the overall design of the building.



### 3. Designing for the historic environment

West Lancashire has a wealth of historic buildings and places, which the Council is committed to preserve for future generations to enjoy. Good quality design is essential for all types of development within or affecting the historic environment to ensure that the character and appearance of the area is preserved.

The aim of any designer, owner or developer should be to provide new buildings, which make a positive contribution to the areas character or appearance.

Listed buildings in particular are a finite resource which are, on the whole, sensitive to changes and alterations. New development should always seek to preserve their special character. Works which detract from the building, including their interiors and/or settings, will not normally be allowed.

New buildings and extensions to existing buildings in the historic environment, whether located in one of the District's 28 conservation areas or on a listed building should be the stimulus for imaginative high quality design. Government guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15) states that; "What is

*important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, but that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well established character and appearance of its own."*

Extensions should not dominate the existing building in relation to its scale, position or choice of materials and should on the whole remain subservient to the main structure. Well designed and successful extensions require a sensitive handling of scale and detailing. There will however be some circumstances e.g. where the site or building is of historic importance where any form of extension would be potentially damaging and will not be permitted.

All development proposals affecting a listed building or conservation area requires the submission of a *Design and Access Statement* as part of the application. The statement should clearly show a proper understanding of the site, justify any changes or alterations and show how the proposed development demonstrates a commitment to achieving a high quality design. More information on Design and Access Statements is available from Appendix F on page 53 of the guide.

Our archaeology is an irreplaceable resource, which adds to the rich diversity and history of

the District. The best way to preserve archaeology is 'in situ' and wherever possible this should be recognised by the careful and sympathetic location of development and the design of layouts and foundations.

Policies EN 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan set down the requirements relating to development affecting conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeology and historic parks and gardens.

#### Guidance

DP 9. Development, which affects a Listed Building, Conservation Area, Historic Park and Garden, Scheduled Monument or their historic settings, should always reflect their special architectural, archaeological and/or historic interest. Proposals should always be sensitive to the character of the historic environment, be of a high quality in terms of design and the materials used and aim to enhance the character and appearance of the building and/or wider area.

## 4. Trees and the natural environment

### Trees



In West Lancashire we recognise the importance of trees and woodland within the District and where appropriate will protect trees which have an amenity value. Priority will be given to development sites and situations where important trees are at risk and care should be taken when considering new development to ensure adequate protection is given to existing trees on the site.

The Council will expect any development proposal to comply with the recommendations contained in the British Standard - *BS 5837 (2005) Trees in relation to construction*.

Permission for carrying out works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order must be applied for in writing (subject to some limited exemptions). A form is available from the Council. There is no charge for processing an application.

If you wish to carry out works to trees in conservation areas, you should give the Council 6 weeks' notice. In line with best practice the Council will consult with residents and the Parish Councils where the proposed works are deemed to be substantial and have a significant effect on the visual amenity of the conservation area. This process would usually exclude any minor works.

It is generally an offence to carry out works which cause or permit damage to protected trees. Such actions may lead to prosecution.

You are advised to use a Landscape Architect and/or qualified tree surgeon to provide you with advice relating to site layouts and the proximity of trees to development and any works to trees. The Council provides a free leaflet giving further advice on choosing a Tree Contractor.

### Wildlife

West Lancashire has a wide variety of habitats and wildlife species, and many sites have statutory or non-statutory designations because of their particular wildlife value. These account



for a relatively small proportion of the District, however, and most of the District's wildlife, including many legally protected animals and plants (such as bats and wild birds) occurs outside these protected sites. It is vitally important that all development proposals take proper account of the likely effect on wildlife, minimising adverse impacts whenever possible. This could involve retaining features that are important to wildlife, such as trees, hedges or ponds, or by timing operations in order to minimise disturbance during sensitive periods.

The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is determining a planning application. As such development proposals affecting wildlife assets should be accompanied by appropriate ecological surveys to enable the council to make an informed decision on the application. The surveys should be carried out by a qualified and experienced ecologist (in the case of species such as bats and great crested newt they will also need to hold a licence) at a suitable time of year. The results of the survey work should be considered well in advance of any work starting on site, so that the development can be designed to take account of the survey findings and incorporate any mitigation measures required. Failure to provide the necessary surveys can result in unnecessary and costly delays to the applicant. Further advice on surveys is contained in para. 5.23 of the recently adopted Joint Lancashire Structure Plan

Supplementary Planning Guidance (2001-2016) on landscape and heritage, published in July 2006 and available on [www.lancashire2016.com](http://www.lancashire2016.com) or from Lancashire County Council.

If a protected species is detected once development has started, development must stop to allow an assessment to be made of the likely impact on the species present and or its habitat. Failure to do so could lead to an offence being committed regardless of a planning permission being in place.



Wherever possible, developments should be designed to enhance the wildlife value of the site by reflecting, strengthening and incorporating habitats that are appropriate to the geographical area. These habitat types are described in the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and are listed in para. 5.38 of the landscape and heritage SPD specified in the preceding paragraph. Development which involves creation of habitats or promoting species populations in accordance with the BAP is encouraged and may be required through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.

#### Guidance

DP 10. Protecting the biodiversity of the District is important. Care should always be taken to assess the likely impact of any development on the existing landscape, including any trees, hedges, wildlife and their habitats. New development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the diversity of our landscape and/or habitats for wildlife to provide an attractive environment for residents, visitors and investors.



## 5. Drainage and flooding

The design and management of both existing and any proposed surface water drainage/sewerage infrastructure alterations is key to the overall long-term flood risk management strategy of the West Lancashire District. As such all proposed new development drainage/sewerage must drain to an approved outfall.

### Foul Drainage

Circular 11/99 identifies that a hierarchy for foul drainage exists and that in the first instance foul sewerage should be directed to a public sewer. If connection to a public main is not possible then other options are available with a package treatment plant being considered before connection to a septic tank is made.

In the case where the final discharge from any foul sewage system is not to the adopted sewerage network then all necessary Environment Agency discharge consents/approvals should be in place prior to occupancy/usage of proposed development.

### Surface Water Drainage



In the case of surface water then this should outfall to: -

- soakaway (ground conditions permitting)
- sustainable urban drainage system (SUD's)
- watercourse/culvert
- existing adopted surface water drainage network

All development drainage proposals must be agreed and approvals given for the proposals from the relevant statutory body, United Utilities / Environment Agency (EA).

Within the West Lancashire District there are certain vulnerable locations that currently have under capacity problems in relation to the existing sewerage/drainage infrastructure/network and regular flooding instances occur during times of moderate/heavy rainfall. Care and consideration must therefore be given, particularly in these vulnerable locations, to the effect of any new development proposals not only on the existing localised drainage infrastructure but more particularly where there may be an adverse affect on the drainage within the catchment.

In these and other vulnerable areas it is likely that free outfalls from new developments into the surrounding surface water drainage network will not be permitted. As such attenuation to these flows together with associated on site storage will be required.

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) *Development and Flood Risk*, where developers are considering building in a high or medium risk flood zone area (on any site over 1hectare in size), a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) must be submitted as part of the planning application process. The FRA will need to demonstrate that the site would not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or cause an increased risk elsewhere. The developer will also need to demonstrate that the development could not be reasonably located outside the flood risk area.

Where the surface water drainage from a development is proposed to outfall into a sustainable urban drainage system (SUD's) then it is unlikely that the SUD's system will be adopted by either the Sewerage or Highway Authority. The developer must in this instance consider and satisfy the Local Planning

Authority (LPA) on any issues surrounding the long-term maintenance of such proposals.

Under the recent DEFRA initiative, *Making Space for Water*, the opening up of closed surface water culverts into open watercourses is now being considered as part of new development proposals in appropriate circumstances. Developers should give due consideration to this initiative during relevant consultations with the Council and/or the Environment Agency. Consequently developers must satisfy the LPA that there will be no adverse effect on the drainage infrastructure anywhere within the catchment, as a direct result of any new development proposals.



The following plan indicates areas of particular drainage concerns within the District and prospective developers need to pay particular attention to the drainage element of their proposals when undertaking schemes in these areas.

### Useful Contacts

Defra - Making Space for Water.  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/>

Environment Agency - Development and Flood Risk. <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

United Utilities – Asset Management and wastewater. <http://www.unitedutilities.com/>

## Part Four – How we intend to use the guidance



This guide recognises that good design is important and will benefit not only the individual by encouraging well thought out and designed buildings but will importantly help to ensure that West Lancashire remains an attractive place to work, live in and visit.

Clearly in providing better and more sustainable designed buildings and development there is a need to promote the need for all buildings to be energy efficient and contribute to the Government's aim to produce less carbon emissions by incorporating wherever possible renewable energy technologies.

In seeking not to be too prescriptive the guide aims to promote good design without stifling architectural innovation but aims to balance the needs of the land or property owner with the social responsibilities of proper planning and good neighbourliness. It should therefore not be seen as a rigid tool which places a 'straight-jacket' on development but as a guide to developers, architects and property owners to the expectations of the Council when considering

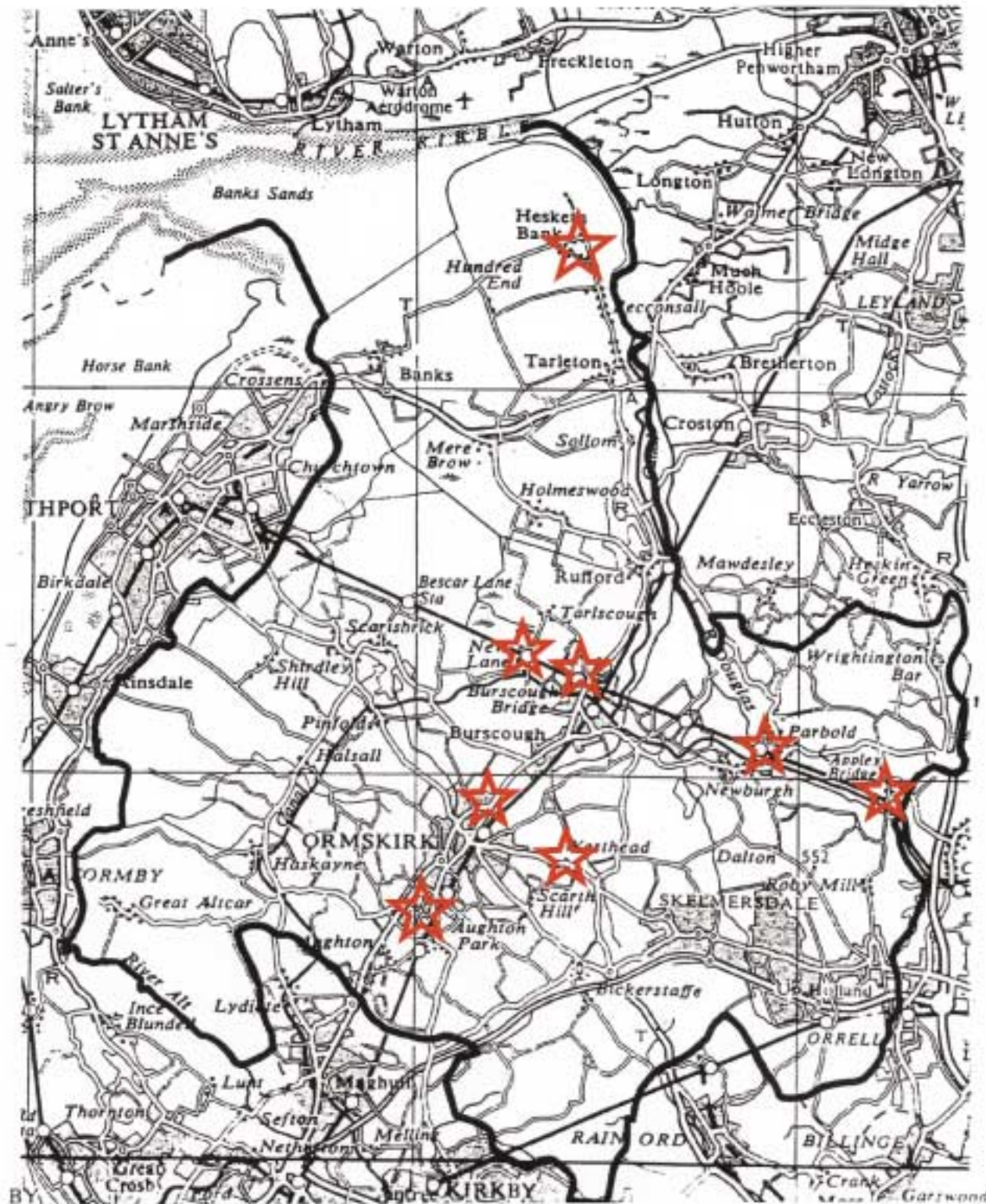
development proposals.

However in providing the guidance we would expect the document to be used by all those involved in the development process by specifically providing help and direction to property owners and developers. The guide in particular provides a source of useful information, contacts and links to assist in formulating proposals for development within the District.

The guide will be used by the Council in assessing the appropriateness of development proposals and in this respect should be seen as a checklist for planning submissions on design matters.

Particular attention should be given to the guidance points (DP1-10) highlighted in coloured boxes which provide concise reference points to some of the key sections of the guidance.

The appendices A-H, to follow, provide a source for further useful information to help with the making of development proposals.



 **Flooding/drainage hot-spots in West Lancashire**

## Appendix A. Useful contacts

The Planning and Development Services Division of the Council delivers a range of services to the community including: Development Control; Building Control; Planning Policy; Conservation and District Engineering functions. We are aiming for those services to be of the highest quality and delivered in the wider public interest. In particular, we want those services to be responsive to individual customer needs and demands and to deliver tangible results in relation to the quality of development which takes place in the District and the quality of the wider environment, all of which contribute to the well-being of the area.

### Contact details

West Lancashire District Council  
Planning and Development Services  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
Lancashire  
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## Appendix B. Design guidance points

**DP 1.** All proposals for development should include a proper and detailed site appraisal or survey, which identifies the attributes of the site and its immediate surroundings. The site appraisal should address the aspects raised in the section above (pages 15-16) and ideally should include annotated plans to a suitable scale and sketches and/or photographs to illustrate the site context or highlight issues or points of interest.

**DP 2.** New development should always add to the local distinctiveness of an area and proposals should show clearly how the general character, scale, mass, and layout of the site and/or buildings fits in with the 'grain' of the surrounding area. Development, buildings or layouts which are inward facing and do not contribute to the streetscene should be avoided. In residential developments the use of standard or universal house types which take no or little account of a site and its local context will not be acceptable.

**DP 3.** All development should fully integrate into the existing landscape or streetscene and any landscape works, whether hard or soft, should reinforce the character of the area and contribute to the quality of the scheme.

**DP 4.** The boundaries to sites play an important role and often define the space between the public and private realms. Layouts that rely on the use of tall, blank, featureless walls or fences (including palisade fencing) bounding public areas create an intimidating environment and should be avoided.

**DP 5.** New development should be of an overall scale, mass and built form, which responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Care should be taken to ensure that building(s) height, scale and form, including the roofline, do not disrupt the visual amenities of the streetscene and impact on any significant wider landscape views.

**DP 6.** Good design requires a proper understanding of proportion and detailing and all new buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, its fenestration and the roofline to the building.

**DP 7.** New development proposals need not imitate earlier architectural periods or styles and could be the stimulus for the use of imaginative modern design using high quality materials in innovative ways.

**DP 8.** Materials should be chosen to complement the design of a development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment. The Council promotes the use of natural materials from environmentally responsible sources and materials of high quality, which have been reclaimed, salvaged or recycled.

**DP 9.** Development, which affects a Listed Building, Conservation Area, Historic Park and Garden, Scheduled Monument or their historic settings, should always reflect their special architectural, archaeological and/or historic interest. Proposals should always be sensitive to the character of the historic environment, be of a high quality in terms of design and the materials used and aim to enhance the character and appearance of the building and/or wider area.

**DP 10.** Protecting the biodiversity of the District is important. Care should always be taken to assess the likely impact of any development on the existing landscape, including any trees, hedges, wildlife and their habitats. New development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the diversity of our landscape and/or habitats for wildlife to provide an attractive environment for residents, visitors and investors.



## Appendix C.

### Relevant local plan policies relating to design:

#### **Policy DS2: Protecting the Green Belt**

This policy relates to development within the Green Belt and the general restrictions, which are in place to control new development.

#### **Policy GD1: Design of Development**

This policy provides general guidance on the design of all types of buildings and aims to raise the overall quality of development.

#### **Policy GD2: Developer Contributions to Infrastructure**

This policy relates to the provision of developer contributions as part of large developments.

#### **Policy EN1: Biodiversity**

This policy explains the protection which will be provided to the wildlife habitats of value within the District and legally protected species.

#### **Policy EN4: Conservation Areas**

This policy relates the protection of Conservation Areas and in particular the need to ensure that any development either preserves or enhances the character and appearance of any of the District's Conservation Areas.

#### **Policy EN5: Buildings of Historic Importance**

This policy relates to the need to ensure the preservation of buildings of historic importance.

#### **Policy EN6: Archaeological Heritage**

This policy relates to the preservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of West Lancashire.

#### **Policy EN7: Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens**

This policy deals with the need to preserve the character of important historic landscapes.

#### **Policy EN9: Protection of Trees and Woodlands**

This policy aims to prevent development, which involves the loss or damage to important trees or woodlands.

#### **Policy DE6: Rural Economy**

This policy relates to the need to encourage the re-use of existing rural buildings for uses, which will benefit the diversity of the rural economy.

#### **Policy DE7: Agricultural Produce Packing Facilities**

This policy relates to proposals for the construction and extension of agricultural produce packing and distribution facilities.

#### **Policy DE8: Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural / Horticultural Workers**

This policy relates to proposals for the provision of temporary accommodation for agricultural / horticultural workers.

#### **Policy DE11: Skelmersdale Town Centre**

This policy relates to any development proposals within Skelmersdale Town Centre.

#### **Policy DE12: Ormskirk Town Centre**

This policy relates to any development proposals within Ormskirk Town Centre.

#### **Policy DE13: Business and Office Development**

This policy relates to proposals for new business and office development within the District.

#### **Policy SC1: Sports, Recreational, Leisure and Cultural Facilities**

This policy relates to the protection of existing open space facilities and consideration of when open space areas may be lost.

#### **Policy SC2: Recreational Facilities**

This policy relates to the provision of new open space facilities and the improvement of existing facilities.

## Appendix D.

### Bibliography and further reading

#### National Planning Policy Guidance

- PPS 1** Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM, 2005).
- PPS 3** Housing (Dept Communities and Local Government, 2006).
- PPG 13** Transport (DETR, 2001).
- PPG 15** Planning and the Historic Environment (DoE, 1994).
- PPS 6** Planning for Town Centres (ODPM, 2005).
- PPS 22** Renewable Energy (ODPM, 2004).
- PPS 25** Development and Flood Risk (DCLG, 2006).
- PPS 7** Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (ODPM, 2004).
- PPS 9** Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (DCLG, 2006).

#### Bibliography

- BS 5837- Guide to Trees in relation to construction* (2005).
- The Building Regulations Part L 2006 – Conservation of fuel and power* (ODPM)
- By Design – Urban Design and the planning system: towards better practice* (DTL and CABE, 2000).
- Better places to live: a companion guide to PPG 3* (DTLR and CABE, 2001).
- Places, streets and movement: a companion guide to Design Bulletin 32* (DETR, 1998).
- Peterborough Residential Design Guide – SPG* (2002).
- Residential Design Guide – Harrogate Borough Council* (1999)

- House Extensions and Garages: Design Guide – Harrogate Borough Council* (2005).
- Design Guidance – St Helens Council – SPD* (2006).
- North Norfolk Design Guide* (1998)
- Design Guide for Residential Development – Wigan Council – SPD* (2006).
- Building in Context: New development in historic areas* (English Heritage and CABE, 2002).
- The Value of Good Design* (CABE, 2001).
- Design Review* (CABE, 2002).
- Building for Life: Delivering great places to live* (CABE and HBF, 2005). The use of urban design codes: Building sustainable communities (CABE, 2003).
- Creating a sense of Place: A Design Guide* (The Affordable Rural Housing Initiative, 2006).
- Manifesto for good design – Good practice note 4* (National Planning Forum, 2005).
- Design and access statements: how to write, read and use them* (CABE, 2006).
- #### Further reading
- North West Best Practice Design Guide* (North West Regional Assembly, (2006).
- Design Coding: testing its use in England* (CABE, ODPM and English Partnerships, 2004).
- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention* (ODPM, 2004).
- What it's like to live there: the views of residents on the design of new housing* (CABE, 2005).
- Sustainable Energy by Design* (TCPA, 2006).
- Building Research Establishment - Site layout for sunlight and solar gain* (BRE – Information Paper IP 4/92,1992).
- Building Research Establishment – The green guide to housing specification* (BRE, 2000).

*Proposals for introducing a Code for Sustainable Homes – A consultation paper (ODPM, 2005).*

#### Useful websites

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

For copies of Government guidance and advice.

[www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)

Department of Trade and Industry web site has information relating to renewable energy sources and sustainable technologies.

[www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

Advice on design and for copies of CBE publications.

[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

Can help in finding a qualified RIBA architect.

[www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

Planning advice, including publications.

[www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation offers help on issues relating to development in the historic environment.

[www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)

Publications on sustainable design.

[www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk)

Information on the Eco Homes project.

[www.breeam.org](http://www.breeam.org)

An environmental assessment for the performance of new buildings.

[www.est.co.uk](http://www.est.co.uk)

The Energy Saving Trust is a Government funded company, which aims to help cut carbon emissions.

[www.thecarbontrust.co.uk](http://www.thecarbontrust.co.uk)

The Carbon Trust helps businesses to cut carbon emissions.

[www.sustainablehomes.co.uk](http://www.sustainablehomes.co.uk)

Provides examples of properties, which have incorporated sustainable technologies.

[www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

Provides information on integrating community safety in to a design.

## Appendix E.

### Glossary of terms

**Accessibility** The ability of users, including disabled persons to move around a site or development.

**Adaptability** The capacity of a building or space to change as a response to differing social or economic conditions.

**Additive** A term used in relation to extensions to existing properties meaning a proposal which is in keeping in size, scale and design to the original property.

**Biodiversity** The UK Government was one of over 150 countries to sign the convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Biodiversity concerns all living things and their habitats.

**Context** The setting of a site or an area includes factors such as the nature and style of the buildings, their built form, the landscape setting, typical land uses, activities and the road pattern.

**Density** Commonly the built density for residential development can be expressed in terms of the units per hectare.

**Distinctiveness** Local distinctiveness relates to the positive features of a place, which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

**Elevation** A façade or face of a building.

**Enclosure** The use of a building to define or enclose a view or space.

**Frontage** The part of a building which faces onto the public realm.

**Form** The layout, density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

**Grain** The pattern, arrangement and size/mass of the buildings and their plots, which make up

a streetscene or settlement. Fine grain would represent small scale, narrow buildings with frequent breaks and junctions.

**Layout** The way buildings, spaces, roads, pedestrian routes and the landscape are placed in relation to each other.

**Massing** The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

**Permeability** The degree to which an area has a variety of convenient and safe routes through it.

**Public realm** The parts of an area, which are open for the public to use and see, including the streets, squares, parks.

**Scale** The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of a buildings component parts particularly when experienced in person.

**Sense of place** The 'spirit' of a place, its special character. This combines the built form of a place with its social attributes (akin to local distinctiveness).

**Sustainable** As in sustainable development, which is defined in PPS 1 as 'development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations'.

**Streetscene** The elements of a place, including the buildings, streets and spaces which commonly make up the public view of an area.

**Urban Design** The art of making places. Involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes.

**Vernacular** Building types which respond to the local context and make use of local styles, techniques and materials.

## Appendix F.

### Design and access statements

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) sets out how good design plays a fundamental role in the delivery of sustainable development. Developers and applicants should show clearly how they have taken into account the need for good design in their submissions. Design and Access statements are required for all planning applications except householder, changes of use and engineering and mining operations from 10 August 2006.

These will help explain how high quality design and issues such as disabled access have been addressed in the proposal and more importantly help ensure new developments are of a high quality. This will give local communities a greater understanding of what is proposed, what might eventually be built and therefore a greater opportunity to contribute to the planning process.

Design statements should accompany all planning applications to explain and justify the proposed design. Design statements, can in their simplest form, be a short written statement. They must however show how the proposed development may impact on the site and the wider area and indicate clearly how the design seeks to demonstrate a commitment to achieving a high quality design.

Importantly the process of producing a design and access statement should help applicants gain a proper understanding of the site and its context.

Design and access statements should specifically include;

- A concise report, including plans, photographs and drawings where necessary, to address the particular characteristics of the site.
- Outline the design principles and concepts of the proposal and how this has influenced the

particular layout, scale, form, appearance, landscaping and materials to be used.

- Explain how the development relates to the site and the wider area. In particular the need to justify the scale of the buildings proposed and how this relates to the site and the relevant skyline.
- Show how the design and/or the layout of buildings have addressed the issues of access and the need specifically to creating an accessible and inclusive environment.
- Explain and justify how the proposed layout in terms of the relationship between buildings and the public and private spaces will create a safe and vibrant environment.
- Explain how the buildings, layout and spaces ensure access for all types of users including the public transport network and emergency services.
- The approach taken in the design of the buildings and spaces for the inclusion of disabled people.

## Appendix G. Building control

Building Control checks building work to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations. These Regulations set minimum standards for the health and safety of people in and around buildings. They also deal with the conservation of fuel and power and access to and the use of buildings.



The Council are committed to providing a quality service to the public by means of a flexible and responsible approach within the framework of the Building Act and Building Regulations. We will do this by checking and making decisions on Building Regulations applications and inspecting work on site.

### Advice and guidance

If you appoint an agent or builder to act on your behalf we will deal directly with them thus saving you time and effort.

We will give impartial advice and guidance on your project. We cannot act as your own private surveyor but will give informal advice and comments on proposed work and may be able to advise on alternative ways of achieving the same objective. In some cases we may make a preliminary site visit before you make a formal application.

### Requirements

All new development should satisfy the provisions laid down in the Building Regulations, which covers the need to ensure a building has suitable foundations and is robust, has suitable measures to combat water and moisture penetration, has adequate means of disposing of foul and surface water, is safe for its occupiers, is well insulated and has an efficient heating system.

Energy conservation in construction is an important part of the Building Regulations and is specifically covered by *The Building Regulations Part L 2006 – Conservation of Fuel and Power* (Department for Communities and Local Government – DCLG)

Works such as replacement windows and domestic electrical installations are also controlled under Building Regulations. However there is an option to have this type of work approved by registered “Competent Persons” who are members of schemes authorised by DCLG.



### Applications

There are two methods of applying for approval of your building project. For domestic work you can submit a Building Notice giving brief details of your proposals and commence work after 48 hours.

Alternatively, if you wish to obtain formal approval of your proposals before work begins you can submit a Full Plans application.

Work to shops, offices, factories, hotels and boarding houses must be made by the Full Plans route so that we can consult with the Fire Brigade to ensure that Fire Precaution measures are provided.

Charges are made for Building Regulations work. These are set locally within a national framework. Details of charges are available on request Tel: 01695 585136 or [www.westlancsdc.gov.uk](http://www.westlancsdc.gov.uk).

If making a Full Plans application you should enclose the appropriate charge with two copies of plans and if appropriate structural calculations giving full details of your proposals.

Full Plans applications may be submitted electronically by using the Submit-a- Plan system. Details can be found at [www.submitaplan.com](http://www.submitaplan.com).

When you or your builder have notified us that work is completed, and a satisfactory final inspection has been made, we will issue a formal Completion Certificate to show that work complies with Building Regulations. This is particularly important if the property is subsequently sold or if you need to secure additional funds. If requested we will provide a schedule of inspections made.

### Party Walls

Party wall matters are between adjoining owners. If necessary we can provide you with a copy of the Party Wall Act explanatory booklet.

### Quality

We operate a Quality Management System approved by the British Standards Institution as fulfilling the objectives set out in BS.EN.ISO 9002:2000.

We will consider all new methods of construction and materials, based on our own experience, and, if necessary, offer expert advice. This way we can help you obtain the best possible value for money.



## Appendix H. Planning submission requirements

To minimise delay and ensure the highest quality development possible it is important to ensure that any planning submission includes sufficient and suitably detailed information.

From our experience it is always advisable to get plans drawn up by a qualified Architect who can properly assess your needs for the site/building. Advice regarding certain aspects of a planning application or the need for additional reports or surveys should also be provided by a suitably qualified person(s) i.e. an Architect, Landscape Architect or Town Planner.

Plans and drawings should be clear and be to a suitable recognisable metric scale showing the development within its existing context. The submissions should always include:

- Location Plan (scale 1:1250).
- A suitably scaled site layout plan showing clearly the existing and proposed site layout.
- Existing and proposed plans of a suitable scale (1:50 or 1:100).
- Elevations, of a suitable scale, showing clearly the external appearance of the building including the neighbouring properties/buildings where necessary.
- A design and access statement is required, (except on householder, change of use and mining or engineering applications), demonstrating how the proposal promotes good design and fits in to the context of the site.

*Submissions, which do not provide the above information or are of a poor standard of presentation or not properly scaled will be rejected and not be processed until all the requirements are provided.*

The level of detail and the need for supporting

information will depend on the nature of the development, its size, complexity and the sensitivity of the particular location. Further additional information, technical studies or site investigations may be required and could include:

- Cross sections
- Streetscene prospective views
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Reports on ecology and protected wildlife species
- Transport Impact Assessment
- Land contamination
- Flood Risk Assessment

Further advice on what to include in a 'Design and Access Statement' is included in Appendix F.

The Council welcomes pre-application discussions. This provides, at an early stage, an opportunity to discuss development proposals and to consider relevant Planning Policies and identifies any difficulties or issues.

We welcome and encourage discussions with all prospective applicants before the formal submission of an application. A planner will be available at the Planning reception at the Council Offices at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk to discuss, with any resident of the District or local business, their development proposals and, if planning permission is required, how it can be obtained. Developers and professional advisers should normally make an appointment to see the planning case officer for the area to ensure that such discussions are of maximum value.

Such pre-application discussions will allow officers to offer advice on how to enhance the proposals. These discussions can help all parties to achieve a more effective use of time and resources and produce a quality outcome. The appropriate name and telephone number can be obtained by ringing 01695 577177. Simple enquiries can be dealt with by telephone. Confidentiality within the Council will be respected.

## Appendix I. List of photographs

### Front cover main photograph:

Cast iron frame to interior of Great Barn, Scarisbrick Park. Overall winner of the West Lancashire Design Awards 2005.

### Front cover small photographs:

Top left - Edge Hill University  
Centre right - Bakers Mews, Tarleton  
Centre left - Pheasants Farm, Dalton  
Bottom - Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University.

### Page 3:

Bakers Mews, Tarleton.

### Page 8:

West Lancashire Investment Centre (winner of the 'best commercial development' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2005).

### Page 9:

Ormskirk Town centre on Market day.

### Page 9:

Ormskirk School (design commended in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2005).

### Page 10:

View of Bakers Mews, Tarleton (winner of 'best residential development' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2005).



### Page 11:

Great Barn, Scarisbrick Park.

### Page 12:

Faculty of Education building, Edge Hill University.

### Page 14:

Top - landscaping at Edge Hill University (winner of 'best landscaping' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2007).

### Page 14:

Bottom - view across Fettle's Wharf Marina, Rufford.

### Page 15:

Top - view across West Lancashire Plain at Parbold.

### Page 15:

Bottom - Newburgh Village Green.

### Page 16:

View of Bakers Mews, Tarleton (winner of 'best residential development' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2005).

### Page 18:

View of housing at Guinea Hall Mews, Banks (winner of 'best residential development' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2003).

### Page 19:

Mature landscaping on housing development.

### Page 21:

Pheasants Farm development, Dalton (winner of 'best conversion scheme' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2005).

### Page 22:

Rookery Close, Cottage Lane, Ormskirk (commended in the 2007 West Lancashire Design Awards).

### Page 23:

Top - Ottershead Farm Barn, Westhead (commended in the 2007 West Lancashire Design Awards).



**Page 23:**  
Bottom - view of housing at Guinea Hall Mews, Banks.

**Page 24:**  
Housing at Apple Hey, Appley Bridge.

**Page 26:**  
Extension on Stoneleach Farm, Wrightington.

**Page 25:**  
Extension to cottage on Alder Lane, Parbold

**Page 29:**  
Old Oak Barn, Sandersons Lane, Wrightington (winner of 'best conversion scheme' category in the West Lancashire Design Awards 2007).

**Page 30:**  
Internal view at Pheasants Farm development, Dalton.

**Page 31:**  
Top - front door at Pheasants Farm development, Dalton.

**Page 31:**  
Bottom - Traditional door and window in Parbold.

**Page 32:**  
Housing development in Banks.

**Page 36:**  
Top and bottom - Tyrer's Farm, Wood Lane, Lathom.

**Page 37:**  
Former Grammar School, Ormskirk.

**Page 38:**  
Top - Pilkingtons, Hall Road, Lathom.

**Page 38:**  
Bottom - West Lancashire Investment Centre, Skelmersdale.

**Page 39:**  
Edge Hill University.

**Page 40:**  
Top and bottom - West Lancashire Investment Centre, Skelmersdale.

**Page 41:**  
Rufford Old Hall, Liverpool Road, Rufford.

**Page 43:**  
View at Martin Mere Wildfowl and WetlandsTrust Centre, Fish Lane, Burscough.

**Page 44:**  
Scarbrick farm land.

**Page 47:**  
Entrance to Coronation Park, Ormskirk.

**Page 55:**  
Top - internal patio West Lancashire Investment Centre, Skelmersdale.

**Page 57:**  
St Michael's Church, Aughton.

**Page 58:**  
Lathom House Almshouses, Lathom.

**Back cover main photograph:**  
West Lancashire Investment Centre, Skelmersdale.

**Back cover small photographs:**  
Top - new housing at Ormskirk Grammar School, Ormskirk  
Bottom - inside view of one of properties at Pheasants Farm, Dalton.



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