



## Extracts from [The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide](#) – Checklists

### The Location and Siting of New Development

In general terms the location of new buildings should:

- Avoid skylines and prominent spurs
- Avoid open slopes
- Be concealed from all but close quarter views
- Not extend ribbon development
- Make maximum use of the site contours without major earthworks
- Make maximum use of existing trees and landscape features

### Relationship of New Buildings to the Landscape, Neighbourhood and Site

Issues to consider when designing any new development or extension:

- The setting of the village or individual building in the landscape
- The nature and pattern of development in the village
- The features which contribute to the character of the village and older buildings, or the locality of an older building
- The location of the building site within the village
- The nature of the site itself and its existing landscape features
- The relationship of the site to its neighbours and the street
- The existing street pattern and the relationship of the building to the road
- The materials used and design details of traditional buildings
- The scale and form of the proposed building in relation to the site and neighbouring buildings
- Existing and proposed landscaping, including boundary treatment, access roads and driveways
- Will the new building add to the sense of place and local character – does it belong to the Chilterns, or is it intrusive 'anywhere' development?

## **The Landscape Qualities of the Site**

- Carry out a survey of the landscape qualities and features of the site
- Retain as many of them as possible, especially those which link the site with the surrounding landscape
- Protect these features during the construction phase
- Take note of any local patterns in terms of garden size and layout
- Gardens should generally be big enough to allow some shrubs or trees to mature and help landscape the development
- Identify local landscape and design features which help to blend the building with the surrounding countryside

## **Detailed Design Considerations**

- Identify the main architectural features of the traditional buildings in the immediate area of the proposed new building, and interpret these in the design
- When building between existing properties, respect the size, shape and siting of adjacent buildings
- Avoid excessive earth works – step buildings down slopes instead
- In multiple plots, use traditional design styles and features to create a consistent design theme, but avoid repeated designs and geometric patterns
- Consider mixing types of housing, (terrace, semi, detached, linked) as this adds variety in a development and the settlement, whilst using consistent designs and materials
- Use simple building layouts usually at right angles or parallel to the road
- Avoid deep floor plans, which create large roof spans, often unacceptably shallow in pitch

## **Roofs**

- Use a pitched roof with central ridge
- Avoid flat roofs
- Avoid roofs with unequal pitches
- Full gabled roofs are preferred. Hipped and half-hipped roofs are less common
- Roof pitch should be at least 40 degrees for clay tiles and most slate roofs
- Consider using a double roof with valley gutters and parallel ridges for larger roofs to minimise their bulk
- Use plain red clay tiles whenever possible or slates as an alternative
- Clay tiles and slates should have a slight texture to help weathering
- Concrete tiles and pantiles are not appropriate
- Avoid using bargeboards on 'traditional cottage' designs
- Do not use bargeboards with highly ornamental 'alpine styling'
- Restrict the use of rooflights, however if used, keep low on the roof and avoid the front elevation of buildings
- Recessed rooflights can help to avoid light reflection
- Dormer windows should be smaller and kept low on the roof

## **Chimneys**

- Chimneys can be an attractive feature of the house
- If the house doesn't have an open fireplace, consider incorporating the central heating flue in a chimney
- Traditionally chimneys often had detailing as a monument to the bricklayers skill. This is especially prominent in traditional estate villages

## **Walls**

- Use red/orange brick
- Do not use other colours of brick unless there is a distinct local tradition
- Avoid using bricks with 'sharp' edges
- Use bricks with texture to help weathering
- Flint should be knapped with the dressed face exposed
- Colour banding should use variations of red brick – avoid other colours
- Consider using burnt 'headers' to provide detail
- Hanging wall tiles, colour washing and weather boarding should be avoided, unless characteristic of the locality
- Consider using weather boarding stained black for garages and other out-buildings – use wide boards, wherever possible

## **Windows and Doors**

- Elevations should have a greater proportion of solid wall to window
- Traditional windows had small panes
- Windows should be square or slightly taller than wide
- Glazing bars should be thin
- Windows should be slightly recessed
- Large windows and patio doors should be confined to the rear or screened parts of the house and should be divided by glazing bars
- Paint is usually the most appropriate finish for timber windows: staining is not a traditional finish and should not normally be used
- Wooden frames are to be preferred to PVC or aluminium
- PVC doors should be avoided
- Front doors should be wood panelled or ledge and braced, with little or no glazing. Fan lights should not be incorporated into the door itself
- Neo-Georgian style front doors should be avoided

## **Porches**

- Porches can create interest, especially on a flat fronted building
- The design of the porch should mirror the main building
- The porch must be in proportion to the house
- Do not add porches to traditional buildings simply for ornamentation
- The materials should be the same as the existing building
- The roof pitch should be the same as the existing building

## **Access, Parking and Garages**

- Parking areas/driveways are better located at the side of buildings
- Drives down the side of the building, with the garage located to side or rear of the dwelling, help to reduce the prominence of the garage and parked cars
- Avoid creating parking areas which dominate the front of the building, in full view of the street
- A drive through archway incorporated as part of the dwelling with garage to the rear can be effective
- The front garden should not be turned into a parking area
- Consider alternatives to standard garages such as 'cart shed' designs
- Integral garages should be avoided
- Avoid building large double garages particularly with a pyramid shaped roof
- Avoid large garage courts, especially if they are isolated from the main building
- Garages should not be set forward of the main dwelling
- Screen parking areas
- Keep visibility splays to a minimum

## **Landscaping**

- Hedges and walls are preferable to fencing and in open countryside hedges are preferable to walls
- Avoid woven panel fences such as 'larchlap'
- Do not use concrete blockwork
- Entrance gates should be simple and ornamental railings avoided
- Avoid 'gardening' the road verge
- Don't treat the spaces between buildings as simply 'leftover' – design them into the whole development
- Native species are preferred for landscaping. Avoid fast growing exotic species, especially cypress and laurel
- Don't use too many different surface materials and avoid the use of highly coloured concrete pavements
- Limit the area of tarmac
- Don't use concrete kerbs, fake cobbles and patterned concrete which are suburbanising features
- Consider bound gravel finishes for tarmac areas

## **Need further information?**

Please see the full illustrated Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Technical Notes available online at <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/buildings-design-guidance.html> or to buy in hard copy from [our online shop](#) for £20.

Or contact Chilterns Conservation Board Planning Officer [planning@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:planning@chilternsaonb.org) or 01844 355507.