

## 5. Design Guidance

### Design Principles for New Development

#### 5.29 (a) Location

National planning policy and guidance emphasises the importance of fit and design of new development in the landscape. These considerations are key to making development acceptable. The general parameters as set out below are aimed at encouraging high quality, individual design that is sensitive both to its immediate setting but also defines the characteristics of the wider local area.

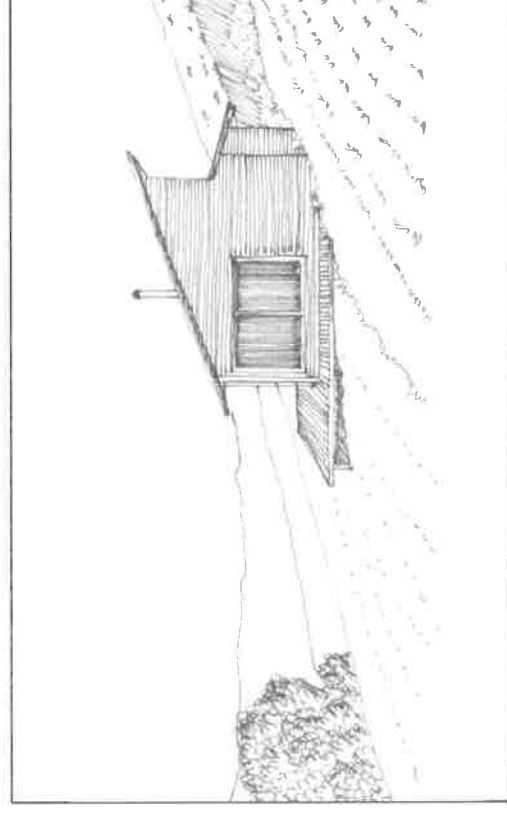
**5.30** Large new buildings, including those associated with agriculture and leisure should be sited to minimise visibility from public roads, popular walking routes and areas of informal and formal public recreation.

**5.31** Wooded sites and trees can provide a pleasing backdrop to new developments in the countryside whilst effecting a level of amalgamation into the landscape at the same time.

**5.32** New development should integrate with and take advantage of existing features of the landscape or the site including topography, trees, woodlands, water features, existing buildings and boundary treatments. New development should 'nestle' within the landscape.



Housing integrating into the existing landscape



Contemporary single storey house recessed into the hillside

### 5.33 (b) Layout

Layout is a critical consideration which if handled effectively, can contribute to a successful design solution. The key factors to be considered are:

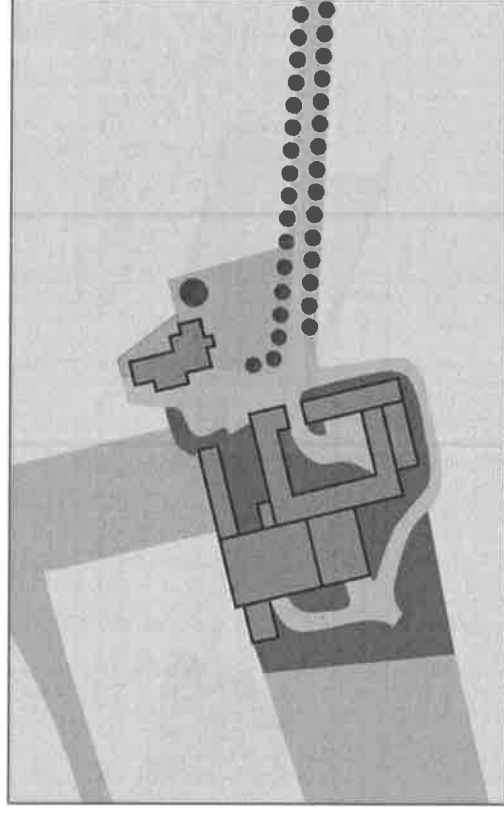
**Topography** - development should take advantage of prevailing contours. For example split level designs suit sloping sites and create the effect of 'nestling' buildings into the topography.

**Existing features** - traditional boundaries, stone walls, hedging and field fences should be retained where possible. Woodland and tree cover should be retained and maximised if available and views should be taken advantage of without compromising privacy.

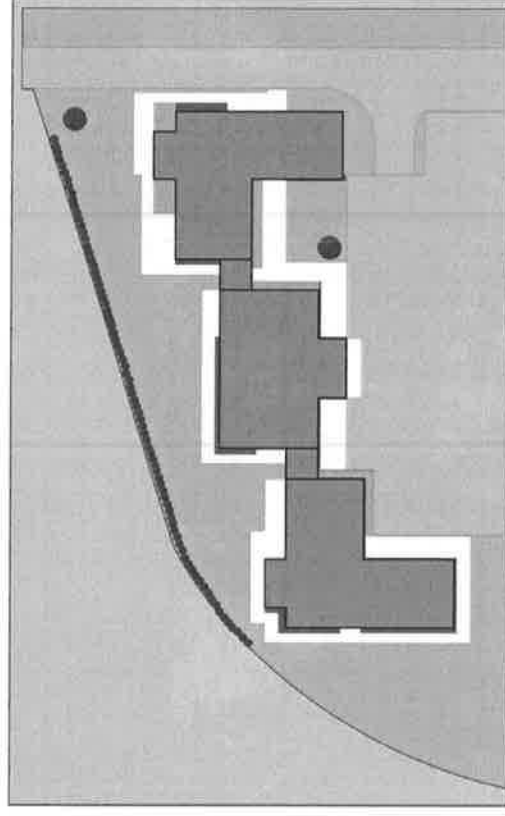
**Established patterns of development** - extensions to existing buildings or outbuildings should mirror established arrangements. For example, extensions to converted farm steadings or stables in country estates should reflect existing building footprints, plot patterns and should maintain spatial relationships between existing buildings in the group.

**Existing man made or natural features** - care should be taken in relation to positioning of new buildings with respect to proximity to established and protected features in the landscape - For example rivers, streams, canals, panoramic views, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments. Particular care is required in relation to location of enabling development and its impact on the setting of places of special architectural or historic significance.

**Orientation** - buildings should be positioned to maximise solar gain and natural shelter.



Arrangement of buildings in typical farm steading - farmhouse, barns and associated sheds are arranged to form inner courtyards. New development should respect established patterns.



Regular Urban Arrangement is inappropriate in a Rural Setting

## 5. Design Guidance

### 5.34 (c) Design

Local traditions, skills, materials and climatic conditions have influenced the design of buildings in the countryside in the past; for example natural stone and timber tended to be locally sourced. New development should respect key aspects of Falkirk's indigenous architecture and landscape in a contemporary manner to maintain a unique sense of place and to avoid 'anywhere' development. Originally designed, innovative and carefully sited buildings to fit the landscape using local materials will be encouraged.

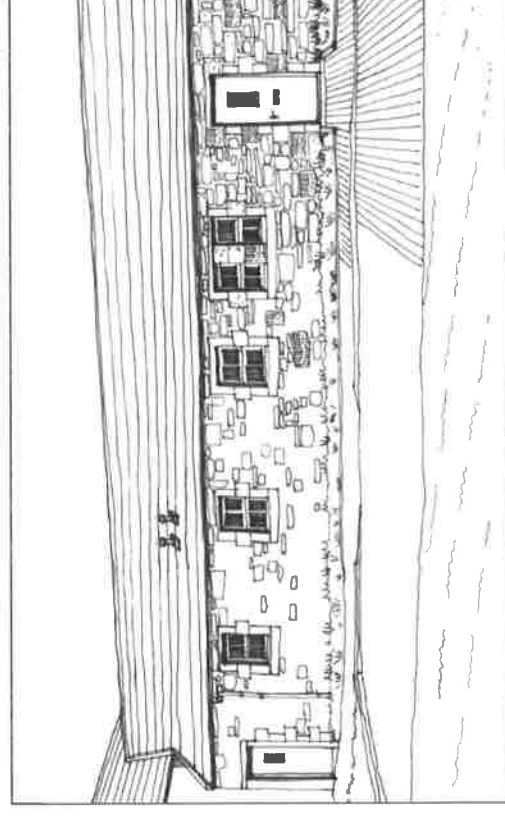
**5.35** Key design considerations for new development are :

**5.36 Scale** - New development in the countryside should be of a scale and density to fit with the surroundings. In the Falkirk Council area, traditional rural buildings are generally of compact scale and proportions. Storey heights rarely rise above two storeys and there is a low window to wall ratio with narrower gables and longer frontages. Farm steadings are generally of moderate scale and simple form in keeping with lowland farm traditions. Country estates are made up of assorted outbuildings, stables, walled gardens, lodge houses and follies, subservient in scale, style and complexity to the main house. Modern business and leisure developments including stables, holiday homes and agricultural buildings tend to be of moderate height with long elevations and shorter gables to accommodate functional requirements. Historic buildings and structures such as viaducts, doocots, castles and aqueducts are prominent in the landscape by virtue of their grand scale, location, quality of materials and unique design.

**5.37** New development should reflect vernacular tradition with respect to simplicity of form and moderate height and width. Where large scale development is proposed, overall design, location and materials will be required to be highly sensitive to the context.



Traditional building carefully sited for natural shelter

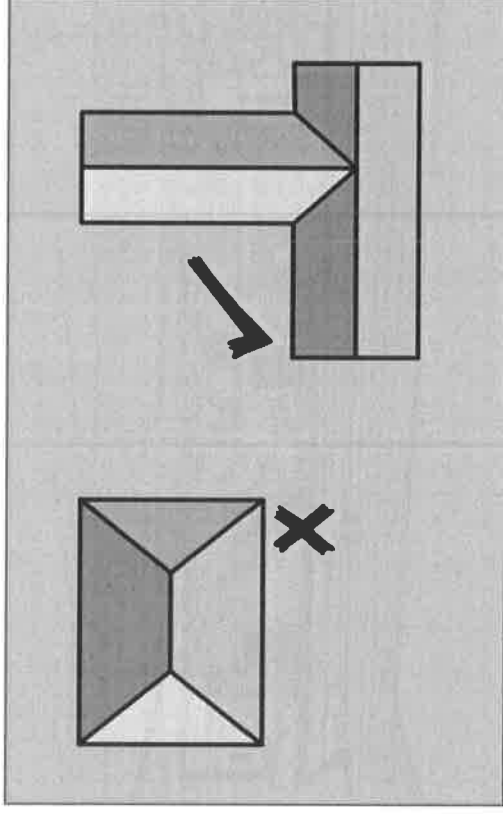


Low window to wall ratio is a common feature of traditional dwellings in the countryside

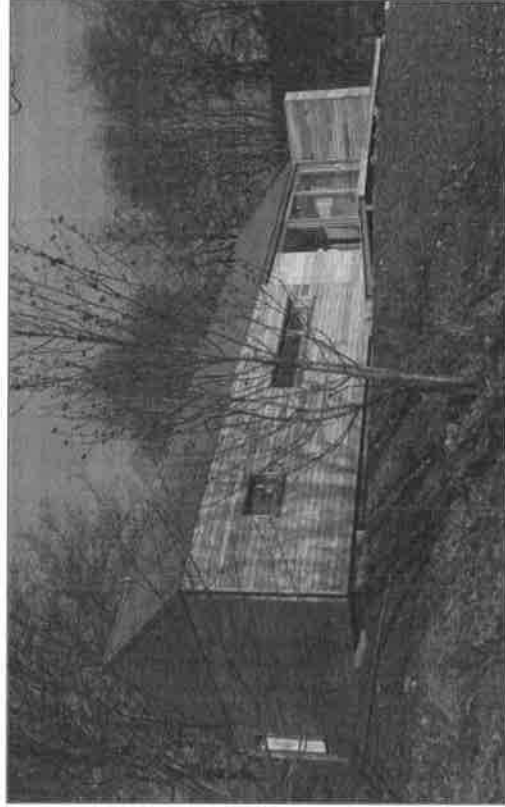
## 5. Design Guidance

**5.38 Detailed Design** - In the Falkirk countryside, typical local detailing of buildings can be identified - see Section 5.19 of this Design guidance for examples of indigenous windows, rooflights, chimneys, roof verges and dormers.

**5.39** New development will be required to demonstrate contemporary interpretation of established local detailing in an imaginative and creative manner to maintain visible links to the area to create individual designs and to avoid standardised 'anywhere' solutions.



Traditional proportions such as linked rectangular plan forms as shown above are preferable to non-traditional deep plan/square plan forms. Pitched roofs are often incorporated creating symmetrical gables

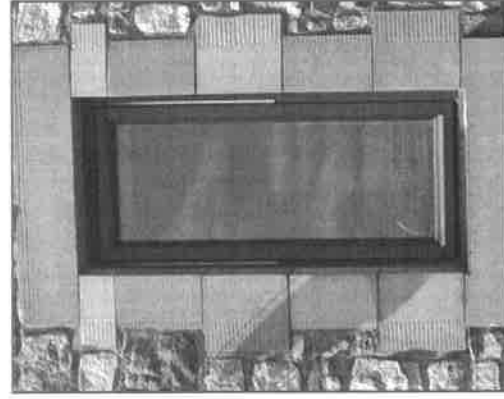


Contemporary Interpretation of Traditionally Proportioned Dwellings  
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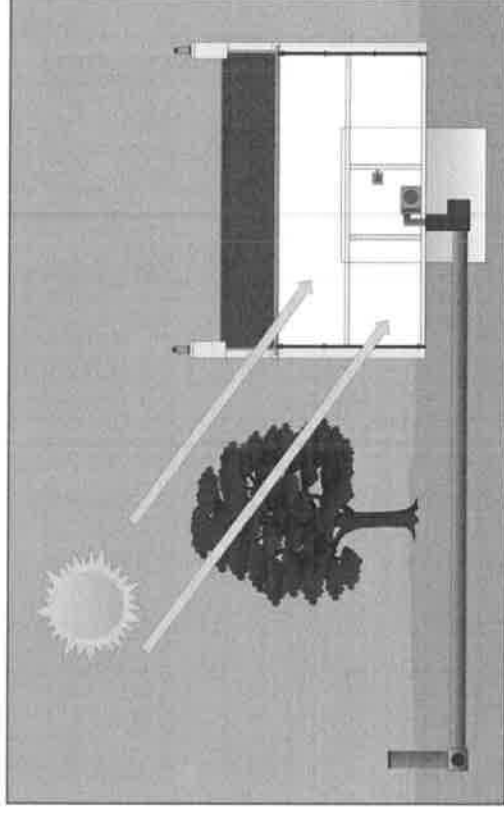
## 5. Design Guidance

**5.40 External Finishes** - Traditionally, rural buildings were finished in stone, slate, timber, lime wash and lime harling. Locally sourced, natural materials should be applied to external walls and roofs of new development as much as is financially and practically possible to reflect local architectural traditions and to anchor the building into the landscape. The use of vividly coloured cladding systems and the application of artificial finishes such as render, plastic or upvc, metal and reconstituted stone should be avoided. The use of slate, natural stone and timber is encouraged.



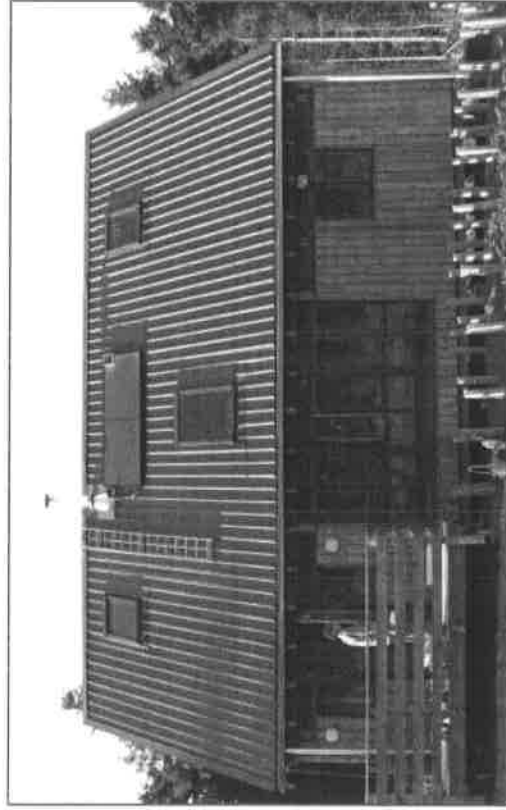
## 5. Design Guidance

**5.41 Sustainable Design** - It is environmentally beneficial and sustainable to source materials locally; their use also helps to blend new buildings with the older more established buildings in the countryside. All development should be designed to be resilient to climate change through careful exterior detailing and choice of materials. Buildings should be positioned to maximise solar gain and to gain natural shelter from topographical features to reduce energy demands. Building design should aim for minimal carbon footprint from initial construction through to low energy use on a day to day basis. Re-use of existing buildings minimising loss of existing building components and materials is encouraged in cases of conversion and refurbishment. High performance, energy efficient glazing and innovative heating systems should be incorporated into new buildings.



Buildings should be designed and orientated to take advantage of solar gain. High performance, energy efficient systems should be incorporated at initial design stages.

Windows to living spaces should be orientated to take advantage of solar gain and buildings should generally be situated to benefit from shelter from prevailing wind. Innovative low carbon heating systems such as ground source heat pumps as illustrated should be considered where conditions allow.



Grangewood Autonomous House  
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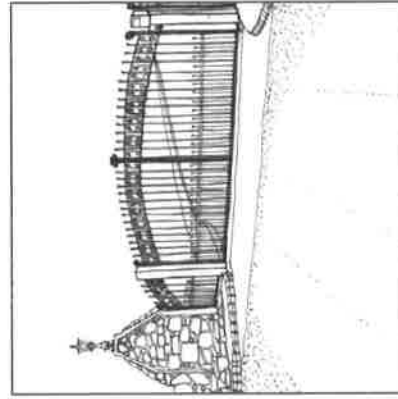
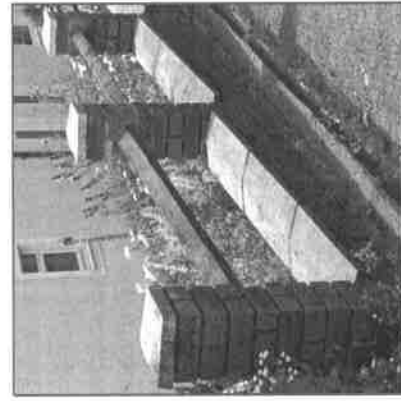
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## 5. Design Guidance

**5.42 Boundary Treatments, Access and Parking** - The design of boundary treatments, access roadways, hard standings for cars, gates and fences to new developments in the countryside should take into account the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape and should reflect the design of any indigenous detailing. Access roads should be positioned to allow the retention of existing boundaries such as stone field boundary walls, fences hedges and trees. The retention of existing features helps to integrate the building with its setting. In most cases simple low key designs using as few materials are preferable to complex and over sized grand designs. Urban solutions for walls and fencing using concrete and brick should be avoided. Access roads and parking areas should be designed to be as simple and informal as possible to integrate with existing roads using natural materials where possible. Safety standards should be accommodated without compromising rural character.



Simple, informal design reflects rural character



Inappropriate boundary treatments out of keeping with rural traditions



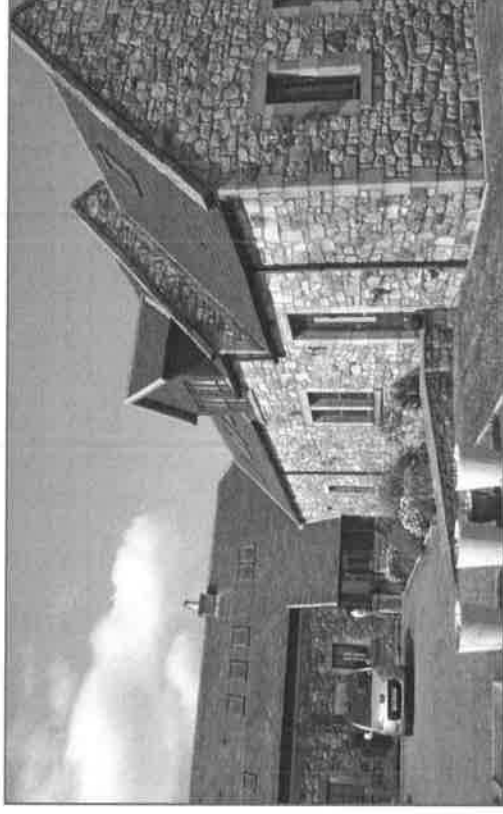
Sensitive choice of materials and crisp, simple detailing

## 5. Design Guidance

**5.43 Landscaping** - Alterations to established landscape features and proposals for new landscaping associated with new development can have a major impact on both the immediate setting and the wider countryside area. Where a development site includes existing trees, hedgerows and other significant landscape features, they should be retained to restore and reinforce established rural character and appearance. Where existing landscape features are agreed to be removed, replacement with appropriate local species as advised by Falkirk Council's Landscape Officers should be agreed.

**5.44** New planting including hedgerows and trees can provide effective screening as well as shelter from the elements on exposed sites. Where larger buildings are proposed, mitigating screen planting will be encouraged to reduce visual impact on the landscape. Screening and hedges planted with quick growing conifer species such as Cypress, Leylandii should be avoided in favour of appropriate native species.

**5.45** Site analysis should include assessment of vantage points in the surrounding area from which new development will be visible. New landscaping features should be designed accordingly to create a natural fit between new buildings and rural setting.

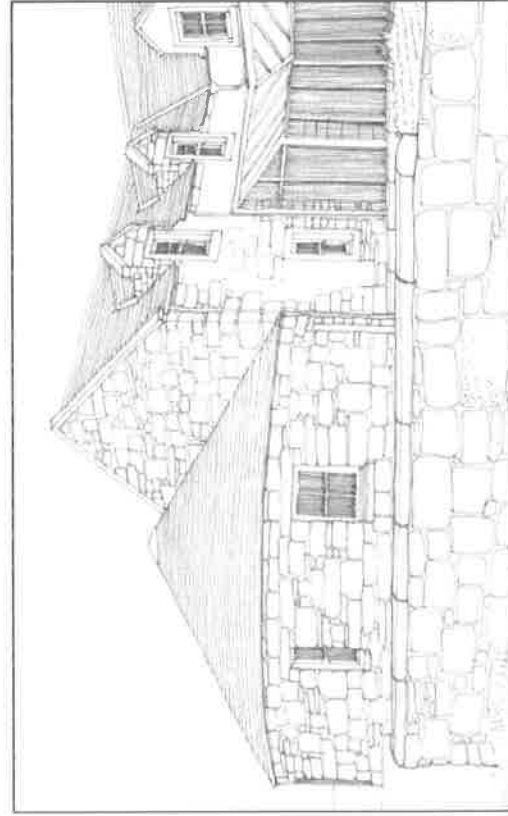


**Rural character is reinforced by simple treatments for hard and soft landscaping.**  
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### 5.46 (d) Conversion of Existing Buildings

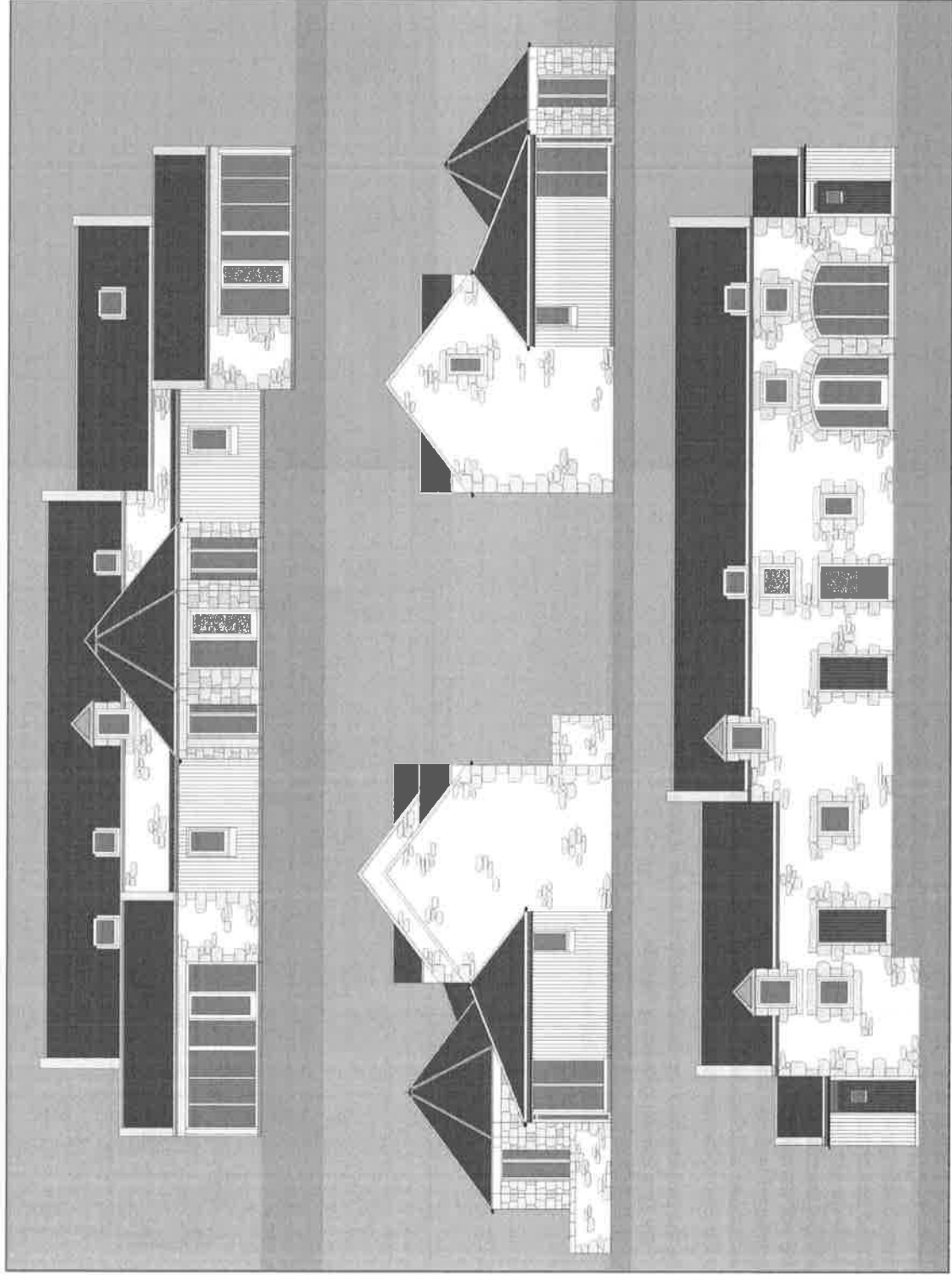
Due to industrial change, many buildings in the countryside of Falkirk are no longer suitable for their original purpose including mills, brickworks, farm steadings and buildings associated with water and transport systems. These buildings contribute to local distinctiveness and character. Older buildings can be successfully remodelled into contemporary living spaces without sacrificing traditional character. It is important that these buildings are not demolished unnecessarily or altered to such an extent that their significant features are lost. The total or substantial demolition of existing vernacular buildings will be discouraged unless supporting information is submitted to demonstrate :-

- 1). the existing building is incapable of repair and re-use as demonstrated by structural/engineering reports.
- 2). the costs of repair and re-use are such that it is not economically viable as demonstrated by full economic appraisal.



Vernacular buildings can be successfully remodelled and extended to provide contemporary living spaces without sacrificing traditional character

5.47



**Case Study :** North Mains, Beecraigs, by Linlithgow  
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## 5. Design Guidance

### 5.48 (e) Infill Development

Infill development will only be acceptable where existing clusters of buildings are deemed to have capacity to accommodate new development without detriment to established patterns of development, character of the group and spatial relationships.

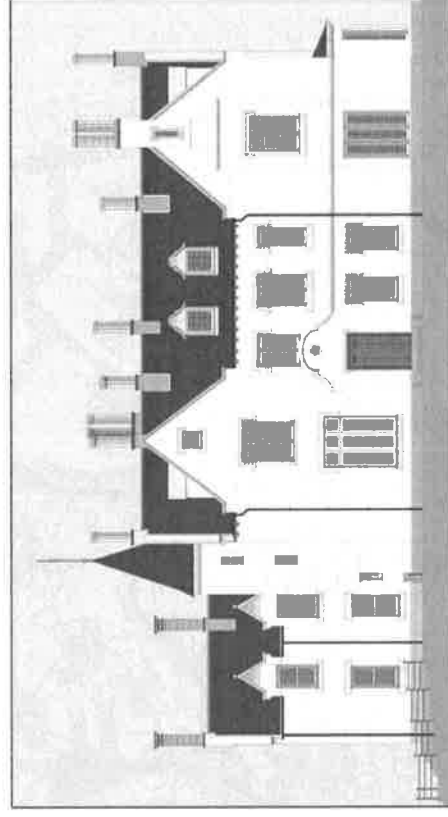
**5.49** The introduction of modest development to small clusters of houses, and existing groups of buildings such as country estates and farm steadings must reflect the key characteristics of the existing group including building lines, scale, massing, orientation and existing access arrangements.

### 5.50 (iii) Enabling Development

Where enabling development is proposed to secure the long term future of a place of significant cultural or natural heritage, the resulting development should be of a high design quality. It should serve to protect the setting and special cultural or natural interest of the place and should represent the minimum level of development to enable the conservation of the place. Where new housing is proposed, great care should be applied to its location and design. If original elements of a designed landscape setting have survived, these should be integrated into proposals.

### 5.51

Enabling development will support the restoration of the main house in the Lathallan Estate converting it to 9 flats : other works include the demolition of the laundry, restoration and conversion of stables to form 3 houses and erection of 36 new houses. The new buildings will be unobtrusively sited in terms of views into the site from the surrounding roads owing to the heavily landscaped setting.



Lathallan House: Part elevation

5.52

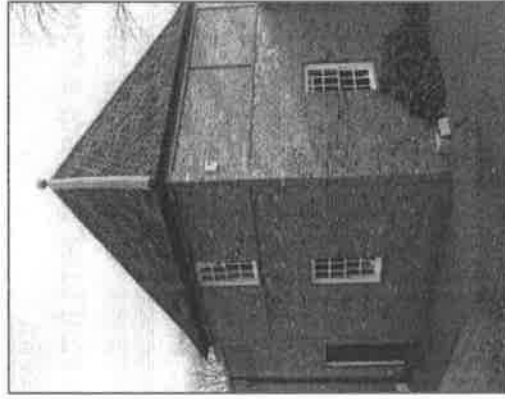


Lathalian Estate Site Plan showing enabling development within the estate

## 5. Design Guidance

### 5.53

The best examples of enabling development respond to the unique architectural and historic character of buildings and their settings by mitigating visual and physical impact on existing buildings and their setting and by enhancing special character. Enabling development at the Walled Garden of Tynninghame House took the form of small pavilions built up from the garden wall behind a 19th century greenhouse. The traditional design and materials preserve the character and appearance of the walled garden.



**New Pavilions adjoining existing garden wall at Tynninghame House**

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**Aerial View: Walled Garden at Tynninghame House**

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## 5. Design Guidance

### 5.54 Design Principles Checklist

|                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location</b>                                | The impact of larger buildings should be minimised through siting, landscaping, massing and use of colour and all new development should take advantage of existing features and topography to effect an "nestling effect" within the rural landscape.                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Layout</b>                                  | New development should be orientated to take advantage of natural shelter and solar gain and should respect and retain existing site features such as boundaries, walls, woodland and trees. Where extensions to existing groups of buildings are proposed, interventions should mirror established development patterns including footprints, plot patterns and spatial relationships between buildings. |
| <b>Design</b>                                  | Originally designed, innovative buildings that fit the local landscape using local, natural materials will be encouraged.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Scale</b>                                   | New development should be of a scale and density to fit with the surroundings. Reference should be taken from local vernacular building tradition of simple forms and moderate height and width.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Detailed Design</b>                         | Contemporary interpretation of the architectural detailing of local vernacular buildings will be encouraged - take reference from traditional windows, rooflights, doors, chimneys, roof verges etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>External Finishes</b>                       | The use of natural building materials will be encouraged - e.g. stone, slate, timber, harling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Sustainable Design</b>                      | Use locally sourced and recycled / salvaged building materials wherever possible and design new development to maximise energy efficient and to withstand the impacts of climate change. Position new buildings to take advantage of solar gain and natural shelter.                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Boundary Treatments, Access and Parking</b> | The design of boundary treatments, access and parking should reflect local character and materials; simple low key designs using natural materials are preferable to complex, over - size solutions more suited to an urban setting.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Landscaping</b>                             | Existing landscape features should be retained; new planting can provide shelter and can mitigate the visual impact of larger buildings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Conversion of Existing Buildings</b>        | Traditional rural buildings should be retained and remodelled as required to provide contemporary uses and to maintain local distinctiveness and character. Total or substantial demolition will be discouraged.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Infill Development</b>                      | Limited development - up to 3 houses - will only be acceptable where it has no impact on the character of established clusters of buildings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Enabling Development</b>                    | Enabling development will only be encouraged where it secures the long term future of a significant place via development of high design quality which protects the setting and special cultural or natural interest of the place.                                                                                                                                                                        |

Please Refer to pages 33 - 45 for Detailed Guidance

## Appendix 1 - List of relevant Local Development Plan Policies

### 6.1 List of relevant Local Development Plan Policies (found within Supporting Policies Chapter)

| Policy       | Topic                                               |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Policy INF02 | Developer Contributions to Community Infrastructure |
| Policy INF07 | Walking and Cycling                                 |
| Policy INF10 | Transport Assessments                               |
| Policy INF12 | Water and Drainage Infrastructure                   |
| Policy BUS01 | Business and Tourism                                |
| Policy BUS05 | Major Hazards and Pipelines                         |
| Policy GN02  | Landscape                                           |
| Policy GN03  | Biodiversity and Geodiversity                       |
| Policy GN04  | Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows                       |
| Policy GN05  | Outdoor Access                                      |
| Policy D02   | Sustainable Design Principles                       |
| Policy D04   | Low and Zero Carbon Development                     |
| Policy D07   | Antonine Wall                                       |
| Policy D08   | Sites of Archaeological Interest                    |
| Policy D09   | Listed Buildings                                    |
| Policy D12   | Historic Gardens and Design Landscapes              |
| Policy D13   | Battlefield Sites                                   |
| Policy RW04  | Agricultural Land, Carbon Rich Soils and Rare Soils |
| Policy RW06  | Flooding                                            |
| Policy RW07  | Air Quality                                         |
| Policy RW09  | Waste Reduction in New Development                  |
| Policy RW10  | Vacant Derelict and Contaminated Land               |
| Policy HSG05 | Infill Development and Subdivision of Plots         |
| Policy HSG07 | House Extensions and Alterations                    |
| Policy HSG08 | Gypsy/Traveller Sites                               |

## Appendix 2 - Useful Contacts

### 6.2

Information on Planning Permission, Permitted Development, Listed Building and Conservation Area control can be obtained from:

#### **Development Management**

Development Services  
Falkirk Council  
Abbotsford House  
David's Loan  
Falkirk FK2 7YZ  
Tel: 01324 504748  
Email: [dc@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:dc@falkirk.gov.uk)

Building Warrant information can be obtained from:

#### **Building Standards**

Development Services  
Falkirk Council  
Abbotsford House  
David's Loan  
Falkirk  
FK2 7YZ  
Tel: 01324 504985  
Email: [buildingcontrol@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@falkirk.gov.uk)

Information on Roads Construction Consent can be obtained from:

#### **Roads and Development**

Development Services  
Falkirk Council  
Abbotsford House  
David's Loan  
Falkirk  
FK2 7YZ  
Tel: 01324 504950  
Email: [roads@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:roads@falkirk.gov.uk)

A list of architects and advice on employing a Chartered Architect can be obtained from:

#### **The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)**

15 Rutland Square  
Edinburgh  
EH1 2BE  
Tel: 0131 229 7545  
Email: [info@rias.org.uk](mailto:info@rias.org.uk)  
Helpful information also available on the RIAS website: [www.rias.org.uk](http://www.rias.org.uk)

Information on protected species can be obtained from:

#### **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)**

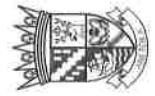
Forth Region  
Silvan House  
3rd Floor East  
231 Corstorphine Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7AT  
Tel: 0131 316 2600  
Email: [forth@snh.gov.uk](mailto:forth@snh.gov.uk)



# **Finalised Supplementary Guidance SG01**

**August 2014**

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| SG01 |  |  |  |  |
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**Falkirk Council**  
*Development Services*

## Policies

### Countryside and Landscape

#### **POLICY ENV.1**

##### **COUNTRYSIDE AND PROTECTED AREAS**

- 1 There is a general presumption against development in areas defined as countryside, unless it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is essential or is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification. Where it is established that a countryside location is essential, development proposals will also be assessed in relation to Local Plan policies appropriate to specific protected areas as defined generally by Schedules ENV.1 and ENV.3.**
- 2 The policies applicable to countryside and protected areas within it, together with the detailed boundaries of each area, will be set out in Local Plans.**

- 5.3 Existing Local Plans identify the boundaries between urban areas and the countryside. To protect the amenity of the countryside, the aim is generally to confine built development to the urban areas, unless it can be demonstrated that it is essential for the development to be located in the countryside or it is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification. Examples of acceptable forms of development would include agricultural buildings, forestry related development, mineral workings, rural based tourism and recreation projects, telecommunications, renewable energy proposals etc. Where it is established that a countryside location is essential the proposal will also be assessed against any other policies appropriate to specific areas and to ensure that the scale, siting and design of any proposal minimises its visual impact. These will be set out in the relevant Local Plan.

- 5.4 Within this broad area of countryside, and overlapping with it, there are specific areas, designated for particular purposes. These are set out in Schedule Env.1 and Env.3 below. Areas of Great Landscape Value relate to 3 areas which are considered to have particular landscape qualities where greater attention needs to be paid to protection and enhancement. The Green Belt relates to the urban fringe and is intended to ensure that there is a separation between, and a setting for, the main urban settlements in the Council area. They are also a focus for recreation and landscape enhancement (see Policy Env.6). Historic Gardens, Prime Quality Agricultural Land and the nature conservation areas (see Schedule Env.3) are intended to protect a particular kind of resource. The detailed definition of these areas and the policies applicable within them will be set out in the relevant Local Plan.

- 5.5 Map 2 sets out the Council's Indicative Forestry Strategy. It indicates those areas which will be sensitive for proposals for forestry and areas where forestry would be preferred. It provides only broad guidance and at a site specific level there may be other issues that have to be taken into account. It is based on the Indicative Strategy used in the previous Central 2000 Structure Plan and will be reviewed as necessary particularly with regard to any changing needs as a result of the development of the Central Scotland Forest.

#### **POLICY ENV.2**

##### **GREEN BELT**

**There will be a system of Green Belts in the areas generally described in Schedule ENV.1 and indicated on the Key Diagram. Within these there will be a long term presumption against development in order to prevent the coalescence of settlements, protect their landscape setting and avoid prejudicing future proposals for landscape enhancement and countryside recreation.**

**The detailed boundaries will be defined in Local Plans, having regard, where appropriate, to the Strategic Development Opportunities set out in Policy Econ.1 and Schedule Econ.1 and other structure plan policies.**



## Countryside

### Development in the Countryside

**5.62** The countryside is defined as those areas outwith the Urban and Villages Limits, as set out in Policy CG01 of the Spatial Strategy. The criteria for assessing housing and business proposals in the countryside are set out in Policies CG03 and CG04. Detailed guidance on the interpretation and application of these policies is contained within Supplementary Guidance SG01 Development in the Countryside. It should be noted that proposals that lie in the Green Belt will additionally have to meet the terms of Policy CG02 contained within in the Spatial Strategy.

**5.63**

#### Policy CG03 Housing in the Countryside

Proposals for housing development in the countryside of a scale, layout and design suitable for its intended location will be supported in the following circumstances:

1. Housing required for the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential;
2. Restoration or replacement of houses which are still substantially intact, provided the restored/replacement house is of a comparable size to the original;
3. Conversion or restoration of non-domestic farm buildings to residential use, including the sensitive redevelopment of redundant farm steadings;
4. Appropriate infill development;
5. Limited enabling development to secure the restoration of historic buildings or structures; or
6. Small, privately owned gypsy/traveller sites which comply with Policy HSG08.

Detailed guidance on the application of these criteria will be contained in Supplementary Guidance SG01 'Development in the Countryside'. Proposals will be subject to a rigorous assessment of their impact on the rural environment, having particular regard to policies protecting natural heritage and the historic environment.

**5.64**

#### Policy CG04 Business Development in the Countryside

Proposals for business development in the countryside of a scale, layout and design suitable for its intended location will be supported in the following circumstances:

1. Areas specifically identified for business development on the Proposals Map;
  2. Business development, including appropriate leisure and tourism uses, where a need for a countryside location is demonstrated, or the development constitutes an appropriate form of farm diversification;
  3. Proposals involving the re-use of industrial, commercial or institutional land or premises, or the conversion of farm buildings for business use; or
  4. Limited extensions to existing established business in the countryside;
- Detailed guidance on the application of these criteria will be contained in Supplementary Guidance SG01 'Development in the Countryside'. Proposals will be subject to a rigorous assessment of their impact on the rural environment, having particular regard to policies protecting natural heritage and the historic environment.





## Housing Design and Residential Amenity

**5.8** The scale of residential growth planned for the area over the period of the plan will have a significant impact on how communities look and feel. It is important that new housing is well designed so that this impact is a positive one. Smaller scale change in residential neighbourhoods, whether through small infill developments, proposals for non-residential uses or simple extensions or alterations to properties, must also be managed so as to maintain residential amenity.

**5.9**

### Policy HSG04 Housing Design

The layout, design and density of the new housing development should conform with any relevant site-specific design guidance, Supplementary Guidance SG02 'Housing Layout and Design' and the Scottish Government's policy on 'Designing Streets'. Indicative site capacities in the site schedules may be exceeded where a detailed layout demonstrates that a high quality design solution, which delivers the requisite level of residential amenity, has been achieved.

**5.10**

### Policy HSG05 Infill Development and Subdivision of Plots

Proposals for the erection of additional houses within the curtilage of existing properties or on small gap sites will be permitted where:

1. The scale, density, disposition and design of the proposed houses respect the townscape character of the area;
2. Adequate garden ground can be provided to serve the proposed houses without an unacceptable impact upon the size or functioning of existing gardens;
3. Adequate privacy will be afforded to both the proposed houses and neighbouring properties;
4. The proposal would not result in the loss of features such as trees, vegetation or walls, such that the character or amenity of the area would be adversely affected;
5. The proposed vehicular access, parking and other infrastructure is of an adequate standard for both proposed and existing houses; and
6. The proposal complies with other LDP policies.

**5.11**

### Policy HSG06 Non-Residential Uses in Residential Areas

Within established residential areas, the introduction of uses which would be incompatible with the residential character and amenity of the area will generally not be permitted. Proposals for appropriate community services (e.g. surgeries, day nurseries and neighbourhood shops), homeworking or other compatible business uses (e.g. guest houses) will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the quality of the residential environment would be safeguarded, the type and location of the property is suitable, and satisfactory access and parking can be provided.

**5.12**

### Policy HSG07 House Extensions and Alterations

Extensions and alterations to houses will be permitted where:

1. The scale, design and materials are sympathetic to the existing building;
2. The location and scale of the extension or alterations will not significantly affect the degree of amenity, daylight or privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties; and
3. It will not result in overdevelopment of the plot, thereby giving rise to adverse impacts on the functioning of garden ground, unacceptable loss of off-street parking, or road safety issues.

Proposals should comply with the detailed guidance on these criteria set out in the Supplementary Guidance SG03 'House Extensions and Alterations'.





## Environmental Quality

### Countryside

- 3.56 Although perceived to be mainly urban in character, the Falkirk Council area has an extensive and varied countryside, the quality of which has a major influence on the image of the area. It is an environment where people live, work, and visit for recreation and tourism, and which is subject to increasing development pressures for housing, business and infrastructure.
- 3.57 Structure Plan Policy ENV.1 sets out a policy approach of restricting development in the countryside unless a countryside location is essential or the activity is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification.
- 3.58 Within this context, Policy EQ19 defines the countryside by reference to a system of Urban and Village Limits, and establishes the overall policy approach to development within it, cross-referring to the other policies listed in Table 3.3 which give guidance on specific uses in the countryside. The objective is to encourage bone fide rural economic activity, whilst resisting sporadic development which would compromise the open character of the countryside. It will also encourage development to locate, where possible, within the rural villages, in order to sustain their vitality. It should be noted that in two of the areas identified for Special Initiatives for Residential-led Regeneration (SIRRs)- Banknock and Whitecross - the Urban/Village Limit is a provisional one pending redefinition of the urban area through the relevant development framework or masterplan.
- 3.59 Policy EQ19 also sets out design considerations which will be particularly relevant to the satisfactory integration of development into a countryside setting, and requires compliance with the 'Design Guide for Buildings in the Rural Area'. Reference should also be made, where appropriate, to PAN 36: Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside and PAN 39: Farm and Forestry Buildings.

3.60

### EQ19 COUNTRYSIDE

- (1) The Urban and Village Limits represent the desirable limit to the expansion of settlements for the period of the Local Plan. Land outwith these boundaries is designated as countryside and will be subject to the detailed policies for specific uses indicated in Table 3.3. Development proposals in the countryside for uses not covered by these policies will only be permitted where:
- it can be demonstrated that they require a countryside location;
  - they constitute appropriate infill development; or
  - they utilise suitable existing buildings.
- (2) In circumstances where development meets the relevant countryside policy criteria, the scale, siting and design of development will be strictly controlled to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the character of the countryside. In particular:
- the siting should be unobtrusive, making use of natural features to integrate development into the landform and avoiding skylines;
  - building design should be sympathetic to vernacular building styles and comply with the design principles contained within the Council's 'Design Guide for Buildings in the Rural Areas'; and
  - boundary and curtilage treatments should be sympathetic to the rural area, with a preference for stone walling and hedging using native species.

3.61 Table 3.3 Detailed Policies for Specific Uses in the Countryside

|                         |          |                                                        |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Housing                 | SC3      | Housing Development in the Countryside                 |
| Business                | EP5      | Business and Industrial Development in the Countryside |
| Leisure and Tourism     | EP16     | Leisure and Tourism Development in the Countryside     |
| Minerals                | EQ31- 39 | Mineral Policies                                       |
| Waste Management        | ST17     | Landfill                                               |
| Facilities              | ST18     | Waste Management Facilities                            |
| Telecommunications      | ST13     | Telecommunications Development                         |
| and Infrastructure      | ST14     | Pipelines                                              |
|                         | ST15     | Overhead Power Lines                                   |
| Renewable Energy        | ST20     | Renewable Energy Development                           |
| Development             | ST21     | Wind Energy                                            |
| Gypsy/Travellers' Sites | SC4A     | Gypsy/Traveller Sites                                  |



### Windfall Housing Development within the Urban and Village Limits

- 4.10 In addition to the housing proposals identified specifically in the Local Plan, other housing development within the Urban or Village Limits will be supported where it meets the criteria set out in Policy SC2. Such windfall development will generally be on brownfield sites and will assist in meeting the general objective of recycling redundant land and minimising take up of greenfield sites. However, sites must meet requirements in terms of accessibility, amenity and infrastructure availability. An estimate of the output from windfall sites has been built into the housing land requirement calculation, and monitoring will take place to check the actual output against the estimate.

4.11

**SC2 WINDFALL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN/VILLAGE LIMIT**

Housing development within the Urban and Village Limits, in addition to proposals identified within the Local Plan, will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- (1) The site is a brownfield one, or comprises urban open space whose loss can be justified in terms of Policy SC12;
- (2) The proposed housing use is compatible with neighbouring uses and a satisfactory level of residential amenity can be achieved;
- (3) The site enjoys good accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling to shopping, recreational and other community facilities;
- (4) Existing physical infrastructure, such as roads and drainage, water supply, sewage capacity, and community facilities, such as education and healthcare, have the capacity to accommodate the increase in use associated with the proposed development, or can be upgraded through appropriate developer contributions as required by Policy SC11;
- (5) In the case of small gap sites and sub-divided plots, Policy SC8 is satisfied; and
- (6) There is no conflict with any other Local Plan policy or proposal.

### Housing in the Countryside

- 4.12 There is continuing pressure for the development of individual houses or groups of houses in the countryside. Structure Plan Policy ENV.1 and Local Plan Policy EQ19 set out the broad approach of restricting new development in the countryside unless a countryside location is required. Policy SC3 contains detailed criteria for assessing the acceptability of proposals. In general, housing will be permitted where it is required to support a genuine rural economic activity. Further opportunities will arise from the rehabilitation of redundant properties and from appropriate infill sites.

4.13

**SC3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

- (1) Housing essential to the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential. In these instances, the applicant must demonstrate all of the following:
  - The operational need for the additional house in association with the business;
  - That no existing dwelling which might have served that need has been sold or otherwise alienated from the holding;
  - That there are no reasonable opportunities for reusing or converting redundant buildings rather than building a new dwellinghouse; and
  - That the business as a whole is capable of providing the main source of income for the occupant;
- (2) Proposals involving the rehabilitation of former residential properties, or the conversion of farm and other buildings to residential use, where all of the following criteria are met:
  - The building, by virtue of its existing character, makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape;
  - The building is in a reasonable state of repair, still stands substantially intact and is capable of beneficial restoration, as verified by a report and certificate from a qualified structural engineer;
  - The restored or converted building is of comparable scale and character to the original building; and
  - In the case of former non-residential buildings, the building is no longer required for the purpose for which it was built; or
- (3) Appropriate infill opportunities within the envelope of an existing group of residential buildings, where the development would not result in ribbon, backland or sporadic development, and the proposal satisfies Policy SC8.



### Infill Development and Plot Subdivision

- 4.30 The quality of residential areas can often be threatened by inappropriate infill development, sometimes termed 'town cramming'. Infill proposals, particularly where they involve the subdivision of the curtilage of existing houses, frequently take little account of the overall grain of the surrounding area, or of the setting and amenity of neighbouring properties. Policy SC8 seeks to prevent insensitive infill whilst allowing development where a legitimate opportunity exists and can be integrated successfully into the urban fabric.

4.31

#### **SC8 INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION OF PLOTS**

Proposals for the erection of additional dwellinghouses within the curtilage of existing properties or on small gap sites will only be considered favourably where:

- (1) the scale, density, disposition and design of the proposed houses respect the architectural and townscape character of the area;
- (2) adequate garden ground can be provided to serve the proposed houses without an unacceptable impact upon the size or functioning of existing gardens;
- (3) adequate privacy will be afforded to both the proposed houses and neighbouring properties;
- (4) the proposal would not result in the loss of features such as trees, vegetation or walls, such that the character or amenity of the area would be adversely affected;
- (5) the proposed vehicular access and other infrastructure is of an adequate standard; and
- (6) the proposal complies with other Local Plan policies.

### Extensions and Alterations to Residential Properties

- 4.32 There is a need to ensure that alterations and extensions to residential properties do not, individually or cumulatively, detract from the environment of residential areas. Policy SC9 sets out the key considerations in determining the acceptability of proposals, dealing with the impact of changes on the integrity of the property itself, on the amenity of neighbouring properties and on the character of the area as a whole. Detailed guidance may be found within the Council's SPG Note on House Extensions and Alterations.

4.33

#### **SC9 EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**

Extensions and alterations to residential properties will be permitted where:

- (1) the scale, design and materials are sympathetic to the existing building;
- (2) the location and scale of the extension or alterations will not significantly affect the degree of amenity, daylight or privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties; and
- (3) it will not result in overdevelopment of the plot, thereby giving rise to adverse impacts on the functioning of garden ground, or the unacceptable loss of off-street parking.

4.34

#### **Creating and Maintaining Residential Amenity - Actions and Indicators**

##### **Actions:**

- Prepare development briefs for outstanding housing sites

##### **Indicators:**

- Quality as assessed through periodic audit of major built developments against sustainable development principles

