# Hamlets

## Key characteristics

- These are very small settlements, mostly consisting of a compact built form that's arisen around a farmstead at the location of a spring.
- The countryside within this area is gently undulating or flat plateau type landscape, however some of the settlements are sited at the bottom of the valleys which have mature trees offering a more enclosed feel such as Milford, and to a lesser degree Southole and Philham. Other settlements although located on higher ground do benefit from a large numbers of mature trees such as Meddon.
- The settlements tend to be approached via narrow winding lanes and benefit from good access to countryside with numerous public footpaths.
- Generally development is low density, mostly two-storey buildings and some bungalows. Many properties are detached and benefit from large plot sizes. Development tends to follow consistent building lines parallel to the road and is either sited edge of road, or set well back from the road.
- Residential buildings pre 1920s tend to be two storey, larger detached properties often 'Devon Cross Passage Type Houses' and historically associated with a farm use. These properties front edge of road or gable end edge of road, and are constructed using traditional building materials. Properties often have gable porches, and many have full gable dormers. The older cob properties have small windows and doors with uneven walls, some have curved walls. Other characteristic features include red clay ridge tiling, red brick chimneys and decorative fascia painted brightly. Roofs are pitched, there are a number of 2-span farmhouses and some hipped.
- There is an interesting use of lime whitewash and part exposed stone on some properties. A few properties are half exposed stone to first floor and half render on the upper storey facade, this is appropriate where cob is used on a stone base. However it does not reflect the traditional appearance of the buildings when this is not the case.
- Traditional building materials include: exposed 'Carboniferous' sombre grey/brown stone with hints of red in colour (this is a durable hard stone often mottled with lichen giving an attractive appearance); cob walls rendered painted white or cream; red brick or stone chimneys; smaller wooden casement or sash windows often multi-paned, although replacement uPVC is also present; slate hanging on end elevations; slate roofs, or concrete grey/brown replacement tiles often with red clay ridge tiles.

Philham

Tosberry

Southole

Welcombe Mouth

Meddon

Milford

- Distinctive building features include: small stained glass feature windows; stilted pointed arches over fenestration; arched windows; decorative fascia boards with concave patterning; wooden shutters; decorative wooden porches incorporating decorative trellis and fascia; and clay finials on gable ends.
- There is an agricultural dominance particularly on the fringes of a hamlet, with a mixture of agricultural building styles and ages present. Traditional buildings include: exposed stone facades with red 'flemish' brick in segmental soldier course around fenestration.
- Residential development dating from 1960s and 1970s is mainly present within the settlement of Meddon which lies outside the AONB. This type of development usually consists of bungalows, although there are some two storey buildings. These dwellings enjoy low densities with large plots, off road parking and detached garages. They are usually rendered: with a faux stone or natural stacked stone facade; red brick with brown concrete roof tiles and large windows to the front.
- There are a number of prefab buildings, that are one storey properties some with asbetos roofing, and in disrepair.
- 1980s and 1990s residential properties are less common, although there are a number of detached dwellings.
- Thatch is a more unusual roofing material within the area. But where present these thatched properties exhibit the typical low eaves, steep pitched roofs and thatched porches, although some porches and parts of the buildings have replacement tiles.
- There are a number of traditional barns present that include: Linhays characterised by an open front with regularly spaced posts or pillars; Shippons, recognisable by the regularly spaced doors on the yard side and pitching door or window on the first floor; threshing barns with large double doors in the centre of one side and smaller doors on the other sides; and stables with symmetrically arranged doors and windows and pitching door at the front. Many of these buildings are sited edge of road, either fronting or facing gable on.
- Construction materials of traditional barns include dressed stone, random rubble stone or stone base with either exposed or rendered cob upper walls. Traditionally roofs would have been thatched or tiled. Thatched roofs have now been replaced with corrugated iron (sometimes rusted), although orangey or brown pantille clay tiles and slate roofs are still present. Many of these barns have red brick detailing around fenestration, usually in segmental arches with string course of bricks (two stretcher rows, two header rows) on either side of the opening. It is thought the red brick was sourced from Fremington, Barnstaple.
- Modern agricultural buildings are present at the fringes of many of the hamlets. These are large scale buildings with steel frames with corrugated roofs and sides, or wood cladding. Usually rusted corrugated iron or painted dark green, often dominate the landscape.


Elmscott


Linton


Southole


Milford


Meddon


Tosberry

- There are a number of barns converted for residential and holiday use. Barns in Southole are sensitively restored and retain distinctive characteristics with small slit windows with stone surrounds and stone relieving. Other barns are less sensitive with half dormer windows punched into the roof which dilute the original distinctive qualities of the barn.
- Traditional gateposts incorporate exposed grey dressed stone with red brick quoins (detailing effect on corners) in brick patterns of two stretcher rows and two header courses.
- The carboniferous hard sandstones and tough igneous rocks, which are dark grey sometimes brownish in colour, on older buildings have lichen which gives an attractive mottled appearance.
- Characteristic features include the stone walls that are either dry stone walling or more usually random rubble or roughly dressed stone laid in mortar. These walls vary in height, sometimes with stone pillars and small wooden gates creating breaks. They are either capped with stone slab copping, stone on edge or splayed stone coping. Some of the large stone walls are wide in width allowing a curved top. There are a number of dry stone walls with thinly cut stone laid in almost herringbone patterns. Some walls in Meddon use flat stones laid on top of one another an in places act as a retaining wall where properties are higher than the road, while others are curved.
- Large use of renewables (photovoltaics, and water heating sytems) are evident in Meddon.
- Other interesting boundary treatments include woven hurdles on green banks (Meddon). In Meddon many of the properties have gated entrances with private driveways, this is due primarily to the fact that many properties are post 1920 and are set well back from the road.
- Many gardens have a cottagey style and climbing plants such as wisteria, roses on the frontages. Fusica is a characteristic feature plant in hedgerows and hydrangeas (blue and cream) are often seen in verges against buildings. Where building are present in more exposed landscape windswept/sculpted trees are present within gardens and roadsides. Abundance of amenity style planting within gardens, contributing positively to street scene. Some walls have hanging or wall plants,
- Millford House is an unusual Georgian three storey house with hipped roof adjoining a two storey older farmhouse. A large quantity of stone and cob traditional barns in ruinous state and large stone walled garden are associated with Milford Farm and House.
- There are remnants of historic cobbles at the base or footpaths leading to some older properties.
- Milford and Linton have ponds adjacent to the road, possibly where soil was quarried for cob buildings nearby. The pond in Linton is well maintained interesting feature with ducks and central island with small willow present.
- Stone wells are important features within many of the settlements, many of which are listed. These stone structures are reminiscent of stone beehive huts.


Eastern Approach into Hartland village

# section 4:
# Design Guidance

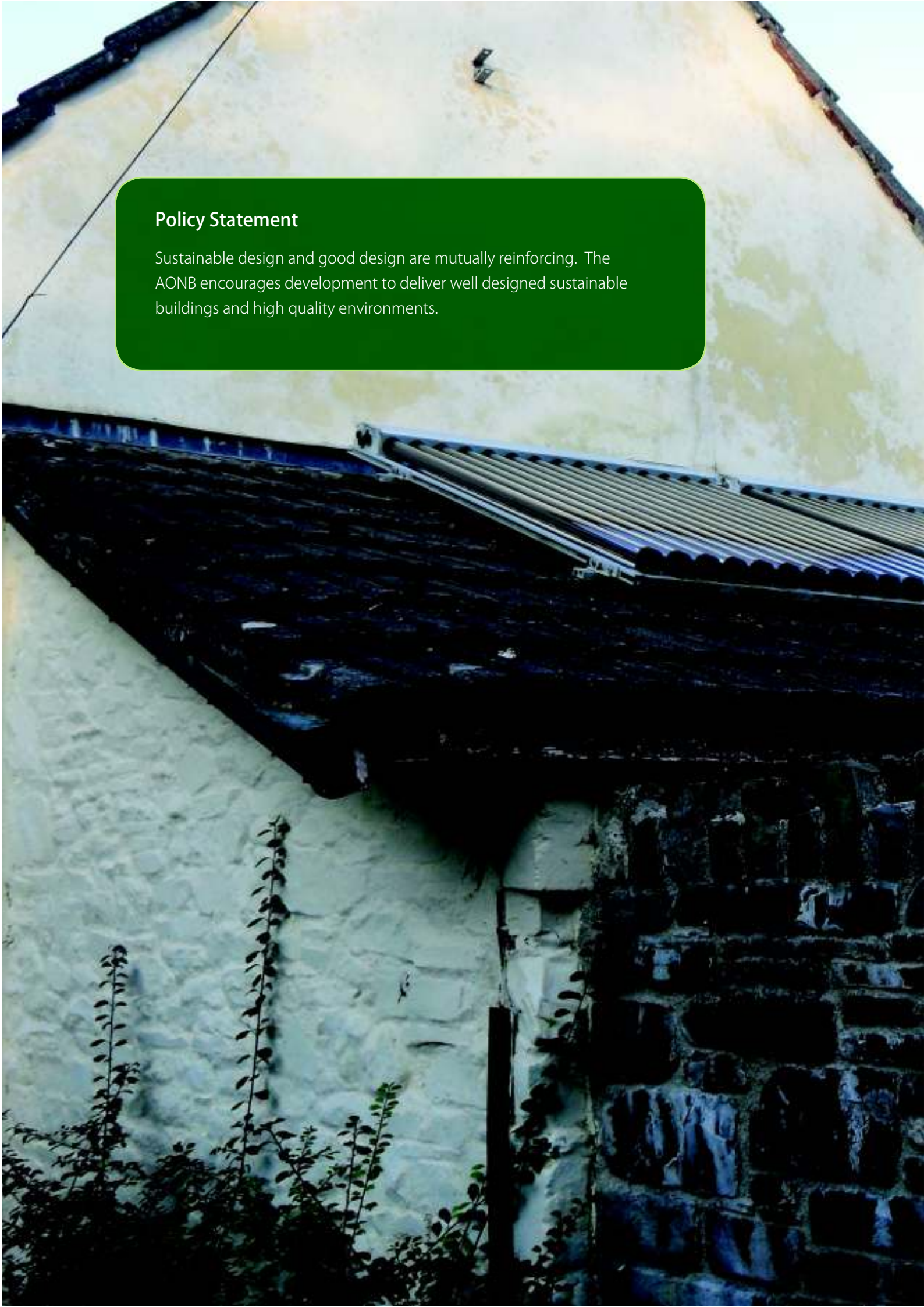
Fore Street, Hartland

# Design Guidance

To compliment the Joint North Devon and Torridge Landscape Character Assessment, it is intended that this design guidance make recommendations on appropriate design, use of materials, scale of development and building patterns for different types of new development in North Devon AONB, to ensure that it positively contributes to the character of the AONB. This guide provides advice on the following:

- Sustainable design
- Residential
- Agricultural
- Tourist and commercial
- Building elements and materials
- Highways

Each of the above can be read as a stand alone guidance although, whatever the type and scale of development proposed, a thorough understanding of the character of a site or building and its surroundings should inform the design process. Hence, Sections 2 of this design guide should be consulted prior to referencing the relevant section.



## Policy Statement

Sustainable design and good design are mutually reinforcing. The AONB encourages development to deliver well designed sustainable buildings and high quality environments.

# Sustainable Design

## General principles

The definition of sustainable development is widely defined as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future' sets out five guiding principles of sustainable development as:

- living within the planet's environmental limits;
- ensuring a strong healthy and just society;
- achieving a sustainable economy;
- promoting good governance;
- and using sound science responsibility.

Climate change is considered to be one of the greatest environmental challenges brought about by increasing man-made greenhouse gas emissions. New and existing buildings account for about 40% of man-made carbon dioxide emissions. These emissions are released during the construction phase of a building and as energy consumed once the building is inhabited. The Government has made a legally binding objective to achieve a 80% reduction in national CO2 emissions. This has initiated a drive for low and even 'zero' carbon homes and buildings, focusing attention on the need to ensure that developments are sustainable in both their design and construction.

Key strategies that will make buildings more sustainable are:

- **Sustainable construction:** Construction projects should aim for minimal negative impact on the environment. When choosing materials and products, consideration should be given to the amount of energy used in manufacture and transport (known as embodied energy) and pollution caused at extraction and processing sites;
- **Passive design:** Buildings should be designed to minimise energy consumption during use with passive design strategies;
- **Renewables:** Generate energy from renewable sources (non fossil fuels) such as hydro, solar power, ground & air source heat pumps, biomass, and domestic wind turbines; and
- **Refurbishment:** Reduce the energy consumption of existing buildings by adding insulation and upgrading thermal performance of windows and doors.

## Passive Design

The concept of passive (non-energy using) design is to minimise the energy needs of a building through making best use of strategies such as solar gain, insulation and draught proofing, building form and rainwater harvesting. Typically, buildings designed using passive design principles collect solar energy through south-facing glazing and direct it into the building to be either used immediately or stored for future use. Passive design solutions should be incorporated at the earliest stage of a project as they can have a fundamental impact on the siting, design and layout of a new building.

### Passive Design

**The design of new buildings or building layouts should:**

- maximise the potential for solar gain by orientating buildings to within 30° due south;
- locate buildings on a south facing slope to optimise solar access, while minimising overshadowing from adjacent buildings.
- ensure that roads ideally run east-west to facilitate south-facing front or rear housing layouts;
- use tree belts around the site to promote sheltering, deciduous trees are often the best as they optimise shading in the summer and permit the sun to penetrate at in the winter. The most effective height for trees is the height of the building and placed 1-3 heights away, or 3-4 heights where solar access is required;
- ensure a balance between optimal positioning for passive solar gain, and a layout which fits in with the character of the area;
- ensure the longer elevations of a house are orientated towards the sun and the principal rooms are placed on the sunny side of the house, whilst the cooler service spaces are located with a northerly aspect;
- avoid the exposed areas of the site and use any natural shelter offered;
- minimise wind chill from the prevailing wind by presenting a narrow frontage in that direction;
- maximise the amount of insulation in the building, with consideration given to the use of more passive sustainable materials such as sheep's wool, wood fibre or recycled materials (newsprint, and plastic);
- carefully consider the building form for instance a square, deep plan building is potentially more energy efficient with a low ratio of external wall area (where heat is mainly lost) to internal volume. However this must be balanced against the need to achieve acceptable levels of natural ventilation and daylight;
- consider attaching unheated spaces such as conservatories and garages to the outside of heated rooms to act as a thermal buffer to reduce heating needs and costs;
- consider harvesting rainwater and recycling 'grey' water from washing machines and baths to flush toilets to reduce water consumption.

## Renewables

**Biomass:** in the Hartland Peninsula, biomass is commonly wood pellets, wood chips or wood logs. Although it can be purpose grown such as miscanthus or can arise from a wide range of organic waste sources. Producing energy from biomass has both environmental and economic advantages. It is a carbon neutral process as the CO2 released when energy is generated is balanced by that absorbed during the fuel's growth. Small scale domestic use biomass usually takes the form of small stand-alone stoves that can provide space heating for domestic rooms and be fitted with a back boiler to provide water heating.

**Hydro-electric generation:** Hydro-power works by using falling water to drive a turbine and generates a steady, reliable supply of electricity compared to wind or photovoltaic installations. Carefully designed micro-hydro systems take only a small amount of water from a river or stream and return it a short distance downstream, thus reducing their environmental impact.

**Solar hot water panels:** This solar water heating system includes solar hot water panels that are located on the roof of a property. The panels then absorb energy from the sun to heat water for baths and showers, supplementing another water heating system. The panels are relatively heavy as they contain circulating water, so the roof needs to be strong enough to take their weight. Enough space is also needed to be available for an accompanying water storage cylinder.

**Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels:** Solar photovoltaic panels absorb energy from the sun to generate electricity. The best location for a solar PV array is on a south-facing roof of a building, or on the ground at a tilt of 30-45 degrees to work effectively. They come in an array of shapes, colours and materials, some of which mimic the appearance of slates. They are generally low maintenance as there are few moving parts to go wrong.

**Ground and Air Source Heat Pumps:** A Ground Source Heat Pump is a system that extracts heat from the ground, upgrades it to a higher temperature and releases it where required for space and water heating. They can also be reversed for cooling purposes in the summer. As these systems raise the temperature to around 40° they are most suitable for underfloor heating. Air source heat pumps work in a similar way but instead absorb heat from the outside air and are less efficient. This is then used to warm water for radiators, underfloor heating, or to warm the air in the building.

**Domestic scale wind turbines:** The UK is the windiest area of Europe and wind turbines can be a cost effective and sustainable way of generating energy. However their performance is very site specific and the output from a turbine depends on its size and location. For the majority of property owners living in urban areas, installing wind turbines on or close to buildings with overall windspeeds of less than 5m/s is probably not a realistic option. However in exposed areas they can take advantage of higher wind speeds from a wide variety of directions. The major issues in the AONB is their visual intrusion in the landscape and the noise they generate in operation, hence sensitive siting would be an important consideration.

## Renewables

**The design of new solar installations should:**

- consider photovoltaic panels that can be integrated with traditional tiles or slates as a building material into the roof or facade of a building, such as solar slates, solar glass laminates and or other solar design solutions;
- consider design issues such as fixings, colour, reflectivity and size, for instance solar panels with dark surfaces are more likely to be acceptable on buildings with slate roofs or on new buildings in areas where slate roofs are characteristic.
- consider the use of solar collectors or evacuated tubes that can be incorporated into the existing roof in the same way as roof windows. Ideally these require an angle of 30-40 degrees, facing due south;
- carefully consider the effect of any solar installation on the appearance of the building. It is a good idea to line panels up with existing windows and roof lights and to ensure the sizes of the panels are complementary to existing features on the building or nearby buildings;
- consider the shadows cast by tall trees and neighbouring buildings;
- consider the roof bearing capacity of an existing building when installing solar hot water panels;
- consider the use of photovoltaic panels on contemporary buildings, industrial buildings and agricultural buildings as they blend well. Outbuildings or extensions can also provide good locations for panels;
- ensure roof-mounted panels are installed so that they are flush with the roof and do not protrude above the roofline. This can help them to blend better with their surroundings.

**The design of new ground source heat pump installations should:**

- if the technology requires disturbance of the ground, consider whether this will cause damage to a habitat that is of high wildlife value or any buried archaeology. In such cases you could consider installing the pipes vertically using a borehole;
- carefully consider the siting and location of the heat exchanger on the outside of the building as this can have a detrimental impact on the building, particularly if it is listed or is in a Conservation Area;

## Refurbishment

Before undertaking refurbishment to an existing property it is important to understand how an existing building is constructed. It is advised that when any alterations to a historically important building, or property located in a Conservation Area are proposed, the Local Authority planners (and conservation officers if need be) are contacted.

The most cost effective way to reduce energy consumption particularly in existing builds is to maximise the amount of insulation, make it airtight and ensure suitable levels of ventilation. Insulation is a very good way to improve the thermal performance of a property and can be installed in the roof, on the walls (externally or internally) or in the ground floor. Single glazed windows in buildings are a major cause of energy loss, and where appropriate replacement with new double or triple glazed timber units should be considered. For historic windows to be retained or windows of properties located within a Conservation Area, measures such as draught proofing, secondary glazing, internal shutters and heavy curtains can be adopted.

## Ratings

The main tools for measuring the sustainability of new buildings are the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Model (BREEAM).

**Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH):** The Code for Sustainable Homes is a way to rate and certify the environmental performance of new homes. The Code uses a 1 to 6 star rating system. A 6 star home having achieved the highest sustainability rating and being zero carbon. 'Passivhaus' is the standard for energy use in all building types and the government expects CSH-rated dwellings to be based on Passivhaus design principles. Passivhaus is considered to be broadly equivalent to Code Level 4 (using SAP). Passivhaus is founded on energy conservation and does not require a conventional heating system but does expects a higher quality of design and construction.

**BREEAM:** This assesses development against various categories such as pollution, ecology, energy efficiency and waste management. It then gives an overall rating of Pass, Good, Very Good, Excellent or Outstanding. BREEAM is aimed at larger developments but the principles that underpin the assessments are also applicable to smaller developments.

## Policy Statement

The AONB Partnership will seek to resist major development within or affecting the AONB. Major development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances such as; there is a proven overriding national need and no reasonable alternative means of meeting that need; and the development does not in any way undermine the
special qualities that led to the designation of the landscape as AONB.

Minor sized developments will be supported by the AONB should proposals/ schemes reflect local distinctiveness, and contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment of the Hartland Peninsula.

Pillman Drive, Hartland

# Residential

## General principles

There are limited opportunities for new residential development within the AONB and the majority of work is in the form of extensions and alterations to existing buildings, infill plots and replacement dwellings. It is important that new residential development is sensitively designed and makes use of appropriate materials, respecting the local character of the area in which it is placed. In order to achieve this it should seek to promote or reinforce traditional and local distinctiveness, by respecting the pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings, their plots, and the general range of building styles and materials.

Proposals for residential new builds should reinforce the Hartland Peninsula's sense of place by respecting the existing built heritage. This does not necessarily mean that it should mimic the existing, as well considered, appropriately proportioned and detailed contemporary designs can enhance both the building's character and that of the wider area. It is important that new builds respect the best qualities of neighbouring properties, whilst taking into account the surrounding landscape context of the Hartland Peninsula such as unique views and landscape character. New development should not only enhance the settlement's distinctive characteristics, but promote energy efficiency, use appropriate renewable energy strategies, incorporate green infrastructure and ensure safe and inclusive access.

## New Residential Builds

New development should take full account of the relationship with existing surrounding building, important views and open spaces. The shape of the land, layout of other buildings, positions of trees and hedges should all be used to tie the development to the site. The principles of  sustainability (as outlined in section x) should be incorporated, such as orientating the building to make the most of passive solar gain. Variety in building heights can create an attractive and interesting roofscape and should be encouraged. The settlements in Hartland Peninsula comprise of differing sized building footprints, resulting from evolution and the extension of individual buildings. Proposals should respect the patterns of existing development through appropriately sized building footprints.

Scale and Massing, Hartland village

## Building Form and Location

**The design of new residential buildings should:**

- give consideration to existing properties that are adjacent to the new development, for instance new development should not overlook neighbouring houses and gardens, and positioning of elements such as windows and balconies should avoid direct views;
- maintain privacy by retaining an appropriate distance between main habitable rooms of facing properties;
- not cause shading to an adjacent property;
- respond to adjacent building heights and to those within close proximity to the site and should reflect local patterns of development assessing the average percentage of site coverage and the typical size of buildings within the local context;
- respect the building line created by other houses/buildings frontages in the street or settlement;
- carefully consider spaces between buildings as these are important as the buildings themselves in creating a distinctive street scene;
- consider the height/size of windows, doors and porches, as the varying detail and sizes can contribute positively to the local character of a place;
- give regard to the existing frontage boundary treatments, are other properties bounded by hedges, stone walls or railings? Boundaries help to distinguish between the public and private spaces and can play an important cohesive feature in unifying the street scene;
- retain where possible existing mature trees, hedges and other planting where possible as these can contribute significantly to the setting of a house and the attractiveness of the street scene;
- include soft landscaping as a way to help: define and soften spaces; integrate a development into its surroundings; and create green corridors and habitat links. Careful consideration should be given to the species selection, scale and design of planting. For example native species are good for biodiversity and local distinctiveness, are well adapted to their local environment, and are more likely to survive, especially in maritime or exposed type environments found within the Hartland Peninsula;
- avoid soft landscaping such as large belts of conifers for screening, ornamental conifers or exotics, in exposed treeless areas where their visual appearance would be intrusive. Here a more subtle approach should be adopted such as low shrub planting. In areas where the landform is undulating, and woodland and hedgerow trees are present, the planting of locally native tree belts should be encouraged to shelter new development and enhance biodiversity.

For guidance on building materials please refer to pages 95 to 104, Building Materials and Elements.

## Domestic Extensions and Alterations

Rather than moving house to gain extra space many people extend their existing property and permitted development rights allow many extensions to be built without the need to apply for planning permission. A well designed extension can enhance the character, appearance and value of a building. However the cumulative effect of numerous extensions over a period of time can have a negative impact on both character of the building and its surroundings and as such should be avoided. The key to a successful approach is to take clues from the existing built form in the Hartland Peninsula, which is a distinctive style of simple, uncluttered and robust forms. It is also important that extensions remain subordinate to the original dwelling so as not to have an adverse impact upon the original building itself. The different types of extensions include general alterations, minor additions, conservatories and outbuildings. If the development is located within a Conservation Area it is important to take advice from the Conservation Officer at Torridge District Council.