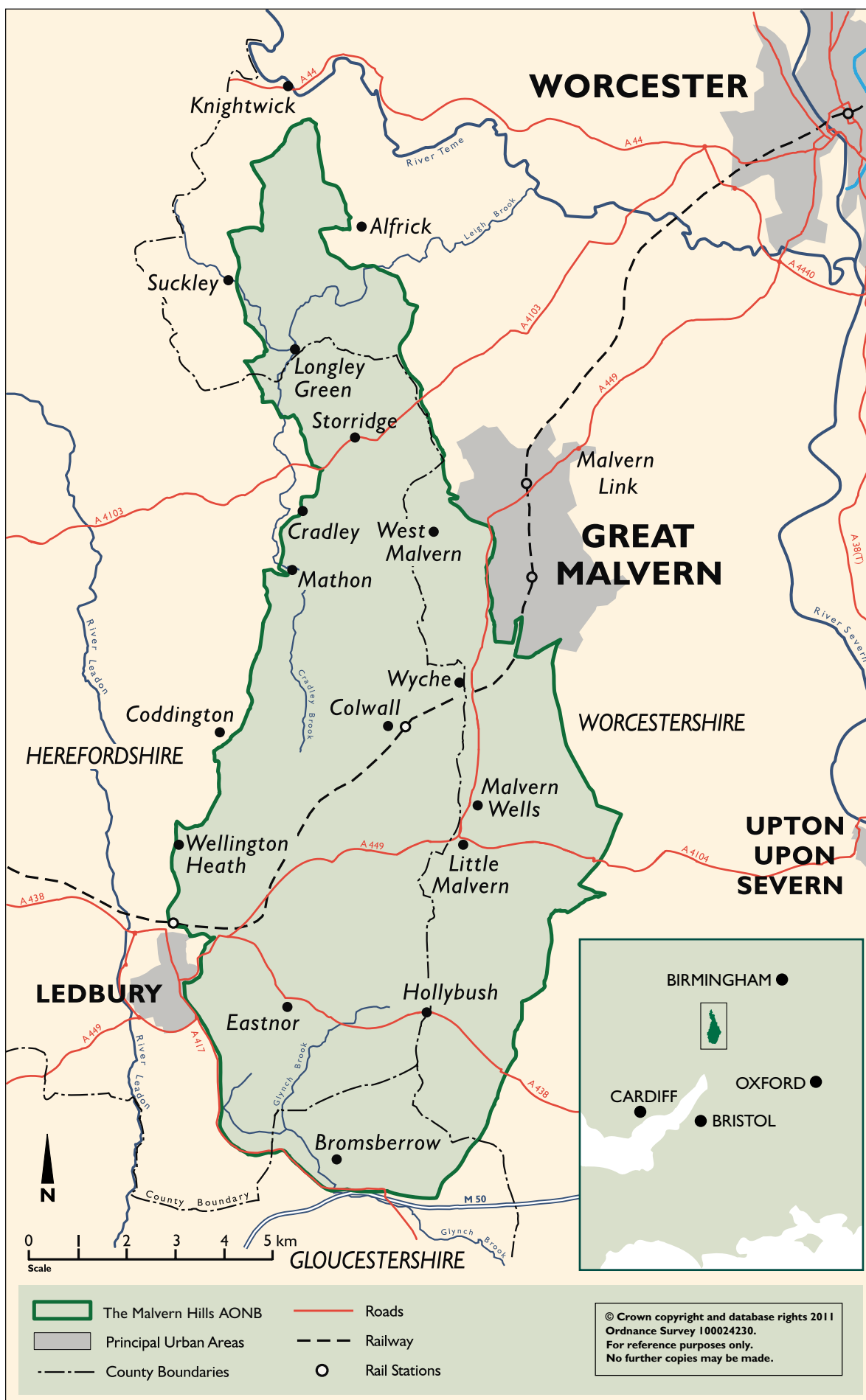


# Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Guidance on Building Design





Outline map of the Malvern Hills AONB

# Contents

## General Guidance

Introduction .....	4
How to use this guide .....	6
Understanding the Malvern Hills AONB landscape .....	8
Building design .....	11
Landscape and setting .....	15
Domestic buildings .....	20
Farmsteads and agricultural buildings .....	31
Gardens and boundaries .....	43
Lighting .....	48
Shop fronts and signage .....	49
Other development .....	51
Materials .....	53
Colour .....	59
Details .....	60
Energy and resources .....	66

## Local Guidance

Landscape Character Map .....	69
High Hills and Slopes .....	70
Principal Wooded Hills .....	72
Wooded Hills and Farmland .....	74
Principal Timbered Farmlands .....	76
Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings .....	78
Settled Farmland with Pastoral Land Use .....	80
Sandstone Estatelands .....	82
Enclosed Commons .....	84
Unenclosed Commons .....	86
West Malvern .....	88
Colwall .....	90
Malvern Wells .....	92
Glossary .....	94



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Buildings and landscape in the AONB

The landscape of the Malvern Hills and surrounding areas has been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with the primary purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. Both natural and cultural influences have combined to produce the landscape that is so highly valued today.

It is also commonly accepted that buildings can make a key contribution to the special character and local distinctiveness of the area. They contribute to 'sense of place' by reflecting local history or providing memories that make a place special to local people. Buildings help to tell a rich and fascinating story about the history of the area: the location of development within the AONB, the different types of building that have been constructed, and the various materials that have been used in their construction all help inform us about how humans have settled and lived in the area and how they have been influenced by the landscape. That story is not complete. This generation, and those that follow, will continue to contribute, adding further layers that in turn will make that narrative richer still.

Landscapes comprise a range of components that influence and are influenced by buildings:

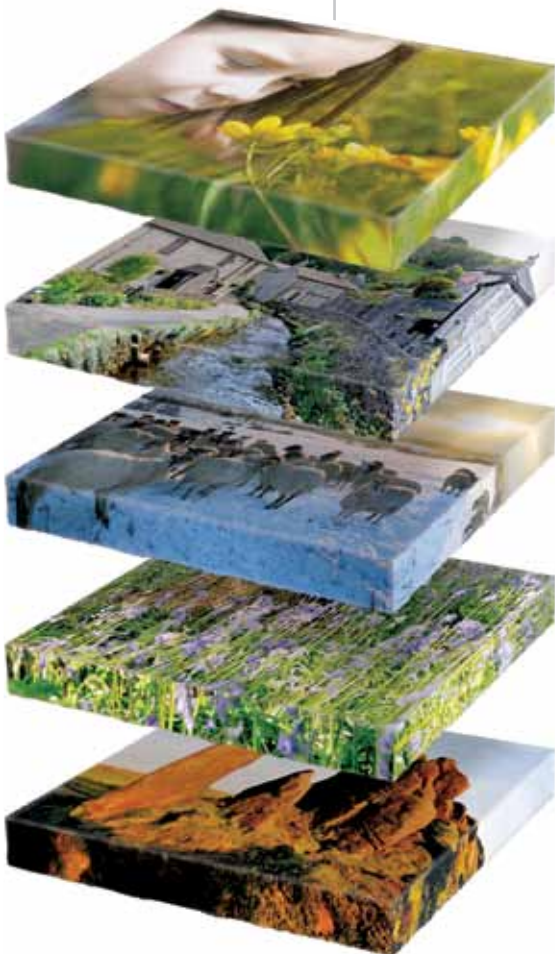
**Experience** – The value of the Malvern Hills AONB landscape relies in part on the standard and character of the buildings within it. It is therefore the responsibility of all potential developers to ensure that each development adds value to the Malvern Hills AONB landscape through good design. This represents an opportunity for developers too.

**History** – Settlement in the Malvern Hills AONB illustrates the use humans have made of the landscape over time. There are many examples. Evidence of prehistoric settlements on the uplands at British Camp and the hill fort on Midsummer Hill represent secure and defensible lookouts. Timber framed buildings are early buildings using the resources that were readily available. Malvern developed as a spa town in the Victorian period, leading to expansion and development from village to town and bringing tourism to the landscape, while the village of Colwall changed with the development of the railway.

**Land use** – Patterns of land use and settlement – from farming to residential living – are fundamental to the rich diversity of building types, scales and styles found in the Malvern Hills AONB. These include modest houses around areas of common land, villas, country houses and traditional farmsteads.

**Wildlife** – Bats and barn owls often inhabit spaces in buildings, while many gardens provide feeding and shelter for birds, butterflies, spiders and bees.

**Natural form** – Older stone buildings reveal the local geology: local stone was a readily available resource. Land form influences location in terms of the proximity of resources such as shelter and water, while the presence of local springs has had a significant influence on the location and type of development.



## 1.2 The purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to promote good practice and to assist anyone who is proposing new development in the AONB. The guidance it contains should also help ensure that new development meets the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework for conserving and enhancing natural and historic environments. It can also be used when preparing local neighbourhood plans and other community planning guidance. Specifically, the guidance outlines how development can make a positive contribution to conserving the AONB landscape and its natural beauty.

The guidance does not set out to freeze the landscape in the past or present. It recognises, however, that many of the buildings and settlements we see today have a character. This character needs to be respected and should be used to guide the design of future buildings. The guidance therefore seeks to explain how an understanding of the landscape itself should continue to play a central role when designing new development, as it has done so effectively in the past.

This document aims to promote an awareness of and sense of pride in the distinctive character of the Malvern Hills AONB so that this character is respected while also allowing the landscape to meet modern day needs and challenges. Design documents of this nature must chart a difficult course between the views of those who are wary of change and the views of those who wish to embrace it. It is also important to recognise that different people will have strong but often contrasting views on what constitutes 'good' or 'bad' design.

## 1.3 Who this document is for

This document provides guidance for all those involved in developing or altering buildings in the Malvern Hills AONB, including property owners, developers, agents, advisers and architects. It is also targeted at those with responsibility for setting the framework for development and for making decisions about individual planning applications. This includes planning staff and their colleagues in local authorities.

Every single development, from the construction of a new house to the hanging of a new gate, has the potential to make a positive or negative contribution to the Malvern Hills AONB. The guidance in this document will help those who value and care for this area to ensure that future developments contribute to the local distinctiveness and sense of place.

## 1.4 Status of this Guidance

This document has been produced to help implement the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan which "formulates local authority policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it" (Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). The AONB Management Plan is a material consideration in relation to planning. The Guidance amplifies the content of the Management Plan in relation to the buildings of the AONB.

Using this document will help public bodies meet their statutory duties to have regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect AONB land (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

## 2. How to use this guide

This document is split into two main sections: 'General Guidance' and 'Local Guidance'.

The 'General Guidance' provides essential information necessary for good and sustainable design in the Malvern Hills AONB. This section is for everyone who plans to develop or alter buildings within the area. It explains the relationship of buildings to the landscape, the design process, what comprises good design and appropriate building materials to use.

The 'Local Guidance' provides a limited amount of additional, more detailed advice on landscape and local building design for specific areas within the AONB. It should be read more selectively, with users reading the chapter, or chapters, specific to the location of their proposed development or alteration. This section should always be read alongside the General Guidance and should not be read in isolation.

Specific guidelines have been developed for 'Domestic buildings', 'Farmsteads and agricultural buildings' and 'Shop fronts and signage'. Other development, such as that for a pub or other business can take principles from these chapters. All developments, alterations and conversions should consider the guidelines for 'Landscape and setting', 'Gardens and boundaries', 'Materials' and 'Details'.

This Guidance on Building Design is not definitive and must be used alongside existing planning guidance and policies that also influence planning decisions in the AONB. These include but are not limited to:

- National Planning Policy Framework;
- Local planning policy – including Neighbourhood Plans, Local Plans and county and district level Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs);
- Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan;
- Malvern Hills AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines;
- County and local Landscape Character Assessments;
- County and local Historic Landscape Character Assessments; and
- Local Village Design Statements.

This Guidance does not cover all aspects of the design and construction process. Further advice should be sought on issues such as: building regulations and building control; the planning process and its requirements for obtaining planning permission; Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment; accessibility and legibility; listed buildings and Conservation Areas; and sustainability initiatives such as 'BREEAM'.

## Links to 'relevant planning and building' resources:

■ BREEAM is a design and assessment method for sustainable buildings.  
[www.breeam.org/](http://www.breeam.org/)

■ The Code for Sustainable Homes is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. [www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/sustainability/codesustainablehomes/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/sustainability/codesustainablehomes/)

English Heritage can provide guidance about listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

■ Listed buildings [www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/planning-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-listed-building/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/planning-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-listed-building/)

■ Conservation Areas [www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/landscape-and-areas/conservation-area-guidance/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/landscape-and-areas/conservation-area-guidance/)

The Malvern Hills AONB website provides further guidance, including:

■ Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan [www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/management\\_plan.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/management_plan.html)

■ Guidance documents [www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html)

Planning Authorities:

■ Forest of Dean District Council [www.forestofdean.gov.uk/](http://www.forestofdean.gov.uk/)

■ Gloucestershire County Council [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/resident](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/resident)

■ Herefordshire Council [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/)

■ Malvern Hills District Council [www.malvernhillsgov.uk/](http://www.malvernhillsgov.uk/)

■ Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/2244.asp](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/2244.asp)

■ Worcestershire County Council [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/)

■ The Planning Portal is the UK Government's online resource for planning and building regulations for England and Wales. [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

■ Colwall Village Design Statement [www.colwall.net/news.htm](http://www.colwall.net/news.htm)

■ Wellington Heath Parish Plan  
[sites.google.com/site/wellingtonheath/parish-council/parish-plan](http://sites.google.com/site/wellingtonheath/parish-council/parish-plan)

■ Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment  
[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/landscape-character-assessment.aspx](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/landscape-character-assessment.aspx)

## 3. Understanding the Malvern Hills AONB landscape

### 3.1 Landscape evolution - a historical perspective



Medieval house with cross wing and woodland backdrop in the Sandstone Estatelands

Although now unsettled, the uplands of the Malvern Hills were once the site of prehistoric settlement, notably at British Camp, on Herefordshire Beacon and at Midsummer Hill fort to the south. The area around the high hills is characterised by lower ridges and well-wooded slopes that have been subject to a long history of coppice woodland management and which were incorporated into medieval deer parks and hunting chases. Strip lynchets and strips of ridge and furrow in small closes bear witness to pre-14th century levels of arable production in areas of higher ground that have since been managed as pasture.

There are some nucleated villages to the west, but the Malvern Hills area is mostly marked by dispersed settlement, with scattered farmsteads, hamlets and cottages (including isolated 12th/13th century moated sites). This pattern was established by the 14th century and intensified further with the disposal of the Crown estates in the 17th century. Before this time, much of the Malvern Hills area was royal hunting forests and settlement was very limited.

The position of many houses and farmsteads today relates to fields that were developed since the medieval period. Across much of the area, especially in the west, fields are generally irregular and small in scale, the result of medieval and post-medieval woodland clearance. These fields are inter-mixed with surviving blocks of ancient semi-natural, replanted woodland and intakes from the hunting chase. Extensive areas of larger fields – particularly south of Mathon and Colwall – reflect the piecemeal enclosure of areas of open fields and common land in association with the development of medium- to large-scale farms. There are also large blocks of planned private enclosure which appeared during the 17th-19th centuries.



The area has a long history of arable cultivation in valleys, especially in the Cradley Brook Valley. However, its soils were best suited to a pastoral economy including smallholding which was often combined with quarrying. Orchards developed to an intensive scale of production from the late 17th century, and are now scattered across the area. Formerly extensive orchards survive in part, particularly in the Leigh and Alfrick area and around Colwall, where fruit production for urban markets peaked in the early 20th century. The hop industry developed from the 18th century, with hop fields concentrated on the valley sides in the north.



Traditional orchard

The numerous springs around the hills were regarded as important features by the medieval period and became a focus of health-based leisure in the 19th century. This new popularity spurred the growth of Great Malvern and resulted in residential development in the surrounding area, with villas and country houses becoming more widespread.

More recently, some areas, such as the distinct common-edge settlement of Wellington Heath, have been transformed by 20th century development. Many post-war 20th century developments are generally of standardised designs that can be found in very many areas around the country. Consequently, they may not add anything particular to the local character of the AONB. They include bungalows that have been considerably extended and local authority properties that were modified as they were moved into private ownership. Some modern buildings enhance the area through their good design, which reflects and is appropriate to the landscape.

## 3.2 The landscape today

There are ten distinct landscape character types within the AONB.

■ **High Hills and Slopes** are perhaps the most recognised landscape, characterised by exposed steep slopes with rough grazing and little human habitation. The iconic Malvern springs are a feature here. Pathways and tracks are associated with Victorian Malvern when the area was a popular spa resort.

■ **Principal Wooded Hills** is a steep sloping, densely wooded landscape with small limestone quarries and irregular-shaped fields. These mainly represent the piecemeal clearance of woodland from the medieval period. Settlement is sparse, comprising mainly scattered farmsteads linked by a network of lanes, tracks and paths. Dispersed settlement exists at Storridge Common in the north where piecemeal enclosure encroached onto the common and farms were possibly associated with a dual economy of farming and quarrying in the nearby quarries.

■ **Wooded Hills and Farmland** is a mixed farming landscape with large woodland blocks, irregular-shaped fields with thick hedgerows, and settlement that comprises farmsteads and small estate villages. Clusters of settlement are also evident around old commons.

■ **Sandstone Estatelands** are low lying with estate villages, isolated farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings among large arable fields and ornamental parkland. There is a strong estate character in this landscape. Here country houses, associated large estate farms, plantations and planned gardens exist.

■ **Principal Timbered Farmlands** comprise small- to medium-scale fields, many enclosed from woodland, ancient woodland and orchards. It is settled with clusters of farmsteads, rural dwellings, occasional small hamlets and villages. There are farmsteads, moated sites and wayside dwellings scattered throughout the landscape.

■ **Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings** landscape is characterised by winding lanes, small irregular-shaped fields and occasional historic, traditional orchards. It is densely settled with smallholdings and wayside cottages. Much 20th century development exists here and has altered the character of the distinct commons edge settlement at Wellington Heath.

■ **Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use** is a rolling lowland landscape with small- to medium-scale fields and scattered farmsteads with linear clusters of dwellings. These include common-edge settlement around the fringe of Castlemorton Common. This is a landscape with a domestic character defined by the density of settlement, grazed pastures, orchards and some arable fields.

■ **Enclosed Commons** comprises regular and straight fields of pastoral use with some arable farmland and isolated farms with clusters of wayside dwellings, all of which have been subject to a higher degree of 20th century change than elsewhere in the AONB. The planned nature of this landscape, with straight roads and red brick farmsteads, gives it a distinctly structured and human influenced character.

■ **Unenclosed Commons** is a wilder landscape with few field boundaries, rough grazing and sparse settlement with farmsteads along roads or as small islands within the commons.

■ **Settled Farmland on River Terrace** has a sparse settlement character of farmstead clusters and roadside dwellings. Intensive horticulture production with medium-sized fields characterises the land use, and commercial orchards are a dominant feature.

The Malvern Hills AONB website provides an interactive landscape character map at: [www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/landscapestrategy.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/landscapestrategy.html)

## 4. Building design

### 4.1 Importance of good design



View of building in the Principal Timbered Farmlands

Landscapes and buildings are constantly evolving and changing. New development, extensions and alterations are not new in the Malvern Hills AONB. Changes to the built environment that respect and consider the character of the landscape create positive change by strengthening landscape character. To sustain the area's natural beauty it is important to ensure that future development is locally characteristic and distinctive, in terms of its design, siting and the materials used. This in turn will have a positive effect on the tourism sector in the AONB, which is dependent on the area's high-quality landscape and natural beauty.

Existing, locally characteristic buildings provide design cues for new development. However, it is important not to simply copy or pastiche existing building styles but instead to be inspired by these styles, developing something that is characteristic to the place and time in which it is created. This requires good, individual and well-considered design.

Good design is essential for all new developments, alterations or extensions within the Malvern Hills AONB. The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) emphasises the link between good design and sustainable development:

*"Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people."*<sup>2</sup>

Well-designed buildings are likely to be more sustainable as good design can "add value and can lead to a number of economic, social and environmental benefits."<sup>3</sup> Environmental benefits, in terms of low impact and low carbon design, are increasingly important aspects of good design.

Historic buildings provide a link to our past, expressing the values of people at that time. The buildings we develop now should provide this same cultural asset for people in the future. Buildings that demonstrate good design are also more likely to be valued and cared for, increasing property or rental values, reducing maintenance costs and enhancing the aesthetics of a place.

High quality, well-maintained places also have a positive effect on the community, increasing the sense of pride, reducing the feeling of isolation and helping reduce crime and fear of crime. Good design can also enhance and reveal the significance of buildings and sites that are designated for their special heritage or natural value.

2 - Department of Communities and Local Government (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*, Crown Copyright, p3.

3 - Amion Consulting and Taylor Young (2009) *Economic Value of Good Design in a Recession*, in Places Matter!

## 4.2 The design process

Successful buildings and places are those that enable local people to take pride in their area, both now and in the future. It is essential that places are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

This chapter will guide those who are unfamiliar with design through a process that will help to create a sustainable building. The process is applicable to new buildings, alterations and extensions.

The chapter is split into two key stages: developing the brief, and designing the building. It is possible to progress some of the steps simultaneously.

### 4.2.1 Developing the brief

Developing a brief involves understanding and identifying the challenges and opportunities associated with a site. This will help to determine the design specification such as appropriate orientation, scale and style.

#### i. Seek advice from the local planning authority and other experts

In the initial stages of the process relevant planning policies, such as the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should be consulted. Seek advice from the local planning authority to determine which permissions, such as planning permission and/or listed building consent, are required.

#### ii. Understand the landscape and its setting

A modern design can add to the distinctive qualities of the Malvern Hills AONB if it is based on a strong understanding of the context, setting and landscape character of the site. This will ensure that any change upholds the existing qualities that make the area special. Consideration should be given to local building tradition, historical development and building styles (building materials, colour, scale, mass and form), local landmarks, settlement patterns, key views, topography and existing biodiversity. The AONB Partnership, and local and county councils hold a variety of documents that help explain many of these characteristics.

#### iii. Understand the site or building

Once the surrounding landscape has been considered it is important to understand the issues, challenges and potential opportunities of the site or building itself. The following aspects should be considered:

- land use;
- the movement of the sun, and the direction and speed of prevailing winds;
- views into and out of the site;
- any key landmarks associated with or visible from the site;
- geology and topography;
- natural features and biodiversity such as rivers, lakes, trees, hedgerows, protected species/habitats, and springs/wells;



- vehicular and pedestrian access, pedestrian and vehicular routes around and into the site (including public rights of way), and key nodes (junctions or other points where people or vehicles meet);
- types of boundaries (hedges, fences, walls);
- the existing building lines and roof lines of any buildings on the site;
- designations of the area or buildings on the site, and Conservation Area or nature conservation designations (for example Site of Special Scientific Interest);
- archaeological, historical and cultural associations; and
- the condition of existing features.

It is also important to understand the character of any existing buildings on the site. This includes their age, scale and form, their design style (for example, is the building a modest timber-framed cottage, or a large ornate villa?), and the building materials used, as well as any ornamentation present.

#### iv. Consider sustainable design principles

To ensure that the development is sustainable, the following questions should be considered.

**Are you making a successful place?** Good design recognises the relationships/connections between people, buildings and spaces. The building should work well with the space and with the buildings around it, enhancing the sense of place and the building's value to local people, encouraging its use and improving the feeling of safety. (If the entrance to a residential property is overlooked by other properties or faces a road, for example, this may feel safer than if the entrance is not overlooked).

**Is the building's design flexible, so that it can be adapted in future?** Consider how the building could be used in the future; this makes it easier for the building to be adapted to a user's different requirements over time. This would include, for example, providing an opportunity to install solar panels on the roof at a later date, or considering the adaptations that would be necessary to make a dwelling more accessible as its residents grow older (such as allowing additional space for installing a stair lift or similar adaptations).

**What is the relationship between people and the building?** Many buildings such as residential and commercial buildings are not for public use so the public will rarely or never enter them. The points at which members of the public do have a relationship with the building, such as the boundaries and frontages, should be attractive and appropriate to the character of the landscape.

**Is this place accessible to all?** The design of buildings and spaces must allow those who need to use them to do so easily, safely and with dignity – regardless of age, gender, mobility, ethnicity or circumstances. This means it may be necessary to install entrance ramps and lifts, or to put up signs in Braille at entrances to public buildings. Similarly, the height of light switches on walls, the width of doorways, and the route that people have to take from the road to the front door should also be considered.

**v. Consider energy and resource efficiency**

Issues such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and adapting to climate change should be considered at the initial stages of planning. This ensures that energy and resource efficiency measures are an integral part of the design, making a positive contribution to the aesthetics of the building and avoiding any unnecessary costs in future. Further details can be found in the 'Energy and resources' chapter.

**vi. Consult those affected**

Any development, no matter how small, can affect others who live or work nearby. Those affected by, or with an interest in, the development should be contacted early in the design process and kept informed throughout. For larger developments, interested parties could be involved in planning and designing the development to encourage a greater sense of place and community ownership.

**4.2.2 Designing the building**

It may be necessary to work with professionals such as architects, structural engineers, landscape architects, or a combination of different professionals. A good working relationship with these professionals can help ensure that the project's aims are achieved; it may also make the project more cost effective.

**i. Explore different concept designs**

This includes exploring different layouts, orientations and types of suitable materials, along with energy efficiency measures or renewable technologies that might be appropriate.

**ii. Develop detailed options**

Discuss options with interested parties and consider whether each option could present any problems when built or in the longer term.

**iii. Produce final designs**

Continue to assess any issues with the design and ensure that it meets the brief.

**iv. Where necessary, submit a planning application or obtain other approvals**

It may be necessary to submit a planning application or obtain other approvals determined at the start of the process before work can begin on site.

**4.3 Links to 'design' resources:**

Design Council CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) has produced a variety of publications about good design

[www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/cabe/](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/cabe/)

# 5. Landscape and setting

## 5.1 Landscape

It is essential to understand the character of the landscape in order to ensure that any new building, extension or alteration is appropriate to its context and respects the natural beauty of the AONB. If a development's design is responsive to local landscape character and the special qualities of the site this will ensure that the development is locally distinctive and appropriate to its setting. It is also important to note that a building that is appropriate in one area of the AONB may not be appropriate in another area.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider the landscape context of the site or building that is to be developed or altered and respond accordingly to ensure that it becomes part of the landscape in which it is located.

**B** - The relationship of building and landscape must be considered at various scales to understand how the building will affect the landscape and views from nearby and far away.

**C** - Carefully consider the position of new development in relationship to key views.

**D** - Take steps to ensure that a building ties into the local landscape and does not detract from key views.

**E** - Consider orientating the building to take full advantage of the landscape setting. For example, locate kitchens on the east side of the building where the sun rises, shelter outside seating areas from the prevailing wind, and design asymmetrical buildings for steep slopes. See 'Domestic buildings' chapter for more information on orientation and aspect.

**F** - New development should respect the grain of local plot size and density, the scale and form of fields and their boundaries, and the settlement pattern. Always use characteristic boundary features and styles.



Occasional development in the Principal Wooded Hills, below the High Hills and Slopes

**G** - Avoid prominent and visually distracting lighting: respect the dark skies, which are an important characteristic of the Malvern Hills AONB (see 'Lighting' section on page 48).

**H** - Where locally characteristic, install landscape features such as orchards, ponds and semi-natural habitats. Such features reinforce landscape character and provide important wildlife habitats.

**I** - Avoid upgrading unpaved routes to farms and cottages. These are often historic routes and essential landscape features: upgrading them can have a significant impact on views and on the way in which buildings 'fit' into the wider landscape. It also increases water run-off and can contribute to flooding.

**J** - Leave areas of unmown grass close to buildings where doing so respects local character and provides habitat. This can help tie buildings into the wider landscape by preventing separation of the buildings from the wider landscape.

## 5.2 Biodiversity

The biodiversity of the Malvern Hills AONB is closely related to the area's distinctive landscapes and their management. The AONB provides habitat for many animals, some of which are of national importance. Careful consideration should be given to these species, although all biodiversity in the Malvern Hills AONB should be considered.

### Issues to consider

**A** - The protection and enhancement of biodiversity should be considered when first designing a new build, extension, alteration or conversion.

**B** - Survey the site to identify the biodiversity that is present, taking particular note of species and habitats that are protected by law. Understanding the biodiversity of a site enables a development to enhance existing habitats and, where diversity is lacking, to create appropriate new habitats.

**C** - Consider how gardens and areas surrounding the development can contribute to biodiversity, for example by integrating existing biodiversity into garden designs, planting native hedgerows and trees, or creating ponds to provide habitats for insects, birds, mammals and amphibians.



New orchard planting, Upper Colwall

**D** - Leaving areas of rough or unmanaged grassland provides habitat and breeding grounds for insects such as butterflies.

**E** - Consider ways in which the sensitive design and planning of new buildings, extensions, alterations and conversions can enhance biodiversity. Opportunities include installing a green roof or walls, and providing roosting sites for bats or nesting sites for birds.



Garden pond, West Malvern



Native hedgerow boundary, Storridge



## 5.3 Historic environment assets

The AONB has a rich historic environment that includes many heritage assets identified as having a degree of significance. These include: designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings (Grades I, II\*, II), Registered Parks and Gardens, and Conservation Areas; undesignated heritage assets of archaeological interest and of national significance, which are also treated as designated assets; and undesignated heritage assets of local significance. Any future development in the AONB should recognise that these assets are irreplaceable and should conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

### Issues to consider

**A** - It is important to understand how any new development could impact on the heritage assets locally and their setting. In some cases it may be necessary to consult an expert.

**B** - Understand the contribution that heritage assets make to local character to ensure that the design of new development enhances this character and respects the asset's setting.

**C** - Consider how heritage assets can be put to viable uses that will allow them to be conserved for future generations. It may be necessary to seek the advice of an expert when converting or making alterations to a heritage asset.



Hope End School House, Wellington Heath

**D** - Buildings that are included on local lists of historic buildings and structures, although not meeting English Heritage's 'Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings' (2010), are deemed locally significant and hence worthy of retention.



Oast houses, Mathon



Royal Malvern Well, Upper Colwall

Further details of designated heritage assets and how to apply for designation can be found in the links to resources.

## 5.4 Views



View of the Malvern Hills from Mathon, showing the scales and prominence of buildings within the wooded landscape in the foreground and set against the backdrop of the hills

Views within the AONB and views from and towards the Malvern Hills are one of the distinguishing and valued characteristics of the area. The Malvern Hills AONB Partnership has produced guidance to help identify and grade important views and associated viewpoints in and around the AONB. Consider this guidance alongside that below.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider how a building will look when viewed from short and long distances and from higher or lower ground.

**B** - Consider the tradition of building in different areas of the AONB. Generally speaking, new buildings should not dominate views to and from unsettled areas.

**C** - Where buildings are highly visible the design of all elevations on public view should be considered, not just the front of the building.

**D** - Development should not detract from key views across the AONB but should complement and respect natural beauty and character. This is achieved through: good siting and scale of development (eg new buildings should not be considerably larger than existing locally characteristic buildings); not building on skylines; using appropriate materials; and by creating appropriate boundaries.



Traditional farmstead in local brick and tile with Dutch barns against the backdrop of the hills

**E** - Key views into and out of farmsteads and other existing buildings should be maintained or enhanced.



Densely packed, homogenous development, Malvern Wells

## 5.5 Links to 'landscape and setting' resources:

■ The Bat Conservation Trust provides useful advice about bats and buildings.

[www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats\\_and\\_buildings.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_buildings.html)

■ Butterfly Conservation provides advice on managing habitats for butterflies.

[www.butterfly-conservation.org/downloads/47/habitat\\_advice.html](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/downloads/47/habitat_advice.html)

■ English Heritage.

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/)

■ HELM.

[www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/](http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/)  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/)

■ Historic Environment Record – Herefordshire Council. [www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=93&id=4741](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=93&id=4741)

■ Historic Environment Record – Gloucestershire County Council.

[www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit&ctid=98&id=4793](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit&ctid=98&id=4793)

■ Historic Environment Record – Worcestershire County Council.

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archive-and-archaeology/search-our-records/historic-environment-record.aspx](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archive-and-archaeology/search-our-records/historic-environment-record.aspx)

Malvern Hills AONB website provides further guidance, including:

■ Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan

[www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/management\\_plan.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/management_plan.html)

■ Guidance documents including: Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints

[www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html)

■ Information about the biodiversity in the AONB

[www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/biodiversity.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/biodiversity.html)

■ National Heritage List for England

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/)

■ Natural England can provide further advice about England's natural environment and biodiversity.

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

■ Royal Society for the Protection of Birds provides further advice about birds and buildings.

[www.rspb.org.uk/advice/helpingbirds/roofs/index.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/advice/helpingbirds/roofs/index.aspx)



## 6. Domestic buildings

### 6.1 Locally characteristic building styles

Locally characteristic buildings are those that have been built using locally available materials or that follow the traditions used in the Malvern Hills AONB and surrounding region. A strong understanding of the locally characteristic architecture should inform future developments, alterations or extensions in the Malvern Hills AONB.

#### The most common features of the Malvern Hills AONB are:

■ Wayside dwellings, located on the roadside, or around commons and sometimes as small clusters. They are generally one storey or one and a half storeys, with one to two bays. These dwellings were constructed independently by their first residents using local materials, including late examples of scantling timber frames with stone or brick, or built entirely from brick and stone. They are usually highly individual buildings, each with a distinctive character.



Wayside cottages

■ Timber framed houses and cottages include cruck-framed houses, which are concentrated in the medieval enclosed landscapes such as the Suckley Hills to the north. Other examples include farmhouses that are no longer in agricultural use and have lost their working buildings, and squatters' cottages. Timber framed buildings are more common in the wooded landscapes due to the availability of local timber. The timber frames were infilled first with wattle and daub and later with brick. Timber framed houses in the AONB generally date from the 17th and early 18th centuries, although some are older. Since the 18th century they have been considerably extended in some areas, using red brick and local stone.



Fine 17th century two-room house with large end stack

■ Quarryman's cottages were built during the 19th century, using local stone. Examples are usually found in areas of the AONB that are close to the quarries themselves, such as in West Malvern and around Hollybush.



Quarryman's cottage

■ Large estates that developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, such as Eastnor Castle and its surrounding landscape. Houses in these landscapes are influenced by estate management and are sometimes characterised by traditional estate colours. They often include decorative elements such as ridge tiles and bargeboards.





Green paint of the Bromesberrow Estate



Gothic Villa

■ Victorian architecture, notably in the more settled areas of the AONB such as West Malvern, Malvern Wells and Colwall. Victorian houses are generally built from traditional brick or stone and are taller than older buildings. They usually include more decorative elements such as moulded cornices and architraves.



Victorian architecture



Less common in the AONB - a classic three-bay villa in late Georgian style, rendered with classical porch and deep eaves to hipped roof

■ Edwardian houses feature in the settled areas of the AONB. These are generally semi-detached and can include mock Tudor gables, bay windows and pebble-dash.

■ Villas often set in their own designed landscapes, among mixed ornamental woodland. They range from symmetrical houses in the late Georgian style to more asymmetrical Gothic Revival houses using local stone, progressing into the distinctive Arts and Crafts architecture of around 1900 to the 1930s. These buildings are much more decorative than other residential buildings, often including segmental and pointed arches above openings, ashlar or brick quoins and dressings on stone buildings, large stone-mullioned windows, crested ridges, finials and decorative bargeboards. The Malvern Hills AONB is one of the best places in England to observe the development of the villa.

Post war developments, including local authority development in settled areas, and 1960s and 1970s bungalows clustering around areas of historic smallholdings and commons, can be found in the AONB. However, they are generally not locally characteristic due to their standardised designs and non-traditional materials, which tend not to reflect local character.

## 6.2 New domestic development

New development is any proposed new building in the Malvern Hills AONB. It includes anything from a single dwelling to a large development of many units. The following provides a guide to help ensure that the design of any new development responds to the local landscape and has a distinct identity.

### 6.2.1 Siting and density

Care should be taken to ensure that new development does not damage a settlement's character and that the density of the new development reflects the existing settlement pattern and plot size. General guidelines that will usually help to ensure this are outlined below.

#### Issues to consider

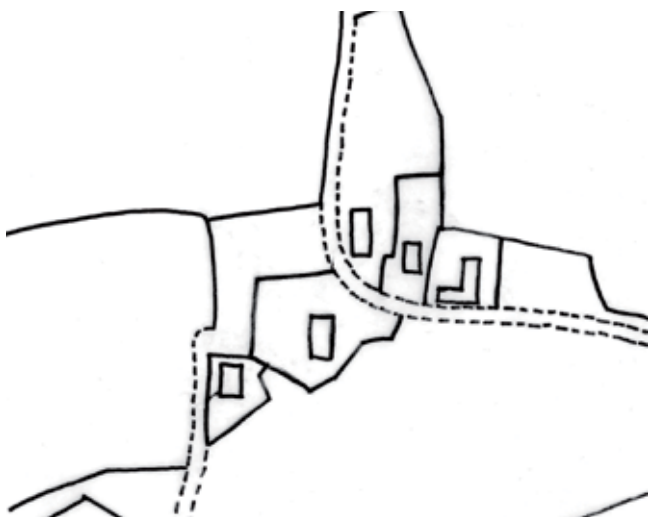
**A** - It is generally appropriate to site residential development of more than two units within the settlement boundaries of existing towns and villages. To prevent the effect of urban sprawl and coalescence of settlement, however, some towns and villages may only be able to accommodate limited new development.

**B** - In a clustered settlement pattern, where there is largely unsettled land between clusters of modest-scale dwellings and other buildings, it may be acceptable to build one or two houses close to existing buildings. Such development must respect the inherited pattern of plot size and building scale.

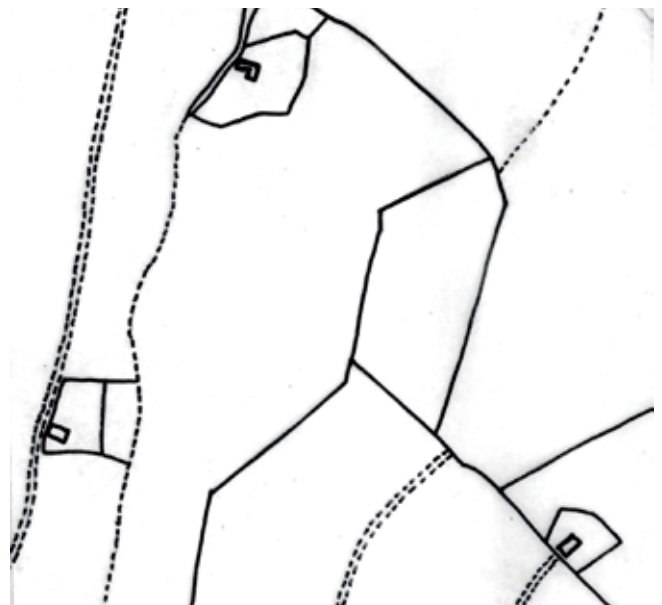
**C** - Larger groups of buildings within an area of dispersed settlement, such as the Principal Wooded Hills, are likely to damage the settlement character of isolated or clustered buildings. While high density developments would be inappropriate, one or two isolated dwellings may be acceptable.

**D** - In some cases, where the landscape is sparsely settled, it may be more appropriate to alter, extend or replace an existing building than to introduce additional buildings into the landscape.

**E** - The local pattern of spacing between buildings and roads should be respected. For example, in areas where cottages are set back from the road new buildings should continue this pattern and not be sited directly onto the roadside.



Small cluster of buildings set within their own grounds



Clusters of buildings are uncharacteristic in a dispersed settlement pattern

## 6.2.2 Aspect and orientation

The orientation of the building is its position in relation to the points on a compass and where the building is located on site. The aspect refers to the particular direction a slope faces.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Taking aspect and orientation into account will ensure that the building responds to its landscape context. This includes considering the direction of the prevailing wind (consider this also when siting outdoor seating areas), and the location of neighbouring buildings and surrounding trees and how these affect light, shade or privacy.

**B** - Consider the path of the sun throughout the year. This will affect internal light, heat and glare. For example, siting large areas of glazing on southern aspects will maximise the amount of passive solar gain and reduce the need for heat energy. Carefully consider the impact of glare from glazing on views from the surrounding area.

**C** - Consider the location of existing routes, such as public rights of way or roads, and access points, to ensure that the new development does not affect access for others and to provide privacy and security for the new development.



Detached properties in large plots, facing West, High Hills and Slopes



Detached property, Hollybed Common

## 6.2.3 Building style

Within the AONB the characteristic building style often varies between each landscape character type. For example, villas are characteristic in West Malvern and Malvern Wells and simple timber framed cottages are characteristic in the Principal Wooded Hills. A strong understanding of existing characteristic buildings, which contribute to the local character within the landscape character type where the new development is located, is essential to ensure that the style of new development is appropriate. For example, a new building inspired by the villas in West Malvern would not be appropriate in the Principal Wooded Hills.

### Issues to consider

**A** - New development should have an appropriate identity that makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.



New locally responsive development in Longley Green

**B** - Innovative designs can integrate the needs of sustainability, energy use and respect for landscape character.

**C** - Explore the potential for new buildings to creatively reflect features on locally characteristic buildings within the relevant landscape character type. This might include exterior chimneys, steeply pitched roofs, ornamentation or a mix of materials where they are characteristic locally.

**D** - Have regard to local building character. For example, where there is a history of designing and building with an individual character in an area it is likely to be appropriate to continue this tradition.

**E** - Consider the roof shape and style of existing locally characteristic buildings. Roofs in the AONB are generally pitched or in some cases hipped. It is generally more appropriate for roofs to be simple with uncomplicated shapes. However, in some areas complex rooflines are characteristic and these should be reflected in new development.

**F** - Planting should be used, where appropriate, to help assimilate buildings into the landscape. However, it should not be used to screen poor development. Good building design is always essential.



This new build reflects locally characteristic cottages while displaying innovation. The two storeys appear as one, materials and colours are appropriate, there is a characteristic exterior chimney and renewable energy is being generated



This example in West Malvern shows how a modern building can reflect characteristics such as the complex shapes and asymmetrical form that are found locally



## 6.2.4 Scale, mass and form

Scale, mass and form are generally interlinked. The scale of a building refers to its height, length and width. The mass is its overall shape and size, taking into account the building scale and volume. The form is generally considered to be the 3D outline of the building including the floor plan and shape.



View of street scene in Malvern Wells shows a consistent scale, mass and form of buildings, although there is variety in terms of colour and details

### Issues to consider

**A** - New development should respect the scale, mass and form of the existing locally characteristic buildings within the landscape character type where the development is located to avoid eroding local identity.



Simple dwelling on the edge of Castlemorton Common

**B** - Developing larger buildings will be most appropriate in areas where such buildings are characteristic, for example in West Malvern or Malvern Wells where Victorian villas are common.



1860s house in the Wooded Hills and Farmland

**C** - It is unlikely to be appropriate to build a house with a large and complex shape in proximity to simple, rectangular form dwellings, especially where such buildings are characteristic, for example on Castlemorton Common.



Alterations and extensions have created complex shapes in some areas of the AONB

**D** - Where larger scale buildings do exist, new development should be informed by an understanding of their historic form. This can range from symmetrical and formal to informal compositions with varied projections and rooflines. New development should respect the scale and simplicity of smaller scale buildings where these are common, avoiding elements such as projections and bay windows which may diverge from this local character.

**E** - Where it is necessary for a new building to be taller than the surrounding buildings, the building should be designed sensitively to minimise its impact. This might be through the use of set back and projecting sections where appropriately characteristic, or by taking advantage of height changes in topography.

## 6.3 Alterations and conversions

Alterations and conversions are the improvement or renovation of existing buildings. They are nearly always preferable to new development because re-use/renovation is usually more sustainable in terms of retaining embodied energy, resource use and cost. Alterations and conversions include reconfiguring the building inside, changing its use to enable a new lease of life, or enhancing the character of a building and removing historical changes that have harmed the building's character or weakened its visual unity.

It may be appropriate to make a record of a historic building's character, features and layout before altering or converting it to ensure that future changes are informed by the original character. English Heritage provides guidance on this (see links to resources).



New windows retain scale and proportions of traditional wayside cottage



Chapel in Wellington Heath now converted to residential use

### Issues to consider

**A -** Alterations or conversions should respect the architectural integrity, character and scale of the building. For example, where a building is characterised by a simple, non-decorative design, this should be retained.

**B -** Consider opportunities to reinstate historic character. This could include replacing uPVC window frames with wooden frames or introducing elements of locally characteristic materials or design where appropriate.

**C -** In some circumstances, for example where materials are to be replaced or when closing or creating an opening, it is appropriate to match the manufacturing, colour, size and texture of materials on the original building closely, rather than using contrasting materials. It may be possible to find reclaimed materials locally that provide a match.

**D -** Cleaning older brick and stone buildings is generally inappropriate because this will lead to a loss of both patina and lichen, and may damage the materials.

**E -** Re-pointing on a large scale should generally be avoided as this will fundamentally affect the character of the building. Confine re-pointing to localised areas that require repair, and use traditional methods where appropriate.

**F -** Natural building materials that are found locally and are not man-made should be used wherever possible on buildings where they are part of the building's character. This is especially the case if the building is listed or in a Conservation Area.

**G -** Where decorative details need to be replaced or where new openings are added, the decorative details should normally copy those on the original building. This will ensure continuity between openings and maintain the unity of the building.

**H -** Avoid creating new detailing or decoration on simple buildings where it would traditionally not have existed.

**I -** Historically or architecturally important features such as arches, lintels, ventilation slits and fixed machinery relating to, or forming an important intrinsic part of, the building's original use should be retained in situ and integrated within the proposed alterations or conversion.

## 6.4 Extensions

Well-designed extensions can revitalise older buildings and contribute positively to local character. If done badly, extensions detract from the original building and can impact on the wider local landscape. It is essential to ensure that an extension has strong unity and a relationship to the original building, strengthening character rather than weakening it. This does not mean that extensions should copy existing development: sensitive and good modern design can complement the original building and respect local character.



Simple rendered modern extension to the rear, with ridge set beneath earlier ridge line

### 6.4.1 Scale, mass and form

The scale, mass and form of an extension should be determined by the character, scale, mass and form of the original building. Extensions are dependent on the original building. There may be some buildings that cannot easily accommodate an extension or will require very sensitive design and planning. On some buildings it may be that any extension is inappropriate.

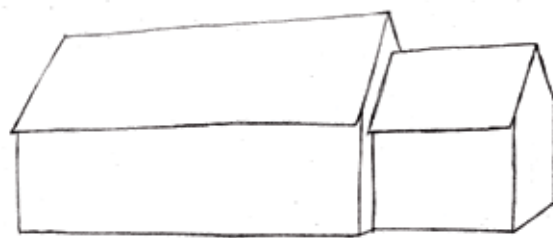
#### Issues to consider

**A** - The general size, height and width of the extension should normally be less than the original building, ensuring that it remains subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and form. This can be achieved by:

- setting the extension back from the main elevation building line to make it less imposing and reduce its impact on the main building;

- setting the eaves and ridge of the extension lower than those of the original building (normally a 0.5 metre set down would help to reduce the impact of the extension); and

- ensuring that the length of a side extension is not normally more than the length of the front elevation of the original building.



Extension is not longer than original building, is set back from the building line and set down below the original ridge so that it does not dominate original building

**B** - The cumulative effect of previous extensions of the original building should be considered. The effect of several extensions from different periods can erode the character of the original building. It may not be appropriate to enlarge the building further, but instead to rework existing extensions more sympathetically or appropriately.

**C** - Consider where to locate an extension. A rear extension can limit the impact on the original building when the building faces onto a road or public right of way. A side extension can be appropriate where space for a rear extension is limited or a rear extension would be highly visible (from a viewpoint, for example).

**D** - Occasionally, and where space allows, it may be most appropriate to build a separate building that is connected to the main building by a link. This can help maintain the form of the existing building.



## 6.4.2 Building style

The style of extension will very much depend on the character of the original building. Some buildings may be able to accommodate extensions that are clearly different while it would be preferable for others to match the original building closely. The design approach should be rooted in a strong understanding of the building's character and the landscape context.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider the appropriate building methods, colours and architectural styles for the extension. These can be traditional or contemporary as long as they complement the original building and local character.

**B** - It may be most appropriate for extensions on significant or notable buildings to be clearly different from the original building. This can allow the merits of the original building to stand out. However such a decision should always be based on an understanding of the building's character.

**C** - When using materials that do not match those on the original building they should not detract from the original building in terms of colour and details.

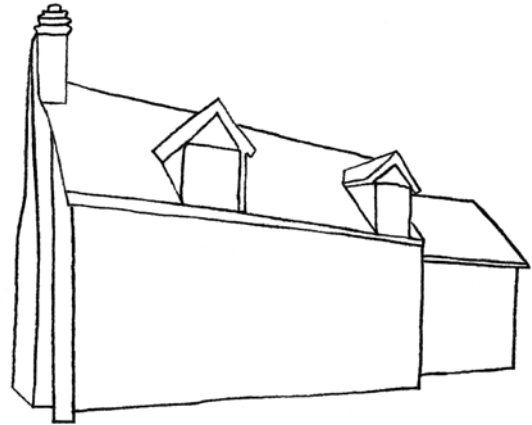
**D** - The roof style and pitch of an extension should normally reflect the original roof. For example, where the original building has a hipped roof the extension should also have a hipped roof.



Extension to this building in Mathon has used closely matching materials

**E** - Decorative detailing on the original building should be reflected, not necessarily copied. Fewer details on the extension will help make it subordinate to the original building.

**F** - Ensure that characteristic features such as large exterior chimneys are maintained.



Location of extension has retained the large exterior chimney



The roof pitch and materials of this extension reflect that of the original building



Windows in this red brick extension are proportionate; first floor windows reflect proximity to the roofline of windows on the original building. Window frame and door colour creates unity

## 6.5 Conservatories

A conservatory is often considered as an alternative to an extension. The guidance on extensions may therefore provide additional help to that below.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Conservatories should respect the style of the original building and not dominate. For example, if appropriate, a conservatory on a simple traditional cottage should be simple with few details. More ornate conservatories might be appropriate on decorative buildings, such as Victorian villas.



This ornate conservatory on a Victorian villa is no more than one storey high and reflects the use of colour on the villa

**B** - The height of a conservatory should be carefully considered to ensure that it does not dominate the original building. On a two storey building the conservatory should normally be no higher than the underside of first floor sills of the original building. On a bungalow, the height of the conservatory should normally be lower than the eaves of the original building.

**C** - It is usually preferable to locate conservatories on the rear of the house.

**D** - Timber or steel are the most appropriate materials for conservatory frames (see 'Materials' chapter for reasons why uPVC should not be used).



The details and colours on this conservatory reflect those on the door and hood



## 6.6 Porches

Porches are usually external to the main building and act as a space to pause before entering or exiting a dwelling. There are a variety of porch styles.

### Issues to consider

**A -** Consider whether or not it is appropriate to install a porch. In some cases, where the original building is of simple design, an external porch or porch hood could detract from this simplicity. In others, a porch could detract from a characteristic doorway. An internal porch (vestibule) may therefore provide a suitable alternative.

**B -** Where they are considered appropriate, porches and porch hoods should not appear to dominate the original building in terms of size. As a general rule, they should normally be no larger than required to surround the door opening itself and no higher than the first floor sills of the original building.



Porch is overly large in comparison with the door opening and is out of scale with the main building

**C -** Porches should be suitable for the property and well-designed; a decorative porch would not be appropriate on a simple traditional building.



Porches and hoods on these dwellings are proportionate. Simple materials and colours complement the original buildings

## 7. Farmsteads and agricultural buildings



Farmstead including farmhouse and barns

A farmstead comprises a farmhouse and the working buildings of a farm. Some farms also have additional field barns or outfarms sited away from the farmstead. Significant traditional farmsteads and their buildings contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of the Malvern Hills AONB and have one or more of the following:

- Traditional farm buildings with a locally distinctive architectural form and character, constructed using local building materials.
- Traditional groups, where the historic buildings and spaces relate to each other.
- Legible settings, existing as part of the landscapes and settlements within which they developed.

Traditional buildings display enormous variation in their plan form, use of materials and the way in which they have developed as part of the farmed landscape. Traditional buildings are not the prefabricated and standardised industrial buildings used today. These buildings display no local variation in character or distribution but are essential to the modern farming industry.

Future change is inevitable if historic farmsteads are to remain as a distinctive part of the Malverns landscape. Where they are fully informed, new uses for historic farm buildings can make a positive contribution to landscape character. They can inspire appropriate, high-quality new development, and sustain the distinctive character and significance of historic farmsteads in the landscape.

Understanding of farmsteads in the Malverns has benefited from the *West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project* conducted by English Heritage in collaboration with local, county and metropolitan authorities (see links to resources). The headline results of this study are as follows:

- Historic farmsteads, comprising the farmhouse and most or all of the working buildings, are assets that make a significant and highly varied contribution to the rural building stock, landscape character and local distinctiveness of the West Midlands. The Malverns has a high rate of farmstead survival except around Malvern itself, with 72% of farmsteads (West Midlands average 40%) recorded from late 19th century maps retaining more than half of their historic footprint.



Shelter shed for cattle in the Sandstone Estate lands



White House Farm

■ Through agricultural, and other new uses, historic farmsteads make an important contribution to the rural economy. A third of these farmsteads in the West Midlands (only 21% in the Malverns) remain in agricultural use with varying degrees of diversification. Only 5% have been converted to sole industrial, commercial or retail use. More than two-thirds of farmsteads are in residential use, including those where some or all of the working buildings have been converted into housing.

■ The economic significance of residential use can be easily overlooked but residential and economic uses are often interlinked. The study found that one in twelve farmsteads in residential use is also the registered office of a limited company – this measure serving as a proxy of home-based professional working. They also provide homes for a ‘business elite’, with 22 directorships of substantial firms for every 100 farmsteads (far outstripping the national average). Regardless of location, historic farmsteads are more often used for a diversity of home-based entrepreneurial businesses than any other dwellings. This is particularly the case in the Malverns, where three farmsteads out of four are in residential use, with their occupants showing high participation in substantial business at director level (39 directorships per 100 farmsteads).

Malverns farmsteads include a variety of building types, the largest and most distinctive being threshing barns for storing and processing the harvested corn, and hop kilns for drying and storing hops. Granaries, stables and cider houses, often combined into multi-functional ranges, and housing for cattle are also typical. Farmsteads are smaller and more numerous in the Suckley Hills to the north and larger in the estate lands to the south.

### The key farmstead plan types in the Malvern Hills AONB are:

- Loose courtyard farmsteads, mostly small in scale, with detached working buildings to one or two sides of the yard.
- Small-scale regular L-shaped farmsteads, mostly comprising simply a barn with additional shelter shed but some with additional working buildings on three or four sides of the yard.
- Some medium- to large-scale regular courtyard farmsteads, mostly U-shaped and including some multi-yard plans.
- Concentrations of linear farmsteads where the house and working buildings are attached and in-line in areas of smallholdings (for example Storridge Common). By the later 19th century many of these had been absorbed into larger farms and are now very rare.



L-Plan outfarm in the Enclosed Commons, now in residential use



Linear farmstead in the Principal Timbered Farmlands



These plan types have all developed within their farmed landscapes (see summary in Landscape and Setting), including as illustrated below:

- On the edges of settlements where fields were enclosed from medieval strips and may retain their curved profiles.
- Within blocks of enclosed land intermixed with open commons.
- Large farmsteads within fields that have been enlarged and reorganised over time.

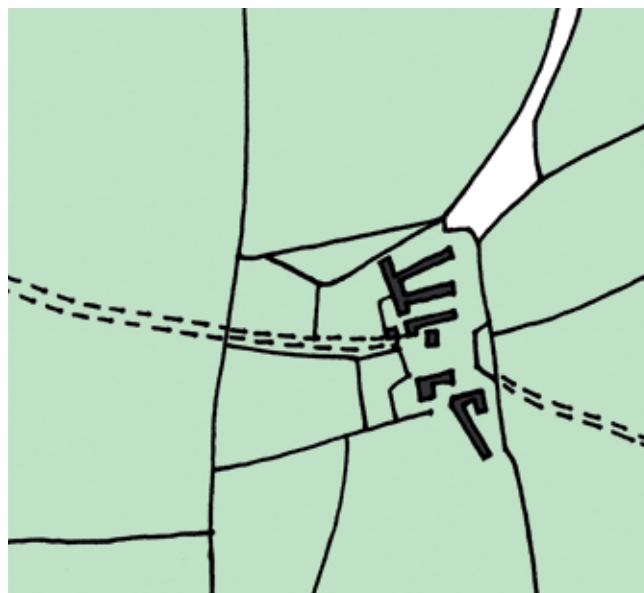
Images show examples of farmstead plan types typical of the AONB in their landscape context



Smallholdings in a common edge context around Castlemorton Common



Linear and L-Plan farmsteads (small to medium in character) associated with piecemeal enclosure of the landscape, in Alfrick Pound



An example of a larger regular courtyard farm associated with mixed farming in a planned landscape



## 7.1 Understanding the farmstead

Development or change to farm buildings should be based on an understanding of the entire farmstead and its relationship with the landscape. This understanding should be developed before any design or planning for change commences. Change should seek to reinforce and strengthen the relationship of the farmsteads with the landscape and the agricultural character of buildings.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Assess the significance of the farmstead in the landscape: views into and out of the farmstead mean it plays a role in the context of the local landscape. These views should be considered during development or changes to the farmstead. New buildings should not block these views.

---

**B** - Understand the relationship of different buildings to each other. By noting how different buildings relate to each other it is possible to observe past changes – the loss and addition of buildings – and the hierarchy of buildings. This informs redevelopment by identifying where there are spaces and opportunities for new buildings or alterations that reinforce the character of the farmstead. It also informs the use of materials, colours, scale, massing and design.

---

**C** - When choosing the location and character of new development, consider the spaces and gaps between buildings (the yards and routeways), and how these relate to the group of buildings and wider landscape.

---

**D** - Maintain the functional, rural and working character of farmsteads to uphold their agricultural character in the landscape and their contribution to the Malvern Hills AONB.

---

**E** - Record the character of buildings before changes occur to ensure that future work can be informed by historical character and not by redevelopment works. It is important to record and retain historical features internally and externally such as doors and windows, open interiors, roof trusses, and floor surfaces and structures. These important elements make up the character of the building.

---

## 7.2 Introducing new development to historic farmsteads

Consider the capacity for farmsteads to change through the introduction of new buildings at the earliest critical stage in the planning process, by understanding and identifying the following about the farmstead:

**A** - Their character, which results from their historic development and function as whole sites, including any routeways and spaces within and around them, and how they are linked to the surrounding landscape and settlement.

---

**B** - Their significance, a factor that can be of critical importance in determining planning applications.

---

**C** - Their sensitivity to the changes being considered, and other issues that can inform pre-application discussions and be taken forward when preparing a scheme.

---

## 7.2.1 Proposed buildings

There may be opportunities for new buildings (ancillary buildings and dwellings). Such buildings may be considered as enabling development to help significant buildings that are highly sensitive to adaptive reuse, to be retained and reused.<sup>4</sup>

Such development might include demolishing modern shed buildings or buildings that are not significant to the character of the farmstead or opening spaces up so that the significance of heritage assets is revealed. Such actions will help enhance the contribution that farmsteads make to the surrounding settlement and landscape. Getting the design right is essential on such sensitive sites so gaining a detailed understanding of the landscape, the farmstead and its buildings is critical to achieving successful design in the rural context.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider the potential to reinstate missing elements that may maintain or enhance the character and significance of the group. This does not mean replicating lost buildings but using an understanding of farmstead character to inform new design. Different opportunities or constraints may be offered by the plan form and the level of change.

**B** - Consider whether introducing a new building might secure the future of highly significant buildings, or other traditional buildings, within a group if it has low potential for change.

**C** - The use of materials of appropriate quality is essential in ensuring a successful scheme. Consider the cost and availability of traditional building materials and the potential to salvage materials (although their source must be considered).

**D** - Consider the siting of shelterbelts to protect and mitigate against the effects of cold winds in landscapes where shelterbelts are a characteristic feature (see local guidance for more detail).

**E** - Think carefully too about site layout, building design and materials to help minimise fuel costs and reduce carbon emissions at source.

**F** - South-facing frontages with the longest face within 30 degrees of south – ideally facing south-east – can often be achieved, as many historic farmsteads tended to face south to maximise the sun.

**G** - The site may have the potential for micro-generation, combining available technologies.

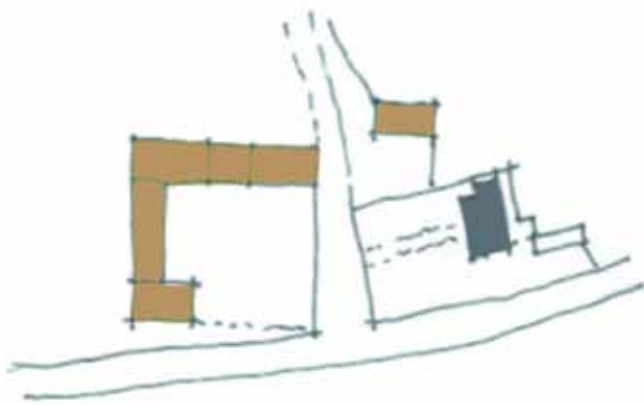
**H** - It may also have the potential, and be appropriate to deliver building-integrated and free-standing technologies including solar, wind and water power, use of biomass crops, geo-thermal sources and air-source heating and cooling.

**I** - When planning new development within farmsteads it is important to consider where new buildings can fit in relation to the different farmstead plan types that exist within the Malvern Hills AONB. Information about the different plan types in the Malvern Hills AONB can be found below.

<sup>4</sup> - Enabling development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring public benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. English Heritage has produced guidance on this at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/enabling-development-and-the-conservation-of-significant-places>

## 7.2.2 L plan yards

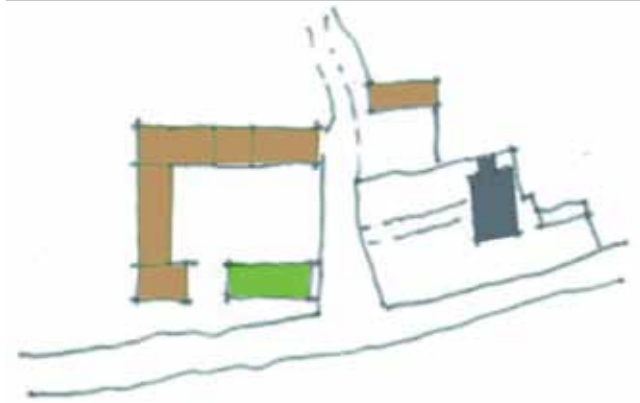
L plan yards tend to be smaller scale than other farmstead plan types and well-defined in terms of form. The strong sense of definition makes this plan type very sensitive to change.



Historic L plan farmstead

### Issues to consider

**A** - Further buildings should only be introduced where they do not alter the original plan form or impact on the courtyard.



An example of positive change where a detached building, shown in green, could be added with inward facing openings, thus mitigating the impact

## 7.2.3 Regular courtyard plans

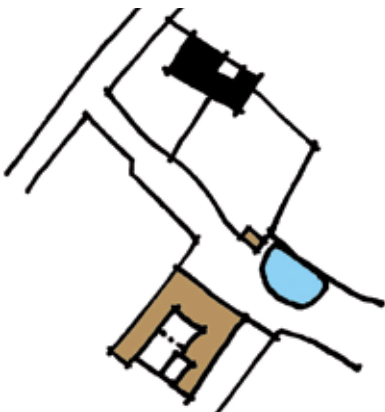
Regular courtyard plans vary in terms of the number of sides they have. There is sometimes space for further development if it is sensitive to the scale of existing buildings and spaces between them.

### Issues to consider

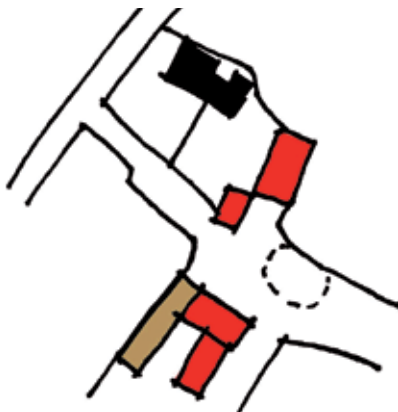
**A** - Consider the courtyard itself: new development should respect and maintain this space.

**B** - Where regular courtyard plan types exist, new development should maintain the form, be it U plan or F plan.

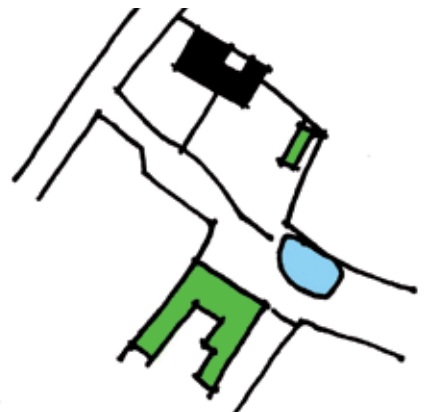
**C** - New development should avoid repeating the traditional plan form: if there is already a U plan farmstead, avoid creating a second U plan when a new courtyard is necessary.



Historic U plan farmstead



Modern buildings, shown in red, have a negative impact on the historic farmstead. The drawing shows the potential for removing these modern buildings and replacing them with new buildings, shown in green, which are informed by an understanding of the historic character



## 7.2.4 Loose courtyard plans

Loose courtyard plans are often simple in form and tend to be characterised by buildings that are separate from each other. They can be as minimal as a farmhouse with one barn to the side or they can be more complex, with buildings on all three sides of the yard.

### Issues to consider

**A** - In the case of loose courtyards with one working building, there are unlikely to be opportunities for new development other than extensions to the existing building or small additional buildings.

**B** - Where there are working buildings on more than one side of the yard there may be opportunities for new development that respects the loose and informal character of the group.



Historic loose courtyard farmstead

Modern buildings, shown in red, have a negative impact on the historic farmstead. The drawing shows the potential for removing these modern buildings and replacing them with new buildings, shown in green, which are informed by an understanding of the historic character

## 7.2.5 Dispersed farmsteads

Dispersed cluster farmsteads are marked by the informality of the grouping.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Retain the dispersed and informal character of the building groups, and avoid layouts that formalise the grouping.

## 7.2.6 Multi-yard farmsteads

Multi-yard farmsteads comprise grouped buildings around a series of yards. They can be dispersed or regular in their overall form.

### Issues to consider

**A** - When adding new buildings it is essential that the size and location of buildings is sympathetic and appropriate to the existing plan.

**B** - This plan type provides more scope for building variation, in terms of materials and character, than other plan types although its character should still be respected and maintained.



## 7.3 Alterations, conversions and extensions of existing farm buildings

As the economic vitality of agriculture has declined and as farming practices have changed so has the demand for working farm buildings. Consequently, some are being converted to new uses, such as residential use. This reflects our ability to revitalise and re-use buildings to suit new needs while maintaining them as valuable elements within the landscape.



Agricultural building now restored and in office use

### Issues to consider

**A -** The separate characters of domestic and working buildings should be retained. Working buildings have a simpler form and fewer openings (particularly windows, although there may be ventilation holes).

**B -** Where extensions, alterations or conversions are considered, the agricultural character should be retained. Decorative elements should not be introduced; these erode the functional and simple character of buildings while introducing suburbanising or residential elements.



Sensitive barn conversion, retaining decorative ventilation panels

**C -** Drains and gutters should be dark, discrete and minimal, unless the traditional colours associated with the estates are locally characteristic.



Reuse of agricultural building



Converted agricultural building

**D -** When converting buildings there is often a desire to increase openings to allow natural light inside. It is generally preferable to avoid creating new openings and to work with the existing ones. Careful internal planning and design can help introduce and 'borrow' natural light.



New windows in barn conversions are not in keeping with their agricultural character

**E -** Where new openings are essential, avoid prominent elevations and place them on the least sensitive elevation in terms of the character of the farm building.

**F -** The use of rooflights should be minimal; where used they should be positioned on the least sensitive roof slopes in terms of views to the farmstead. Steel framed rooflights set flush to the plane of the roof are usually most appropriate.



Conversion of these hop kilns retains the simple character, small windows and cowl on roof

**G -** Alterations and extensions may use new materials that are of suitable high quality to ensure durability and sustainability. Traditional materials are preferable but their cost and availability may be an issue.

**H -** Where new materials are introduced to a historic farm building they should match or, if this is not possible, complement existing materials in colour, size and shape. The use of contrasting materials will generally be inappropriate.



Reuse of agricultural building

**I -** When converting farm buildings, particularly to residential use, private areas such as gardens need to be carefully sited and contained, particularly in relation to public views and the surrounding landscape. This will help prevent residential or suburbanising features from being introduced into the landscape and will also ensure privacy.

**J -** There is often no hard boundary definition between farm buildings and the landscape. Where this is the case new buildings and extensions should follow this characteristic.

## 7.4 New agricultural buildings

There is an economic need for new agricultural developments as a result of modern farming practices and the sale of traditional farm buildings for conversions. Modern farm buildings tend to be larger than traditional farm buildings and there is an increasing demand for buildings on previously undeveloped land. New agricultural buildings can have a significant impact on the landscape because they may be permitted in wider countryside areas where other types of development would not be.

New farm buildings need to be fit for their purpose while reflecting local building practices and contributing to landscape character. When located near existing farmsteads they must not dominate the existing farmstead; instead, respect for the existing farmstead plan type must always be maintained.

### 7.4.1 Building style, scale and massing

When planning new developments it is important to consider the scale and massing of existing agricultural buildings, ensuring that new buildings reflect these. Buildings that are out of scale with other farm buildings in a group will dominate, eroding the group's contribution to landscape character. The following guidelines provide advice on how to ensure that a building fits with the landscape, has minimal impact and makes a maximum contribution to character.

#### Issues to consider

**A** - The visual impact of a larger building can be limited by the use of a series of shorter span portal frames to reduce elevations and create a lower roof height than a single span roof.

**B** - It may be possible to construct two smaller buildings rather than one large building, particularly where the topography is steeply sloping and there is limited space for development.

**C** - The scale and mass of larger buildings can be broken up by setting back or projecting some sections of the building or by stepping the roofline.

**D** - Overhanging eaves create a shadow line, making buildings appear smaller than they are.



New grain store respecting colours of existing functional buildings in complex

**E** - When building on sloping ground, build on lower rather than higher slopes, and on a break in the slope. This reduces both the visual impact and the need for earth movements and alterations in land form.

**F** - Where available, a backdrop of mature trees or hills will help reduce a building's visual impact. That said, the emphasis should be on alleviating visual impacts through good siting and design rather than through screening and mitigation measures.

**G** - When buildings are intended to house livestock 10% of the roof space should be made up of roof lights or openings to enable sufficient natural light to penetrate. Roof lights should be evenly distributed across the roof, and located on the least visually prominent roof slope.

## 7.4.2 Materials and colour

The use of appropriate materials and colour makes a major contribution to ensuring that an agricultural building fits into the landscape. The following guidelines relate specifically to appropriate materials and colours for farm buildings in the Malvern Hills AONB. General guidance in the 'Materials' chapter should also be considered.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Traditional materials such as stone and traditional brick are characteristic in the landscape. They are durable and help to ensure that a development is sustainable in the long term as well as being characteristic of the local area. Where the use of traditional materials is not economic it is important to ensure that any new materials are appropriate for the local landscape.

**B** - Use non-reflective materials or matt paints to reduce the visual impact of agricultural buildings in the landscape. Colours should reflect the colour of materials on surrounding stone or brick agricultural buildings (generally warm but muted, earthy tones) and should not stand out in the surrounding landscape. Although farmhouses are sometimes painted white it is generally not appropriate to paint agricultural buildings white.

**C** - On new agricultural buildings, the use of many materials or colours on one building has a negative visual impact, affecting the unity of the building. Similarly, the use of one type of material or colour creates the illusion of a larger building: a mix of two or three different materials and complementary colours is preferable.

**D** - New agricultural buildings often comprise two different courses – a lower course and an upper course. If the lower course comprises concrete blocks these can be rendered or painted an appropriate colour to blend with surrounding buildings (generally warm but muted, earthy tones).

**E** - Pre-cast concrete constructions can be dyed an appropriate colour to match the stone on surrounding buildings.

**F** - When different materials are used on the same building they should not be proportioned evenly: using different proportions of colours and materials will further reduce the apparent size of buildings in the landscape.

**G** - Using darker colours on roofs than on walls makes a building appear smaller. Dark roofs, however, may increase heat absorption and would require additional ventilation for housing livestock. An exception to this is if a building is to be located against a skyline; it would then be more appropriate to use a lighter colour for roofing, which would blend more with the colour of the sky.

**H** - Timber boarding provides excellent natural ventilation for new agricultural buildings. It may be possible to source this locally. More information about using timber can be found on page 54.



Portal-framed sheds such as these are vital for the modern farming industry. Vertical timber boarding complements the trees behind



### 7.4.3 Temporary accommodation for seasonal workers

---

Although temporary, accommodation for seasonal workers can have a significant impact on the landscape.

#### Issues to consider

**A -** The visual impact should be reduced by designing and siting the building using the principles for new agricultural buildings above. For example, site the structure on lower slopes away from important views and with a backdrop of trees, and use muted, non-reflective materials and colours.

---

## 7.5 Links to 'farmstead and agricultural building' resources:

■ Understanding of farmsteads in the Malverns has benefited from the *West Midlands Farmsteads and Landscapes Project* which was conducted by English Heritage in collaboration with local, county and metropolitan authorities.  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/wmidlandsfarmsteads)

■ Helm also provides advice on farm buildings.  
[www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings](http://www.helm.org.uk/farmbuildings)

■ English Heritage's Farmsteads Toolkit  
[www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/](http://www.farmsteadstoolkit.co.uk/)

## 8. Gardens and boundaries

Good design of the external areas that surround a building, including gardens, boundaries and car parking, is critically important in complementing and enhancing the building. It is a crucial element when trying to integrate a building into the surrounding landscape. Consider what is characteristic locally when designing the areas around a building: creating a garden or boundary that is not characteristic will be at odds with the surrounding landscape and will create a negative impact for the building. Car parking should not dominate as this will have a negative effect on the natural beauty of the Malvern Hills AONB.

### 8.1 Gardens

Buildings in the AONB are often set back from roads in their own grounds. In some areas of the AONB, however, there are no front gardens and buildings front directly onto the roads.

#### Issues to consider

**A** - Where characteristic, set buildings in their own grounds, with front, side and rear gardens.

**B** - Avoid extending gardens onto farmland/the wider countryside. This creates inappropriate textures and colours in the landscape and urbanises/suburbanises the landscape character.

**C** - Plant native and/or locally characteristic species to help tie development into the local landscape and enhance biodiversity. Planting native thorny species such as blackthorn, hawthorn and holly can also provide a secure boundary as well as acting as a deterrent to intruders.

**D** - Keep hard surfacing to a minimum: avoid formal kerbs, tarmac and paving, particularly in the wider countryside or on the edges of settlement.

**E** - Use materials, such as loose gravel or crushed stone, from a local source, in a colour that complements the surrounding soil colour. This reduces visual impact while helping to prevent flooding as part of a sustainable drainage system.

**F** - Creative design of outside space can enhance security by minimising potential hiding places or opportunities to access upper floors.



Malvern stone wall boundary with hedgerow and planting in garden



Use of formal kerbs and tarmac in the wider countryside



Informal track in the wider countryside

## 8.2 Boundaries

A variety of characteristic boundaries exist in different parts of the AONB including stone or brick walls in settled areas, and native mixed species or thorn hedgerows in open countryside. In some areas of the AONB there are no clear boundaries between buildings and the surrounding area.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Avoid removing characteristic boundaries, especially where they play an essential role in the enclosure pattern of the landscape.



Malvern stone boundary ending in blue brick



Hedgerow boundary in settled area of AONB



Uncharacteristic modern fencing alongside hedge boundary

**B** - For new boundaries, observe and follow characteristic local boundaries:

■ Where hedgerows are dominant, new hedgerow boundaries should be planted using locally occurring species. See also the local guidance section of this document.

**C** - The style of Malvern stone wall construction and the mortaring technique used can change on a very local scale. Follow the local style, including the size and shapes of stone blocks, the bond pattern and mortaring techniques:

■ Malvern stone walls can have alternate large and small coping stones known as 'cocks and hens': where this pattern occurs locally it should be followed.

■ When repairing or constructing walls with Malvern stone traditional lime mortaring is normally locally characteristic. This is generally more durable, breathable and flexible than modern cement.

■ Pointing on Malvern stone walls should follow the traditional style of lime mortar, flush with the wall and therefore subtle in appearance.

■ Older Malvern stone walls sometimes have snake/ribbon pointing. This style of pointing is sometimes associated with Victorian gothic and domestic revival properties. Maintaining this type of pointing may be appropriate when associated with such properties.



Snake/ribbon pointing on Malvern stone wall





Malvern stone with soft mortar

- Malvern stone can be used as a facing to a wall that is constructed in another material.
- If this is not possible, a brick wall, using a mix of red or blue brick, with detailing of Malvern stone, and lighter coping stones may be acceptable.



Malvern stone facing a breeze block wall



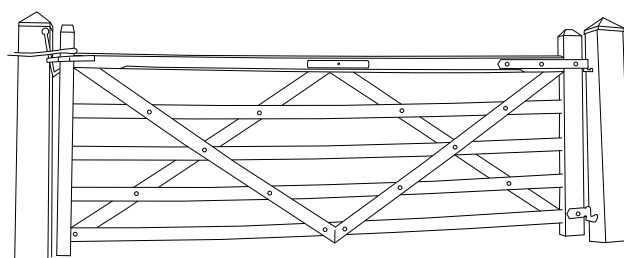
A poor example of a stone wall that does not respond to local character

**D** - Fencing is not generally characteristic in the landscape and would usually be inappropriate where native hedgerows or stone walls are the characteristic boundary. Occasionally, fencing may be acceptable if it is low, avoids uniformity and does not erode the local character through inappropriate colours or the introduction of suburbanising characteristics.

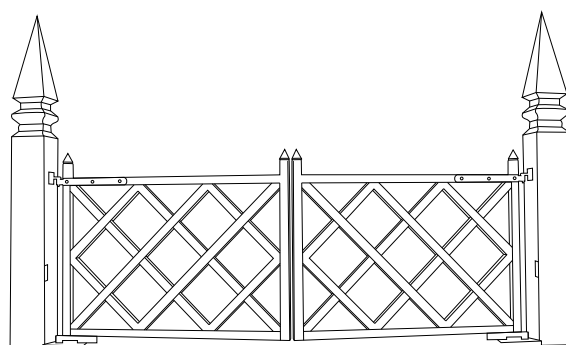


This wooden fencing with planting behind is acceptable in a wooded landscape

**E** - Low, timber gates are preferred, particularly for modest, rural dwellings. Metal or large gates may be appropriate in certain locations. This includes low metal gates at entrances to agricultural land/buildings, or larger, ornate gates to large properties.



A simple gate is more appropriate for modest dwellings



A more ornate gate may be appropriate for large or more decorative buildings



Ornate gate on eighteenth century three-storey property



## 8.3 Sheds, garages and other outbuildings

Ancillary buildings such as sheds, garages and outbuildings are often necessary additions to a development, providing useful additional space for storage, car parking or domestic activities that could clutter the landscape. The following guidelines aim to ensure that these structures do not have a negative impact on the design and character of the building they are linked to.



New three-bay garage

### Issues to consider

**A -** Sheds, garages and other outbuildings should not compete, in terms of scale, decoration and design, with the original buildings they serve. They should be designed and sited to relate to, not dominate, the original building. Use of more subdued colours and simple designs will allow them to be less obtrusive. Some decoration may be appropriate if this helps reflect the character of the main building.

**B -** Materials should aim to complement those on the original building, either by closely matching or using different materials that are complementary in terms of colour, texture and size. Materials and colours should respect those of the local landscape.



New garage in the Sandstone Estatelands

**C -** The roof pitch should normally be similar to the original building. Garages appear less dominant when their roof slopes towards the garage entrance.



This garage is subservient in scale to the house, and the roof reflects the pitch, shape and colour of the roof on the house

**D -** Where a garage adjoins the original building, the guidelines for extensions should be followed.

**E -** For security purposes, site sheds where there would be surveillance from buildings, roads or footpaths, but where this would not impact on landscape character or key views.

**F -** Careful consideration should be given to siting elements that can become permanent and may detract from the area's character, such as dustbin areas and garden furniture. Screening with appropriate planting or using appropriate outbuildings, sited and designed in order to fit into the local landscape, can help.



The roof of this garage extension reflects the steeply pitched gable roof of the original building

## 8.4 Car parking

Spaces for car parking tend to be associated with most new developments or redevelopments. Their impact on the setting of the building and the wider countryside should be minimised to avoid affecting landscape character.

### Issues to consider

**A** - New, large car parks are unlikely to be acceptable in the AONB.

---

**B** - Site car parks away from key views and integrate them into the landscape through the use of tree planting, appropriate boundary treatment and surfacing (crushed or loose stones and gravel).

---

**C** - Avoid formal drives that are edged and surfaced, particularly in open countryside, unless they are locally characteristic.

---

**D** - For security, site car parking where there would be surveillance from other buildings, roads or footpaths, but where this would not impact on landscape character, key views or people's privacy.

---

**E** - Underground car parking may be appropriate with apartments and large-scale developments in settlements where ancillary space is limited.

---

## 9. Lighting

The dark skies of the Malvern Hills AONB are a key component of its natural beauty, making an important contribution to the sense of tranquillity and the rural character of the landscape. External lighting such as street lighting, security lights and flood lighting contribute to light pollution and can have a negative impact on the rural landscape and on tranquillity. Outdoor lighting can also have a negative impact on bats, moths and other nocturnal animals.

### Issues to consider

**A** - External lighting should only be installed where necessary and should be kept to an absolute minimum. New external lighting may be unacceptable in dark sky areas where it could have a significant impact on current levels of tranquillity. Any lighting that is considered essential, including street lamps, should be switched off when not needed.

**B** - Lighting should be kept low to the ground wherever possible.

**C** - Permanently lit outside lights are unlikely to be acceptable. Consider the use of motion sensors so that lights are only on when necessary, for example when someone approaches the front door.



Example of down lighting showing minimum light spillage



Lookalike gas lamp, modified to reduce light pollution

**D** - Use low level wattage bulbs. A 150 watt outside security light is recommended, rather than the more powerful 300 to 500 watt lights.

**E** - Angle external lighting downwards to avoid illuminating neighbouring buildings.

**F** - Fit hoods or shields to external lights to minimise light spillage.

**G** - On commercial buildings, if illumination of signs is required, these should be lit from above, not below.

### 9.1 Links to 'lighting' resources

■ The Campaign for Dark Skies is the British Astronomical Association's campaign to restore natural, starry skies, by reducing inefficient lighting.  
[www.britastro.org/dark-skies/](http://www.britastro.org/dark-skies/)

■ Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Dark Skies campaign.  
[www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/countryside/dark-skies](http://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/countryside/dark-skies)

■ English Heritage guidance on External Lighting for Historic Buildings.  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/external-lighting-for-historic-buildings/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/external-lighting-for-historic-buildings/)

■ Institution of Lighting Professionals.  
[www.theilp.org.uk](http://www.theilp.org.uk)

## 10. Shop fronts and signage

Malvern Hills District Council and Herefordshire Council have developed guidance for creating or altering a shop front or signage. This should be used alongside the general points below.



Pharmacy, Colwall



Post Office and store, Suckley

### 10.1 Shop fronts

Generally, shops in the Malvern Hills AONB are found in the settlements such as Malvern Wells and Colwall. They mostly consist of post offices, restaurants and independent retail units. Historically, many shop fronts in the AONB have been installed onto the front of an existing residential building, which has tended to be a Victorian villa or a cottage. Some shop fronts from the 19th century survive today.

#### Issues to consider

**A -** It is important that shop fronts are well-designed: attractive frontages not only improve the appearance of the AONB, they also attract customers and contribute to the economic success of a business.

**B -** Shop fronts should maintain a locally characteristic street scene as opposed to maintaining a generic, or nationally used, corporate image.

**C -** Shop fronts should respect the existing character, including the historic and architectural period, of the building itself and other buildings in the local area. This helps them to integrate with the building and street scene.



## 10.2 Signage



Advertising sign along grass verge, below the hedge line



This self supporting sign does not detract from the building due to its simplicity and sensitive colours

Many businesses in the AONB require signage. Such businesses include shops, pubs, B&Bs, petrol stations and sports and recreation facilities.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Signage should be sensitive to the building it is installed on and/or to the surrounding landscape. Colours, materials and reflectivity are important considerations to minimise landscape impacts.

**B** - Some buildings may be so sensitive to change that no signage would be acceptable on the building itself.

**C** - Wherever possible, signs should not stand proud of features such as hedgerows, fence lines or buildings.



Small sign at entrance to business premises, Bromesberrow



Café sign along a country lane, Eastnor

## 10.3 Links to 'shop front and signage' resources:

■ Herefordshire Council Shop Front Design Guide  
[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environment/conservation/54203.asp](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environment/conservation/54203.asp)

■ Malvern Hills District Council Shop Front Design Guide  
[www.malvern hills.gov.uk/cms/planning/conservation/the-historic-built-environment/spd-shop-fronts.aspx](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/cms/planning/conservation/the-historic-built-environment/spd-shop-fronts.aspx)

# 11. Other development

The principles set out in the previous chapters, for 'Domestic buildings' and 'Farmsteads and agricultural buildings' can be used to reduce the impact of other developments such as recreation facilities and horse stabling. This chapter provides additional information for other types of development.

## 11.1 Horse related development

Keeping horses often requires buildings to shelter horses or to store equipment. The following guidelines should be considered alongside 'Guidance on Keeping Horses in the Landscape' produced by the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership.

### Issues to consider

**A -** It is usually most appropriate to convert existing buildings for keeping horses. Where this is not possible carefully consider the siting, scale, design, materials, colour and boundaries of new developments.

---

## 11.2 Recreation and sports facilities

Recreation and sports facilities can include pitches, club houses and changing rooms. These developments should be designed in a way that is appropriate and adds to local landscape character.

### Issues to consider

**A -** Follow the design principles highlighted in the 'Domestic buildings' chapter.

---

**B -** To prevent facilities from eroding the rural landscape character, they should be integrated into the landscape through tree or hedgerow planting, appropriate surfacing and boundary treatment. The 'Garden and boundaries' chapter provides further information.

---

**C -** If acceptable in principle, consider and minimise the impact of any flood lighting on the surrounding landscape (see 'Lighting' section on page 48).

---

## 11.3 Developments in gardens

This section considers the type of development where large gardens attached to existing development are divided up to enable new, additional development for residential purposes. This type of development ranges from entirely new dwellings with their own curtilage to small 'granny flats' associated with the existing building. Development of this kind can impact on both the setting of the original house and the wider settlement pattern.

### Issues to consider

**A -** A new dwelling in a garden will only be acceptable where it can be proved that it does not have a negative impact on the character of the existing building or settlement pattern.

---

## 11.4 Apartments

There may be locations in more settled areas where it is appropriate to locate small apartment buildings. Generally, in the open countryside new apartment developments could have a serious impact on the Malvern Hills AONB and would not be acceptable. This is particularly the case where the landscape is open, and apartment buildings would be out of scale with the existing buildings.



These apartments have been rendered in a villa style to fit into the local character



One of the first water cure establishments now converted to apartments

### Issues to consider

**A -** The principles of good design, scale and mass discussed in the 'Domestic buildings' chapter should be considered in the design of apartments.

**B -** The location of apartments should be carefully considered and only sited in areas where they would not impact on character and settlement pattern or be out of scale with existing buildings. The areas where Victorian villas are characteristic, for example, may be able to accommodate new apartments.

**C -** Consider the density of development, avoiding developments that comprise such a large number of units that they would be out of scale with the surrounding buildings.

**D -** When converting existing buildings to apartments consider the impact on the character of the building to be converted. The principles set out in 'Alterations and conversions' of this document should be considered.

**E -** The impact of additional parking requirements and other ancillary structures such as communal bin/recycling areas should be considered and carefully designed (see 'Gardens and boundaries' chapter).

## 11.5 Links to 'other development' resources:

■ The Malvern Hills AONB website provides Guidance on Keeping Horses in the Landscape.

[www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html)

## 12. Materials

Local building materials that are used in the Malvern Hills AONB make a strong contribution to landscape character. This is because for a long time, due to a lack of transport, the local landscape was the only source of construction materials. As a result of the varied landscape in the AONB a variety of local building materials have been used, often within the same development, including timber frames with wattle and daub or brick infill, traditional local red brick, Malvern stone, limestone and sandstone. The use of these local materials enhances the character of the AONB as it provides a link between development and the local landscape.

In many cases a mix of materials has become characteristic of development in the area. For example, there are timber framed cottages with red brick extensions and stone chimneys. The larger domestic buildings that are found in more settled areas of the AONB use a mixture of materials, such as yellow or blue brick dressings on red brick buildings or ashlar dressings on stone buildings. A variety of materials is also used on agricultural buildings, including timber framing with brick infill, weatherboarding, stone or traditional local brick. Modern agricultural buildings tend to use corrugated metal cladding or timber.



Estate property in limestone, Eastnor



A mixture of wood, brick and stone, Colwall

### Issues to consider

**A -** It is generally preferable to use locally characteristic materials as they provide a link with the local landscape. Carefully consider the use of modern materials to make sure that they are an appropriate colour and texture and will enhance the local landscape character, not detract from it.

**B -** Consider the sustainability of materials. Aim to source materials locally and think about the production processes involved in producing the material. For example, some man-made materials, such as uPVC, have a negative impact on the environment (uPVC is a plastic derived from the non-renewable resource of oil and a high amount of energy is used in its production).

**C -** Where it is characteristic, consider mixing different materials to add to the variety of development in the AONB (for example, a red brick chimney or a stone extension can be used on a timber building).



## 12.1 Reclaimed or recycled materials

There is a growing opportunity to use materials that are recycled, such as timber cladding made from recycled materials, or materials that have been reclaimed. These can be regarded as preferable, particularly for new buildings, because they are more sustainable. These materials retain embodied energy from their manufacture so no new materials are quarried or extracted, reducing the impact on the environment.

### Issues to consider

**A** - When considering the use of recycled materials it is important to assess their overall sustainability in terms of the energy or carbon required to manufacture or transport them. This will help you ensure that the manufacture and processing of the materials makes them a suitable and sustainable alternative. The UK Green Building Council and BRE can help to assess the sustainability of materials.

---

**B** - It may be possible to salvage and reuse materials (such as stones, bricks or clay tiles) from the original building that is being altered or renovated, if the materials are still sound.

---

**C** - Consider the use of locally reclaimed materials. Using these materials can help a new building respect local character: they are usually already weathered/aged and help to ensure that the colours, shapes and textures are appropriate. However, it is important to consider the source of such materials as occasionally the availability of second-hand materials may be linked to damage or theft to other buildings.

---

**D** - The use of recycled materials may not be appropriate on historic or traditional buildings as they can include modern, impervious materials that would damage the breathability of traditionally constructed buildings.

---

## 12.2 Timber

Buildings in the Malvern Hills AONB demonstrate the use of locally-grown timber from the medieval period. These buildings are mostly concentrated in the wooded landscapes to the west of the Malvern Hills, where good quality wood was readily available.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider using timber which reflects that found locally in the AONB. Local timber is preferable as this reflects its traditional use in the AONB, is a sustainable resource, and can be more cost effective than other materials.

---

**B** - The use of a timber frame reflects a characteristic and traditional construction method used in areas of the AONB. Some experts now recommend that timber frames are externally clad rather than infilled (which was the traditional method), as infill panels can leak and do not offer the same levels of insulation.

---

**C** - Consider the most appropriate modern timber product to use for cladding the building. The variety and flexibility that is available can provide a range of creative options. Local timber or timber that reflects what is found locally will have a greater positive impact on enhancing landscape character. Options include: timber boards, used vertically or horizontally, spaced apart or overlapping; Structural Insulated Panel Systems; and solid wood panels that are later rendered, lime-washed or painted. An architect, designer or a timber expert can advise on the suitability of the different timber products for specific developments. The sustainability of the source of such materials should be considered.

---

**D** - External walls on agricultural buildings can be clad in timber weatherboarding, Yorkshire boarding, vertical overlap boarding or feather edge boarding.



Timber boards, in mid shades of brown, fitted vertically on an agricultural building

**E** - In wooded landscapes consider fitting vertical timber boards as this can help buildings be better assimilated into the landscape due to the vertical nature of tree cover.



The use of light, pale brown timber helps this building to fit into the wooded landscape

**F** - Timber found locally, such as oak, can be left to weather naturally or treated with a clear stain to allow its natural colour to show. It is not necessary to colour it artificially. Where timber does not reflect the colours of the timber that is found locally, it may be necessary to colour it so that it complements the surrounding landscape.

**G** - Where render or paint is characteristic, timber panels can be rendered, lime-washed or painted.

**H** - Consider the use of timber alongside another material such as brick or stone, especially where a mix of materials is characteristic.



Use of timber on elevations with a red brick chimney

## 12.3 Brick

From the end of the 18th century red brick became a key building material. Initially used for higher status homes and chimney stacks, red brick was later used to re-front timber framed buildings or replace wattle and daub panels. Although red brick generally dominates in the Malvern Hills AONB, blue and yellow bricks were used alongside red brick, especially during the Victorian periods and in the more settled areas.

Historically, the red brick used in the AONB would have been handmade, creating bricks in soft, mellow shades with a textured finish. Machine-made brick was commonly used from the mid-19th century.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider the colour, texture and size of any brick and mortar to ensure that it complements, and is not at odds with, characteristic brickwork. It is preferable to use traditional handmade bricks or reclaimed bricks where possible. Machine made bricks that replicate the appearance of traditional handmade bricks may also be acceptable to reduce costs.



Hard, white mortar is uncharacteristic of the area

**B** - Consider using a mix of different soft shades of red brick in one building, rather than one standard shade throughout, as this may help avoid uniformity and complement the traditional red brick.



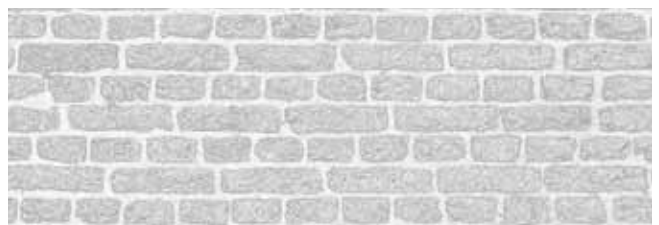
The use of various mellow shades of red brick softens the colour, avoids uniformity and helps to respect local characteristics

**C** - Consider the bond used when constructing brick buildings as this can affect the appearance of the building in the landscape. Traditionally, brick buildings in the Malvern Hills AONB are constructed using a Flemish or English bond. A more modern, stretcher (or running) bond can often appear out of character.

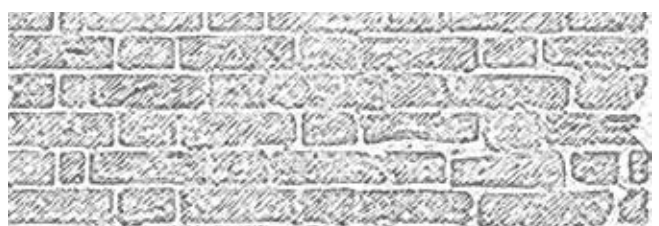
### Examples of different brick bonds used in the AONB



New red brick house, responding to immediate local context at Upper Welland



English bond



Flemish bond



## 12.4 Stone

From the late 18th century onwards, local stone was increasingly used in the Malvern Hills AONB. The range of stone that was used shows how buildings can reflect the huge variations in landscape and local geology that exist in the area. Malvern stone, for example, is dominant in areas close to the Malvern Hills themselves, such as West Malvern; Arden Sandstone was quarried and used in the Unenclosed Commons to the east of the Malvern Hills; and limestone is common in the south of the AONB, associated with the Eastnor and Bromesberrow Estates.



Decorative detailing on stone buildings



Where stone is used, it is generally not 'finished' or processed and is therefore roughly shaped into blocks, known as 'rubble' stone. Some of the stones of the area split into roughly rectangular blocks and can be laid in courses although the varying sizes of stones mean that the courses are of different thicknesses. Other stones, such as Malvern stone, break into irregular blocks making coursing difficult and so are usually laid 'randomly'.



Random rubble Malvern stone wall



Limestone stone wall



Coursed rubble sandstone stone wall

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider the use of local stone where it is characteristic in the AONB. It is important to follow the characteristic stone and style of construction that is used locally. This includes the size and shape of blocks, the bond pattern, and the mortaring techniques that are used on local buildings and boundary walls.

**B** - Where stone is to be used for new buildings, extensions or alterations, it should be sourced, if possible, local to the AONB. Sometimes, it may not be possible to source new supplies of characteristic stone. In this case, consider sourcing reclaimed materials.

**C** - Where only a small amount of local stone is available, this could be used for decoration, or for stone features such as porches or chimneys.

**D** - Where it is not possible to source sufficient amounts of reclaimed local stone, it may be possible to use stone from across the three counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire or Gloucestershire where the shape, size, colours and textures of the stone reflect that of surrounding buildings. This helps to reduce the carbon footprint of the development and supports the local economy.

**E** - A traditional lime mortar, as opposed to a cement-based mortar is preferred when using natural stone as this is softer, more durable and flexible, and more characteristic.



## 12.5 Roofing materials

Plain clay tiles are historically the most common roofing material within the Malvern Hills AONB, with Welsh slates used occasionally. Clay tiles are dark and matt, making them less prominent from long distances and reducing the visual impact of development on the landscape. The soft colour palette of Welsh slate can also complement the surrounding landscape.

Thatched roofs are occasionally found within the AONB, usually on older properties. A wheat thatch would traditionally have been used in the area but availability of such thatch in this country is now very limited. Water reed is now most frequently used but this is often sourced from outside the UK and so may be far less sustainable. It is likely that buildings built before the 19th century employed a plain thatch style with little embellishment. Later thatching can sometimes be more decorative.



Characteristic roofing materials



### Issues to consider

**A** - Clay tiles or Welsh slate are encouraged in the AONB where they are locally characteristic. However, other roofing materials may be appropriate where they complement the materials and colours used locally and should generally be dark and matt. Careful consideration should be given to sustainability, with local, natural materials preferred.

**B** - Thatch roofs should be maintained, not replaced with a different material.

**C** - Consult a local thatcher or Conservation Officer for more information about characteristic thatching materials in the AONB.

**D** - Where possible, thatching materials should be sourced locally.

**E** - Work with your thatcher to replace the roof with a similar style. If in doubt, reduce embellishments and aim for a simple style.

**F** - Green roofs may be appropriate in some areas of the Malvern Hills AONB, especially at the edges of settlement where they may help a building to integrate into the landscape. Green roofs offer a variety of other benefits such as supporting biodiversity.

## 12.6 Links to 'material' resources:

■ UK Green Building Council  
[www.ukgbc.org/content/materials](http://www.ukgbc.org/content/materials)

■ BRE have produced a Green Guide to Specification that provides guidance of the environmental impacts of building materials [www.bre.co.uk/greenguide/](http://www.bre.co.uk/greenguide/)

## 13. Colour

Contrasts in colour can be characteristic of development in the AONB – from the use of local timber, brick and stone to the use of strong colour, particularly white, for 19th and early 20th century villas and also for lime-washing cottages and other houses. As a result, villas that fringe the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills can be prominent features in the landscape.



Occasional colourful buildings in West Malvern

Choice of colour and shade for new development should be informed by an appreciation of local character and past trends. The local landscape and the significance of short and long distance views of the development should be key considerations. It is not the intention that colours should necessarily 'match' those in the landscape, but they should usually complement them. As a general rule new development should not set out to be too prominent in the AONB landscape.

### Issues to consider

**A -** In the open countryside of the AONB, where the natural colour of the characteristic materials is exposed, it is preferable not to apply an artificial colour to natural materials.

**B -** Darker or earthy natural colours that do not reflect much light are generally preferred in the open countryside.

**C -** Consider natural, muted colours which would have been characteristic on timber framed cottages when they were first built, including natural timbers and subtle tones of whites, off whites, yellow and cream for the infill, alongside the use of the now traditional black and white.

**D -** Render or paint is characteristic in more settled areas such as West Malvern and Malvern Wells. Where it is characteristic, render or paint in colours that are sensitive to the surrounding backdrop of hills can add to the characteristic variety of buildings and prevent homogeny. Consider muted, subdued shades of off whites, cream, yellow and pink.

**E -** Garish or reflective colours and patterns should be avoided, particularly in the open countryside. Modern paints are often made with UV brighteners and optical enhancers: such paints can reflect colours in the landscape and are not appropriate. The use of bright, brilliant or reflective paint shades should also be avoided. Subtle shades are more characteristic and will weather better over time.

**F -** Matt colours are preferred. Colours with a gloss or shiny appearance should be avoided.

**G -** A 50/50 mix of matt black and rosewood paint may be appropriate for fences or sheds, as this is more discrete in the landscape and does not draw attention to these features, which are generally considered urbanising.

**H -** Ensuring that the colour of ornamentation is similar to that which is used on surrounding buildings will reduce the impact of new buildings, alterations or extensions: darker, non-reflective colours will help reduce the visual impact where this is desirable.

**I -** When using coloured paints, modern, micro-porous paints can protect and preserve underlying timber and so are more sustainable than some traditional paints.

# 14. Details

Details are small-scale features that help tie buildings to the local area and provide local character. Details include windows, doors, chimneys and ornamentation.

## 14.1 Windows and doors

The position, arrangement, style and size of openings, such as windows and doors, are important aspects of building design: they help create a visual unity and rhythm to the building. These are important design considerations as they help to ensure that all elements in the building are in proportion, working as one to create a sense of completeness and quality.

The solid to void ratio is the proportion of wall area to the amount of openings on the exterior of a building. This is a key consideration for new developments and when altering existing openings. Traditional building techniques created smaller openings. As a result, older buildings tend to have a higher solid to void ratio than newer buildings, which tend to have larger and more frequent openings.

The positioning of openings also creates character in a building and helps define age, original design and purpose. Examples of positioning that define character include whether doors are centrally located on the main elevation or located to the side, and whether windows are located against the roof line or set further down.

Buildings in the Malvern Hills AONB display a range of window styles. On smaller, older buildings small casement windows with timber or metal frames are common. Larger sash windows are more prevalent on larger buildings such as rebuilt Georgian farmhouses. Dormer windows are also characteristic in some areas of the AONB. More decorative buildings can include large stone-mullioned windows.



Sash windows with glazing bars



Three light casement window

### 14.1.1 Alterations to existing buildings

It may be necessary to make alterations to existing openings or create new openings when altering or converting an existing building. In some cases, it may be that the openings are being altered because previous alterations have introduced uncharacteristic features to the building or because more energy efficient openings are required. The following provide some general principles. It may be necessary to seek further advice for listed buildings or those in a Conservation Area to ensure that the style of openings is characteristic of the building.

#### Issues to consider

**A** - When altering a building the characteristic style, size, shape, proportion and position of doors and windows should be understood. In some cases previous changes may have resulted in uncharacteristic openings. Future changes should therefore be based on the original character, not informed by later alterations. Respect, and be sensitive to, this original character and the building's solid to void ratio.



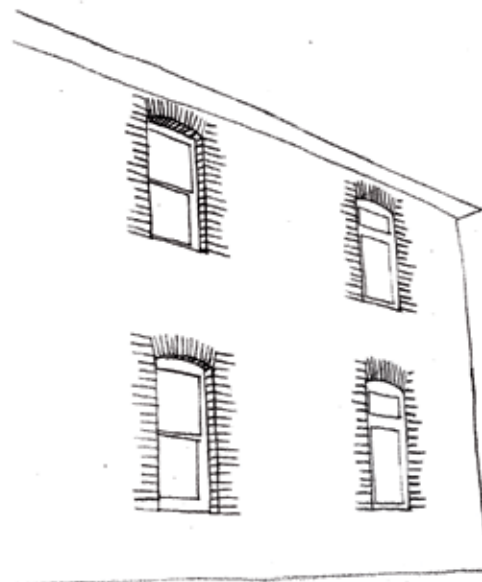
Windows reflect original proportions, style and shape

**B** - Wherever possible, and where they are characteristic to the building they serve, existing openings should be used and their proportions maintained: adding new openings can damage the visual unity of the building. If it is necessary to add a new opening, ensure that there is enough wall space to do this sensitively and in a way that respects the age and style of the building.

**C** - Openings should generally be in proportion to existing openings and sensitively located so as not to disrupt the building's character.



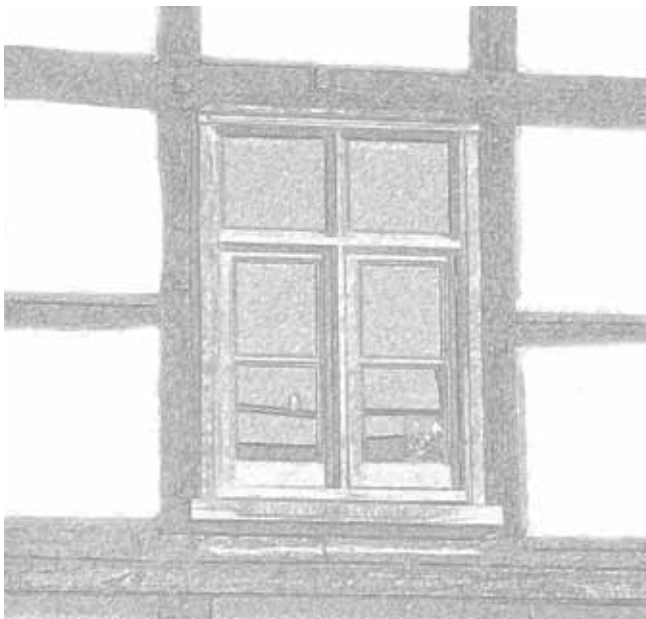
New bay windows reflect the position and style of the original sash windows



New plastic windows to the right do not reflect original plate glass sashes, which are set into the building in a deep reveal

**D** - When making alterations or replacing openings on timber framed buildings, openings should relate to the frame and structural characteristics.

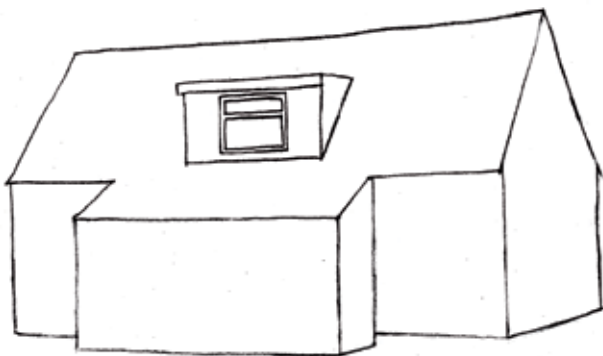




The scale of the new windows on a traditional cottage respect the pattern of the timber frame

**E** - If it is necessary to enlarge existing openings ensure that this is done in proportion. For example, if windows are mainly tall and narrow then maintain this shape rather than using windows that have a horizontal emphasis.

**F** - When introducing dormer windows to an existing building they should reflect the roof shape and pitch of the building and be lower than the ridge line. To maintain visual unity they should normally be directly above, and be smaller than, existing windows.



New large dormer is out of scale with the original building and does not reflect the roof shape and pitch of the original building

**G** - Where double glazing is to be used in alterations and the window design needs to vary slightly to accommodate the extra thickness of the glass, keep the windows in proportion, respecting the solid to void ratio and ensuring that the windows respect the age and style of the building.

**H** - When replacing doors on an existing building the size of the new opening should not normally be larger than the original opening and should respect the style and the decoration (or lack of decoration) of the character of the building.

**I** - The use of timber is generally preferred for doors and window frames as this is usually more locally characteristic and sustainable than other materials. uPVC window frames are not appropriate.



This new timber door respects the building's scale, being no larger than the original opening. The porch respects scale and complements the door

## 14.1.2 New buildings

### Issues to consider

**A** - The solid to void ratio should be a key consideration when designing a new building in order to create a building with visual unity and rhythm.

**B** - Consider the openings of the characteristic buildings locally and respect their style, size, shape and position.



The impact of large areas of glazing is reduced by a timber canopy and by anti-reflection glass that is broken up by timber

**C** - Large areas of glazing on new buildings can sometimes appear out of character and can create visual impact as a result of glare. Large areas of glazing may be appropriate if consideration is given to design and specification:

- Extensively recessed glazed areas, or those with screening, may increase the apparent solid to void ratio, reducing the impact on local character.
- Darkened windows may reduce their visibility and impact on the character of the building.
- Non-reflective glass will significantly reduce glare into the wider landscape.
- Ensuring that areas of glazing are broken up with other materials and are not continuous will reduce glare into the wider landscape.

## 14.2 Chimneys

It is characteristic in the Malvern Hills AONB for houses to have at least one chimney. Older buildings of timber frame construction often have large exterior chimneys, sometimes with a bread oven projection to the side. Brick or larger dwellings often have tall brick chimney stacks, sometimes as later additions. Chimneys create visual interest in settlements and contribute to the complex rooflines that may be a characteristic feature. Modern development has reduced this characteristic feature as there has been little need for chimneys for open fires, cooking or heating. However, the use of wood-fuel and wood burning stoves for heating is now more popular.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Where exterior chimneys and chimney stacks exist they should be retained.



Examples of traditional chimneys

**B** - Consider incorporating a traditional, characteristic open fire and chimney into a new development where exterior chimneys and chimney stacks are locally characteristic.

**C** - If an open fire is not included, consider incorporating the central heating flue or wood burning stove into a chimney.



Examples of modern buildings that incorporate chimneys

## 14.3 Ornamentation

Ornamentation provides decoration to buildings. It includes decorative lintels, keystones, cornice mouldings, pillars, segmental or gothic arches, ridge tiles, bargeboards, finials and carved patterns. Such decoration is mostly found on larger Victorian houses and villas, usually in settlements. Dwellings in the open countryside are generally modest and often free of ornamentation. Where ornamentation is characteristic, it creates variety between buildings.



Bargeboards and decorative ridge tiles



Moulded brick



Decorative lintel over window

### Issues to consider

**A** - Detailing should be considered within the context of the character and scale of the original building. Unless decorative buildings are characteristic locally, it is often more appropriate to use modest, simple details that do not detract from the building's character.

**B** - It would generally be preferable to have a degree of variation between buildings, taking account of the ornamentation that is characteristic of the local area. The 'Local guidance' provides more information on local characteristics.

**C** - Ornamentation should reflect local character and, where appropriate, traditional craftsmanship.

**D** - Materials used for ornamentation should be traditional, such as local stone or handmade brick, rather than modern materials such as plastics.

**E** - Detailing on extensions or outbuildings should be subordinate to the detailing on the main property.

## 14.4 Links to 'detail' resources:

English Heritage can provide guidance on listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

### ■ Listed Buildings

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/planning-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-listed-building/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/planning-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-listed-building/)

### ■ Conservation Areas

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/landscape-and-areas/conservation-area-guidance/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/landscape-and-areas/conservation-area-guidance/)



## 15. Energy and resources

A building that uses fossil fuels, rather than renewable energy, for space and water heating, or cooking, produces carbon and is contributing to climate change. The rising costs of energy can also put a strain on many household finances. This chapter highlights options and design considerations for reducing carbon emissions, generating renewable energy and adapting for climate change. You should seek advice about installation and the different techniques for individual buildings, particularly if you want to carry out any of the following suggestions to a listed or historic building or building in a Conservation Area.

National policies and initiatives highlighted in the 'Links to resources' should be considered alongside this guidance.

### 15.1 Energy efficiency and generating renewable energy

The energy efficiency of a building should be considered before thinking about generating renewable energy. Energy efficiency or conservation measures usually have no visual impact and will reduce the amount of energy required from renewable sources, reducing the amount of infrastructure needed and the initial cost of renewable energy production.

#### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider how a new or existing building can be made more energy efficient. This can be achieved by taking the following steps:

- 
- Reduce the heat lost through leaks in the building fabric, such as walls, roof, windows and external doors, which may make it difficult and costly to keep the building warm.
  - Explore ways to provide adequate ventilation during warmer temperatures and control moisture levels. For example, consider using a natural ventilation system or mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.
  - Take advantage of passive design features. For example, use the landform, layout and orientation of buildings to maximise natural light, passive solar heat gain and shelter from the prevailing wind.
  - Explore the use of new materials with a high thermal mass to regulate temperature fluctuations in summer and winter and reduce energy demands.

**B** - Once the energy efficiency of the building has been considered, explore the potential for small-scale renewable energy which suits the needs and respects the character of the building and local landscape. The following should be key considerations:

- 
- Explore renewable energy options at the concept design stage to ensure that they are integrated into the building and are sensitive to the landscape. Additional space may be required and the building should be able to accommodate any additional load requirements.
  - Consider combining different complementary technologies such as water management alongside heat management.
  - It may be necessary to install or use conventional carbon emitting technologies as a top up when the renewable technology is not able to produce sufficient energy.
  - Consider the use of cooperatives or community schemes to make use of larger scale renewable energy technologies that could heat or power several buildings. For example, a large scale biomass boiler could heat a small group of houses.

The following are suggested renewable technologies. Further information about installing these technologies and design considerations, including more detailed guidance from the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership, can be found in the 'Links to resources.'

**C** - Wood fuel – a biomass boiler uses wood chips, wood pellets, logs or grasses instead of fossil fuels. Given the significant amount of woodland within the AONB this technology may be particularly appropriate as it can help stimulate and sustain woodland management. Carefully consider what provision will be made for storage and transportation of fuel. Collective storage facilities or collection/delivery points that provide fuel for several buildings will help to reduce additional clutter in the landscape. The Forestry Commission provides useful advice about wood fuel and its benefits to land management and biodiversity.

**D** - Solar electricity – electricity for your building can be generated from photovoltaic panels installed on a roof, on the elevations of a building or as stand-alone panels. The design and location of such panels should be carefully considered to avoid negative impacts on the landscape:

- Carefully consider the siting of the solar panels and the view of the building from short and long distances or from higher ground. Where panels would have a negative impact on the landscape a ground level installation would be preferable.

- Consider dull, non-reflective, darker options, without reflective frames/grids as these can better integrate the panels into the landscape. All black options are available with anti-reflective coatings.

- Consider the use of solar panels as a building material. For example, solar roof tiles and solar roof slates are now available and can be used in a similar way to conventional roof tiles. Solar cladding may also be appropriate where it is dark and non-reflective, is not the main building material and is not installed on prominent elevations.



Stand alone panels behind the main building

**E** - Solar thermal (solar water heating) – the biggest demand for energy, after heating of internal spaces, is for heating up water. Solar water heating can provide the majority of hot water for a domestic property, although it may require further heating with a boiler/ immersion heater during winter.



Dark non-reflective solar water heater

**F** - Heat pumps – heat pumps absorb heat from the ground, water or air. They can be carbon free if the electricity driving them is from renewable sources.

**G** - Wind farms are not appropriate in the AONB. Small wind turbines to generate energy, for example a single building's electricity, may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

## 15.2 Water management

There is increasing pressure on our water supply from the growing population and as a consequence of climate change. Sustainable water management should be considered at the outset of a building design.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Explore options for sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water run-off around a development and ensure that water drains as it would in a natural system, particularly during heavy rainfall, to minimise the chances of flooding. It may be necessary to consult a flood or hydrology expert, especially for a larger development or site that is inclined to flood.

**B** - Depending on the size and the character of the site and its surroundings, sustainable drainage systems can be small scale, with a small garden pond or large scale, including a system of drainage ditches, ponds and wetlands.

**C** - Incorporate soft surfaces around the building to reduce water run-off.

**D** - Where hard surfacing is required use porous surfaces that allow water to drain. These include crushed or loose stone or gravel.

**E** - If water features such as ponds or culverted watercourses are restored or enhanced they can be used for storing water for the garden and can reduce the impact of heavy rainfall and flooding.

**F** - Consider harvesting rainwater for future use and also grey water recycling (where the domestic waste water that is produced from activities such as washing dishes and clothes is cleaned and reused).

## 15.3 Waste management

Waste must be carefully managed and planned at the outset of all developments.

### Issues to consider

**A** - Consider the type of waste that will be generated and prepare a Waste Management Plan to map its route from the point it is produced to the point it is stored, recycled or collected. These plans can be required by some national standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes.

## 15.4 Links to 'energy' resources:

■ Climate Change and Your Home.  
[www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live/](http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live/)

■ English Heritage guidance on saving energy.  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/saving-energy/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/saving-energy/)

■ Environment Agency provides guidance about a variety of issues including sustainable urban drainage and climate change.  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/)

■ The Forestry Commission provides further information about wood fuel.  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6PGGQR](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6PGGQR)

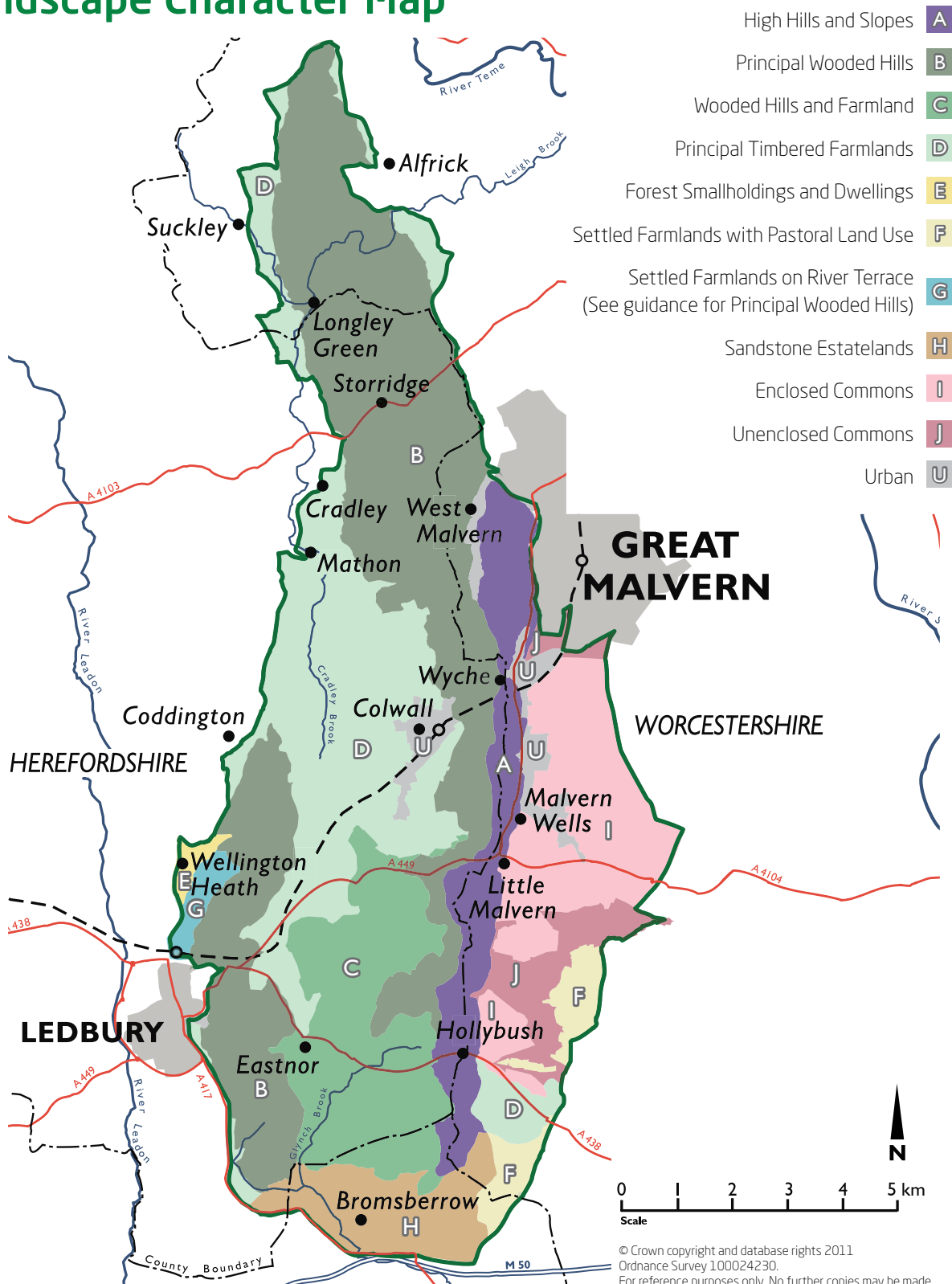
■ The Malvern Hills AONB website provides further guidance on renewable technologies.  
[www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/guidance.html)

■ Pond Conservation provides advice about creating ponds for wildlife. [www.pondconservation.org.uk/advice/makingpondsforwildlife](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/advice/makingpondsforwildlife)

## Part 2 - Local Guidance

The local guidance provides specific advice for each landscape character type. It does not provide all of the information required for building design in the AONB and should therefore be read alongside the general guidance in part 1 of this document. Please refer to 'How to use this guide' for more information.

### Landscape Character Map



The Malvern Hills AONB website provides an interactive landscape character map at:

[www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/landscapestrategy.html](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/landscapestrategy.html)



# High Hills and Slopes

## 1. Key characteristics of High Hills and Slopes

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** An unenclosed and sparsely settled landscape associated with a high ridge of ancient igneous and metamorphic rocks.
- **Infrastructure:** Roads are sparse, with paths and untarmacked trackways, mainly Victorian in origin, crossing the slopes and reflecting the cultural heritage of the area as a spa resort.
- **Boundaries:** Buildings often have no boundary with the wider landscape. Where they do exist, low wall boundaries of Malvern stone are characteristic.
- **Tree cover:** There is wooded land cover on the lower slopes, and mixed ornamental woodlands associated with some developments.
- **Topography:** Steeply sloping.



The High Hills and Slopes



Small trackways



Characteristic Malvern stone wall



Building facing onto road

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Victorian houses, two-storey simple cottages and quarryman's cottages.
- **Recent building additions:** Inter-war and post war development.
- **Significant features:** There is no dominant building style; Malvern stone buildings are common due to the historic supply of stone from local quarries.
- **Materials:** Mix of stone, red brick and timber framing.



Simple stone cottage



Mix of light render and brick



Light coloured renders

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

- **Dominant local plan type:** Form varies with linear plan types, loose courtyard, regular courtyard and dispersed plan types.
- **Dominant local character:** Simple, with two storeys and a rectangular plan form.
- **Significant features:** Most farmsteads originated as smallholdings but have historically been enlarged.
- **Materials:** Red brick, some farmsteads are rendered.

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the unsettled character of the landscape. Due to the unsettled nature there is very limited opportunity for new development.
- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the views to and from the Malvern Hills. Buildings should not detract from, or dominate, these views.
- **Domestic buildings:** New buildings should creatively reflect and complement locally characteristic buildings.
- **Domestic buildings:** Relate to the steeply sloping landform and topography by extending storeys down or up the slope.
- **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** New agricultural development would not normally be appropriate in this landscape. Instead alter existing buildings or sensitively replace a building that has become neglected and disused.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Due to the open nature of this landscape it would be appropriate to limit the amount of planting in gardens. New woodland planting is generally inappropriate.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Where boundaries are required a low Malvern stone wall may be appropriate.
- **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic use of red brick, Malvern stone or timber framing. Malvern stone is preferred, where available.
- **Materials:** Ensure that materials, including areas of glazing, are non-reflective and do not impact on views.
- **Colour:** Light, neutral or earthy tone, renders can be appropriate in this landscape.
- **Details:** Limit ornamentation on buildings in this landscape where simple and unadorned buildings are characteristic.

# Principal Wooded Hills

## 1. Key characteristics of the Principal Wooded Hills

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

Due to its sparse settlement and building style, refer to this guidance for the Settled Farmlands on River Terraces. Please refer to the Malvern Hills Landscape Strategy for more information on its landscape character.

- **Settlement and location:** Sparse settlement characterised by dispersed historic farmsteads, occasional smallholdings and isolated farm buildings with occasional clusters of buildings.
- **Infrastructure:** A network of rural lanes running through narrow wooded valleys and dingles.
- **Boundaries:** Characteristic tall, mixed native species hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, hazel, wild privet and field maple.
- **Tree cover:** Significant ancient semi-natural woodland with large, irregularly shaped woodlands and wooded streamlines often forming an interlocking pattern with surrounding, thickly hedged fields and traditional orchards.
- **Topography:** Undulating, in places steeply sloping, rising locally towards the Malvern Hills.



Narrow, winding rural lanes



A wooded landscape with settlement below the ridgeline



Remnant orchard, Storridge

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Simple, 17th to 18th century timber framed cottages, many with 18th or 19th century alterations and larger red brick buildings of two storeys.
- **Recent building additions:** Some post-war development of red or brown brick.
- **Significant features:** Large, external brick or stone chimney breasts, sometimes with a bread oven.
- **Materials:** Timber frame buildings, red brick, limestone and some Malvern stone.



Barn conversion and timber framed houses



Red brick dwelling



Wayside cottages

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

- **Dominant local plan type:** Loose and regular courtyard plan types with some linear farmsteads.
- **Dominant local character:** 17th to 18th farmhouses, many altered or extended and later, larger farmhouses. Smallholdings, some enlarged, and isolated farm buildings are common.
- **Significant features:** Oast houses are present in this landscape. Farmhouses often have large exterior chimney breasts.
- **Materials:** Early farmhouses are timber framed, later are red brick. Many farmhouses built on a plinth of red brick or rubble stone. Farm buildings vary with timber framing, stone, red brick and weather boarding.



Isolated Farmstead



Larger stone and red brick farmhouse

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the sparsely settled and wooded character of the landscape, avoiding development on ridgelines.
- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain ancient woodland and mature trees.
- **Domestic buildings:** New development, alterations and conversions should respect the characteristic simple plan form and small scale of no more than two storeys.
- **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Maintain and enhance the scale and agricultural character of smallholdings and isolated farm buildings.
- **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Isolated farm buildings tend to have little or no infrastructure in the form of roads etc. This character should be maintained. In most cases, new tracks, roads or cabling would not be appropriate.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance characteristic tall, mixed species hedgerows.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance the wooded character of this landscape by planting native tree species in gardens.
- **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic mix of local materials including timber, limestone and handmade red brick.
- **Colour:** The infill on timber framed buildings can be painted in mellow cream/yellow colours.
- **Details:** Respect the dominant local character by creatively reflecting characteristic features such as stone/brick plinths and external chimney breasts.



# Wooded Hills and Farmland

## 1. Key characteristics of Wooded Hills and Farmland

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Sparse settlement with an estate character; some buildings clustered in the small estate village or around former commons. Many farms and cottages are isolated along private driveways.
- **Infrastructure:** A network of narrow, rural lanes.
- **Boundaries:** Mixed species hedgerow boundaries of locally occurring hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, field maple and wild privet. Occasional limestone walls.
- **Tree cover:** Discrete, irregularly shaped ancient woods, traditional orchards and streamside trees.
- **Topography:** Varied topography that is undulating and in places steeply sloping.



Narrow, winding rural lanes



Isolated farmsteads



Timber framed cottage

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** One and a half to two storey timber framed cottages dating from the 17th century. Larger two storey red brick or limestone houses.
- **Recent building additions:** There is a recent move to paint infill on timber framing mellow creams/yellows.
- **Significant features:** Thatched roofs and exterior chimney breasts, brick ashlar end quoins on stone buildings, the traditional red paint of the Eastnor estate on bargeboards, doors and drainpipes.
- **Materials:** Timber framing, red brick and limestone.



Thatched cottage



Larger red brick dwelling



Estate House with red Eastnor paint

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

■ **Dominant local plan type:** Mix of regular courtyard plan types and loose courtyard plan types. Larger farmsteads show estate influence with multi-yard farmsteads and covered yards.

■ **Dominant local character:** Farmhouses are usually two to three storeys high, many remodelled between the mid 18th to late 19th century. Small casement windows and larger sash windows are evident.

■ **Significant features:** Red brick chimney stacks and exterior chimney breasts. Bargeboards and doors painted Eastnor red. Some oasthouses and mill buildings.

■ **Materials:** Red brick with some timber framed farmsteads. Farm buildings are mainly red brick, often with a timber frame, limestone or timber weatherboarding.



Eastnor red painted woodwork



Red brick farmhouse with characteristic chimneys



Traditional barn

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the dispersed and sparse pattern of settlement. Due to the sparse settlement there is limited opportunity for new development.

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain and enhance woodland, including ancient woodlands and orchards.

■ **Domestic buildings:** Maintain the characteristic simple plan form and small scale of many buildings.

■ **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Continue the characteristic mix of using two or three materials on agricultural buildings.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance native, mixed species hedgerows. Limestone walls would also be acceptable.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance the wooded character of this landscape by planting native tree species, particularly oak, in gardens.

■ **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic use of timber on buildings by continuing its use with timber framing and cladding with timber boards or timber panels.

■ **Colour:** Where appropriate, continue the use of Eastnor red paint on detailing for both domestic and agricultural estate buildings.

■ **Details:** Respect local character by creatively reflecting local characteristics such as exterior chimney breasts, steeply pitched roofs, and brick ashlar end quoins on stone buildings.

# Principal Timbered Farmlands

## 1. Key characteristics of the Principal Timbered Farmlands

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Clustered pattern of farmsteads, rural dwellings with occasional small villages and hamlets. Farmsteads are occasionally within hamlets or villages but are more often isolated along tracks and minor roads.
- **Infrastructure:** Irregular network of winding lanes with thick roadside hedges.
- **Boundaries:** Mixed species hedgerows, of hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, hazel, and dogwood and scattered mature, hedgerow trees.
- **Tree cover:** Irregular shaped blocks of woodland of ancient character. Buildings are often located against a backdrop of trees.
- **Topography:** Low lying, rolling with occasional steep sided hills.



Hedgerow trees



Clustered settlement



Rolling topography

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** 17th and 18th century timber frame cottages and houses of two or three bays, limestone or red brick wayside dwellings. Many have 19th and 20th century red brick extensions.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century development in more settled areas.
- **Significant features:** Large exterior chimneys, occasionally with bread oven projections.
- **Materials:** Mix of timber, limestone and red brick, with timber or metal casement windows.



Examples of timber frame buildings in the Principal Timbered Farmlands

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

- **Dominant local plan type:** A mixture of regular and loose courtyard farmsteads, usually intimate in scale: regular courtyards are more common in the north and loose courtyards more common in the south.
- **Dominant local character:** Three to four bay timber frame farmhouses of up to two storeys and an attic and occasional substantial rebuilt red brick Georgian farmhouses of up to three storeys. Farmsteads are mostly isolated in the landscape.
- **Significant features:** Examples of farmsteads with one or two hop kilns, some with the original cowl on the roof.
- **Materials:** Mix of timber and red brick, with metal or timber casement or sash windows.



Examples of characteristic farm buildings in the Principal Timbered Farmlands

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the clustered settlement pattern with unsettled land between, and the characteristic location of buildings set back from the road in their own grounds.
- **Domestic buildings:** New development, alterations and conversions should respect the simple character in design, materials and massing.
- **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** New agricultural building should enhance the diverse built character. Historic features such as hop kilns and timber framed barns should be retained.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance characteristic mixed species hedgerows and buildings set among a backdrop of native trees including oak, hazel and birch. Boundaries such as fencing and non-native hedgerows could be replaced with thick, mixed species native hedgerows, or stone walls in the more settled areas.
- **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic mix of materials including timber, red brick and limestone, for example by including a red brick chimney or a stone extension on a timber-framed building or including a stone plinth on a red brick building.
- **Details:** Respect the dominant local character by creatively reflecting local characteristics such as large exterior chimneys, bread oven projections, or steeply pitched roofs. Retain such characteristic features when making alterations or extensions.



# Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings

## 1. Key characteristics of the Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Intimate pattern of settlement traditionally characterised by strings of small and modest wayside cottages and smallholdings built alongside open common land. Most of the settlement of Wellington Heath is included in this landscape type.
- **Infrastructure:** A network of narrow winding lanes, often defined by tall hedges with hedgerow trees, broadly following the hill ridges and valleys.
- **Boundaries:** Mixed species hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, hazel and dogwood. Hedgerow trees include oak and fruit trees.
- **Tree cover:** Historic orchards and wood pastures.
- **Topography:** Varied, from hill ridges down to lower valleys.



Mellow red brick is characteristic in this landscape



The Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings landscape



Narrow winding lanes with hedgerow trees

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Historically, character comprised small, simple wayside dwellings, some with just two rooms, built by the first occupants and therefore each of highly individual and unique character. Some smallholdings and historic farmsteads exist; these have been altered or converted.
- **Recent building additions:** Post-war development along roads and some 21st century development. Enlargements, extensions or alterations to older dwellings.
- **Significant features:** Uniform, post-war development has diluted the traditional, modest local building character and intimate settlement pattern.
- **Materials:** Historically timber frame construction, often combined with, or built wholly from, local stone or traditional, handmade red brick. Post-war development includes much modern red brick.



Buildings with characteristic open spaces in between



Former chapel now converted to residential use

## 2. Local guidance

### Local issues to consider alongside community planning documents

- **Landscape and setting:** Respect the rural, ad hoc settlement pattern of small wayside dwellings with open spaces between. Avoid dense development.
- **Domestic buildings:** New development, alterations and extensions should respect the local character of modest buildings in terms of size, form, style and limited ornamentation.
- **Domestic buildings:** Individual and unique buildings are preferable. Avoid uniform developments of identical buildings or larger buildings. Focus on creating character and identity between the different buildings to reflect the historic building character.
- **Domestic buildings:** Maintain the simple, small-scale, modest character and the integrity of historic buildings when carrying out alterations, extensions or conversions.
- **Domestic buildings:** Avoid enlarging existing buildings and maintain open spaces between buildings. Buildings should be modest in size and style.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance characteristic hedgerow boundaries with hedgerow trees. Where opportunity allows, replace those that have been lost.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Consider incorporating sustainable drainage in gardens to address the flooding that is occasionally experienced in Wellington Heath.
- **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic mix of materials including red brick, which reflects the softer, less uniform appearance of traditional handmade brick, stone which complements the stone that is used locally, and timber framing.
- **Colour:** Rendering on some buildings may be appropriate in this landscape. Muted, pale shades of white, yellow and cream would be most characteristic.
- **Details:** Maintain the simple form of development with limited ornamentation.

# Settled Farmland with Pastoral Land Use

## 1. Key characteristics of the Settled Farmland with Pastoral Land Use

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Small to medium-scale settled agricultural landscape characterised by scattered farms, relic commons and clusters of wayside dwellings.
- **Infrastructure:** A network of narrow winding lanes.
- **Boundaries:** Native mixed species hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn and elm.
- **Tree cover:** Scattered hedgerow trees, groups of trees around dwellings and stream-side trees.
- **Topography:** Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and valleys.



Tree groups around dwellings



Native hedgerows and scattered hedgerow trees



Clustered settlement with a backdrop of trees

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Isolated, simple wayside dwellings.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century development, including red brick semi-detached houses and bungalows. Many older dwellings have been redeveloped.
- **Significant features:** Simple details including traditional red brick lintels and arches over openings. Buildings have at least one chimney with older red brick buildings having two. There is a mix of hipped and gabled roofs.
- **Materials:** Mainly red brick buildings with occasional stone or timber framed buildings.



Stone barn with red brick quoins



Weatherboarding is a typical feature of many farm buildings

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

- **Dominant local plan type:** Mix of loose and regular courtyard farmsteads with occasional smallholdings and isolated farm buildings.
- **Dominant local character:** Originally small and rectangular, many of the farmhouses have been altered and extended resulting in larger buildings with complex floor plans.
- **Significant features:** Tall red brick chimneys with narrow exterior chimney breasts. There tends to be little ornamentation associated with the farmhouses and buildings.
- **Materials:** Mainly red brick, with older farmhouses timber framed with colour washed wattle and daub. Farm buildings are often limestone with reinforcing red brick lintels, sills and quoins.



Clustered settlement

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the clustered settlement pattern along roads and narrow lanes, build within clusters where this would not over-enlarge the settlement.
- **Landscape and setting:** Retain and manage field ponds near developments. With some developments it may be appropriate to create new field ponds.
- **Domestic buildings:** Maintain the local character of simple buildings in terms of form and style.
- **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Maintain and enhance the built character of farmsteads, with farmhouses built from red brick or timber framing and farm buildings constructed from limestone with red brick detailing.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance locally characteristic hedgerows and tree groups around dwellings.
- **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic mix of materials including red brick and limestone. Using timber for cladding or weatherboarding would also be appropriate.
- **Colour:** Colours should complement existing building materials and be of earthy, mellow tones.
- **Details:** Respect the local character by creatively reflecting locally characteristic simple details, for example around doors and windows, and small chimneys.



# Sandstone Estatelands

## 1. Key characteristics of the Sandstone Estatelands

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Isolated brick farmsteads and isolated or clusters of wayside dwellings, often located along long driveways or narrow lanes, with accompanying country houses.
- **Infrastructure:** A network of narrow, rural lanes with verges often containing gorse and bracken.
- **Boundaries:** Mixed species hedgerows of hawthorn and blackthorn, along with hedgerow oak trees.
- **Tree cover:** Discrete estate plantations, groups of trees and sparsely scattered mature hedgerow oak trees.
- **Topography:** An open rolling landscape.



Narrow, winding rural lanes



An open, rolling landscape with tree groups



Wayside cottage

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Simple, small, two storey cottages, decorative estate cottages/houses and larger houses, up to three storeys.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century development, particularly in Bromsberrow village.
- **Significant features:** Decorative elements such as ridge tiles, overhanging eaves, decoration around windows and blue-green paintwork associated with the Bromsberrow estate.
- **Materials:** Sandstone buildings, often with traditional red brick quoins, red brick and occasional timber framing.



Larger decorative houses with Bromsberrow blue-green colours



17th century cottage



Bromsberrow blue-green paintwork

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

■ **Dominant local plan type:** Many 19th century farmsteads, mainly regular courtyards with multi-yard farmsteads, loose courtyard farmsteads and dispersed plan farmsteads.

■ **Dominant local character:** Farmhouses have quite large floor plans, with two storeys and an attic. Agricultural buildings tend to be one and a half storeys high.

■ **Significant features:** Dormer windows are characteristic on farmhouses in this landscape.

■ **Materials:** Timber frame construction, either red brick infill, or rendered. Farm buildings are a mix of timber frame and red brick, stone barns with red brick end quoins and timber weatherboarding.



Timber framed farmhouses with large floorplans and attics



Farmstead

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings.

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the characteristic network of rural lanes and associated grass verges with minimal and discrete signage.

■ **Domestic buildings:** New development and alterations should respect the simple, small-scale and estate character of buildings.

■ **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Where a new farm building is essential consider its scale and siting. New buildings would be better sited as part of an existing farmstead or in less prominent locations.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance the characteristic mixed-species hedgerows.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain mature or veteran trees. Plant new oak trees where possible in gardens and boundaries.

■ **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic mix of materials including local sandstone and traditional red brick. Red brick should reflect the characteristic softer appearance of handmade brick.

■ **Colour:** Continue the use of Bromesberrow blue-green paint on woodwork detailing for both domestic and farm buildings on estate property.

■ **Details:** Continue the use of decorative details including overhanging eaves and decorative window surrounds.

# Enclosed Commons

## 1. Key characteristics of the Enclosed Commons

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Sparse settlement of isolated red brick farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings associated with former common land.
- **Infrastructure:** Straight roads, with wide grass verges and settlement often located at the end of trackways.
- **Boundaries:** Straight hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn and elm with scattered hedgerow trees including veteran oak trees.
- **Tree cover:** Localised plantation woodlands and linear tree cover along watercourses.
- **Topography:** Gently rolling, lowland landform.



The Enclosed Commons (foreground)



Gently rolling lowland topography



Straight Roads and hedgerows with hedgerow trees

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Simple, small, two storey wayside dwellings clustered around the edge of the commons, with principal elevations facing access roads.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century developments associated with the edges of nearby settlements. Wayside dwellings often extended to create double depth buildings or with rear projecting wings.
- **Significant features:** Wayside dwellings often have chimneys.
- **Materials:** Traditional red brick which is occasionally rendered or painted.

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

- **Dominant local plan type:** Mainly regular courtyard plan types with some loose courtyards and L Plan farmsteads.
- **Dominant local character:** Farmsteads tend to be 19th century in origin and located along the edges of unenclosed common land. There are some rebuilt Georgian farmsteads with three or four windows on the first floor and sash windows
- **Significant features:** Tall chimneys and some decorative elements such as lintels and sills.
- **Materials:** Mix of brick, timber framing, brick infill and weatherboarding. Characteristic farm buildings comprise traditional red brick, stone buildings with red brick quoining or occasional use of weatherboarding.



Red brick building



Isolated farmstead



L-plan outfarm, now residential



Mid-19th century regular courtyard farmstead, now in office use

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the sparsely settled character of the landscape. Due to the sparsely settled character there is very limited opportunity for new development.
- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the characteristic roadside verges and seek to retain or create roadside verges in new developments.
- **Domestic buildings:** New buildings should reflect the simple form and character and complement the materials and colours of existing buildings.
- **Domestic buildings:** Consider the cumulative impact of previous extensions before planning a further extension to a dwelling; further extensions may be inappropriate.
- **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Isolated farm buildings tend to have minimal infrastructure e.g. tracks. This character should be maintained; in most cases, new tracks, roads or cabling would not be appropriate.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Garden boundaries should be low and should include locally occurring native species.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** To maintain rural character, avoid planting ornamental trees and shrubs. Planting in gardens should include locally occurring species, such as oak and willow.
- **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic use of traditional red brick. Timber would also be suitable.
- **Details:** Maintain the local character by reflecting local characteristics such as a chimney.



# Unenclosed Commons

## 1. Key characteristics of the Unenclosed Commons

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Settlement is mostly located along roads around open common land or as farm clusters on the edge in the small patches of enclosed land. Settlement on open common land occurs occasionally as small 'islands'.
- **Infrastructure:** Roads generally run around the edge of the open common land.
- **Boundaries:** Native hedgerow boundaries of hawthorn, blackthorn and elm. Stone walls and some fencing around buildings. Generally boundaries are low, allowing view of the buildings. There are few boundaries associated with the unenclosed common land.
- **Tree cover:** Scattered patches of secondary trees (mainly birch and oak) and groups of trees associated with settlement plots and gardens.
- **Topography:** Gently rolling, becoming more undulating along the eastern edge of the ridge of the Malvern Hills.



Dwellings located in enclosed land around the edge of Hollybed Common face towards the unenclosed open common



The open, unenclosed and unsettled common land



Traditional orchard

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Small, simple red brick wayside dwellings, no more than two storeys in height with a one or two room rectangular plan form.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century bungalows of red brick or stone and large modern developments that have replaced older dwellings.
- **Significant features:** Occasional timber framed buildings with wattle and daub infill, which are one storey with an attic.
- **Materials:** Red brick dominates. Some stone buildings have red brick detailing.



A characteristic red brick building



Smallholding

## 1.3 Farmstead and agricultural buildings

■ **Dominant local plan type:** Farmsteads around the edges of the open common tend to be 19th century loose cluster farm plan types with some regular courtyard, linear and dispersed plan types.

■ **Dominant local character:** Simple rectangular plan with gently pitched gable roof and small openings.

■ **Significant features:** Brick chimneys, some large exterior chimney breasts.

■ **Materials:** Red brick or timber frame construction with red brick infill. Dark weatherboarding on small barns is a feature in this landscape.



Edge of Common farmstead



Typical red brick farmstead associated with the Unenclosed Commons

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the unsettled character of the landscape by ensuring that buildings do not encroach onto the unenclosed open common land. Due to the unsettled, open character of this landscape there is little opportunity for additional buildings.

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the characteristic sparse tree cover, limiting tree planting to groups around buildings.

■ **Domestic buildings:** New development, alterations and conversions should respect the characteristic simple, small-scale appearance of buildings.

■ **Farmsteads and agricultural buildings:** Extensions to farm buildings, especially farmhouses, would generally be inappropriate in this landscape where buildings are characteristically small.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** Gardens should not extend onto the open common. Garden boundaries should be minimal and include locally occurring hedgerow species.

■ **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic use of red brick. It may also be appropriate to use other materials alongside the red brick, where the colour complements that of the red brick and surrounding landscape.

■ **Colour:** Maintain the locally characteristic palette of colours which are influenced by the natural colour of the materials used. It is generally not appropriate to render or paint the main elevations of buildings.

■ **Details:** Maintain and enhance the use of brick detailing on stone buildings.

# West Malvern

## 1. Key characteristics of West Malvern

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Dense settlement with a sense of enclosure due to planting in gardens and buildings which generally face towards roads, taking full advantage of the panoramic views from the steep slopes.
- **Infrastructure:** Parallel main roads follow the contours of the landscape, with diagonal roads joining them. Frequent on-street parking caused by lack of off-road parking for many buildings. Traditional gas lamps are a feature and water features provide a link to the area's heritage as a spa resort.
- **Boundaries:** Large irregular blocks of rubble Malvern stone walls set in lime mortar, often terminating in brick (usually blue brick) at the entrance to properties. Sometimes with hedgerows behind.
- **Tree cover:** Ornamental trees can be found in larger gardens.
- **Topography:** Dominated by steep slopes, with buildings using the landform and maximising space by extending some storeys down the slope.



Sense of enclosure created by proximity of buildings to road and planting in gardens



Complex rooflines



Malvern stone wall ending in blue brick

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Large Victorian and Edwardian villas, often Gothic in style with later Arts and Crafts. Occasional Victorian and quarryman's cottages.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century development of bungalows and detached houses.
- **Significant features:** Highly varied forms and scales, including projecting wings and pitched gables. Decorative details include quoins, segmental and gothic arches, colourful ridge tiles, finials and bargeboards and large stone-mullioned windows, often in contrasting colours to the main elevations.
- **Materials:** Mix of materials and colours which creates a unique character; many of the residential buildings are built with a combination of irregular blocks of Malvern stone, red, yellow or blue brick



Examples of the variety of buildings in West Malvern

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the intimacy and sense of enclosure in this settlement by relating buildings to the steeply sloping topography, reducing the apparent scale of larger buildings, and by planting in gardens.
- **Landscape and setting:** New buildings should be within the linear settlement pattern and should not seek to expand West Malvern up or down slopes into open countryside.
- **Domestic buildings:** New development should enhance the variety of architectural styles and details through the use of decorative openings, varied rooflines, chimneys, projecting wings or bay windows.
- **Domestic buildings:** New development should carefully consider the visual impact of buildings on sites that slope up from the road to avoid a hard edge dominating the road. Consider setting back upper floors or including elements such as balconies or gable projections.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Malvern stone wall boundaries which end in blue, or sometimes red, brick are preferred. Where Malvern stone is limited consider building a wall using Malvern stone as the facing material or a boundary that complements the colour and style of the Malvern stone boundaries, such as a blue brick wall with some Malvern stone detailing.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Consider terraced gardens to make use of the landform. Where a high retaining wall is required, the characteristic materials should be used and softened with planting. Living walls could also be considered.
- **Lighting:** As an elevated location the use of outside lighting should be considered carefully.
- **Materials:** Continue the sustainable use of Malvern stone and enhance the existing variation and diversity through the creative use and mix of characteristic, or complementary, materials and colours.
- **Colour:** Enhance variety through the use of characteristic coloured paint or render that complements the existing palette of colours found locally (usually muted, pale shades of cream/yellow, off-white, pink or blue). Avoid garishly bright colours, the use of several colours on one building and the use of one colour on several neighbouring buildings.



# Colwall

## 1. Key characteristics of Colwall

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Colwall includes Colwall Stone, Upper Colwall (both conservation areas) and Colwall Green. Panoramic views from the settlement emphasise the close relationship to surrounding open countryside. Settlement focuses along the main route.
- **Infrastructure:** Roads follow the contours of the landscape and have wide grass verges. The railway line also provides linear structure.
- **Boundaries:** Hedgerow boundaries with privet hedges in the centre of the village and mixed species hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, hazel, dogwood more common on the edges of the village.
- **Tree cover:** Densely wooded areas, patches of parkland and road side trees, including mature, ornamental evergreens.
- **Topography:** A sloping settlement, the main route runs from higher slopes in the north east to flatter agricultural land in the south west.



The linear settlement of Colwall, with dense patches of woodland



Characteristic street trees



Hedgerow boundaries

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Character varies with 17th to 18th century cottages, and larger Victorian and Edwardian houses.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century developments radiate on roads and lanes off the main route through Colwall Stone.
- **Significant features:** There is a great mix of architectural styles and decorative details in Colwall, resulting from various stages of development throughout its history.
- **Materials:** Red brick is used for larger Victorian and Edwardian houses, sometimes with stone detailing. There is a significant number of stone buildings.



Large red brick buildings



Older stone cottages



Timber framed buildings

## 2. Local guidance

Local issues to consider alongside the Colwall Village Design Statement and Colwall Landscape Character Statement:

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the linear settlement pattern and the characteristic open spaces that are particularly evident on the settlement edge.

■ **Landscape and setting:** Maintain and enhance the wide grass verges and associated tree planting. Tree species could include lime, cherry or other fruit trees.

■ **Domestic buildings:** Vary the scale, within existing parameters, and plan form of buildings to add variety to a new development.

■ **Domestic buildings:** Extensions should follow the character of the main building. If a building is simple then the extension should be; if a building is more decorative then the extension should have some degree of decoration.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** New developments should provide gardens large enough to set the buildings back from the road and be planted with locally occurring species.

■ **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain and enhance characteristic hedgerows with privet hedgerows in the centre of the village and mixed species hedgerows towards the edges of the settlement.

■ **Materials:** Enhance the characteristic mix of materials including red brick or stone, limestone or Malvern stone. Red brick should reflect the characteristic softer appearance of handmade brick with a soft, narrow lime mortar.

■ **Colour:** It would be acceptable to render or paint some new buildings in a development. Muted, pale shades of white, yellow or cream would be most characteristic.

■ **Details:** Respect local character by creatively reflecting local characteristics. This includes, for example, exterior chimney breasts, moulded decoration in brickworks and above openings, contrasting materials/colours on window surrounds, and decorative ridge tiles.

# Malvern Wells

## 1. Key characteristics of Malvern Wells

### 1.1 Landscape and setting

- **Settlement and location:** Malvern Wells includes Upper Welland and Welland. It is a settled landscape, dominated by steep slopes and fairly dense, linear settlement.
- **Infrastructure:** Roads run along contours, especially on the higher slopes. Traditional gas lamps are a feature and water features provide a link to the area's heritage as a spa resort.
- **Boundaries:** Malvern stone walls ending in red or blue brick, mixed species hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn and elm, stone walls with high hedgerow boundaries, occasional brick walls and wooden fencing.
- **Tree cover:** Non-native, mature tree species in gardens.
- **Topography:** Steeply sloping upper slopes, with flatter common land to the east.



Malvern Wells settlement



Decorative detailing



Characteristic variety between buildings



Hedgerow boundary

### 1.2 Domestic buildings

- **Dominant local character:** Varied: villas, large houses and simple cottages. Most development is Victorian or Edwardian.
- **Recent building additions:** 20th century development is often situated between older properties.
- **Significant features:** Decorative detailing including gothic styling on some villas, coloured bargeboarding and contrasting stone work. Chimneys are characteristic in this landscape.
- **Materials:** Red brick and irregular rubble Malvern stone.



Victorian house



Different colour renders



Villa

## 2. Local guidance

### Local Issues to consider

- **Landscape and setting:** Respect the area's close proximity to the surrounding rural landscape, relating to the steeply sloping topography in the west and the gentle common land in the south east.
- **Landscape and setting:** Maintain the characteristic pattern of roads which follow contours in the landscape and are lined with buildings.
- **Domestic buildings:** Maintain and enhance the variety of characteristic architectural styles and details.
- **Domestic buildings:** Maintain variety between buildings through materials, scale, details or by varying rooflines.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Buildings should generally have small gardens rather than be set back in very large grounds or at the end of long driveways. Victorian villas may be an exception.
- **Gardens and boundaries:** Maintain the characteristic boundary in the local area. Avoid standardised modern fencing where possible.
- **Lighting:** The use of outside lighting should be carefully considered, especially in more elevated positions and at the edge of the settled areas.
- **Materials:** Where possible, introduce elements of Malvern stone into a development particularly where red brick is being used as the main building material.
- **Colour:** Rendering or painting buildings may be appropriate. Use muted shades of colour that complement the existing palette of colours used locally.
- **Details:** Respect local character by creatively reflecting local characteristics such as gothic styling, coloured bargeboarding, contrasting stone work and chimneys.



# Glossary

## Biodiversity

The variety of all living things on earth.

## Built environment

Refers to man-made structures in the landscape, ranging from just one building, to a whole city. In the Malvern Hills AONB it can include an isolated dwelling, a hamlet, a village or the roads that connect them.

## Carbon emissions

The release of carbon into the atmosphere from energy use.

## Curtilage

A legal term to define the land immediately surrounding a house or dwelling within which the owner can expect privacy. This is not necessarily marked or enclosed but usually includes the garden, parking areas and any outbuildings.

## Eaves

The lower outer corners of a roof. Their purpose is to carry rainwater away from the building wall.

## Elevation

The front, sides or back of a building.

## Heritage assets

A building, monument, site, place or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.

## Hipped roof

A type of roof where all sides gently slope towards the walls, meaning the building does not have any gables.

## Infilling

The use of vacant land within a village or town for development, helping to limit the growth of the village or town.

## Landscape

Landscape is more than just scenery. The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'.

## Landscape character

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

## Landscape Strategy

To provide direction and guidance on how the different landscapes of the Malvern Hills AONB can be managed in order to obtain optimum character, condition and sustainability.

## Lichen

A partnership between two very different types of organisms; a fungus and an alga. Algae are very simple plants. The two are so closely interwoven that they appear as a single individual. Lichens can be found growing on bare rock, walls, roofs and monuments.

## Lintel

The horizontal beam that can be found across the uprights of a door or window.

## Mass

The overall shape and size of a building, taking into account the building scale and volume.

## Patina

A coating that has developed over time and creates added character and texture, for example through weathering, oxidation and pollution marking brick/stone or verdigris on copper or bronze.

## Permeable

Surfaces that are permeable allow water to penetrate through to the ground below, reducing surface water run-off and risk of flooding during heavy rainfall.

**Quoins**

Masonry blocks at the corner walls either to provide strength to a wall or for decoration.

**Recessed doorways/ windows**

The door or window is slightly set back. It can be important to the character of the building and the overall design.

**Renewable energy**

Energy from renewable sources, meaning energy from non-fossil fuel sources, namely wind, solar, aerothermal, geothermal, hydrothermal and ocean energy, hydropower, biomass, landfill gas, sewage treatment plant gas and biogases.

**Ridge**

The elevated crest of the roofline.

**Sustainable development**

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Tranquillity**

The quality of calm experienced in places with mainly natural features and activities, free from disturbance from manmade ones.

**Ventilation slits**

Small openings in the wall of buildings to enable airflow.

**Vernacular architecture**

Following the traditions which appear to be unique to the district or region in which they are found.

## Notes

## Notes



## Notes

## Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of this document, which began with a 'start-up' workshop and which finished, after much hard work, with a formal consultation exercise. Thanks are due to all those who participated in these events. Guidance, direction and support have also been provided by a number of professionals, including Duncan Rudge from Malvern Hills District Council, Carly Tinkler CMLI and members of the AONB Staff Unit. Special thanks go to Jeremy Lake from English Heritage for his expertise and for giving up precious time and energy and to Bob Edwards for his comments on draft documents. Last but certainly not least, a very big thank you to the team at Countryside for their professionalism and for their uncomplaining dedication to the task.

## Photography credits

**All photographs copyright Malvern Hills AONB Unit except:**

**Christopher J Baddiley** - P 48

**Bob Edwards** - P60

**Bob Embleton** - P50, P70, P80, P81, P84, P85, P86, P90, P92, P93

**Eastnor Estate** - Front cover

**Phillip Halling** - P74

**Trevor Rickard** - P80, P85

The following bodies provide financial support to the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership



Malvern Hills AONB Partnership  
Manor House, Grange Road  
Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 3EY

Tel: 01684 560616  
Email: [aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:aonb@worcestershire.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk)