

D Cotswold Design Code

Background

D.1 The Cotswolds is an outstandingly beautiful area, rich in built and natural heritage. The aim of this Design Code is to ensure the highest standards of new development, respecting the distinctive qualities of the District for the benefit of current and future generations.

D.2 This Design Code should be used in conjunction with national policy and guidance, including the NPPF and the PPG. These emphasise the importance of good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. It encourages high quality and inclusive design that establishes a strong sense of place and responds to local character.

D.3 This Code is intended to cover all aspects of design, within a Cotswold context. These aspects include architectural, urban, landscape, ecological and sustainable design. And the Code is relevant to a wide range of development, from householder extensions and alterations, to conversions, major residential schemes and large-scale commercial proposals. It is a material consideration in planning decisions and, set within the context of the Local Plan, carries considerable weight.

D.4 It may, in some cases, be appropriate to produce site specific design codes for significant development schemes.

Informing the Design – Resources and Information

D.5 This Design Code must be read in conjunction with policies EN2, INF7 and related policies.

D.6 All good design is informed both by the needs of the current and future users, and by a proper understanding of the site and its setting. These considerations are of particular importance where there is an existing high quality built and natural environment, as in Cotswold District.

D.7 There is a wealth of information on the natural, built and historic environment of the District, which is continually being expanded. Reference should be made to the Council's website for the most recent information and guidance produced by the Council and other organisations, including: landscape character assessments; conservation area appraisals; design guidance for individual architectural features; and community design statements. Site-specific information should also be sought, and the characteristics of the site and its wider surroundings should be carefully studied.

D.8 The Council's validation process clearly outlines the types of assessment that might be appropriate. These are likely to include, for example, landscape visual impact assessments, historic environment statements, and ecological appraisals. The type and scope of assessment required will relate to the development proposed and to the level of potential impact of that development.

Landscape, Settlements and Streets

D.9 Careful study should be made of the context of any new development. Each site will have its own characteristics, and a specific landscape or townscape setting. Any proposed development should respond to this.

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D.10 Settlements are distinctive in how they sit within the landscape. They have their own unique layouts and patterns of streets. These characteristics should be reflected in the location and design of new developments.

D.11 Cotswold towns typically have many buildings tightly arranged at their core, with building lines set immediately on, or close to, the rear of the pavement. Many feature gently curving streets, and are centred on wide thoroughfares or market places. Nearly all settlements incorporate important open spaces. Some Cotswold villages are arranged around village greens. Others are set out in a linear fashion, or are more dispersed and rural.

D.12 In the countryside, a few grand houses might sit impressively in dominating locations, but the majority of buildings appear nestled within their landscape setting, and are not prominent or located on the skyline. An understanding of the impact of any development proposal on key views is critical.

D.13 Traditional Cotswold street scenes contain buildings of a variety of scales and architectural styles. Together, however, there is a sense of rhythm, harmony and balance, and this should be continued in any new development. The particular character of existing streets should be respected, including gaps between buildings, which can often be important. New additions might add interest but should not appear out-of-keeping.

D.14 In designing new development, close attention to the site and its setting should work at all levels, from the overall principle, density and grain, to the scale, form, roofscapes, elevations and detailed features of the buildings, and then to the landscaping surrounding them.

D.15 Whatever the design approach, it is important to ensure that development not only respects local character, but also develops a sense of place in its own right. This is particularly important for larger schemes, where some individuality in design for the whole development, or for areas within the development, will help the site to form its own identity and character, whilst still respecting the wider context.

Scale and Proportion

D.16 New buildings should be carefully proportioned and relate to the human scale, and to their landscape or townscape context.

D.17 Excessive or uncharacteristic bulk should be avoided. New buildings should generally not dominate their surroundings, but should complement the existing structures or landscape, and sit comfortably within their setting.

D.18 The height of new buildings should respond to the local context, for example forming a gentle transition from open countryside to settlement edge.

D.19 Extensions to existing buildings should be in scale and character with the parent building. Additions should not dominate the original building, individually or cumulatively. Subservience in mass and height is often important, leaving the building's evolution apparent.

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D.20 The design approach selected should respond to each site and its setting. The success of different design approaches, and in particular architectural styles, is very dependent on location. There are many valid approaches to the design of buildings, depending on their context. Due to the distinctive and consistent traditional architecture of the Cotswolds, a vernacular design approach is commonly successful. On some sites a contemporary approach, well-executed, can be appropriate. These two design approaches are discussed further below.

Architectural Style – the Cotswold Vernacular

D.21 Many Cotswold settlements are quintessential English villages. The distinctive traditional architecture of the area is famous worldwide. Buildings have, for many centuries, had a relatively uniform and consistent style, resulting from the use of the local stone and traditional construction techniques. This is known as the Cotswold vernacular.

D.22 Many new buildings are designed in the Cotswold vernacular style and, if done correctly, this follows a great tradition. The same design approach will of course not be applied to all contexts in the District. The decision whether to adopt a vernacular or more contemporary architectural style will depend on the type of development, the site and its setting. Where it is adopted, it is critical that new vernacular proposals are carefully researched and reflect the qualities of the traditional architecture of the area, including materials, proportions and roof forms, as well as the siting, scale and detailed design of features.

D.23 New designs should not draw on existing buildings that have been unsuccessful or have not respected local distinctiveness. Poor imitations of true vernacular architecture should also be avoided. At the same time there should not be blind copying or slavish replication of specific buildings or detailing. New vernacular proposals should be inspired by the best of the past, carrying the key qualities and essence of the Cotswold style, but also utilising new technologies and best practice to address the environmental, economic and social concerns of today.

D.24 It should be noted that the Cotswold vernacular is not entirely consistent across the whole District. There are subtle variations in architectural forms and features, and in materials, that result in areas of differing character, which should again be reflected in new development.

D.25 Some key qualities of the Cotswold vernacular are:

- a. The use of local limestone for walling, and split limestone slates for roofs. Roughcast render is also used, more often in southern parts of the District.
- b. A general simplicity of form and design is typical, often giving buildings an understated appearance, with any ornamentation usually limited to architectural features.
- c. Restricted gable widths, resulting in narrow plan depths to many buildings.
- d. Steep roof pitches, dictated by the use of the stone tiles.

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- e. A variety of roof forms, sometimes a simple single ridge with plain unbroken roof slopes and windows set under the eaves, and sometimes forward-facing steep gables. Roof slopes are also often broken by smaller ‘gablets’, or dormers, some more substantial stone, and others timber-framed and rendered.
- f. Valleys traditionally formed by stone slates swept to a curve. Plain shallow eaves and verges, with an absence of overhangs, and without any exposed rafter feet, fascias or bargeboards.
- g. Chimneys, originally stone (often ashlar), and then commonly red brick from the nineteenth century. Tall chimneys, often set to the ridge line, with stacks normally integral and flush to gable end walls.
- h. Window openings well-spaced and fairly small, with sizeable areas of wall in between. Openings usually centrally placed within gables, and end walls containing chimneys usually blank, or with sparse and offset fenestration.
- i. Two and three light windows most common. Generally a hierarchy to the openings, with wider ground floor windows below smaller upper floor windows.
- j. Stone mullion window surrounds, directly glazed or containing metal casements, and sometimes with stone hood moulds above. Or simple flush timber casements, with slender glazing divisions, set below stone or timber lintels.
- k. Doors usually solid timber boarded, sometimes containing a small glazed pane.
- l. Porches of varying styles. Some of a solid stone gabled type but many lightweight canopies, such as gables or flat hoods supported on brackets.
- m. Garden areas enclosed by boundary treatments, most typically dry stone walling.

D.26 From the eighteenth century, a larger number of buildings were constructed showing the influences of classical architecture. Roofs set behind parapets become more common, as well as the use of verge copings. Unlike fully classical set-pieces, such as some country houses and large town houses, many more buildings applied certain elements of classicism, whilst retaining a vernacular flavour. For example, some farmhouses were given a polite, symmetrical facade with sash windows.

D.27 A distinctive interpretation of the Cotswold vernacular continued through the Victorian period, with many architect-designed estate cottages and terraces, as well as civic buildings. Gothic or Tudor inspired architectural features were sometimes employed. Exposed rafter feet and decorative bargeboards and finials are occasionally seen. From the Victorian period, with the coming of the railways, the use of blue slate for roofing became more common.

D.28 The Cotswold vernacular is also renowned for its relationship with the Arts and Crafts movement. Arts and Crafts buildings had a distinctive character but drew heavily on the vernacular and emphasised quality of materials and craftsmanship, both to exteriors and interiors.

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Architectural Style – Contemporary

D.29 Original and innovative proposals that reinforce a sense of place and help raise the standard of design generally are welcomed. A contemporary design should make strong local references and respect elements of the Cotswold vernacular, in order to maintain the architectural distinctiveness of the area.

D.30 On many listed buildings, in some prominent locations, or within consistently historic and traditional village and town street scenes, a contemporary building may appear too starkly out-of-keeping. This is more often the case in an area such as the Cotswolds, which has such a strong vernacular. But there are many opportunities to explore a less conventional design approach, and this is encouraged.

D.31 The massing and the elevations of contemporary buildings should usually be broken, especially in historic settings, to avoid overly horizontal proportions and a monolithic or brutal appearance. The scale, modulation and architectural lines of contemporary buildings should respond to their context, for example with vertical articulation reflecting the narrower plots within town centres.

D.32 The use of traditional local materials, most notably natural stone, appropriate proportions, and a high standard of workmanship will help to ensure that contemporary developments are harmonious with their surroundings. There should be an emphasis on simplicity of design, with detailing neatly resolved and of the highest quality.

D.33 In some instances the use of modern, non-local materials may contribute towards a successful contemporary design. This might include the use of more extensive areas of glazing, zinc or copper roofs, or timber cladding. However, obvious local references should still be made.

D.34 Modern design may also facilitate the incorporation of sustainable features more readily than when following a traditional design approach. Key points that relate specifically to the Cotswold context include the use of locally-sourced materials, and the incorporation of heating and energy generation that utilises local resources, for example, woodland products.

Materials and Craftsmanship

Stonework

D.35 The most important, unifying aspect of the traditional architecture of the Cotswolds is the use of the local stone. Cotswold stone is an oolitic limestone that has been quarried locally for centuries and used for walling, roofing and other architectural elements.

D.36 The colour of Cotswold stone varies across the District, from lighter creams and some greyer tones to the south, to deeper creams and rich honey colours further north. It is vital that the colour chosen is appropriate for each locality, when extending or altering existing stone buildings, or when constructing new buildings.

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D.37 There are various styles of walling stone within the Cotswolds. Many higher status buildings are constructed in ashlar stonework. This consists of straight cut, finely tooled blocks of stone, laid to their natural bed, with very tight mortar joints.

D.38 More commonly walls are constructed of Cotswold rubble stone. This includes some neater squared and dressed stonework, usually given a flatter tooled face. But many buildings are built up in rougher, less worked rubble stone, and some in shallow coursed field stone. Traditional rubble stonework is generally best laid to courses randomly varied in size up through the stonework, but most often consistent in size along the length of each course, avoiding overly wide mortar joints.

D.39 Mortars are traditionally lime based. The use of lime mortar is a requirement in some situations, most commonly on listed buildings. It is also suitable for other traditional structures. Where a more modern mix is permissible, the inclusion of lime, white cement and local sand (including some larger aggregate sizes), is often found to be successful for new rubble stonework. The aim is a mortar that dries to a colour to blend with the stone. The effect should generally be unified stonework, rather than obvious stones amongst mortar. Usually joints are brushed back to give a rougher texture, finished flush or very marginally recessed from the faces of the stones.

Other walling materials

D.40 The use of lime washes and renders is particularly characteristic of southern parts of the District, such as Cirencester and Tetbury. Sometimes rubble stonework is traditionally given several coats of lime wash, in colours ranging from whiter tones to stronger ochres. Lime washes protect stonework and give buildings a distinctive soft appearance, usually continued across architectural elements such as stone mullion window surrounds and hood moulds.

D.41 Many Cotswold vernacular buildings were rendered historically, and in some cases the stonework we see today was never intended to be exposed. Traditionally most renders are of a roughcast type, with a thrown pea-shingle coat, and a lime wash finish. This gives a soft, interesting and locally distinctive appearance. Some buildings, usually those with classical design influences, and typically in town centres, are finished in smooth renders.

D.42 Other traditional building materials also make an important contribution to local character. Some red brick is seen, more commonly from the nineteenth century onwards, and more often in town contexts and for outhouses across much of the District. It was also used more widely to the far north, in the Vale of Evesham, and to the far south east, in the Upper Thames Valley.

Stone slates

D.43 Cotswold stone slates are constructed from limestone, split along its natural bed and dressed to various slate sizes. They are then laid to courses diminishing in size, from the eaves up to the ridge. A steep roof pitch is required. Ridge tiles are traditionally sawn stone, and valleys formed by slates swept to the curve. This widespread roof covering is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Cotswold vernacular architecture.

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D.44 Artificial Cotswold stone slates are available, and have improved in quality. They are still, however, not the authentic, traditional material. They have a subtly different appearance. They do not fully imitate the visual qualities and variations of the natural material, and do not weather and develop a patina with age in quite the same way. On listed buildings and in some other sensitive historic settings they may not be permissible. But they are appropriate for use on many unlisted buildings and housing developments across the District. A high quality artificial stone slate product, in these situations, gives roof slopes a suitably softer appearance, reflecting vernacular buildings and responding to local distinctiveness.

Other roofing materials

D.45 From the nineteenth century onwards there is more use of blue-grey Welsh slate, for re-roofing, and often for lean-tos and outhouses, town houses and agricultural buildings. Roof pitches are not required to be so steep when using this material. In most contexts, the stone slate (or artificial stone slate) should remain the dominant material in new vernacular developments. Natural blue slate, although a welcomed traditional roof covering, does have a cleaner and harsher appearance.

D.46 Some use of thatch is also seen in the District, most widely in a few of the northernmost villages, but with scattered examples surviving further south. Plain clay tile is seen in some locations, and clay pantiles in the south west of the District, around the Tetbury area, and often on outbuildings.

Windows and doors

D.47 A high quality of materials is expected generally within new development. Slender metal window framing may be appropriate within stone mullion surrounds or within contemporary designs, but windows are generally required to be timber side-hung casements or sliding sashes.

D.48 The framing of casements should be balanced to opening and non-opening lights. Modern storm-proof detailing should be avoided and generally flush casement window construction should be used, with attention paid to achieving slender glazing divisions. Detailing should include plain chamfered external beading, to replicate traditional putty lines.

D.49 Timber doors would also usually be expected. Wider planks are often appropriate for boarded doors. Panelled doors should be of a period style appropriate to the building.

Finishes

D.50 Even the choice of finishes can make a vast difference to the character and appearance of buildings, such as window and door paint colours. The use of stained timber should generally be avoided as it is not a traditional joinery finish and does not complement Cotswold stone. Colours should normally be selected from a fairly traditional palette, but this still allows for wide variety.

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D.51 The nature and colour of other external woodwork should generally harmonise with the colour of the walling materials. Lintels, posts and weatherboarding are commonly oak. The most sympathetic finish for these features is often completely untreated. The wood then weathers and silvers with time to very successfully complement stone, and assist in vernacular and contemporary developments blending well within their settings.

Boundary treatments and surfacing

D.52 The use of traditional materials also extends to the landscaping surrounding buildings.

D.53 Dry stone walling is of course indigenous to the area and seen widely. Correctly laid walls require a skilled craftsman. They are traditionally topped with stones set on edge (cock-and-hen), but sometimes are given a simple curved concrete capping.

D.54 There are also examples of red brick walls and other boundary treatments, including railings. Painted railings, vertical and set into low walls, are seen in town or village centre contexts, with horizontal parkland style railings often used in more rural settings. Mixed native species hedging can be used as part of a successful landscaping scheme, sometimes planted alongside post-and-rail fencing within agricultural surroundings. Wattle fencing can also be used for screening in many contexts, again sometimes whilst planting is established.

D.55 Modern, incongruous forms of boundary treatment should be avoided, especially in prominent locations. These include close-boarded and other forms of modern timber fencing, concrete block walls or certain types of hedging such as Leyland Cypress.

D.56 Within traditional street scenes and to front gardens lower forms of traditional boundary treatments should be maintained, so as not to obscure the frontages of buildings and result in uncharacteristic high enclosure to the road. Privacy should be established using planting.

D.57 Paving is traditionally limestone, or Yorkshire, flags. Stone cobbles, blue engineering bricks and other traditional setts are commonly seen. And crushed limestone or bound gravel can also be sympathetic surface finishes.

Craftsmanship

D.58 High levels of craftsmanship will be required to use both modern and traditional materials appropriately and to ensure high quality developments are delivered. It is often the detail and sensitivity of the work that makes all the difference in achieving a successful outcome. Skilled craftsmen are also often able to repair historic features, avoiding the need for more extensive replacement of fabric.

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Sustainable Design

D.59 There is now a greater awareness of the need to ensure that developments are sustainable in their design and construction. The potential impacts of climate change can be addressed through a variety of means, from the incorporation of better insulation and renewable energy technologies, to adaptations for severe weather events, and the use of local and recycled building materials. Re-use of existing buildings is also often more environmentally sustainable than demolition and new build.

D.60 Elements of sustainable construction can be applied through retrofit, by altering existing buildings, and as part of new build developments. Many aspects of sustainable design need to be considered at the onset of site planning to ensure that they can be achieved, for example the use of building orientation to maximise passive solar gain or sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

D.61 Other issues are controlled via the Building Control system, but property owners and developers are encouraged to exceed the requirements of those regulations. Detailed guidance on sustainable design is not provided within this Code as there is sufficient guidance provided elsewhere, for example, in the PPG and from Historic England.

D.62 Sustainable design needs to be responsive to the character of the area and the sensitivities of the site. For example a careful and sympathetic approach is required when dealing with listed buildings, and buildings in conservation areas or other sensitive historic or landscape settings, including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some measures may be more appropriate in certain contexts than others.

Inclusive Design

D.63 An “inclusive” design approach will help a range of users within the community, including older people, those with physical impairments and medical conditions, and families. There are marked demographic changes in the District, particularly in more rural areas, with increasing numbers of older people. This brings with it a particular set of issues that should be addressed in the design of new developments.

D.64 New dwellings can be designed to ensure that occupiers can remain in their own homes as long as possible, without the need for costly additional interventions, perhaps by following Lifetime Homes principles, or by incorporating more single storey dwellings, or dwellings with lifts.

D.65 The design of the public realm, including open spaces and highways is also crucial. Getting out and about is of vital importance for people to remain healthy and active members of the community. In order to achieve this, the following should be given consideration:

- a. Open spaces, including streets and parks should be designed with adequate seating, gently sloping access routes, measures to reduce fear of crime, and an attractive appearance, so that people are encouraged to use them.

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- b. Open spaces, including pavements, should be well maintained to avoid trip hazards and other obstacles to safe use.
- c. Pedestrian crossings should be designed taking into account sensory impairments, and giving people with limited mobility adequate time to cross the road.
- d. Community spaces should be incorporated into developments to improve social connections.
- e. Community spaces and facilities should have adequate WC provision.
- f. Public buildings should be designed with excellent inclusive access.

Effective Green Infrastructure and High Quality Landscape

D.66 High quality, well integrated and carefully designed green infrastructure (GI) and landscape provision is crucial to the long-term success of developments, ensuring that the maximum multi-functional benefits are achieved for those that live in, work at and visit new developments. The spaces in between new buildings, the surrounding areas, and the connections between a new development and the existing townscape or landscape, are equally important to the design of the structures themselves. The detail of the GI and landscape provided on a development site will be related to various factors including the nature of the site itself, and the type, size and impact of the development. Improved GI and high quality landscape is also of great benefit when introduced into existing built areas. Key principles include the following:

| Key Principles | | |
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| a. | National and local standards and best practice | The amount, type and design of GI should be informed by the appropriate national and local standards, guidance and best practice, including the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard from Natural England and the national allotment provision recommendations from the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. |
| b. | Local character | The design of newly created elements of GI and landscape should be inspired by and enhance the character of the existing GI, landscape, biodiversity and built environment of the site and the wider area. |
| c. | Existing landscape features | GI design and distribution should be informed by existing landscape, ecological and historical features. For example, stone walls, hedgerows, trees and ponds should be retained and successfully integrated into the GI network. |
| d. | Heritage assets | A new development site may include or fall within the setting of historic buildings and structures, and archaeological sites. The GI network should be designed, used and managed in such a way as to protect and enhance the heritage assets and their settings, preserving key views and buffer areas. |

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| Key Principles | | |
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| e. | Interface with existing properties | The interface between a new development and any existing adjacent properties should be designed to respect the amenity of existing residents and to ensure that the existing and new developments are well integrated. |
| f. | On-site GI network | This should function as a network of interconnected green (and blue/aquatic) spaces, which fulfil various functions including: formal sport; recreation; pedestrian and cyclist routes; accessible natural green space; structural landscaping; SuDS; and wildlife habitat. Most of the elements of the GI should be multi-functional. |
| g. | Distribution of GI across the site | The GI network should be designed to ensure that all residents, employees and visitors have convenient access to green spaces. This should be achieved through dispersal of meaningful and usable areas across the site. Elements of the GI should be of sufficient size to be functional and easily managed. The GI and landscape provision should be located so that it makes best use of and enhances important local views. |
| h. | GI and landscape provision on individual plots | The landscape design of individual plots and the areas immediately surrounding them (e.g. roadside verges) should be of high quality and should reflect the landscape, ecological and built character of the area. Private spaces such as gardens should be of an appropriate size for the dwelling provided, and should be designed to ensure privacy and adequate daylight. Private spaces should be clearly recognisable as such, through the use of suitable boundary treatments. |
| i. | Inter-relationship with off-site GI | The on-site GI should be designed to ensure that it links physically with off-site GI to maximise opportunities for ecological connections, footpath and cycle links, continuity of landscape features, etc. |
| j. | Off-site GI enhancements | Where possible enhancements to off-site GI assets should be achieved, for example increasing public access to nearby land, and better management of wildlife sites in the locality. |
| k. | Sustainable drainage solutions | The principle approach to the SuDS infrastructure should be to ensure that as much of it as possible is provided on the surface, mimicking the natural drainage of the site. This will reduce the burden on the existing sewerage system. The SuDS infrastructure should not only serve a drainage role, but also contribute to the visual amenity and the wider environmental performance of the development. Its management should be fully integrated with the management of other aspects of GI. |
| l. | Green features on buildings | Green features (living roofs and walls, bird or bat boxes, etc.) should be incorporated, where appropriate, into new and existing buildings. |

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| Key Principles | | |
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| m. | Biodiversity enhancements | Opportunities should be taken within all areas of GI (and the built environment) to enhance biodiversity through species choice, creation of new habitats, land management etc. There should be linkages with existing biodiversity assets and networks, and increasing access to nature for people. |
| n. | Species choice | Within planting schemes, species choice should be guided by appropriateness to the local area (with an emphasis on native species); suitability for its function (for example winter screening); value for wildlife; and resilience to climate change. |
| o. | Street trees | Wherever possible street trees should be planted to improve amenity and environmental performance. Street trees can also be used to help to define the character of different areas of a development and improve legibility. |
| p. | Road junctions | The landscape design of new or significantly altered road junctions, particularly at visually prominent locations, should be of high quality, reflect the landscape character of the area, help to give a sense of place, and ensure greater legibility. |
| q. | Pedestrian and cycle routes | The walking and cycling network, which will form part of the GI, should encourage “active travel”, in line with the highway user hierarchy principle. On-site routes should link to off-site non-vehicular routes, particularly those that lead to key destinations such as shops, schools and railway stations. These routes should be designed so that they are also available to the existing residents and businesses in the locality, and they should be implemented early in the delivery of the development. |
| r. | Healthy lifestyles | GI should be designed to encourage healthy lifestyles for all, including: encouraging walking and cycling; provision of formal and informal sports facilities; providing volunteering opportunities; and food production. |
| s. | Provision for all sectors of the community | The amount, distribution and type of GI across a site (and any off-site GI enhancements) should be based on an assessment of the needs of the new residents and other users of the site. Consideration should also be given to helping to meet any shortfall in existing provision. |
| t. | Accessibility | The majority of the GI should be accessible, both physically and socially, to all sectors of the community, providing safe, attractive, welcoming and engaging spaces for local people. It should meet the needs of all sectors of the community, including “hard to reach” groups and those who may require specific provision (for example seating to assist those with limited mobility). |
| u. | Timing of “construction” of GI | Where appropriate, elements of the GI network should be “constructed” in advance of built development. Where this is not appropriate, the timing of their “construction” should be tied to the relevant phase of built development. |

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Key Principles

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| v. | Long-term Management | The management and monitoring of GI should usually be controlled by a management plan. The plan should clearly set out who will be responsible for the management of the GI and landscape provision. Management plans should be implemented in full and regularly reviewed. Where appropriate the local community should be involved in the management of GI. |
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Key Design Considerations for Specific Development Proposals

D.67 Key design considerations include the following:

| | Development proposal | Key considerations |
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| 1. | <p>Residential extensions, outbuildings and new dwellings</p> <p>Extensions to existing buildings should be in scale and character with the original building, and in-keeping with its setting, whether traditional or contemporary in design.</p> <p>Although most commonly applied when assessing extensions, these residential amenity considerations also apply to other types of development, including new outbuildings and dwellings.</p> | <p>a. Extensions should respect the scale, proportions, materials and character of the building.</p> <p>b. They should not obscure important elevations or features of interest, or in any way diminish the quality or integrity of the building, and they should not detract from the surroundings.</p> <p>c. Excessive bulk should be avoided. Modern extensions should not dominate or compete with the original building, either individually or cumulatively.</p> <p>d. They should generally be subservient in height, area and overall mass to the original building, leaving the form and evolution of the building apparent.</p> <p>e. The location and massing of an extension, its roof form and the treatment of its elevations should respect the building. Usually a similar solid to void ratio will be followed, with the location, spacing and size of openings in-keeping with the existing architecture.</p> <p>f. Simplicity of design is important. Extensions should appear as a natural part of the evolution of the building and should look 'right'.</p> <p>g. It may often be necessary or more appropriate to adopt a design approach in-keeping with the original building. But in some cases adopting a contemporary approach may be equally acceptable.</p> |

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| | Development proposal | Key considerations |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 421 1506 607">h. Whether vernacular or contemporary, materials should be used that make reference to the existing building, and to the local distinctiveness and architectural traditions of the area. New materials need not all be identical to the existing, but should harmonise with them. <li data-bbox="523 645 1453 680">i. To vernacular dwellings, integral garages should be avoided. <li data-bbox="523 719 1506 869">j. Conservatories are usually best located to private rear elevations, not seen within the street scene. When dealing with vernacular buildings or those in sensitive historic settings a solid roof treatment to garden rooms is usually most appropriate. <li data-bbox="523 907 1506 981">k. Large upper floor openings, and Juliet balconies, should generally be avoided on buildings of traditional design. <li data-bbox="523 1019 1506 1093">l. Dormers should be in-keeping with the building to which they are added, in their placement, scale and design. <li data-bbox="523 1131 1506 1317">m. Porches should not be applied where they detract from the character of a building, or obscure features of interest. Elsewhere they should be sympathetic in style. Although stone structures can sometimes be permissible, often lighter-weight traditional canopies can more successfully overlay an historic building. <li data-bbox="523 1355 1506 1464">n. The gaps between buildings may be important to retain as open, providing rhythm and relief within the street scene, and contributing to the character of the area. <li data-bbox="523 1503 1485 1612">o. Extensions should respect the amenity of dwellings, giving due consideration to issues of garden space, privacy, daylight and overbearing effect. <li data-bbox="523 1650 1506 2033">p. To ensure adequate privacy, the minimum distance between facing windows of one and two storey dwellings should be no less than 22m and, for buildings higher than two storeys, no less than 28m. Where the distance between facing windows is less than 28m in one and two storey dwellings, or less than 32m for buildings higher than two storeys, permitted development rights may be removed. For these purposes, facing windows are those which can readily be seen into from within principal rooms in another property, including windows at an angle to one another, but excluding windows on front elevations. Much will depend on the angle and |

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| | Development proposal | Key considerations |
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| | | <p>the topography. A principal room is a bedroom, living room, dining room, kitchen, study or other living space, but not a hallway, stairs, bathroom, utility or store.</p> <p>q. To avoid undue loss of daylight, when considering planning applications, the Council will take into account the advice contained in the Building Research Establishment publication IP 23/12 - Site Layout Planning for Daylight.</p> <p>r. To ensure adequate garden space, the size of a private garden should relate to the size and nature of the property. A large detached family house should have a substantial garden, capable of providing enough space for different family activities to take place at the same time, (e.g. sitting-out area for adults, children's play space, clothes drying area). An elderly person's bungalow requires a smaller, easily managed private area for quiet sitting-out.</p> <p>s. It should be possible to identify an area within the garden as a sitting out area that is private and reasonably screened from view from neighbouring properties or passers-by. Walls or close-boarded fences will be required as a part of landscaping schemes to ensure privacy from the outset. The private area need only be part of the garden of the property. The garden itself should be larger - see above. Private space is space within the curtilage of the property for use by those who live there, whether a garden for a single property or a communal garden for a block of flats.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Garages and other outbuildings</p> <p>Garages and outbuildings should be carefully sited, scaled and designed so as not to detract from the character of the main building or its setting.</p> | <p>a. All new outbuildings should relate to the scale and character of the main building, and the plot in which it sits. For example, a large garage may look out-of-keeping within the context of a modest cottage, where traditionally only smaller outhouses might be expected.</p> <p>b. New outbuildings should not be excessive in number. A larger number of outbuildings, seen in relationship to the main building, might result in visual clutter and might detract from the surroundings.</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 421 1506 607">c. In some sensitive contexts, garages may not be permissible, where for example they detract from the contribution a traditional property and its garden makes to the area, or where breaching the front boundary and introducing vehicular access to the garden is considered harmful. <li data-bbox="523 645 1506 757">d. Integral garages should not be formed within traditional buildings and should not be designed into new vernacular style houses. In such cases, garages should be detached. <li data-bbox="523 795 1506 943">e. Garages and other outbuildings should generally not be positioned forward of the street-facing or principal elevation of the building. They should be pushed back to the rear of the building, so as not to compete with or detract from it. <li data-bbox="523 981 1506 1167">f. Where adopting a vernacular design approach, single garages are often more appropriate, as their smaller mass and narrower gables are more in-keeping with traditional outbuildings. Garage door openings should be placed within the gable end of the building, with the ridge running the length of the roof. <li data-bbox="523 1205 1506 1435">g. Where double or larger garages are permissible, these are better oriented with their doors under the eaves and with their wider gables concealed from view. Roof lines should generally be kept low and dropping the rear eaves can assist in this. Incorporating accommodation above the garage, with associated openings and external stairs, may not always be permissible. <li data-bbox="523 1473 1506 1697">h. Traditional outbuildings in the Cotswolds are generally of stone construction, occasionally with posts and boarding infilling below open eaves. Local stone is therefore often most appropriate and traditional for the construction of new outbuildings and garages. Large new timber buildings are not so characteristic of the Cotswolds. <li data-bbox="523 1736 1506 1883">i. Of course smaller timber sheds and summerhouses are widely permissible. Traditional design, sensitive scaling and siting, and a subdued timber finish are important for such structures to blend in with their garden settings. <li data-bbox="523 1921 1506 1995">j. Bracing to the posts of car ports and other open fronted outbuildings should be avoided. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> k. In sensitive locations garage doors should be side hung, vertically boarded and given a suitable (usually painted) finish. In new housing schemes the style and finish of garage doors should at least imitate this traditional appearance. l. There should be adequate space for manoeuvring of vehicles, but overly wide visibility splays and sweeping drives should generally be avoided. For more modest properties, entrances should maintain a more low-key appearance. m. Large stone piers, finials and ornate gates should be avoided, unless the access is for a high status building. High solid boarded gates may also not be supported where these are considered uncharacteristic or they block important views. Often timber field gates or other traditional, low, open gates, set simply within low stone walls are most appropriate. n. Only minimal openings should be created in front boundaries. Traditional enclosure, such as walls, railings and hedges, should be maintained and not removed to establish off-street parking. |
| 3. | <p>New build houses in the Cotswold vernacular style</p> <p>The design and materials used should reflect the key attributes of the traditional buildings of the area, whilst providing energy-efficient and liveable modern homes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A mixture of house types, including a good representation of terraces and semi-detached, with only some detached. A layout that is generally not too regimented and achieves interesting street scenes, with active frontages and attractive open spaces. b. Simple and traditional forms, with limited gable widths, plan depth often being achieved through rear gabled 'additions'. Steep roof pitches. c. Cluttered fenestration and over-scaled window openings should be avoided. Windows should be well spaced and generally centrally placed within gables, with a hierarchy of opening sizes. Gable end walls blank or with limited offset openings. d. Use of natural local limestone in sensitive locations and high quality artificial stone elsewhere. e. Stone of an appropriate colour to the locality. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Usually rubble stonework, laid to random but consistent courses. Mortar of a good colour match to the stone, with a rough texture, brushed back flush. g. Some use of high quality through-coloured render, of a roughcast texture. h. Natural or artificial stone slates to roofs, laid to diminishing courses, with some use of natural blue slate. i. Some use of other traditional walling and roofing materials may be appropriate, depending on the site and its location within the District. j. No bargeboards to verges or fascia boards to eaves. Exposed rafter feet avoided. k. The inclusion of chimneys, built up in traditional stone or brickwork, and set flush to gable end walls. l. Dormers and porches of traditional design. m. Doors and windows recessed into the walls of the building. n. Appropriate colour stone facing lintels, to the depths of the reveals. Alternatively oak lintels, left untreated to silver. Stone or stone tile sills. o. Flush timber casements, with balanced opening and non-opening lights, slender glazing divisions, and attention paid to traditional external detailing. Sliding timber sashes. p. Slender metal casements within stone mullion window surrounds. q. Front garden areas traditionally enclosed by natural dry stone walls, and some railings. r. Traditional stone (or occasionally brick) boundary walls separating rear gardens from streets. s. Sensitive boundary treatments to outer edges of housing schemes, avoiding close-boarded fencing and including sufficient landscape buffers. |

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| 4. | <p>Large commercial, industrial and agricultural buildings</p> <p>Such buildings should be sited, scaled and designed sensitively, using appropriate materials and finishes. The impact of associated features should also be minimised.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. New commercial or industrial buildings are often located in the context of larger settlements, or other similar development. Their design should respond to, and where appropriate enhance, their surroundings. b. Large new buildings within historic towns, such as office blocks and care homes, should be sensitive to their context. c. Careful consideration should be given to placement and massing, responding to the surrounding historic grain of the settlement, and the scale of nearby buildings. d. It is often difficult to reconcile larger buildings and the Cotswold vernacular style, as there are few traditional precedents, so a contemporary approach can be more suitable. e. Breaking the mass of a new building into modules, with varying roof lines and vertical articulation, is often valuable, especially within historic contexts. f. The highest quality of detailing and materials, making strong local references, would be expected in sensitive settings. g. For large industrial or agricultural buildings in less sensitive settings some modern forms of cladding may be permissible, but often traditional and higher quality materials are still appropriate, such as timber boarding. h. These buildings should be finished in appropriately subdued colours, to assist in blending into their surroundings. This may include untreated timber or an equivalent grey stain. i. In rural settings, the placement, scale and massing of new buildings should also respond to their landscape context. j. Care should be taken to assess, for example, the impact on views within the AONB and on the settings of any heritage assets. k. Buildings should be carefully positioned to fit in with the landform in that particular location, and not should not be sited where they will dominate the surroundings (for example on the skyline or in the middle of a flat plateau). |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 421 1506 533">l. A low profile should be maintained and consideration should be given to breaking up the mass of a large new building (by varying its height, or using two small units rather than one). <li data-bbox="523 568 1506 636">m. New farm buildings should generally be integrated within existing farmsteads. <li data-bbox="523 672 1506 869">n. Extensive tree and hedge planting can help to assimilate the buildings into their surroundings but care should be taken to avoid the planting itself changing the character of an area, or the screening being necessary to conceal what may be an inappropriate development. <li data-bbox="523 904 1506 972">o. Artificial bunds to hide new developments are also rarely successful, as they are out of character with natural landforms. <li data-bbox="523 1008 1506 1075">p. Security features such as fencing, lighting and cameras should be carefully designed to minimise their impact. <li data-bbox="523 1111 1506 1178">q. The impact of associated features, such as fuel tanks and outside storage areas, should be minimised by screening etc. <li data-bbox="523 1214 1506 1281">r. New access roads can damage features such as trees and hedges, and existing tracks should be used wherever possible. <li data-bbox="523 1317 1506 1384">s. New surface treatments should be in character with the surrounding area. <li data-bbox="523 1420 1506 1487">t. Traditional boundary treatments should be used such as dry stone walls, and post-and-rail fencing with hedging. <li data-bbox="523 1523 1506 1590">u. High sheet metal gates or other solid gates are likely to detract. Low barred gates, particularly timber, are more in-keeping within a rural context. |
| 5. | <p data-bbox="156 1749 427 1783">Barn conversions</p> <p data-bbox="156 1818 501 1966">In designing a barn conversion the aim should be to preserve the traditional agricultural</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="523 1749 1506 1897">a. Barn conversions should be designed sympathetically. A scheme should work around the building, rather than the building being subjected to unnecessary changes. Often a creative approach is required. |

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| <p>appearance of the building, and the contribution it makes to the surrounding landscape.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Barns and other historic agricultural structures should be conserved, and converted where appropriate, in their existing or original form, maintaining their traditional construction. c. Extensions should be very limited and should not change the overall massing and form of the historic buildings. d. The building should be capable of conversion without extension or any significant degree of re-building. e. New openings in exterior walls should be avoided, preserving the often blank character of the walls of many barns and other traditional agricultural structures. f. Use should be made of existing openings. New glazing should be recessed within these, and should be of a simple, functional design, avoiding domestic styles. g. Screens within large threshing barn openings should be deeply recessed. Screens within open fronted animal shelter or cart shed structures should be set back to the rear of, and generally detached from, the columns or posts. h. Sometimes new narrow ventilation slit type openings or new small, square pigeon-hole type openings may be permissible. i. New openings in the style of single doorways or pitching doors (typically in gable end walls) are occasionally permissible. j. Roof slopes are typically unbroken expanses of stone slate or blue slate. Sometimes the absolute minimum of modestly scaled, flush set conservation style rooflights is permissible. k. Dormers should be avoided altogether, as well as other features typical of domestic buildings, such as chimneys, conservatories and porches. l. In minimising new external openings, and maximising natural light to rooms from existing openings, it is usually most appropriate to maintain an open plan to much of the interior of a barn. Smaller rooms might be housed in existing attached structures, and use might be made of galleried mezzanine floors. |

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| | <p>m. Retaining large spaces to listed barn interiors is an important requirement, so that their full historic volume and scale is appreciated from within the building.</p> <p>n. Historic features should be preserved as far as possible within all barn conversions. This is of course a particular requirement for listed buildings. Such features can include roof timbers, floor structures, stairs or ladders, partitions, doors, historic cobbled surfaces or threshing floors, and other fixtures, such as animal stalls and mangers, and even farm machinery.</p> <p>o. Upgrading of a barn interior to achieve habitable spaces should be sympathetic, especially within listed buildings. For example, in inserting ceilings, principal roof timbers should be left fully open to view. Wall linings should be reversible, should allow the masonry to breathe, and should not conceal features of interest. And new floors might overlay old surfaces of interest, preserving them beneath, if it is not possible to leave them exposed.</p> <p>p. Services and installations on or around the building (such as lighting schemes, alarm boxes, post boxes, and aerials or satellite dishes) should be minimised and sympathetically sited, designed and finished. Potential impacts of night time lighting should also be considered.</p> <p>q. New outbuildings, such as garages and sheds, should be avoided, as these new structures can detract from the simplicity and original form of a barn or farm complex, and they generally have a more domestic appearance.</p> <p>r. Boundary treatments should be traditional and appropriate to the rural setting, such as low dry stone walls and hedging.</p> <p>s. New tracks, accesses and gateways should be designed to minimise the impact on the agricultural character of the surroundings.</p> <p>t. The landscaping around the building should aim to avoid obvious domestication. The extent of the residential curtilage should be limited, to minimise the impact of garden uses, and associated planting and paraphernalia. It should be particularly tightly drawn</p> |

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| | | <p>where a close relationship survives between a barn and its open field setting, and in these cases should generally be contained within enclosed courtyard areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> u. Landscape schemes should be soft and low-key, and inspired by the rural surroundings. For example hard paved or tarmac surfacing and new subdividing walls should be avoided, and planting should generally be native species and informal in style. v. Barns and other traditional agricultural structures may provide wildlife habitats for a range of important species and any impacts should be fully resolved, with adequate biodiversity mitigation and enhancement put in place. |
| 6. | <p>Shop fronts</p> <p>The design of new shop fronts or the careful alteration of existing shop fronts is important in maintaining the historic character and vibrancy of town and village centres.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Historic shop fronts should be preserved, including any features of significance, such as blind boxes and historic signage. b. Where alteration of historic or traditional shop fronts is proposed, this should be sympathetic to the building and the wider area. c. New or replacement shop fronts should maintain the divisions between historic plots and buildings. Shop fronts for wider retail units should maintain the appearance of a series of smaller traditional shop fronts. d. New or replacement shop fronts should respond to the character and architectural style of the remainder of the building. They should be well proportioned and detailed, for example with solid low stall risers, appropriate glazing divisions and suitably scaled fascia boards. e. Materials and finishes should be appropriate to the building and the area. In most historic town and village contexts painted timber shop fronts and fascia boards are expected. f. Security measures should be sympathetic, for example toughened glass or internal shutters. External roller blinds are unlikely to be acceptable. |
| 7. | <p>Signage</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Signage should be appropriate to the shop front, building and wider area. |

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| <p>Sympathetic signage is vital in preserving the amenity and historic character of buildings and areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Signage should not be visually dominant or incongruous. It should also not result in visual clutter of the surroundings. c. New signs should be limited in number and scale, so as not to detract from the quality of a building or area. d. Fascia boards are often integral to shop fronts and should be appropriately proportioned. Where applied to other building frontages they should be modestly scaled and carefully placed to avoid close proximity to architectural features. e. In some cases, most often on listed buildings, new fascia boards may be harmful to the character of the building, especially where historic town houses are occupied by business premises. In which case, alternative forms of signage may have to be explored. Sometimes a hanging sign may still be permissible, or smaller plaque type signs. f. In most contexts painted timber fascias are most appropriate, either with traditional painted lettering or sympathetic applied letters. A simple frame to the edge of an applied timber fascia board is usually appropriate. Occasionally a simple square-edged matte finish aluminium sign may be permissible. g. Similarly, in sensitive historic settings, hanging signs should be framed painted timber, hung on simple or traditional metal brackets. Sometimes simple square-edged matte finish aluminium hanging signs are permissible. h. Very bright and garish colours should be avoided, especially where these appear incongruous and detract from the historic character of a building or area. i. Lighting of signage should be avoided. Internal illumination of signs is almost always unacceptable, especially in sensitive historic or landscape settings. Limited and subtly installed external illumination is sometimes permissible, usually for business premises with evening opening hours. j. The amount of information on new signage should be limited as far as possible, usually to just the business name, in order to avoid visual clutter. The inclusion of telephone numbers, websites and |

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| | | unnecessary information about the business should be avoided. Often subtle small signs set behind, or applied to, windows can provide additional details. |