

New Forest National Park Design Guide

(Incorporating the National Park Design Code)

Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation Draft Document

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The New Forest is a unique landscape survival in lowland England. Great expanses of natural habitats, extensive ancient woodland, mire and heath are intimately connected to villages, small-holdings and farms. Large areas of the National Park are the subject of either national or international nature conservation designations, or have conservation area status for the quality of their built environment.
- 1.2. Within this context, the mosaic of buildings and their setting in the landscape contribute to the underlying character that is so important yet vulnerable to change.

How to use this document

- 1.3. The aim of this Design Guide is to provide advice to help achieve high standards of design in development proposals while retaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the New Forest National Park. The guide does not prescribe one style of building over another. Rather it is intended to inspire all applicants, their agents, architects and designers, to have regard to those features and rural characteristics that make the New Forest such a special place. It can also be used as a good practice guide for development that does not need planning permission.
- 1.4. It applies throughout the New Forest National Park, both inside and outside the Defined Villages and other settlements, and also applies to traditional buildings and contemporary designs.
- 1.5. This Design Guide embodies the broad principles of good design encouraged in national and local planning policies. Applicants are encouraged to use this document to inform planning applications, and engage in pre-application discussions where appropriate. It will also be helpful to liaise with the relevant town or parish council, and with neighbours, in advance of submitting a planning application.

The importance of good design

- 1.6. The importance of well designed buildings and spaces within a national park context cannot be overstated. They contribute to vibrant communities where people feel safe and happy to live and work. They must be resilient to the impacts of climate change and provide space for people and nature.
- 1.7. Sense of place is made up of a number of elements and features, including space, buildings and infrastructure. Good design requires a careful understanding of this local context. Appreciating what makes the New Forest special is key to achieving a scheme that reflects its local distinctiveness and character.
- 1.8. The layout, form and scale of buildings, their appearance, materials and landscaping, are all important elements that together make for schemes

appropriate to the area. What this means in the New Forest context will be explored in more detail in later chapters, through broad principles.

- 1.9. The New Forest is not characterised by only one or two building styles, or types of local building materials; there are a number of different ways the character of the area can be reflected. This can include through an appropriate scale and detailing of a building, as well as its boundaries and landscaping. The winners of the entries to the National Park Authority's Building Design Awards from the last few years show that contemporary design can be appropriate and successful in the New Forest in the right context.
- 1.10. As the New Forest is a living, working environment, buildings need to be fit for purpose, and designed to last, with sustainability at their core. Good design incorporates elements that allow buildings to adapt to climate change, including natural shading, orientation and layout, passive solar design, energy and water efficiency measures. They can incorporate biodiversity features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and planting for wildlife. These matters are also explored in more detail in Chapter 6. The key challenge for us all is to bring these elements together in one well-designed package that is appropriate to the New Forest.
- 1.11. For developments that require a Design and Access Statement (see advice on the National Park Authority [website](#)), applicants should show in their Statement the rationale for the development and demonstrate how it embodies the Local Plan policies, and the recommendations in this Design Guide.

Planning status

- 1.12. The Design Guide is a Supplementary Planning Document, prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations. It conforms with, and supplements, the adopted [New Forest National Park Local Plan](#) (2019), and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It should also be used as a good practice guide for development that does not need planning permission. Applicants should note that there are many other issues to be taken into account, as well as design, when planning applications are being considered within the National Park, and development should be consistent with all relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Planning policy framework

- 1.13. There is a wide range of national and local policies and guidance that helps identify what constitutes good design. In particular development in the New Forest National Park should comply with national planning policies, and development plan documents. This Design Guide provides guidelines as to what comprises good design in a national park context within the framework of the policies. This includes a specific focus on the elements that underlie the unique character and identity of

the New Forest National Park. This Design Guide will therefore be the primary source for detailed guidance on design issues within the National Park.

- 1.14. The following paragraphs set out some of the most relevant national and local planning policy guidance that have informed the advice in this Design Guide. Additionally, some of the local guidance will set out more specific details for certain types of development (such as horse-related development), or for particular geographical locations such as conservation areas, village design statements and 'made' neighbourhood plans.

National policy

- 1.15. The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. One of the key principles is the creation of high quality buildings and places to foster inclusivity, a sense of place, develop safe and accessible environments and respond to local character and history. The NPPF also emphasises that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, confirming that National Parks have the highest status of protection in relation to these matters; and to conserving and enhancing cultural heritage.

National guidance

- 1.16. The [Planning Practice Guidance](#) provides regularly updated supporting guidance on good design (particularly the section on 'Design: process and tools'), including primary principles and objectives, what it can achieve and how good design should shape planning proposals.
- 1.17. The [National Design Guide](#) (2019) also forms part of the Government's planning guidance and illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It focuses on ten characteristics of design which work together comprising context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. Further details are provided in Chapter 3 of this Design Guide.
- 1.18. [Building for a Healthy Life](#) (BHL) is a design tool to measure and assess good design, and has become a Government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. BHL focuses on three core themes of 'Integrating into the neighbourhood', 'creating a place', and 'street and home'. The National Park Design Guide embodies the principles of BHL and it is expected that applicants will reflect this in their proposed development.
- 1.19. The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission was set up to promote high quality design for new homes and neighbourhoods. In the Commission's final report to Government, [Living with Beauty](#) (2020), the emphasis is on the creation of beauty at three scales:

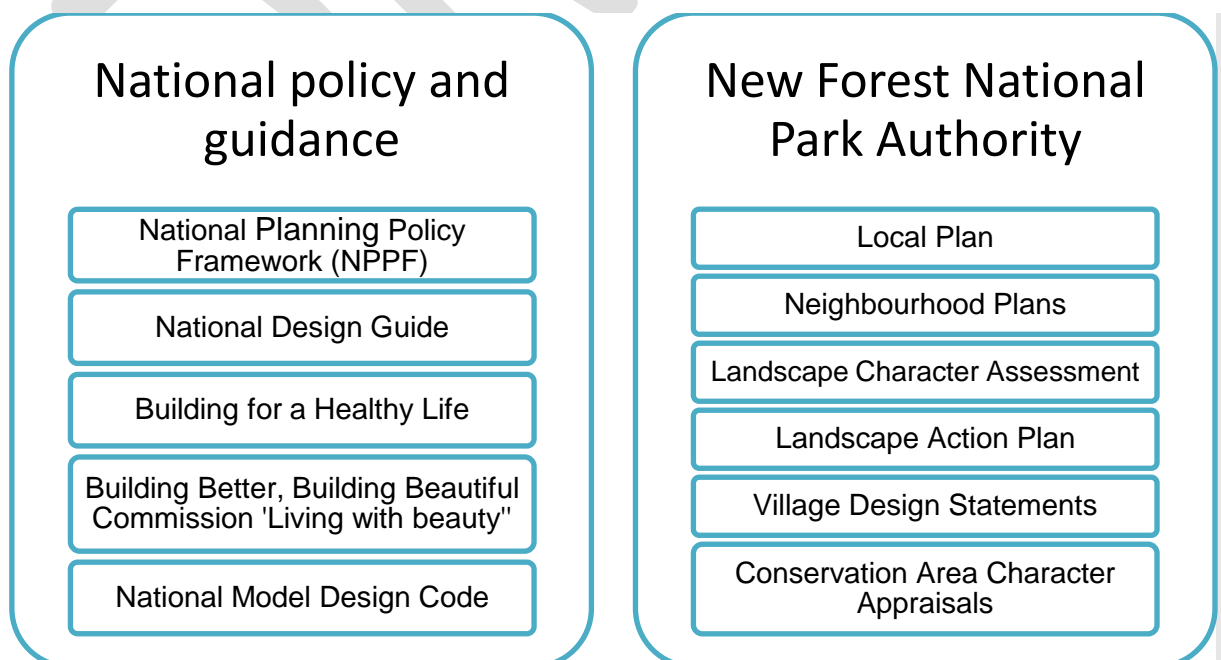
- Beautifully placed - sustainable settlement patterns sitting in the landscape
 - Beautiful places - streets, squares and parks, the 'spirit of place'
 - Beautiful buildings - windows, materials, proportion, space
- 1.20. In August 2020 the Government published a White Paper entitled '[Planning For The Future](#)' which signals the intention to undertake a comprehensive review of the planning system. Whilst this proposes many changes to national planning policies and processes, it does emphasise the Government's commitment to place a new focus on design to create beautiful homes and places, which embed high environmental standards.
- 1.21. The Government published the National Model Design Code in July 2021. It provides guidance on the production of local design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design, expanding on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide (2019). Planning authorities are expected to develop their own local design codes or guides, proportionate to the scale of development and design issues pertinent to their area. This Design Guide incorporates the relevant design code elements for the National Park area, as set out in Chapter 4.
- 1.22. National policy and guidance, as well as other legislation such as the Climate Change Act, sets out why and how there should be an emphasis on sustainable development. This includes an expectation that all new development should adopt and incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques. The aim over time is to achieve low or zero carbon footprints for new buildings. Chapter 6 of the Design Guide sets out more detail on how to incorporate sustainable features into the design and layout of new development in the National Park, whilst respecting its local character.

Local policy and guidance

- 1.23. Development proposals should conform to the policies of the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) (generally referred to as 'the Local Plan'). Further details can be found on the Authority's website at [Local plan - New Forest National Park Authority \(newforestnpa.gov.uk\)](https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk).
- 1.24. The key policies within the Local Plan (2019) which are amplified by the Design Guide are:
- Policy SP1: Supporting sustainable development
 - Policy DP2: General development principles
 - Policy SP7: Landscape character
 - Policy SP11: Climate change
 - Policy SP14: Renewable energy
 - Policy SP15: Tranquillity
 - Policy SP16: The historic and built environment

Policy SP17: Local distinctiveness
Policy DP18: Design principles
Policy DP34: Residential character of the defined villages
Policy DP35: Replacement dwellings
Policy DP36: Extensions to dwellings
Policy DP37: Outbuildings

- 1.25. The Local Plan emphasises that development in the many conservation areas and affecting all listed buildings will need careful consideration to ensure that their character is conserved and enhanced, as set out in national policy, and that the character and local distinctiveness of the National Park is respected. There are 20 conservation areas in the National Park, three of which straddle the boundary with New Forest District Council. More detail can be found in the individual Conservation Area Character Appraisals available on the Authority's [website](#). Applicants should always check whether their proposed development is within a conservation area or affects any listed building.
- 1.26. Another element of local design guidance are [Village Design Statements](#). These are a way for local communities to work with the Authority in preparing guidelines for the design of new development in their area. They are adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents that complement and add detail to existing planning policies and guidance.
- 1.27. [Neighbourhood Plans](#) may also include relevant design policies for a particular area. Once supported at local referendum and formally 'made' by the National Park Authority, these policies form part of the statutory 'development plan' for the National Park (alongside the Authority's Local Plan) and applicants should have regard to any relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.



2. Development Context: The character of the New Forest

Relevant Local Plan (2019) Policies

SP7 – Landscape character

SP16 – The historic and built environment

SP17 – Local distinctiveness

DP18 - Design principles

- 2.1. The design quality of a new development, at any scale, should not be viewed in isolation. It should respond positively, sensitively, and imaginatively to the local context, so that it slots comfortably into the wider picture. Therefore, development designs, whether traditional or modern, require a considered response to a place, based on an understanding of its character.
- 2.2. Large or small developments need to consider and respond to the character of the New Forest at the large, medium and small scale: the wider landscape; the settlement pattern and layout within the landscape; and the form, scale, design, materials, and details of the local built traditions.
- 2.3. This chapter gives a broad-brush introduction to the main aspects of the New Forest's landscape, settlement, and architectural character.

Landscape Character

- 2.4. Over the last 1,000 years, traditional land management cycles of burning and cutting vegetation, and the commoning tradition of pastoral farming, have shaped the natural landscape of the New Forest. This has resulted in a mosaic of woodland, ancient wood pasture, heathland, mire, and forest farmlands, traversed by stream valleys and roamed by the New Forest ponies, donkeys, pigs, and cattle.
- 2.5. The [New Forest Landscape Character Assessment](#) (2015) provides a more detailed assessment of the landscape, describing 19 different character areas in the National Park based on variations in the natural environment, settlement pattern and land uses. Policy SP7 in the Local Plan (2019) highlights the importance of understanding the unique landscape setting described in these Character Areas to ensure new development sits comfortably alongside existing features and attributes.

Settlement Character

- 2.6. The rural settlement patterns found in the New Forest are intimately related to the natural and man-made features of the landscape and contribute to its evident character.
- 2.7. The requirements of commoners and smallholders, engaged in the rural economy, have largely driven the pattern of development in the New Forest since medieval

times. This has produced a diverse range of settlement types across the New Forest. Nucleated villages, like Lyndhurst and Beaulieu, developed in strategic locations on more productive land and along key trade and transport routes to provide easy access to smallholdings and the Open Forest, as well as interconnectivity. Dispersed rural settlements such as Burley and Frogham, and scattered farmsteads, hamlets, and isolated commoners' encroachment expanded the built area to the Open Forest. As the piecemeal enclosure of land continued during the 18th and 19th centuries, linear settlements, such as East Boldre, expanded into the Open Forest.

- 2.8. Several large private land-owning estates have also influenced the character of the New Forest, creating more formal areas of landscaping and development. The large country houses are usually examples of grand and fashionable architecture set within substantial gardens and designed parkland, producing striking views and a sense of stately detachment. The houses were at the centre of a working agricultural estate that included stables, icehouses, gate lodges, dairies, home farms, kitchen gardens and estate workers cottages, which were all built as part of a formal landscape design.
- 2.9. The New Forest settlements developed organically over centuries as the Crown and independent estates released parcels of land for enclosure and development, and as illegal encroachments continued to creep onto the Open Forest. Consequently, the settlements traditionally had soft, informal boundaries, which 'bled' into the surrounding landscape. Natural or visually permeable plot boundaries further helped settlements to nestle into the landscape.



Historic development in Fritham nestling into the contours of the landscape

- 2.10. The rural economy and piecemeal development of the New Forest has also generally resulted in low-density settlements. Buildings in hamlets and villages are often set back from the road, behind wide verges, and situated within spacious plots, creating a distinctive open rural setting. Other settlements within the New Forest have a contrasting sense of enclosure, where there is denser tree cover, mature hedgerows lining the roads, and where development has been established closer to the highway.
- 2.11. Settlement densities are generally higher in the larger nucleated villages of the New Forest, especially towards the centre of the defined villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, and Sway. Over time these settlements have developed, providing local employment, services, and transport links. Policy DP34 in the Local Plan recognises that the built character of these villages is varied – the cores are often characterised by denser, close-knit development, while the outer areas are generally more spacious in character. Policy DP34 and this Design Guide emphasise that development within the Defined Villages should be informed by consideration of the character of the village.



Higher density, varied development along Brookley Road in the village centre of Brockenhurst

Rise of Suburbanisation

- 2.12. Since the 19th century, plots within the New Forest settlements have been infilled and the settlements expanded outwards. This has resulted in increasingly hard urban edges and more densely populated settlement cores. Since the 1920's some ribbon housing development has also spread out from the village centres. The designation of the New Forest Heritage Area in 1985, with additional planning controls introduced in 1992, helped to protect the character of the area. The New Forest was designated as a National Park in 2005, giving the area the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. National Park status

also means the conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the New Forest - including its built environment – should be given great weight.

The Local Vernacular

- 2.13. The local vernacular architecture of the New Forest is rich and varied, having developed over the centuries as new technologies and materials became more easily and cheaply available, and as new fashions arose. However, it was borne out of humble beginnings as commoners and small-scale subsistence farmers played a central role in creating the present cultural landscape of the New Forest, including the architecture of many historic buildings.
- 2.14. **Commoners Dwellings** tended to be modest properties, usually a single room deep, laid out in a two-cell linear plan. They were built from an established range of materials that were locally sourced, easily accessible, and affordable. These shared architectural attributes have created a unified recognisable New Forest vernacular. However, due to the piecemeal fashion in which the area was developed many New Forest buildings are unique. As buildings have been extended and added to over time their unique and organic rural character has been augmented.
- 2.15. Dwellings were often accompanied by small groups of lightweight ancillary agricultural buildings such as barns and stables, arranged around a central courtyard. Agricultural buildings have a range of distinct forms and sizes, depending on their intended function and their builder's resources. This gives depth and variety of character to New Forest settlements.
- 2.16. **Encroachment Cottages** and squatters' cottages were also common in the New Forest. They were originally established on marginal land, on the basis of the historical convention that a right of possession was established if a house was erected on common ground overnight and had fire in the hearth between sunrise and sunset. Consequently, these dwellings were small and easily overlooked shanties, shacks, cabins, and hovels of rudimentary, makeshift, and lightweight construction. With time some of these dwellings became more firmly established and were consolidated and enlarged with more durable materials. Woodgreen has many examples of encroachment cottages that contribute to the distinctive character of the village and the settlement form.



An example of a small commoners dwelling that has been extended over time

- 2.17. Early cottages in the Forest date from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries and are usually timber framed with thatched roofs. Cob was a common building material as it was cheap and readily available and required few tools. Cob was particularly popular in the 18th and 19th centuries when the brick tax precluded the poorer classes from building in brick. These cottages are characterised by their thatched roofs, shallow foundations, and their thick, rounded walls, punctuated by only a few small window openings.
- 2.18. In the mid-late 19th to early 20th century, the post-industrial revolution and the growth of the railway made alternative materials, like brick and slate, cheaper and widely available. This influenced the character of the New Forest architecture. During this period double fronted redbrick cottages under slate gable roofs were built in empty plots between the earlier developments. These New Forest Cottages are characterised by their symmetrical frontage; central porch; and a gable roof bookended by chimneystacks.



A typical 19th century New Forest Cottage behind a traditional timber post and rail fence and pedestrian gate

- 2.19. The **Arts and Crafts** architectural movement of the late 19th and early 20th century was also very influential in the New Forest, as the area became more fashionable. The style is typified by unique, asymmetric designs, and the use of a variety of traditional local building materials and craftsmanship. Many large, high status houses or villas, built in Burley and Lyndhurst as country retreats of the upper middle classes, are in the Arts and Crafts style. Smaller 19th and early 20th century town houses and estates built on the fringes of Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst and Sway also display architectural tropes of the Arts and Crafts movement.



A 19th century Arts and Crafts villa on the outskirts of Lyndhurst

- 2.20. The 19th and 20th centuries also saw a rise in commercial development, particularly in Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst, where several purpose-built shops were constructed, and several domestic properties were converted into shops with accommodation on the upper floors.
- 2.21. **Formal architecture** is less common in the New Forest; most monumental architecture is associated with the large country houses, landed estates and churches. Except for Beaulieu Abbey, the larger medieval houses of the New Forest have not survived, though some of their 18th and 19th century replacements do. These country houses were at the forefront of architectural fashion and innovation, often displaying the influences of continental architecture. The supporting infrastructure to the large houses (the gate houses, estate cottages, lodges, model farms and dairies etc.), though usually modest in size, also often had formal architectural tropes, distinct to each estate, as seen at Breamore (just outside the National Park), Pylewell or Exbury. Despite this, the estates have retained their rural landscape setting and character, as they were usually planned to provide a spacious aesthetic, a rural idyll.



A pair of estate cottages displaying decorative architectural features indicative of their status

Locally Listed Buildings

- 2.22. Buildings of special heritage and architectural interest are statutorily listed for their national significance and have been given legal protection. In most villages, normally only a handful of buildings are statutorily listed. However, many vernacular properties, though not considered of national significance or special interest, make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the New Forest National Park and its individual villages. The loss of these properties would erode the special character of the New Forest. Consequently, many vernacular buildings have been identified as locally listed buildings, which the National Park Authority consider to have significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. The locally listed buildings identified to date are predominantly located within Conservation Areas, and have been compiled into a list by parish, which is available on our website ([here](#)). The 'local list' will continue to evolve and as an ongoing process with further buildings across all areas of the National Park will be considered for inclusion. Policies SP16 and DP35 of the adopted National Park Local Plan (2019) seek to conserve the local distinctiveness of the area and safeguard locally listed buildings from inappropriate development, loss, or replacement.

3. Design Principles

Relevant Local Plan (2019) Policies

- SP1 - Supporting sustainable development
- DP2 - General development principles
- SP7 - Landscape character
- SP16 - The historic and built environment
- SP17 - Local distinctiveness
- DP18 - Design principles
- SP19 - New residential development in the National Park
- SP21 - The size of new dwellings
- DP34 - Residential character of the Defined Villages
- DP35 - Replacement dwellings
- DP36 - Extensions to dwellings
- DP37 - Outbuildings

- 3.1. New development offers an opportunity to reflect on what is special and unique about the New Forest. New development that meets other planning criteria and creates beautiful places that will stand the test of time; protects and enhances the New Forest's precious environment; and supports efforts to combat climate change, will be supported. High quality development includes not just beautiful buildings, but also gardens, landscape and other green spaces in between. The approach should be holistic, to look at the impact of the whole development within its setting. This should generate net gains for the quality of our built environment.
- 3.2. The National Design Guide addresses how to recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of 10 characteristics. These are set out below:

1. **Context**

Well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site and beyond the site boundary. It is influenced by culture, local history and heritage.

2. **Identity**

The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. Well-designed places with a strong identity help to give the users, owners and residents a sense of pride and well being.

3. **Built Form**

Well-designed places use the right mix of building types, forms and scale of buildings and public spaces for the context and the proposed density, to create a coherent form of development that people enjoy.

4. **Movement**

Well-designed places have a hierarchy of connected routes, paths and lanes. New roads should reinforce this hierarchy and priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists, without relying on the private car for the day to day. Access to public transport to promote active travel is important.

5. **Nature**

Integrating nature into new development is important. Well-designed developments include site-specific enhancements to achieve biodiversity net gains at neighbourhood, street and household level. Green corridors can be used to extend and enhance existing ecosystems. Existing areas of valuable biodiversity are protected and enhanced. Priority is given to rare or critical habitats and species.

6. **Public Spaces**

The quality of spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Public spaces are open to all and promote social interaction and community well being. High quality public spaces will include planting and water, and incorporate biodiversity, and this is particularly relevant to allocated housing sites within the National Park.

7. **Uses**

Depending on the scale of the development (and recognising that the majority of developments within the National Park are small-scale), there should be a mix of uses and tenures to reflect the diversity of the community and the varying needs of residents.

8. **Homes & Buildings**

Well-designed homes and buildings provide good quality internal and external environments for their users to promote health and well being. They should be cost effective to run and incorporate sustainable design features.

9. **Resources**

Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design should respond to the impact of climate change by being energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions to meet net zero by 2050.

10. Lifespan

Well-designed places sustain their beauty over the long term. They add to the quality of life for their users and as a result will be cared for by the users and custodians. This enables users to develop a sense of ownership over time, and the buildings need to be able to adapt to their changing needs and technologies during their lifespan.

- 3.3. The new Design Code (as set out in Chapter 4) will complement the revised and consolidated [Manual for Streets](#) (and [Manual for Streets 2](#)), which is committed to the creation of sustainable and inclusive public spaces and streets, and also the [National Design Guide](#). This Design Code has been prepared locally to reflect the special character of the New Forest and encapsulate its special qualities to provide a clear guide for development.
- 3.4. Particular reference and consideration should also be made to the [Conservation Character Appraisals](#) and the [Landscape Character Assessment](#) (LCA), which set out the special characteristics of these areas of the New Forest in more detail. These documents will help to inform site analysis and offer a wider understanding of the site context to help inform the design process, and should be referenced in the preparation of Design & Access Statements.
- 3.5. Whatever the size of the development, the layout and grouping of buildings and the spaces created between them, should reflect the locally distinctive characteristics of the site and its surroundings. This means that buildings should be grouped together to form a sense of enclosure and define the 'grain' of the immediately adjacent areas. Opportunities should be taken to link to existing footpaths, frame a key view or landmark, as well as creating a safe and attractively laid out environment which connects to the existing settlement.
- 3.6. In terms of key design principles, orientation is an important factor that should be considered at the start of the design process. Layout should maximise daylight, with a high proportion of southerly aspects, passive solar gain and sunlight to gardens. Plotting the sunpath at different times of the year will help determine the optimum orientation.
- 3.7. Linked to this, landscape design should be an integral part of the design process, so that plants do not grow and mature to block sunlight or key views within the settlements (as highlighted in the Conservation Area Character Appraisals); and the layout should take account of the prevailing weather conditions.
- 3.8. The National Design Guide highlights the importance of public spaces. As a basic principle, buildings should be designed to front the street or public spaces, avoiding blank facades to public spaces.
- 3.9. To minimise the impact of cars, communal parking areas should be small, attractively detailed and efficiently laid out. Communal parking areas should be as

close as possible and overlooked by the property they serve. Parking in the front curtilage of properties should be avoided.

- 3.10. The National Design Guide section on 'Movement' highlights the importance of well-designed spaces. Shared surfaces should be designed using locally sourced high quality materials to minimise the visual impact of vehicular traffic and create a pleasant pedestrian environment.
- 3.11. For larger developments within the National Park, the opportunity to create new high quality public open spaces, using quality materials and street furniture, is a key design principle. In accordance with the local planning policies, lighting should be low key and directional. In the context of a nationally protected landscape, flood and security lighting can be particularly intrusive and the need for them must be clearly justified in any proposals, so that the extent and quality of the dark night skies are not diminished in the New Forest.

The Design of Extensions

- 3.12. The majority of planning applications received by the National Park Authority relate to extensions to existing dwellings, or the remodelling of a dwelling. These need to be considered carefully to enhance and complement the existing dwelling, and it may be an opportunity to improve on previously poorly designed additions. Schemes which meet other planning criteria, are well detailed and well considered, and which reflect the beauty and quality of place of the New Forest are more likely to be supported.
- 3.13. In particular, the design and appearance of an extension should complement and be subservient to the main dwelling. Extensions should be in proportion to the original dwelling, and as a general rule, side or rear extensions should be positioned below the main ridge line in order to be subservient to the original dwelling. Schemes should avoid gentrifying and over development of the site.
- 3.14. The use of quality natural materials, such as clay tiles, natural slates, red brick and timber joinery are more likely to be supported. Modern manmade cement boarding and plastic based products are not sustainable and will tire, date and age quickly and therefore should be avoided, particularly in sensitive or open forest locations.
- 3.15. National planning policy set out in the NPPF is clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design, that fails to take the opportunity available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or styles. This statement of national policy is relevant to all applications considered within the National Park, including small-scale residential applications such as extensions.

New Dwellings

- 3.16. The National Park Authority considers a large number of planning applications for replacement dwellings each year, often relating to dwellings which are only a few years old. From a sustainability viewpoint, the reuse, refurbishment or adaptation of the existing dwelling is often the most carbon efficient way forward. Further details are set out in Chapter 6 of this Design Guide on sustainability considerations.
- 3.17. Subject to meeting the strict criteria of the Local Plan policies, well designed, carefully considered new and replacement dwellings with sustainable credentials are more likely to be supported. This Design Guide encourages harmonious designs to complement the streetscene and landscape, avoiding visual clutter such as over large porches, large expanses of glazing and rooflights, ornate gable details and pretentious gateways. All details of window and door design, materials, design and colour, should accompany an application at the beginning of the application process, not be left until late in the planning process.
- 3.18. The landscaping, hedgerows and boundary treatments are critical to the setting of a building, and should be considered at the initial stages of development, rather than left as an afterthought. The landscape setting, streetscene and public realm are all important criteria to be addressed in the initial design proposals. As set out in Chapter 7 of this Guide, suburban boundary treatments such as close boarded fencing and large security gates should be avoided.

Secure by Design

- 3.19. Secure by Design (SBD) is a public initiative that improves the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit. The aim is to sustainably reduce crime through design and other approaches, to help people live in a safer society. This involves, logical connections, safe routes, public views into sites as well as discrete lighting. Applicants should be mindful of the Secure by Design initiative when designing new development or making changes to existing properties.

4. A New Design Code (Building Elements)

Relevant Local Plan (2019) Policies

SP1 – Supporting sustainable development
DP2 – General development principles
SP7 – Landscape character
SP16 – The historic and built environment
SP17 – Local distinctiveness
DP18 - Design principles
SP19 – New residential development in the National Park
SP21 - The size of new dwellings
DP34 – Residential character of the Defined Villages
DP35 – Replacement dwellings
DP36 – Extensions to dwellings
DP37 - Outbuildings

Building Elements

- 4.1. In parts of the National Park, the distinctive character of rural settlements has sometimes been compromised by inappropriate newer development, often more appropriate in suburban settings. New development should look to well-designed and sympathetic detailing in order to retain local distinctiveness.
- 4.2. This does not imply that modern developments should be pastiche representations of earlier periods. New buildings should, as a general rule, be of new design, and contribute to our built heritage. But it is important that such development should respect and relate to its neighbours, and to its wider landscape setting.
- 4.3. In development proposals, a site analysis showing existing features, trees, slopes, hedges, water courses, old walls, and the materials which nearby buildings are built from, should form part of the planning application, in order to show a level of appreciation of the site and its immediate setting. Integrating these features into the new development will foster harmony and rhythm into the surrounding landscape. Using existing features in this way, each development will possess its own distinctive sense of place and identity.

The New Forest National Park Design Code

- 4.4. National planning policy encourages planning authorities to prepare local design guides and codes to raise the standard of new development in their areas. This is not about resisting development, but instead focuses on how it can enhance the built heritage of an area. This chapter of the Design Guide sets out the key elements of the New Forest National Park Design Code, proportionate to the scale of development planned within the area. A design code is a set of simple, concise, design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical

development of an area. The aim of the National Park Design Code is to provide greater certainty about the design of development for communities and applicants.

- 4.5. Given that the entire area of the New Forest National Park benefits from the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, the Design Code guidance set out below applies across the whole of the National Park. Unlike other planning authority areas, the New Forest National Park does not include multiple 'area types' covering city/town centres, industrial areas, retail parks and science parks for example. Instead, the National Park is characterised by small villages of less than 3,000 people and rural settlements. The key Design Code elements drawn out below therefore reflect the New Forest's context as a nationally protected landscape and the scale of planned development established in the Local Plan.
- 4.6. To preserve and strengthen the distinctive character and qualities of the New Forest, new development should consider:

Street Pattern, Driveways and Movement

- 4.7. Within villages and hamlets, preserve and reflect the historical street pattern in new developments. This can be managed in the following ways:
- avoiding development which compromises the layout and clarity of the existing street pattern and street-scape. This includes culs de sac which access small groups of dwellings are suburban in character and out of place in a traditional village setting. Greater sensitivity is required when applying highway standards, with particular reference to the rural sections of [Manual for Streets](#), which prioritises pedestrians and walkers in rural layouts without compromising safety;
 - the design of small housing schemes should be considered by looking at the spatial layout and orientation of the proposed dwellings, areas of green space and then the provision of an access road to serve it;
 - it is possible to create rural lanes using narrower roads, which will still be acceptable to the highways authority, and will encourage vehicles to slow down and give priority to pedestrians and New Forest stock;
 - following historic building lines to preserve historic boundaries, and protect sensitive and protected verges. Many of the grass verges within the New Forest National Park are protected due to their national or international importance for nature conservation. The verges also provide grazing for New Forest stock and contribute to the rural character of much of the National Park. Impacts of development proposals on the verges should therefore be considered in formulating plans. In addition, the National Park Authority will use planning conditions to protect verges during construction work;
 - referring back to development pre-World War II for density, layout and spacing between the dwellings in order to understand the historic development of the

village. Some may be lower densities, and others higher, such as with terraces of cottages, depending on the character of the village;

- ensure the road layout and access to dwellings, the circulation, as well as the location of parking spaces and garages is unobtrusive, so that the highway and car do not dominate and create a suburban layout. In a small development, it is important to vary the position of garages so they are less regimented;
- any on-site rights of way should be retained as part of development plans, with a suitable green buffer either side of the paths which conserves their character and biodiversity value. Paths should be wide enough to accommodate the users for whom they are designed and should not be enclosed between substantial structures and boundary features. Where it is necessary to divert a right of way to accommodate development, any alternative alignment should follow suitable desire lines, with preference given to paths through landscaped or open spaces away from vehicular traffic. The Hampshire County Council or Wiltshire Council rights of way teams should be consulted at an early stage in larger developments. Further information can be found in the New Forest Access Forum's 'Guidance on access for planners and developers';
- the choice of materials has a profound effect on the appearance of the highway and finish of the development. The edging treatment is important. Standard smooth concrete kerbs should be avoided in rural areas. Smaller unit blocks, with a rough texture which resemble granite setts, are more likely to be supported, or conservation standard designs. Within the development, the use of granite setts as a rumble strip, helps to slow down vehicles and adds some variety to other surfaces. Areas of private drive or courtyards can be finished in rolled hoggin or washed gravel, which will aid surface water permeability;
- driveways should be surfaced in materials which are appropriate to rural locations, such as hoggin or gravel, rather than concrete or brick paviours. Edges should be of treated timber or granite setts;
- soft verges are an important feature and characteristic of the Forest rural lanes. Their sizes and widths should always be maintained, along with any ditches, as they are an intrinsic part of the New Forest landscape. It is important that these features are not enclosed and resurfaced for parking spaces or bin stores. Many verges within the National Park are protected due to their nature conservation value and parking outside the curtilage of dwellings on these nationally protected verges is prohibited. New development should consider the introduction of verges into the design, to soften the edges and retain this tradition;
- the level of street lighting should be appropriate to the locality. The majority of the National Park has no street lighting and if the surrounding lanes and villages are unlit, new development should be the same without public street lighting installed. Proposals for external lighting will need to have regard to the guidance

on lighting and light pollution in Chapter 7 of this Guide and the Landscape Action Plan.

Building Character

- 4.8. Within any hamlet or village, the existing building character and form should be strengthened. This may be achieved in the following ways:
- ensuring the scale of new development is consistent with local traditional buildings, such as building spans, ridge and eaves heights which reflect local style; spans exceeding 7 metres depth should be avoided;
 - ensuring that the siting of buildings relative to the highway, plot curtilage and adjacent buildings, reflects the historic settlement pattern;
 - ensuring the appropriate orientation of new buildings follows a recognisable pattern which may already exist in a village;
 - using a simple rectangular form for the main body of the house, enlarged if necessary by a small scale, well-articulated extension to the rear;
 - ensuring that roof pitches relate to traditional roof pitches in the area, set at the same angle; and/or
 - avoiding flat roofed extensions, garages or other out-buildings, where possible.

Boundaries

- 4.9. Local distinctiveness should be reinforced by the appearance and treatment of boundaries and spaces between and around buildings:
- landscape design should be considered as an integral part of the building design process, and is equally as relevant at the initial site planning stage, when considering the overall basic form and layout of the development. As required by Policy SP7 in the adopted Local Plan (2019), early reference to the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Landscape Action Plan (LAP) should be made, in order to consider the specific qualities of the site involved;
 - existing mature hedges and boundary walls should be retained and reinforced wherever possible, especially where these form important features within the village;
 - ensure boundary treatments to the front, side and rear of properties are sympathetic to the locality and reflect local traditions and styles;



A typical low brick wall boundary behind a soft grass verge

- new boundaries to the front, side and rear should be sympathetic to the locality - in terms of materials and height - whether this is hedgerows, or low brick boundary walls, and should relate to the surrounding topography;
- new hedgerows should be indigenous to the local area to harmonise with the landscape and provide wildlife habitats. Suburban planting and the use of laurel or other quick growing varieties should be avoided;
- hedges should be re-instated, or the use of woven hazel or willow fences at 1.5 metres can be a suitable soft alternative to close boarded fencing, and these can be reinforced with planting to soften the impact;
- re-instating metal estate fencing where it is missing or has been damaged in parks and country estates will be encouraged, and their installation may be suitable in other rural locations;



Traditional estate railings around the Exbury Estate lodges

- fences are more appropriate to the larger village settings, than the rural nature of the open Forest. Close boarded fences in particular, appear hard and oppressive and are damaging throughout the New Forest National Park wherever they are used as boundary fencing;
- good existing trees should be preserved wherever possible and incorporated into a development. Similar species should be planted to offer succession planting, and indigenous species are encouraged to integrate the development within the wider landscape. Sufficient space should be allowed to enable new trees to grow to their full potential;
- gate posts and entrance gates should be of a scale and design befitting the dwelling, without decorative details and lighting. Simple timber five bar gates fit within most rural settings in the Forest, and can be made to open automatically for convenience. Solid timber gates look suburban and oppressive and are not acceptable. Tall pretentious brick piers and walls, with metal or solid timber gates are more suburban in style and unacceptable.

Appropriate Design

4.10. Local identity should be preserved by appropriate design:

- good modern design will be encouraged, provided it is appropriate for the locality. Proper attention to detail is a prerequisite for all good buildings, including contemporary designs. Designers should consider the traditional buildings of the locality, especially those which contribute to local distinctiveness, visit the site and interpret these in a modern context. To be successful, this requires a high degree of sensitivity and architectural integrity, with corresponding less dependency on standardised building components. Irrespective of the proposed style of building, modern or traditional, the basic form, proportions and materials should follow the guidance set out in this document;

- it is not intended to prescribe the design of extensions or new dwellings, as design implies a degree of subjectivity and creativity. However, the quality of design, in terms of the form of buildings, their basic proportions, materials and attention to detail, can be measured and will be subject to scrutiny in accordance with the approved local planning policies. These qualities characterise traditional buildings, and give the pleasing appearance to the buildings so cherished, and are equally relevant today. The quality of buildings can also be measured in their soundness of construction, method of heating, insulation, and adequate light and natural ventilation;
- present day Building Regulations impose standards which were often absent in the past or when dwellings were built a hundred years ago. Technological advances continue to update standards and materials. However, it is important to use this document in tandem with Building Regulations and recognise that traditional techniques are still relevant today, and indeed appropriate in rural locations.

Building Proportions

4.11. New dwellings should reflect the proportions of traditional buildings:

- traditional buildings were very simple, in terms of their form and elevational treatment. Many older houses are very plain, with straight eaves lines and simple roofs. The simplest building designs harmonise with the local landscape. The relationship between solid wall to window/door openings in a façade is important. A solid/void relationship ratio of 5:1 is common, with more solid wall than glazing, and should be used as an approximate measure for new dwellings. Typically modern houses tend to be 2:1, with much more glazing provided;
- traditional buildings may include box sash windows or casements or a combination of both. The casements may have single, double or triple lights (windows), resulting in a vertical, square or horizontal opening. However, the design of the dwelling or extension should always have a vertical rather than horizontal emphasis. Sash windows will always have a vertical emphasis;
- the use of double or triple glazing over the last 30 years has led to a distinct but subtle change in the appearance of dwellings. The use of upvc and timber replacement windows tends to provide standardised mouldings, which are significantly chunkier than the original windows. This not only leads to a loss of light into rooms, but the overall appearance of the building changes dramatically. Where it is necessary to replace windows, timber will be preferred and the moulding details need to be accurately replicated. In some instances the use of powder coated aluminum will be a suitable alternative material;

- the use of symmetry and harmony in design, and the use of geometric ratios which underpin the design of Georgian buildings (Golden Section) still represent sound principles for the design of modern dwellings.



New traditionally proportioned cottages at Bransgore

4.12. Extensions should ensure the character of the original building is preserved:

- an extension should be in scale with the existing dwelling, and always be subservient in size and height. Its form, elevation treatment and detailing should complement the original dwelling. The use of appropriate materials are more likely to be supported, and where necessary, should exactly match those used on the original dwelling. The use of good quality matching bricks, clay roof tiles or slates will be encouraged:
- with side extensions, the proposed width should not exceed half the width of the main house, otherwise it is likely to appear elongated, and contrived, and out of proportion to the original dwelling. The ridge should be set down from the main roof to distinguish the later addition;
- it is also possible to lose the identity of a dwelling when a number of extensions, including wrap around extensions, are added. Extreme sensitivity and skill are required whenever a small cottage is extended, in order to preserve the original identity of the cottage. This is particularly so for estate cottages and lodges;
- many buildings of special historic character (Locally Listed Buildings), have been subject to incremental alterations and extensions over time. The essential character of a cottage depends on its size and scale, and each successive extension however modest in size, can undermine this character. Additional rooms should reflect the proportions, scale and size of the original floorplan;

- space standards and rooms sizes which are taken for granted in modern homes cannot be strictly applied to historic dwellings. Where it is considered that the threshold has been reached for extensions, further additions will not be acceptable where they will result in the loss of character of the cottage.

Heritage Assets

4.13. The character of Heritage Assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Locally Listed Buildings and Sites should be protected:

- the setting of listed buildings can be preserved by ensuring that important curtilage buildings, structures or walls, are not damaged or compromised by the erection of inappropriate development;
- by encouraging the repair of traditional buildings using appropriate materials, especially cob, combed wheat thatch, brickwork and clay tiles;
- further Locally Listed Buildings will be identified and included on the [Local List](#);
- as clear justification is required to support any applications for Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission, set out in a Statement of Historic Significance, of how the proposals will impact on the heritage asset and how the asset will be enhanced.

Materials

4.14. Proposals should ensure the use of appropriate building materials:

- the use of materials from the locality, such as local brick, will be encouraged;
- the use of lime putty mortar in new brickwork for aesthetic, practical and sustainable reasons will be encouraged on historic buildings;
- where new brickwork is proposed on historic buildings, a 1m x 1m sample panel will be required to be provided on site and approved prior to development. The proposed bricks should match the local vernacular brick in texture, colour, size, mortar and bonding pattern;
- where appropriate, rendered blockwork will be encouraged where cob buildings were traditionally located, but not in villages predominantly of brick. Rendered walls should have plinths of red brickwork and the render should have a smooth finish. The roofs would traditionally have been of thatch or slate;
- cob is rarely used in modern construction, but it is appropriate for the repair of cob buildings and to avoid difficult joints with cement render;

- the use of natural stone within the New Forest is extremely rare, except on high status buildings such as churches, some barns and manor houses. Applied stonework cladding to brick or rendered walls should be avoided;
- the use of weatherboarding for garages and outbuildings is likely to be supported, and can be used to clad single storey extensions to dwellings. Wide featheredged boards normally of oak, chestnut or elm should be laid horizontally, but vertical boards with cover strips for joints are likely to be supported for outbuildings;
- decorative tile hanging is appropriate in the villages where it has been traditionally used, such as in Lyndhurst and Burley;
- the use of clay plain tiles will be encouraged on pitches of 40 degrees or more. Despite advances in technology, many machine made tiles remain uniform in appearance and texture on roofslopes. The use of pantiles or Bridgewater tiles will be encouraged only where they are already in use, such as in Burley for Bridgewater tiles;
- slates are used throughout the Forest and will be encouraged in villages where they already exist. Natural non-shiny slates are likely to be supported on any pitch, not just shallow pitches. They also are useful to show the distinction between a new extension and the original dwelling, and can be used in association with tiled roofs to articulate and break up larger buildings. Slate substitutes should be avoided;
- the use of thatch throughout the New Forest is widespread, and most commonly is of combed wheat reed now. New thatched buildings are likely to be supported where other thatched buildings are already in existence. Combed wheat allows a soft rounded finish to the roof, and the ridge would always have been flush, and not adorned with decorative scallops or horns at each end of the ridge;

- the use of simple corrugated metal sheeting on low key outbuildings and barns is likely to be supported, and would have been painted black. Modern metal profile sheeting, concrete tiles, fibre cement and plastic sheeting is not acceptable.

For further details of materials, see Chapter 5 of this Design Guide SPD.



The rhythm of clay roof tiles, chimneys and steeply pitched roofs in Beaulieu

Windows, Dormers and Rooflights

4.15. The number, size and placement of windows and rooflights is vitally important in the design of a building:

- large modern windows and substantial areas of glazing or roof lanterns, are not acceptable where the light spill may impact on the tranquility and dark skies of the National Park. The area of glazing proposed should be informed by the context of the site and further guidance is provided in Chapter 7 of this Guide;
- where additional rooflights are acceptable in principle, traditional conservation style rooflights which lie close to the plane or flush to the roofslope are encouraged, with a narrow glazing bar and top or side hinges, rather than a pivot. Large modern rooflights or lanterns are not acceptable in sensitive parts of the National Park (for example near to the Open Forest or close to sites of nature conservation value) where the impact on the dark skies is greater;
- rooflights provide greater levels of daylight than traditional windows in walls, and can help to reduce the need for electric lighting, which can account for up to 25% of a building's energy consumption. Care needs to be taken so that the appearance of the roof is not compromised, which can happen if they are too large, there are too many, or if they are too prominent;

- dormer windows are not traditional features, and where they do occur historically were very small, just large enough to light the roofspace. Where dormer windows are considered appropriate, they should have careful detailing to ensure the design retains the elegance of historic detailing, and to avoid being top heavy with over large cheeks, roofs and bargeboards;
- new dormers should be as narrow as possible, little wider than the window itself, with a projecting fascia or bargeboards adjacent to the window head. The barge boards should be plain without filets. Side cheeks should be of lead to avoid widening the dormer with cladding;
- window reveals should be set back from the face of the brickwork by 80mm, as they were in 19th century dwellings. This offers a practical as well as an aesthetic solution by protecting the weathering of the timber window frames. Associated with these deep reveals are masonry window cills, often of stone or rendered brickwork;
- windows constructed of uPVC do not have the style or character of traditional timber windows, and their use should be avoided. Well made sustainable timber windows which use well seasoned timber (or Accoya) will outlast uPVC windows. Microporous paints applied to bare wood will help to reduce the level of maintenance required. The ten year guarantees for uPVC are nothing compared to traditional well seasoned timber windows over 100 years old.



Cottages at Beaulieu with small roof dormers and discrete rooflights

Conservatories and glazed links

4.16. In order to reduce the visual impact of a conservatory, proposals should consider the following points:

- conservatories need to look and feel as though they belong, designed to be an integral part of the house, without appearing to be too grand. Orangeries were originally the preserve of the country house and wealthy, and these ornate and decorative conservatories often have elements which are entirely out of place for New Forest cottages;
- a conservatory should be modest and subordinate in footprint and scale to the dwelling, set well below the cill of the first floor window. A lean-to, mono pitch design often works well, and is more sympathetic in design than the grander decorative designs. The use of well seasoned timber or powder coated aluminium is likely to be supported whilst the use of tinted glass is not acceptable. A potting shed lean-to design may work well in rural settings;
- where a glazed link is acceptable, the use of a modest glazed link can offer an opportunity to link an outbuilding to a dwelling. However, it must be sympathetic in form and design, and subservient in scale to the dwelling and outbuilding. The more discrete the better, and a modest modern design may work well in this situation, rather than a statement design.



A successfully designed partially glazed & timber link between a farmhouse and the adjacent barn near Exbury

Barns, outbuildings and garages

4.17. The unique character of barns should be protected:

- outbuildings, barns and cart sheds are an integral feature of the rural landscape. Where supported by local planning policies, conversions should maintain their simple robust form, utilising existing windows and apertures, and excessive rooflights or expansive glazing should be avoided, particularly on the roadside elevation. Large full height statement glazing should be avoided, and where smaller sections may be permitted, they should be well detailed and broken up with appropriately proportioned mullions, transomes and glazing bars;
- the setting of barns is often compromised by conversions, where new boundaries can split sites, and new access drives lead to damaging urbanising effects. Domestic clutter, such as washing lines, trampolines, satellite dishes and lighting, has a huge incremental impact, and will damage the simple agrarian character of the site;
- it is very difficult to extend barns without the extension appearing contrived and creating a domestic alteration to the original building, so these will not be acceptable;
- new garages can be extremely large and bulky. These are alien features in the landscape, and it is far better to break buildings up than to have such dominating features. They should be low key in design and appearance, built of traditional materials, such as weatherboarding with shallow pitched roofs. Regimented garaging should be avoided in rural settings.



The successful conversion of the former Fire Station at Beaulieu into a design studio, which has retained the simple robust form and utilised existing openings

Porches

4.18. It is important that porches relate well to the dwelling:

- porches should be designed to be in proportion to the front elevation of the house, to be a small enclosed space, rather than an additional room or grand statement. Traditionally pitched or mono pitched, with a slate, thatched or clay tiled pitched roof, they can be an attractive addition to a front or side elevation. As a principle, over-sized decorative barge boards should be avoided, unless the dwelling already has them at eaves level; and timber is preferable to modern man-made unsustainable materials such as uPVC or cedar cladding.

Shopfronts, commercial signs & exterior lighting

4.19. Supporting well designed shopfronts is important:

- traditional shopfronts will be actively encouraged throughout the villages of the National Park – there are existing examples in Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Burley - with the use of traditional materials in the elements of the design;
- where new fascias and signs are proposed, these should be as small as possible, in proportion to the scale of the building and should not be internally illuminated. Off the peg standard logos by large national companies, should be redesigned to reflect individual detailing for sensitive sites in the New Forest. The use of timber rather than acrylic fascias, will be supported, as will hand painted fascias over acrylic applied lettering. Shiny, plasticky signs look poor and should be avoided, as should back-lit box signs, because they have an overly suburban appearance;
- lettering needs to be both readable and suitable to the setting; the size, font and colour of lettering is often crucial to the impact, and oversized lettering should always be avoided. The font could be chosen to relate to the period or character of a building or settlement. The lettering colour needs to have sufficient contrast to the background to be legible, however, gaudy, and garishly bright colours should be avoided. The colour palette should be chosen to complement the fabric of the building or the natural surroundings;
- on older buildings, especially shop fronts, the property could be enhanced by the removal of unsympathetic plastic and box signs. There may even be original fascias and details underneath that can be restored to good effect. Where new fascias and signs are proposed, these should be as small as possible and in proportion to the scale of the building;
- external lighting should be avoided unless it is for a business which needs to open at dusk and in the evening. External lights, where they are acceptable, should be discretely located with the minimum number of lights to adequately

light the fascia and will require consent. External lights should point downwards and be limited in number to protect the tranquility of the Forest.

Context checklist

4.20. Having set out the main elements of the New Forest National Park Design Code, the following contextual considerations can be used as a checklist which designs for new development should aim to respond to. All of these elements are important for the success of planning applications within the National Park:

- does the design preserve any key views and vistas, and respect the setting of landmarks?
- does the design sit comfortably within the existing landscape, responding to the topography, and patterns and means of site enclosure? Does it blend into the wider landscape?
- do the siting, orientation, form, and layout respond to patterns of light and shade, openness, and enclosure in the surrounding landscape?
- does the material palette reflect the colours and textures of the wider landscape?
- are native species used in the associated landscaping scheme?
- does the new development reflect the existing settlement pattern and grain of development?
- are existing boundaries, hedgerows, walls etc. being conserved and enhanced?
- do existing routes and spaces between buildings set a precedent for the setting, form, and layout of the design?
- does the proposed function correspond to the needs and character of the existing settlement or area?
- is the scale of the new development proportionate to the surrounding buildings?
- has the form of the design been influenced by traditional rural building typologies?
- does the design take precedents from the local vernacular material palette or architectural detailing?
- does the design reflect the architectural variety found in the buildings of the New Forest?
- have opportunities been taken to incorporate existing natural features or historic buildings into the design?
- are the parking provision, bin storage, and utilities paraphernalia discrete?

5. Materials

Relevant Local Plan (2019) Policies

SP1 – Supporting sustainable development

DP2 – General development principles

SP16 – The historic and built environment

SP17 – Local distinctiveness

DP18 - Design principles

- 5.1. Building materials can have considerable influence on the overall success of a design. They affect a building's functionality, durability, sustainability, its attractiveness, and how well it fits within its local context. The scale, form, architectural style and setting of a building will guide what materials are appropriate.
- 5.2. Whether the design is a traditional or contemporary style, good quality and well-chosen materials create coherent design compositions, and help a building embed into its setting. In contrast poor quality materials or alien material combinations, cause buildings to look mismatched and out of place. Therefore, materials of suitable quality, durability and finish, need to be identified early in the design process.
- 5.3. The National Park Authority can attach conditions to planning permissions requesting details of the proposed materials for approval prior to work commencing. Sometimes sample panels of the proposed materials may be requested, especially for proposals affecting listed buildings or in conservation areas, to check their quality and appearance. Finishes should be applied to the material to be used, to check how absorbency affects the appearance. It is also important to consider how a building will weather.

Traditional Materials

- 5.4. Local vernacular buildings contribute significantly to the distinctive character of New Forest settlements. Vernacular buildings are typified by the use of locally available materials, and traditional methods of construction and ornamentation. Communities value the established, locally distinctive, palette of materials and construction techniques as part of the New Forest's history and character.
- 5.5. Traditional materials found in the New Forest include:
 - thatch (combed wheat)
 - clay tile (plain tiles, pantiles, bridgewater tiles and hanging tiles)
 - natural Welsh slate
 - lead
 - corrugated iron (wriggly tin)
 - timber framing

- plum or orange brick
- Beaulieu and Exbury buff brick
- cob
- lime Render
- timber cladding or weatherboarding
- cast iron rainwater goods

5.6 There is wide variety in where and how these vernacular materials have been used in different settlements and areas within the New Forest, so discretion is required to choose materials appropriate to the specific context of each development. For example, a cob cottage would fit well within East Boldre, but might look out of place amongst the brick and tile hung Edwardian buildings of Lyndhurst. The function of a building also plays a key role in the material choice for a development. For example, corrugated metal sheeting or timber weatherboarding, painted black, is common on low key outbuildings and barns, but would be unusual on a high-status building. Using appropriate materials is particularly important when works are undertaken on listed buildings, in their setting, or within conservation areas, to ensure their special character is conserved. The Defined Villages tend to have a more varied architectural character, so there may be more scope to use a wider variety and style of materials.

5.7. Thatch has been used on properties throughout the New Forest and traditionally was shaped to have a rounded flush ridge. In the past long straw was the most common thatching material, but now combed wheat reed is more widely used on roofs and to create the soft rounded flush ridge. Water reed is not a traditional material in the New Forest and its use is not acceptable. Imported European water reed should be avoided as it has a harsher, squarer finish and is often poor quality, sometimes arriving on site damp, so will decay quickly. It is better to carefully protect roofs in need of repair whilst waiting for a supply of combed wheat to become available in the next harvest rather than settling for lower quality or non-traditional materials. Thatched roofs should reflect the existing or prevailing local thatching traditions on new thatched buildings or when re-thatching, and decorative block cut scallops on the ridges should be avoided.



A pair of lime plastered cob cottages under a thatched roof with a traditional simple flush ridge, in Hale

- 5.8. Clay plain tiles and slates have also been used widely throughout the Forest. Despite advances in technology, many machine-made tiles remain uniform in appearance and texture on roof slopes, so traditional handmade tiles are preferred. Likewise, treated slates and slate substitutes are poor replicas of traditional natural slates and should be avoided.



Pantiles and Bridgewater tiles are common on Arts and Crafts properties in Lyndhurst and Burley

- 5.9. Brick is a versatile and common material, used widely throughout the New Forest. As with clay tiles, the textures and colours of handmade bricks cannot be adequately replicated by machine made bricks. When using brick, attention must also be paid to the mortar mix, bond and pointing type. The proposed bricks should match the local vernacular brick in texture, colour, size, mortar, and bonding pattern. The use of lime putty mortar in new brickwork for aesthetic, practical and sustainable reasons will be encouraged.



Buff brick and plum brick dwellings sitting side by side in Exbury

- 5.10. Cob will rarely be used in modern construction, but it is important that appropriate materials are used for cob repair. Cob blocks should be used to stitch cracks and fill eroded areas and finished with a breathable lime render. Cement block and brickwork should be avoided as they absorb water and dry at different rates to cob, which will cause further cracking. Cement render and mortar filling should also be avoided as this traps moisture into the cob and causes it to deteriorate.
- 5.11. Where cob buildings were traditionally located, rendered blockwork is likely to be supported for extensions or new buildings, but not in villages predominantly of brick. Rendered walls should have plinths of red brickwork and the render should have a smooth finish.



A cottage in Woodgreen rebuilt in cob after fire damage

- 5.12. Traditionally weatherboarding was mostly used on agricultural buildings and ancillary outbuildings, while brickwork and cob were predominantly used domestic buildings. Therefore, weatherboarding can be used effectively in the New Forest on agricultural buildings, ancillary buildings, low-key extensions and barn-style dwellings. The use of wide, square edged or featheredged boards, normally of oak, chestnut, or elm, laid horizontally and left to weather naturally, is likely to be supported. Vertical boards with cover strips for joints are likely to be supported for outbuildings. Ship lap boarding and cedar cement based coloured cladding, are not acceptable materials to use within the National Park because they appear overly polished, uniform and sterile, which is at odds with the unique quiriness and easy organic appearance typical of the New Forest vernacular architecture.



Traditionally weatherboarding on an agricultural outbuilding in Burley

- 5.13. Practicality and functionality were key factors in the development of local vernacular traditions, so in rural areas such as the New Forest, materials were often used sparingly. Therefore, new developments in the New Forest will be encouraged to use a restrained palette of traditional materials, as this approach usually produces the most effective, sympathetic, and cohesive designs. Adorning a building with numerous different materials and decorative features can result in an overly complex and contrived final product that looks disjointed and messy.
- 5.14. The durability and sustainability of material choices are also important considerations. Our historic buildings demonstrate that with regular maintenance, traditional materials are incredibly durable, robust, and versatile. As such, using traditional materials can increase the functioning life of a building and its component parts, which reduces the amount of embodied carbon (carbon emissions from the construction, maintenance, and demolition of a building) released over the lifetime of the building. Furthermore, using locally sourced materials cuts transportation costs and carbon emissions, while also supporting local businesses and skilled craftspeople.

- 5.15. There are several searchable registers of conservation specialist contractors, craftsmen and women, and traditional material suppliers including [Architects Accredited in Building Conservation](#), The Institute of Historic Building Conservation's [Historic Environment Service Provider Recognition register](#), the [Institute of Conservation register](#), and the [Building Conservation Directory](#). Applicants can also contact the Authority's Building Design and Conservation Officers to receive advice on appointing specialist contractors and sourcing traditional materials.

Contemporary

- 5.16. If used carefully, contemporary materials and technologies can be used effectively improve buildings energy efficiency while also sitting comfortably alongside traditional buildings in the landscape. Contemporary materials that have been used successfully in the New Forest include:
- zinc and aluminium
 - green roof
 - oak shingles
 - structural glazing
 - reinforced straw bales
- 5.17. Zinc and aluminium can be used as suitable alternative to lead roofing. When used sensitively they can also be used effectively as cladding.



The metal standing seamed roof on the Lookout Café at Lepe Country Park

- 5.18. Green roofs and shingles, though not traditional, are natural materials that allow buildings to blend into the landscape. Both materials also have environmental benefits. Green roofs can be used for rainwater filtering and recycling, as well as capturing carbon. Shingles are produced with little wastage, are lightweight, and

are very durable. Cedar shingles should be avoided however, due to the risk of acid run off.



A shingle roof on a new build cottage in Burley

- 5.19. When used sensitively and thoughtfully, structural glazing can be used effectively to break up the bulk of new buildings. As set out elsewhere in this Design Guide, great care needs to be taken to avoid extensive areas of glazing, particularly at first-floor level, which will reflect sunlight glare and lead to light pollution at night, causing it to stand out rather than recede into the landscape. Overhanging canopies or upper floors can help shade light pollution and reflected glare from extensive areas of glazing, while also protecting against excessive solar gain.



A modern development in Woodgreen that has successfully used a green roof, structural glazing, and careful massing to nestle into the landscape

- 5.20. Reinforced straw bales are a sustainable material that creates sturdy looking walls with rounded corners and deep reveals, similar to the effect produced by traditional cob cottages. Elevations are often rendered and require pronounced roof overhangs to protect from weathering, which augments its traditional aesthetic.

- 5.21. Materials like flat, heavy uPVC, composite cladding, smooth, highly polished or varnished, narrow section timber cladding should be avoided, because they appear overly suburban and standardised. Modern metal profile sheeting, concrete tiles, fibre cement and plastic sheeting are also not acceptable.



The same property clad with different materials: on the left clad with cedral cement boarding and on the right clad with natural timber which will weather to silver

6 Sustainability

Relevant Local Plan (2019) Policies

SP1 – Supporting sustainable development
DP2 – General development principles
DP8 – Safeguarding and improving water resources
SP11 – Climate Change
SP14 – Renewable energy
DP18 - Design principles
SP19 – New residential development in the National Park
DP35 – Replacement dwellings
DP36 – Extensions to dwellings

- 6.1. One of the most significant factors influencing the future of the National Park is the climate and nature emergency. There is now clear [evidence](#) that climate change is happening and is due to human activity, resulting in global warming and greater risk of flooding, droughts and heat waves. Southern England, including the New Forest, could suffer from the impacts of further climate change. Its communities, wildlife and nature are under threat from rising temperatures, wildfires, pests, diseases, drier soils and more powerful and frequent storms. The Government declared a climate emergency in May 2019 and is committed to reducing greenhouse gases and carbon emissions, through the Climate Change Act. Addressing climate change is one of the key principles in the NPPF.
- 6.2. The National Park Authority is committed to addressing climate change through its actions. Collectively the National Park Authorities in England have committed to developing a climate action programme that includes encouraging highly sustainable and well-designed homes (see the Delivery Plan for Climate Leadership in National Parks 2020).
- 6.3. However, the need for measures to address sustainability and climate change does not automatically override environmental protection or safeguarding of heritage assets that could erode the special qualities for which the National Park is designated. This is especially important in the New Forest, where over 50% of the land is designated for nature conservation purposes, with 20 conservation areas and over 600 listed buildings. Inappropriate measures may not deliver the intended benefits, and may end up harming the fabric of the building or the well-being of occupants or neighbours. Therefore this chapter sets out details of the types of sustainability measures that can be incorporated into new development, whilst respecting the environmental protections and local character of the New Forest National Park.
- 6.4. Some of the measures described in this chapter may not require planning permission, but the design considerations can still help inform the proposed development in ensuring that it blends well with the landscape and reflects the

character of the National Park. In addition, building regulations (Part L) set out standards for energy and water efficiency measures, and building regulations approval may be required for the proposed development.

6.5. The key principles for achieving sustainability in new development include:

- minimising the loss of existing native planting and natural features
- retaining and enhancing green and blue infrastructure, including habitat links and corridors
- incorporating suitable features to enhance biodiversity
- incorporating energy efficiency measures appropriate to the building
- incorporating suitable renewable energy measures that are sensitive to the local area and character
- using locally or sustainably sourced materials
- ensuring safe, attractive and well connected cycle and pedestrian routes in, out and through larger housing schemes

New homes

6.6. New dwellings offer an ideal opportunity to consider sustainability elements from the outset, and incorporate appropriate measures at that time, rather than retrofitting afterwards. The main considerations which will be encouraged for new dwellings include:

- using the siting and layout of the dwelling to take advantage of solar gain by orientating the main glazed elevation to the south (or within 30 degrees of south)
- siting, layout and orientation can also enable more natural daylight in the dwelling and reduce the amount of lighting required
- working with the topography of a site can help to provide shelter and may reduce excessive engineering works
- incorporating flexible spaces into the design that can be used interchangeably for various functions like a spare bedroom or study, and can be easily adapted to different lifestyles such as a growing family or accommodating elderly relatives
- the use of locally sourced materials can often have a lower carbon footprint, help to sustain the local economy and can help a new development to blend into its surroundings
- the use of responsibly salvaged or recycled materials can also help to reduce the energy usage in the construction of the dwelling, such as sourcing materials through local sawmills
- naturally renewable materials should be considered such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified timber as they use less energy in their production compared with manufactured materials such as uPVC
- avoiding adverse impacts on wildlife, for instance by scheduling construction work to avoid sensitive times such as nesting for birds or hibernation and maternity periods for bats

- all developments have the opportunity to create new habitats. Consider for example providing roosting / nesting spaces for bats / birds, using sustainable drainage systems or landscaping to create habitats, or managing an area for wildlife purposes
- encouraging natural boundaries such as native species hedges for enhanced wildlife and ease of maintenance

Existing homes

- 6.7. Re-use of existing homes and buildings may be a more sustainable option than replacement. The amount of carbon dioxide (embodied carbon) released in building a new house, or demolishing and replacing a building, is much higher compared to re-using existing buildings. [Research](#) published in 2020 by Historic England indicates that ‘even after 50 years of use, the embodied carbon of a new build house accounts for as much as 28% of the total carbon attributable to the building. It can therefore take several decades for the operational carbon savings of new buildings to produce a net benefit when compared to the refurbishment of an existing building’. Historic England also note that ‘Compared to refurbishing a traditional Victorian terrace, a new building of the same size produces up to thirteen times more embodied carbon. This equates to around 16.4 tonnes of CO₂, which is the equivalent of the emissions released by driving 60,000km, or 300 times round the M25, in a large petrol car.’
- 6.8. Embodied carbon includes emissions from extraction, manufacture / processing, transportation and assembly of every element involved in the building of the house. In the implementation of Part L of the Building Regulations, the Government uses the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has published guidance for architects looking to assess and reduce carbon emissions in the construction of their designs. Their document ‘Embodied and whole life assessments for architects’ sets out considerations of embodied carbon as well as the concept of whole life carbon, which is defined as the carbon emissions resulting from the construction and the use of a building over its entire life. A whole life carbon assessment provides a picture of a building’s carbon impact on the environment. In addition, The Building Research Establishment (BRE) also has a scheme assessing and certifying the energy efficiency of refurbished buildings.
- 6.9. According to the UK Green Building Council the built environment contributes around 40% of the UK’s total carbon footprint, of which almost half is from energy used in buildings (www.ukgbc.org/climate-change/). Many improvements can be carried out to improve energy efficiency, often at a relatively low cost, significantly enhancing the comfort of the building for its users, as well as providing savings on fuel bills and helping to meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Historic England has several publications setting out advice on improving energy efficiency

in historical and traditionally constructed buildings (see details in Chapter 8 of this document).

- 6.10. Sustainable elements can be incorporated into existing homes in a way that reflects the character of the original house, but improve its overall efficiency, such as increased insulation, secondary glazing and more efficient appliances. This can include one or more of the elements mentioned in this chapter, many of which do not require planning permission, but can be incorporated into wider development proposals such as an extension or outbuilding.

Sustainable construction

- 6.11. Incorporating sustainability into the development of homes, buildings and infrastructure involves maximising the efficient use of resources by using fewer raw materials and less energy, as well as causing less pollution and waste. Sustainable methods of construction will be actively encouraged. It is easier and more cost-effective to be factored into the development proposals from the start, and comprises locally or sustainably sourced materials and sustainable construction techniques, which are set out below. Such an approach is supported in Policy SP1 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019).
- 6.12. There are a number of national accreditation schemes for sustainable and low energy buildings, from organisations including BREEAM, Passivhaus Trust and the Association for Environment Conscious Building. These include both new build residential and retrofit of existing buildings to improve energy efficiency. More information can be found on their websites (see links in Chapter 8 of this document), together with case studies, and relevant guidance.

Re-use of materials

- 6.13. Generally the re-use of materials should be complementary to those on the existing building, or be appropriate to its surroundings, as set out in chapter 5. Sustainable use of resources may include the re-use of appropriate salvaged materials such as bricks or slates, which can help a new extension blend with an original building. However, poorly matched materials can make a building stand out in a streetscene and should be avoided. Applicants should ensure that sufficient similar materials can be salvaged from a suitable and sustainable source.

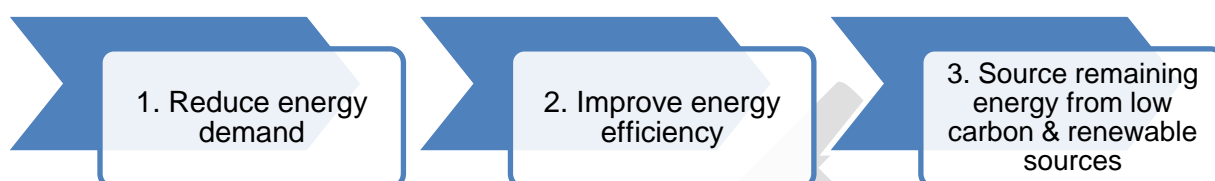
Construction techniques

- 6.14. Whilst there are many traditional and historic buildings in the New Forest, this does not preclude the consideration of contemporary materials and construction methods, such as the use of hay bales or pre-fabrication methods. However, any such methods should still be appropriate to the local context and within the scope of the design parameters set out in this document. New technology and materials are constantly evolving and newly developed techniques and materials will be

considered where they fit within the design parameters referred to throughout this document.

Energy efficiency

- 6.15. When addressing the energy usage of a dwelling or other building it is useful to have regard to the energy hierarchy, see below.



- 6.16. The first consideration is to ensure that a new building is designed and constructed to reduce the amount of energy needed. This includes taking account of the orientation and siting of the building so that efficient use is made of the natural daylight and sunlight to reduce the need for lighting and heating. This is easier to incorporate into new buildings or extensions.
- 6.17. Secondly, consideration should be given to improving the efficiency of existing buildings. This can be achieved through a range of measures including simple schemes that do not require planning permission, such as increasing insulation, and fitting water management measures.
- 6.18. Finally, consideration turns to ways to source energy from other means, such as using renewables, to improve the energy consumption of the building and reduce carbon emissions.

Reducing energy demand

- 6.19. One of the best ways of reducing energy use in a new building is to ensure it makes the most of its position in the landscape, where it is sheltered from prevailing winds, and retains the sun's heat and light, through a combination of design, orientation and landscaping. Taking advantage of the sun's heat and light can be achieved by considering the scope for the majority of windows to be on the south facing side of the building (or 30 degrees from south). This makes use of what is known as 'passive solar gain'.
- 6.20. However, glazing may need to be controlled by integrated design techniques or external features such as controlled ventilation systems, pergolas and screen planting to control heat build-up. As highlighted in Chapter 7 of this Guide on 'lighting and light pollution', the use of glazing should be informed by the context of the site, and any energy efficiency benefits should be balanced against the design considerations set out elsewhere in this document.



A design with windows oriented to make the most of solar gain, but which are shaded with a pergola to avoid overheating the internal space

Improving energy efficiency

- 6.21. Part L of the Building Regulations seeks to improve the energy efficiency of all buildings. For historic buildings, and those of traditional construction, reducing heat losses without harming their special character or compromising their performance can be difficult, or impossible to achieve. More specific guidance in these circumstances is set out in guidance documents produced by Historic England, see Chapter 8 for website links.

Renewable energy sources

- 6.22. Policy SP14 in the Local Plan (2019) confirms that the potential for renewable energy generation in the National Park needs to be balanced against any adverse visual and amenity impacts on the nationally designated landscape. Therefore, the policy emphasis is on small-scale renewable energy proposals for residential or commercial uses, or small-scale schemes for local community facilities. The most appropriate forms of renewable energy in the National Park are likely to be solar and biomass, as evidenced through the Local Plan.

Water management

- 6.23. In addition to energy efficiency measure there is much to be gained from the incorporation of water management measures into new development. Reducing water demand measures or using water more efficiently is in line with the requirements of Local Plan Policy DP8 to ensure new dwellings are more water efficient, and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

- 6.24. New dwellings can also include measures to recycle the wastewater from baths, showers, washing machines and sinks, known as greywater. This will largely be addressed through internal measures but any potential adverse impacts on the local amenity or landscape should be avoided. Greywater is not suitable for use as drinking water, but can be used for watering gardens or flushing toilets, and should require minimal infrastructure with limited visual impact. This is the same for rainwater harvesting that involves collecting rain to store and use, particularly on gardens. Such water storage facilities should be sensitively sited, especially in the curtilage of listed buildings or in conservation areas.
- 6.25. There is more guidance on implementing water management measures in the Government's Approved Document G (Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency).
- 6.26. Surface water drainage and flooding can be dealt with by the provision of green and blue infrastructure, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and green roofs. They can also provide habitats and green corridors for wildlife, and amenity space for people. However, they should be permeable materials and not involve hard impermeable surfaces or heavily engineered measures. They are most effective when integrated into a scheme from the outset, particularly larger residential schemes. Chapter 8 sets out links to guidance on green and blue infrastructure, including SuDS.



The successful use of a green roof at Paultons Park theme park

Renewable energy

- 6.27. The following section lists details some of the low and zero carbon technologies that are most likely to be considered feasible and appropriate in the National Park. It is not exhaustive and new technologies may become available in the lifetime of this guide.

- 6.28. Additionally, not all renewable energy sources will be compatible with heritage assets, and more advice can be found on the [Historic England website](#), where there is a range of technical papers on the impact on the landscape and heritage assets of renewable energy.

Solar power

- 6.29. Solar power is the leading small-scale renewable technology and comprises photovoltaic panels and tiles and solar hot water panels (solar thermal) which harness energy from the sun to generate electricity or heat water.
- 6.30. Most photovoltaic systems are made up of panels that fit on top of the roof, but they can also be installed on the ground. They should ideally be on a roof space facing south or east / west, unshaded, and at a pitch angle of about 30 or 40 degrees. However, they can still be put on flat roofs or shallower pitches but may not be quite as effective, although this may be a more appropriate design solution for some buildings. The benefits are that they have no moving parts and are silent, and can harness the sun's energy on sunny and cloudy days. Additionally, photovoltaic tiles are available, which resemble slate, and can be used to form part of or the whole of a roof.
- 6.31. Solar panels are most cost-effective if integrated into schemes during construction. Retro-fit panels are more conspicuous and sit proud of the roof. However, they are easier to remove when obsolete.



Woodgreen Community Shop with integral solar panels on the south-facing canopy

- 6.32. In accordance with Policy SP14 of the Local Plan (2019), the potential visual impact of solar technology can be reduced by consideration of the following principles:
- using panels and roofing tones that are compatible, using non-shiny materials with minimal reflection
 - solar panels are more acceptable on dark slate roofs, and less visually intrusive, in comparison to clay tiled roofs

- panels should be as flush as possible with the roof, and should not extend above the roofline
 - locate the installations away from prominent or important views and consider placing on an outbuilding or to the rear of the building if possible
 - where roof installations are not possible, ground mounted technology could be used and sited in rear gardens or away from the main frontage of the house to reduce visual impact, but should be sited within the curtilage of the property
 - solar panels can be incorporated into designs as canopies and lean-to extensions where appropriate (see Woodgreen community shop above)
 - avoid placing panels on top of dormer roofs
 - site the installations to conform with the design of the new or existing building and its locality, such as symmetrically, or lined up with windows or other similar features on the building or surrounding buildings
- 6.33. In some instances it will not be possible to locate solar installations on listed buildings or within conservation areas without harming their character, and therefore alternative renewable technologies should be explored.
- 6.34. Any application for large scale solar PV arrays will be subject to rigorous examination and expected to clearly demonstrate that the special qualities of the National Park will not be compromised by the development, and that the intrinsic value of the landscape is retained. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be essential to show a sound understanding and assessment of the impact of proposals. Policy SP14 in the Local Plan sets out the local planning policy considerations for the assessment of renewable energy proposals.



Ground mounted solar panels at Efford Mill

Wind power

- 6.35. The New Forest is not generally an appropriate location for wind turbines due to insufficient wind speeds and the likely impact on the landscape and special qualities of the National Park. Domestic scale turbines require planning permission and applicants are advised to speak to officers before making an application.

Heat pumps

- 6.36. **Ground Source Heat Pumps** use pipes that are buried underground to extract heat from the ground. This heat can then be used to heat radiators, underfloor or warm air heating systems and hot water. Domestic schemes are generally allowed as permitted development (but Listed Building consent may still be required). Planning consent may be required for use in community or commercial buildings.
- 6.37. As the pipes are underground they are inconspicuous, though need sufficient space to accommodate them. Where possible the pump and associated machinery should be housed in an existing building to reduce visual intrusion, or an appropriately designed new small outbuilding if necessary. Ground source heat pumps can be particularly suited to listed buildings, within conservation areas and elsewhere where the visual impacts of other technologies would be unacceptable, provided that there are no archaeological implications. However, any potential impact on tree roots and underground services should also be avoided.



Ground source heat pump installation at Ferny Crofts Scout Activity Centre, near Beaulieu

- 6.38. **Air Source Heat Pumps** transfer heat from the outside air into a building to provide electric heating to generate hot water and heating. An air source pump unit will need to be fitted to a wall or placed on the ground, with plenty of airflow around it. These units can look industrial and should therefore be sited in an inconspicuous part of the building or grounds. Visual and landscape impacts on listed buildings should be avoided. Additionally, pumps should be sited to minimise possible impacts of noise on surrounding neighbours.
- 6.39. **Biomass** is mainly the use of logs, wood chips, wood waste or pellets to create electricity and heat. Small scale domestic uses are likely to constitute permitted development, although permission will be required for larger schemes in community or commercial buildings. Biomass fuel from a sustainable local source will be encouraged. Biomass boilers require very little infrastructure other than space to

store the wood fuel and so have minimal landscape impact. Any necessary outbuilding should be small-scale, unobtrusive and complement the character and design of the existing house or building.

Combined heat and power (CHP)

- 6.40. CHP boilers are like mini-power stations generating heat and recycling energy as a by-product. Within the National Park most combined heat and power installations are likely to be micro CHP units for domestic use and are unlikely to require planning permission.

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7 Landscape and Ecological Considerations

Relevant Local Plan (2019) Policies

SP6 – The natural environment

SP7 – Landscape character

SP15 - Tranquility

SP17 – Local distinctiveness

- 7.1. Landscape issues should not be addressed as an afterthought to the design of built development but be integral to the overall design. Traditional New Forest settlements have responded to the shape and environmental qualities of the landscape, and new development should seek to do the same. An understanding of the landscape and wildlife present on a site and the impact of development proposals are essential whatever the scale of development. Early consultation and seeking pre-application advice from the Authority's Development Control team is highly recommended to help applicants to assess the biodiversity and habitat issues. It is also recommended that landscape surveys and analysis are undertaken early in the application process so that the design of development can be effectively adapted to the landscape context. Applicants should be mindful that ecological constraints and the related surveys are seasonal; these details need to be provided at the beginning of the application process, as ecology surveys cannot be conditioned as part of a planning approval.
- 7.2. The National Park Authority can attach a landscaping condition to planning permissions for new developments that requests details of: the trees and shrubs to be retained; a specification for new planting; the areas of hardstanding and the materials to be used; boundary treatments; and a method statement for implementing the landscaping scheme, including how future maintenance will be undertaken.

Environmental enhancement

- 7.3. Over the last 10 years the UK has seen significant decreases in the abundance and distribution of many species of plants, fungi and animals, due to the impacts of climate change and increased development pressure. Environmental enhancement measures seek to counter these negative impacts upon our landscapes and natural environment. Well-designed new developments should seek to not only mitigate any negative impacts the proposals will have upon biodiversity but make new positive contributions to the New Forest's biodiversity and scenic beauty.
- 7.4. Environmental enhancement measures can be woven into many aspects of a development, including the design of private amenity space, property access and boundary treatments, sustainable drainage and flood control measures, external lighting, and signage. The National Park Authority has also produced a separate Supplementary Planning Document to provide specific guidance on [Horse Related Development](#), setting out how the landscape impacts can be minimised.

- 7.5. When considering how environmental enhancements can be built into a development, it is important to look at the design holistically, to ensure features intended to benefit wildlife are not compromised by other design decisions. For example, lighting can deter bats from using roosts and carrying out construction works at certain times of the year could interfere with seasonal nesting patterns.
- 7.6. Both traditional and modern buildings can be designed to accommodate protected species. There are solutions to perceived problems of including environmental enhancement measures in a design, that will satisfy the requirements of all the relevant professionals. For example, thermal bridging caused by wildlife structures can be effectively mitigated and there are traditional roofing felts that can be used in listed buildings that will meet Building Regulation standards.

Amenity Space

- 7.7. A property's garden space can contribute greatly to the overall character and success of a development design, both in terms of the benefits it can have for nature, as well as for the health and well-being of residents. Front gardens, in particular, have a significant impact on the wider street scene and character of settlements.
- 7.8. Using native and wildlife friendly planting species in gardens poses a real opportunity for biodiversity and strengthening the rural character of our existing settlements and new developments. Suitable planting options for gardens include orchard or fruit trees (apple, pear, plum); shrubs (heather, gorse, broom, viburnum, lavender, lilac, rosemary, mint) climbers (ivy, honeysuckle, clematis, virginia creeper, clematis, honeysuckle); and groundcover to link larger plants and soften hard surfacing, (grass turf, clover, wildflower meadow, ivy, periwinkle).
- 7.9. Fruit trees and native species trees (such as oak, beech and ash) can be located in front or rear gardens. The large native species trees require a large enough space to allow for future growth. These native species trees are also appropriate to plant as replacements to non-native species commonly found in gardens such as eucalyptus and leylandii trees.
- 7.10. Gardens and outbuildings can be designed to provide new homes for wildlife, by including features like green walls, insect hotels, hedgehog houses, ponds, rough grassland, and bird or bat boxes.

Boundary treatments

- 7.11. Traditionally, ancient trees and native boundary hedgerows were used as a soft and visually permeable means of defining fields and residential plots. Historic trees and hedgerows make significant contributions to the landscape character, provide habitats and movement corridors for wildlife, improve air quality, reduce the effects of heavy rain, and provide shelter. Consequently, developments should seek to

retain and integrate existing trees and hedgerows into the overall design. Retained hedgerows and trees need to be given enough space to be able to grow, produce flower and fruit. New native trees and hedgerows can also be planted to connect into, reinforce or reinstate these natural features and habitats. As a rule of thumb new hedge planting should be set back approximately 300mm from a boundary, to allow space for growth. Hedgerows should also be given the appropriate maintenance (pruning, layering or coppicing completed outside of the bird nesting season) to ensure they continue to make a positive ecological contribution. More detailed information and advice can be found in New Forest [Hedgerows leaflet](#) and the [Boundaries to properties in the Western Escarpment Conservation Area leaflet](#).

- 7.12. Hedgerows, trees, and other planting can be used as effective soft screening of less sympathetic features of a development, such as bin storage, ground mounted solar panel arrays or even the bulk of a building.
- 7.13. Native tree and hedgerow species include oak, ash, beech, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, hornbeam and wild rose.
- 7.14. Non-native hedge species such as Leylandii, Laurel and Griselinia have a suburbanizing character so should be avoided. These species have low ecological interest compared to native species hedgerows and can grow very tall without proper management. Planting garden boundaries with non-native and exotic species also risks them spreading into the surrounding Forest (as has been the case with rhododendron), which will have a negative impact upon its special habitats and on biodiversity (and has required work on invasive species removal in parts of the National Park).
- 7.15. Banks, ditches, and dragons' teeth can all be used effectively as natural ways of defining spaces. Some existing banks and ditches are also historic landscape features, so should be retained and enhanced. Other rurally appropriate forms of boundary treatment include low clay brick walls with matching copings, visually permeable fence styles where planting can poke through, and five-bar gates. Picket fences, post and rail fences, post and wire fences, the Burley Fence (a partial or complete hedgerow grown up with a post and wire fence with a timber top rail), and metal estate fences are all traditional and unobtrusive ways of marking plot boundaries. Reinstating metal estate fencing will be encouraged, where it is missing or has been damaged in parks and country estates. Woven hazel and willow hurdles provide a rural form of solid fencing; hedging can also be used to soften the visual impact of a fence. Where your property has a solid boundary, consider creating a small opening at the base to allow hedgehogs to pass through unhindered.



A combination of traditional boundary treatments, including a post and rail fence, a hedgerow, and dragons' teeth

- 7.16. Suburban boundary treatments such as concrete kerbing, close boarded fencing, concrete block walls and high ornamental boundary walls should be avoided. The nationally protected landscape of the New Forest could be improved by replacing them with more traditional and rurally sensitive solutions. [The New Forest National Park Landscape Action Plan](#) details sensitive design solutions.



Close boarded fencing gives an oppressive feel to this lane in Brockenhurst

Access

- 7.17. The size, number, and design of the access points to properties can significantly impact the character of a design. The New Forest's roads and lanes are often narrow and informal, with limited openings, traditional gates, simple verges, and lane surfacing. Widening driveways or punching in additional access points to

properties can have a suburbanising effect upon the street scene, fragmenting and damaging the verges and network of hedgerows, many of which are highly valued for nature conservation. Existing accesses should be used where possible and shared vehicle and pedestrian access to properties will be encouraged.

- 7.18. Gate posts and entrance gates should reflect the scale and design of the dwelling they serve and respect the character of the existing street scene. Only in a very few specific cases would tall ornamental brick piers with lighting and ornate wrought iron gates be appropriate. For most properties they appear overly grand and suburban for the New Forest setting and are not considered acceptable. Similarly, tall solid timber gates give properties a feeling of fortified impenetrability, which is alien to, and detracts from the open, informal character of the New Forest. Simple timber five bar timber or metal field gates are likely to be supported in rural settings in the New Forest and can be automatic.



Grand gate piers incongruous with the character of the thatched cottage

- 7.19. Formalised hard surfacing, such as paving blocks or tarmacadam, further compounds the visual intrusion of access ways. The use of permeable and semi-permeable surfaces such as pea shingle, golden gravel, hoggins and grasscrete systems will be encouraged as they are more appropriate for the rural setting of the New Forest and help manage surface water runoff. Buff coloured materials that match the natural gravels of the New Forest will be encouraged at the edge of settlements or where accesses cross verges or the Open Forest. Edges should be of treated timber or granite setts or left to merge with the grass for a more informal appearance.



A simple informal gravel accessway and a boundary ditch

- 7.20. Long access tracks, particularly those of hard surfacing, across fields should be avoided due to their suburbanising effect. Access should be direct as possible while providing suitable vehicle visibility splays. Applicants should avoid losing sections of hedgerow to achieve standard visibility splays.

Drainage

- 7.21. The effects of climate change, including warmer wetter winters, more extreme rainfall events and winter storms, and hotter drier summers will continue to be felt in the New Forest in the coming years. Therefore, it is important that water is sustainably managed to help prevent flooding events and reduce the impacts of long hot dry spells.
- 7.22. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to mimic the natural drainage of surface water, to manage rainfall close to where it falls and act as a means of filtering out pollutants. Where existing boundary ditches are present, they should be included into the drainage system, as this will maintain the existing landscape character. Otherwise, swales, scrapes, sumps, ponds, and rain gardens could be created to reduce the risk of flooding and provide wetland habitats. [The Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) has more detailed advice about how to create and maintain ponds and other drainage features that are wildlife friendly. Green roofs on buildings can also be used capture water and slow down the run-off, as well as acting as a sustainable form of heat and sound insulation.



A SuD scheme in a new development (outside the National Park) populated with water-plant species

- 7.23. In addition to sustainable drainage, there are several design solutions available to make sustainable and efficient use of water within a development. Grey water from kitchens and bathrooms can be recycled and used for toilets, dishwashers and washing machines after being filtered to remove bacteria. Rainwater run-off from roofs can also be harvested in water butts and recycled for use on the garden.

Signage

- 7.24. Signs are useful to mark residential property, businesses, attractions, facilities, and directions. However poorly designed and located signs risk creating clutter and an urban aesthetic that is at odds with the rural character of the New Forest.
- 7.25. Before installing signs, assess what signage is needed and for what purpose, so that their design and position can be rationalised to reduce unnecessary duplication and clutter. If signs are well positioned, visible and readable, fewer signs will be required overall. Applicants should also note that planning permission will be required for any sign that is larger than 0.3 square metres or for illuminated signs of any size on the front of, or outside, their property.
- 7.26. Once a suitable location for a sign has been identified an appropriate design needs to be devised for that setting and the purpose the sign serves. Signs should be made of appropriate materials and suitably proportioned for the space they locate. In the rural setting of the New Forest, rustic natural materials, particularly wood, can be very effective. Wood could be painted or left to weather naturally. Other traditional materials like cast iron, carved and painted brick, and painted render are also sympathetic to the rural setting.



Successful low key signage in Beaulieu High Street

- 7.27. Not all signs require lighting, and where it is necessary it should be used sparingly. Consider whether there is already sufficient lighting in the vicinity to avoid specifically lighting the sign. External lighting should be avoided unless it is for a business which needs to open at dusk and in the evening. If a sign does require lighting, down lighting should be used where possible to focus on the sign. Lights should be discretely located with the minimum number of lights to adequately light the fascia and will require consent.

Lighting and light pollution

- 7.28. Homeowners, developers, architects, landscape architects and lighting designers will be encouraged to provide non-obtrusive lighting designs when preparing proposals for any development in the National Park, including for any small-scale domestic changes that don't require planning permission. There are steps that can be taken by residents and public bodies operating within the New Forest National Park to reduce obtrusive lighting at existing properties, including:
- the installation of low-wattage bulbs, but with sufficient light intensity (measured in lumens). Lamps of 500 lumens or less are appropriate for most domestic purposes
 - the installation of motion/proximity detectors on external lighting
 - the colour of lighting – white LED lights emit a much 'bluer light' which not only increases the amount of glare sensed by the human eye and other organisms, but also the amount of visible light pollution

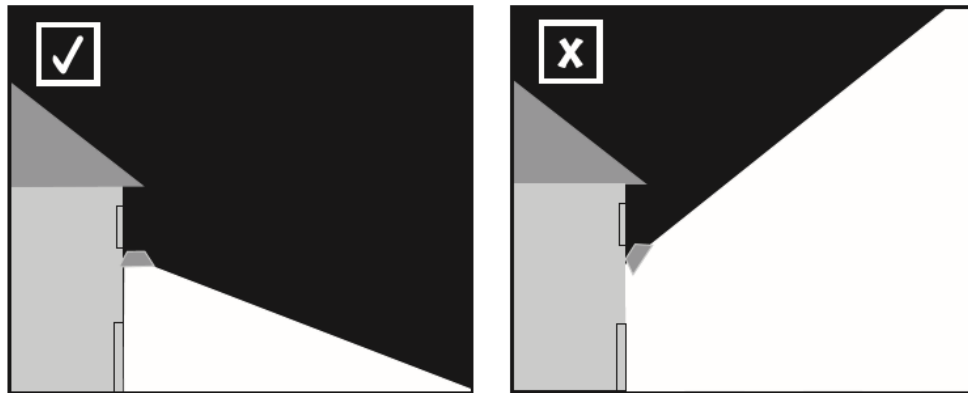
- shielding or down-tilting external lights and using asymmetrical or double asymmetrical lights
 - switching off lights when not needed and installing timer switches and dimmers
- 7.29. The best time to consider what lighting is necessary in a development is at the outset of the design process. It is important to think how the development will be used at night and - by design - minimise the need for exterior lighting. This could, for example, be by using lighting only where and when it is necessary, using an appropriate strength of light and adjusting light fittings to direct the light to where it is required. In addition, the colour of the lighting is a relevant consideration. Warm white LED spectrum lighting, for example, has less of an impact on night-time ecology and other sensitive receptors than cold white LED lighting. In all cases illumination should be appropriate and commensurate to the surroundings and character of the area as a whole.
- 7.30. In implementing policy SP15 (Tranquility) of the Local Plan, applicants will be expected to demonstrate the process which has been followed in order to arrive at the proposed lighting scheme. This will be proportionate to the scale of the development and the likely impacts. For larger developments for example, applications should be accompanied by a 'Lighting Plan' or 'Lighting Strategy' setting out potential light spillage and how this has been addressed in the design of the proposed development. Across the National Park, proposals should demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken to help conserve the dark skies of the National Park. The character of the area and the surrounding environment will influence what would be considered an appropriate level of lighting for a development. Illumination should be appropriate to the surroundings and character of the area and this will vary within different parts of the New Forest. For example, the lighting element of proposals close to protected habitats or in sensitive areas of the National Park (e.g. facing the Open Forest) will be particularly scrutinised.

External Lighting

- 7.31. All development proposals within the New Forest should avoid external lighting where possible. If floodlighting or other external lighting is unavoidable, it will be necessary to ensure that no light escapes above the horizontal plane and is directed to where it is required and not onto neighbouring property or the surrounding landscape of the National Park. The National Park Authority can attach conditions to planning permissions for new developments that include the design and operation of external lighting systems to prevent light pollution.
- 7.32. The Institution of Lighting Professionals produced [updated guidance](#) in 2020 regarding the reduction of obtrusive light within development schemes. It provides a good starting point for any applicant embarking on designing the lighting element of their proposals and focuses primary on external lighting. Table 2 of the guidance

note lists National Parks in Zone E1 – Natural – and characterised by a ‘dark’ environment.

Ensure that outside lighting shines downwards



Ensure that fully-shielded outside lighting is used



Internal Lighting

- 7.33. The spill of internal lights from large open glass windows, roof lanterns and sky lights also presents a source of light pollution in addition to externally mounted lights. Consequently, it is important that light from this source is proportionately controlled. The design of buildings should reduce the impact of light spill from internal lighting or suitable mitigation measures should be put in place. For example, alternatives to lanterns and skylights include lighting tubes and/or a reduction in the number of lanterns and skylights proposed.
- 7.34. In sensitive areas of the New Forest National Park – such as adjacent to protected habitats or fronting onto the Open Forest - proposals should avoid large continuous areas of glazing, such as multi-floor to eaves glazing/cart shed openings. Expansive and continuous glazing can present significant landscape impacts and glazing should be broken up in order to ensure the resultant appearance reflects the function as low key domestic glazing.



Effective use of louvres on this contemporary design to provide shading and reduce the impact of light spill from the large windows

7.35. In accordance with Policy SP15, this Design Guide recommends applicants use the following checklist to assist them with their lighting decisions:

- why the lighting is needed
- what may be affected by night time lighting e.g. neighbours, sites of ecological importance, open landscapes, or protected species
- will the lighting be visible from some critical viewpoints such as a public footpath or from the surrounding Open Forest
- what kind of lights are required and their location
- consideration of the use of motion sensors
- which areas are being illuminated and why
- whether any design solutions can overcome potential light pollution problems
- light colour
- consider potential light spillage to adjacent areas and impacts on the dark skies through increase skyglow, particularly from large expanses of upward facing glazing

8 Further information

- 8.1. Getting advice from a planning officer before making your application is very worthwhile. It can help the process run more smoothly and quickly. The National Park Authority provides a free duty planning officer service to assist with initial or general planning enquiries. There is a fee for formal written pre-application advice and more details can be found on our [website](#).

Sustainability information sources

SuDS	Susdrain - www.susdrain.org/
Green and Blue Infrastructure	Landscape Institute: www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/green-infrastructure/ JNCC: jncc.gov.uk/our-work/blue-green-infrastructure/
Embodied carbon in refurbishment and new build	Historic England: Understanding Carbon in the Historic Environment (2019) Historic Environment Forum: Heritage Counts 2019: There's no place like old homes – Re-use and recycle to reduce carbon (2020)
Energy Efficiency	Energy Saving Trust www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/ Historic England: Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings - Application of Part L of the Building Regulations to historic and traditionally constructed buildings (2017) Historic England: Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to improve energy efficiency (2018)
Planning Permission	Planning portal www.interactive.planningportal.co.uk/
Building Regulations	Planning Portal www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200135/approved_documents/74/part_l_-_conservation_of_fuel_and_power
Renewable Energy and Historic Properties	Historic England historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings/low-and-zero-carbon-technologies/
Passivhaus Trust	www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/

Association for Environment Conscious Building (AECB)	www.aecb.net/
BREEAM	www.breeam.com/

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9. Glossary

Bargeboards

Boards hung from the projecting incline of a gable roof, hiding the horizontal roof timbers; often decorative

Bay

The regular vertical division of an elevation defined by architectural features such as windows, columns or pillars

Boundary treatments

Different ways of marking a boundary, including fences, hedges and walls

Building line

The alignment of building frontages along a street

Building span

The distance between two ends of a construction

Bulk

The volume of the built form

Cob

A material for walls made from compressed earth, clay or chalk, often reinforced with straw.

Commoner

A person who occupies land to which Common Rights in the New Forest are attached, including the right to turn out ponies, horses, cattle and donkeys and the right to turn out pigs in the pannage season in autumn to feed on acorns and beech nuts

Commons

Defined areas of land which are subject to rights of common

Conservation Area

A defined area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, designated under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 by the Local Planning Authority

Context

The location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings

Curtilage

An area attached to a dwelling house forming one enclosure with it

Defined Village

The four main villages within the National Park – Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway – which provide a range of facilities and services for their surrounding communities

Design and Access Statement

A short report accompanying and supporting a planning application that explains how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrates that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users

Design Code

A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area

Design Guide

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice

Eaves

The lower edge of the sloping roof that projects beyond the wall

Embodied carbon

The carbon emitted during construction, maintenance and demolition or re-use of a building

Enclosure

Fenced land from which the commoners' stock are excluded, both in Crown and private ownership

Encroachment

Areas of Open Forest illegally enclosed for private use or occupation, usually on its periphery, or around settlements

Estate

A large area of land in the country owned by a family or organisation usually with a large house

Fascia

Horizontal boards attached to rafter and truss ends at the eaves; the flat surface above a shop window displaying the name of the shop

Fenestration

The arrangement and design of windows in a building

Form

The three-dimensional shape of buildings and the spaces they define. Built form is defined by the size, shape in plan, height, bulk, massing, building lines, and relationship to the plot boundary

Frontage / Façade

The exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes including more elaborate architectural features to distinguish it from the other faces of the building

Grain

The pattern of plots in an area

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)

Heritage Statement

A document accompanying and supporting a planning application that analyses the significance of heritage assets affected by the proposal. The statement should also detail the impact of a proposal on the heritage asset's significance and explaining how it can be avoided, minimised or mitigated, and justified, if that is not possible, in whole or in part.

Layout

The arrangement of buildings and streets into blocks; the arrangement of buildings and features within a plot; the arrangement of rooms and spaces within a building

Listed Building

A building recognised to be of national historic importance, designated and protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990

Locally Listed Building (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by identified by local planning authorities as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions

Massing

How the bulk (volume) of a building is shaped into a form

Mouldings

A member of construction that has been shaped to introduce a variation or contour to its outline

Mullion

A vertical post or upright, dividing a window into two or more lights

Open Forest

The unenclosed Crown Lands and adjacent commons which are subject to common rights

Plinth

A recognisable base of a wall or building, usually several courses of material treated to give the appearance of a platform

Rain Garden

A shallow area of ground planted with shrubs and flowers, which receives water runoff from roofs and other hard surfaces

Render

An external coat of mortar covering stone, brick or cob.

Ridge

The horizontal line at the junction of two sloping roof surfaces

SANG

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) is the name given to new green space provision that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation for development likely to affect protected habitats

Scale

The height, width and length of a building or space in relation to its surroundings

Scrape

Shallow depressions with gentle sloping edges that seasonally hold water

Setting

The surroundings in which a building or features is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve

SuDS

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to mimic the natural drainage of surface water, typically managing rainfall close to where it falls

Sump

A pit or reservoir that serves as a drain

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

Swale

Natural or man-made linear depressions, with shallow-sloping, grass sides; often shady and marshy

Transom

Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or the top of a door

Vernacular

Regional building styles that use local materials and traditional methods of construction and ornament, often used on ordinary low-status buildings