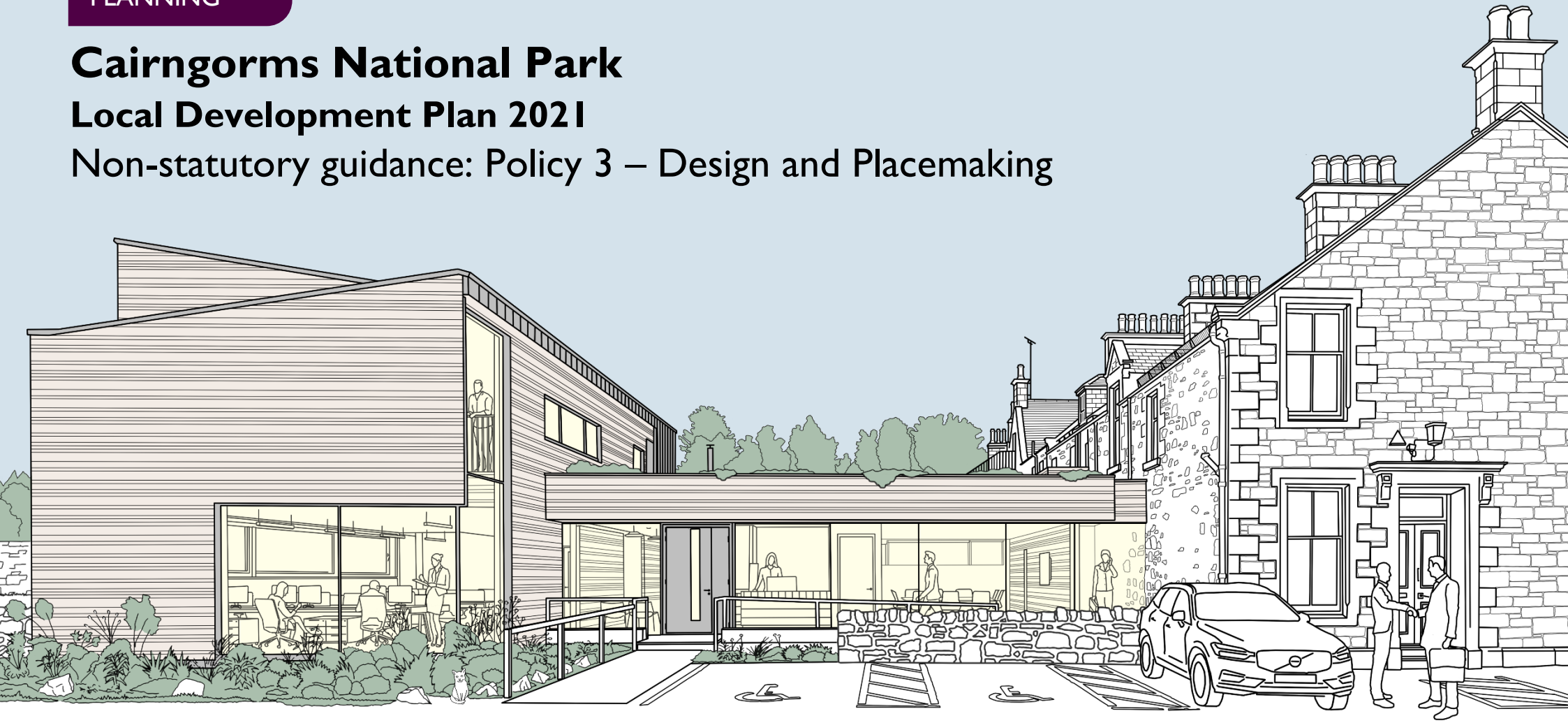
PLANNING

Cairngorms National Park

Local Development Plan 2021

Non-statutory guidance: Policy 3 – Design and Placemaking



Contents

How to Use this Guidance

This non-statutory guidance forms part of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2020 and applies to all planning applications within the Cairngorms National Park. The Local Development Plan is available via https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/ and should be read alongside this guidance.

This guidance should be used during the preparation and assessment of planning applications to ensure that the requirements of Policy 3: Design and Placemaking are met.

Introduction and context

Policy 3 of the Local Development Plan applies to all development. It provides guidance to inform design and placemaking for development proposals within the Cairngorms National Park.

Local Development Plan 2021

Policy 3- Design and Placemaking

3.1 Placemaking

All developments must meet the six qualities of successful places, which in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy paragraphs 41 to 46, are to be:

i. distinctive;
ii. safe and pleasant;
iii. welcoming;
iv. adaptable;
v. resource efficient; and
vi. easy to move around and beyond.

3.2 Major developments

Major developments of 50 or more homes, or 2 hectares or more of employment, retail or mixed use development, will need to be supported by a masterplan or development brief. Where a site is allocated, this requirement will be outlined in the Community Information section of the Plan. Masterplans and development briefs must demonstrate how the development meets the six qualities of successful places.

3.3 Sustainable Design

All development proposals must also be designed to:

a) minimise the effects of the development on climate change in terms of siting and construction and, once complete, achieve at least the minimum standard in compliance with the Building Standards Technical Handbook;

b) be sympathetic to the traditional pattern and character of the surrounding area, local vernacular and local distinctiveness, whilst encouraging innovation in design and use of materials;

c) use materials and landscaping that will complement the setting of development;

d) make sustainable use of resources, including the minimisation of energy, waste and water usage, within the future maintenance arrangements, and

for any decommissioning which may be necessary;

e) enable the storage, segregation and collection of recyclable materials and make provision for composting;

f) promote sustainable transport methods and active travel, including making provision for the storage of bicycles and reducing the need to travel;

g) improve or add to existing public and amenity open space;

h) maintain and maximise all opportunities for responsible outdoor access, including links into the existing path network and ensuring consistency with the Cairngorms National Park Core Paths Plan

i) protect the amenity enjoyed by neighbours including minimisation of disturbance caused by access to the development site;

j) include an appropriate means of access, egress, levels of private amenity ground, and space for off-street parking; and

k) create opportunities for further biodiversity and promote ecological interest.

3.4 Replacing existing building stock

Replacing existing building stock will be considered favourably where:

a) the existing building is not a listed building or an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area; and

b) the original footprint of the building is incorporated into the new development unless an alternative adjacent site would minimise any negative environmental, landscape or social effects of the development.

3.5 Converting existing building stock

Converting existing building stock will be considered favourably where:

a) the building is redundant for its original use, and is unlikely to have a commercial or economic future in its current form; and

b) the conversion works maintain the style and character of the original building in terms of form, scale, materials and detailing, where they contribute positively to the context and setting of the area.

3.6 Alterations to existing building stock

Alterations to existing building stock will be considered favourably where they:

a) respect the design, massing, proportions and general visual appearance of the building and area; and

b) maintain an appropriate level of private ground, including space for off-street parking.

Who is the guidance for

This document has been produced to inform those who engage with the planning process such as developers, architects, agents, planning officers and anyone preparing a planning application as well as other interested parties.

Key Design and Placemaking Considerations

The right development in the right place

National Planning Policy stresses the importance of delivering the right development in the right place. For example residential development on brownfield sites within settlements is likely to be compatible with surrounding land use and also more inclined to be supported. The first hurdle in the process will be to locate a suitable site. Care must be taken to carefully consider the suitability of the potential site to ensure problems don't arise during the design phase, which may ultimately make the scheme financially unviable and unlikely to obtain planning permission. Important questions to consider at an early stage in the design process include:

- Will your proposed development be compatible with nearby land uses?
- Will this development at this location be resource efficient?
- Will the development create sustainable economic opportunities for example in utilising local produce or sustainable tourism, or by providing houses near places of work?
- Are important infrastructure connections available? (poor infrastructure connections often compromise the liveability of a place and providing the required infrastructure can add substantially to costs. Site consideration should include availability of infrastructure including water, sewerage, energy, sustainable transport, vehicular access, broadband and access for construction traffic).

Development Plan policy and allocations

All planning applications will be assessed against the adopted Local Development Plan and supporting supplementary and non-statutory guidance. For sites within or near settlements consideration should be given to the specific settlement guidance in the Local Development Plan. Any Community Action Plans or Local Place Plans for the area should also be consulted.

Natural heritage and landscape considerations are important to the special qualities of the area and in the statutory aims of the National Park – these factors are likely to have greater significance for development within the Park than outside and there are specific policies and guidance relating to these factors. Relevant information and guidance is provided in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and associated supplementary guidance, which

can be found on the Planning pages of the Park Authority website:

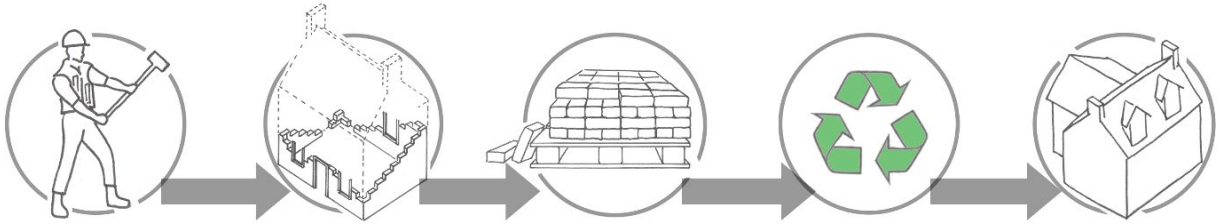
https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/

Early engagement with planners is encouraged to avoid unexpected costs, delays or issues during the planning application process. Initial contact should be with the Planning Authority in which the development would be located, e.g. Highland, Moray, Angus, Aberdeenshire or Perth and Kinross Council.

Replacing or converting existing building stock

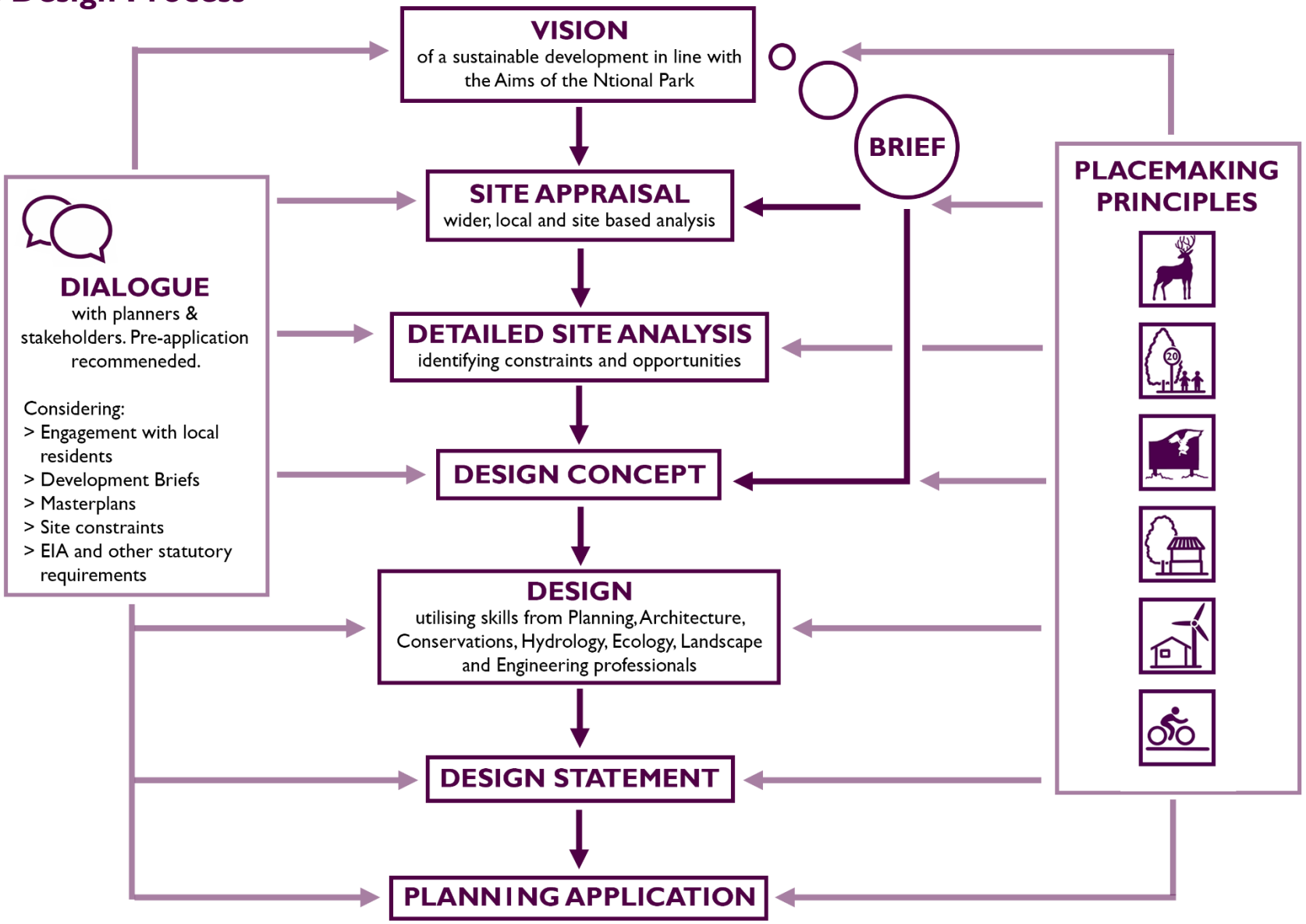
Where possible, materials should be reused in the replacement building, being recycled where this is not possible.

Proposals are encouraged that enable a higher proportion of secondary aggregate/recycled materials to substitute for the consumption of primary aggregates, including facilities for storing, processing and recycling construction, demolition and excavation materials (Policy 10.6: Minerals).



DESIGN

The Design Process



Submitting a proposal

When submitting a proposal for development in the Cairngorms National Park applications must demonstrate a regard for the special built and natural environment of the National Park's distinctive character and location.

This guidance is just one of a range of supplementary documents that should be considered at the earliest stage of the design process. Potential applicants should seek pre-application advice from the Planning Authority relevant to the location of the proposed development, being Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray, Highland or Perth and Kinross Council. Advice should be sought at the earliest opportunity to help identify constraints and opportunities.

Community Engagement

Effective community engagement can reveal important local information, for example about the key assets that any new development should use, protect and/or enhance, constraints that may not be obvious to those not living in the location (such as traffic issues), and challenges facing the community that the development could help to address.

Effective community engagement informs the iterative siting and design process, and demonstrates that community views have been taken into account. It should provide greater understanding about what is proposed and help avoid misinformation where proposals are controversial.

Design Statements

In line with the Planning Advice Note 68 (PAN 68) applications for development in the Cairngorms National Park will be expected to include Design Statements for certain types of development. Applications will be determined, in part, based on the information put forward in the Design Statement so it is important that potential applicants and designers are aware of the content expected to be included.

Early engagement with the relevant Planning Authority should help identify the site specific information that needs to be included in the Design Statement. Planning Officers will assess the application against relevant Local Development Plan policies.

The Design Statement does not have to be a lengthy document. The use of diagrams, illustrations and photographs alongside text is encouraged to provide an overview of the proposal and how it meets the requirements of the relevant Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan policies.

Design Statement: Content

To ensure the Planning Officer assessing the application can make an informed decision the Design Statement should demonstrate how the proposed development responds to the existing landform, character, built, cultural and natural environment of the site and surrounding area, as well as a clear understanding of the effects of the proposed development and how siting and design have been used to address them. If mitigation measures are required to address adverse effects, outline detail of these should also be included. (The best place to describe effects and mitigation

measures in detail will be in other documents supporting a planning application, such as an ecological survey report or landscape and visual impact assessment.).

The proposed development site location, boundary and layout will need to be clearly defined on a map (or maps) with a suitably scaled Ordnance Survey backdrop.

The application site will need to be clearly defined and should be presented in the Design Statement so that third parties consulting on the proposal can glean all the required information without having to visit the site. A successful design statement will include:

Site Analysis/ Appraisal

Thorough site analysis is key to developing a proposal that responds to the sites unique characteristics. A good site analysis will identify , amongst other things, how the landform, built environment and ecology of the site and surrounding area presents constraints and opportunities, the connection options for services, what infrastructure is likely to be required, how the development could connect to existing paths, roads and public transport.

Context

A comprehensive analysis of the context in which the proposed development would be located should consider the landscape character and form, built, cultural and natural heritage of both the development site and surrounding area. Failing to respond in a sensitive manner is likely to lead to the proposal failing to meet the requirements of Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan policies.

Brief

A short brief should be included to outline the project type, delivery and objectives. This is the opportunity to explain why the development is being proposed and what need its creation is going to meet. It should also highlight key constraints that will be overcome by the design solution. This will not be a lengthy piece of text, it should be short and concise.

Design Concept

The Site Analysis, Context and Brief should inform the design concept put forward for the development. Addressing the opportunities and constraints identified in the site analysis, while responding to the contextual analysis findings and adhering to the brief a suitable design concept will emerge.

This will help readers of the Design Statement understand how the proposed development has minimised adverse effects and optimised opportunities to deliver enhancements.

Design Solution

The Design Solution should bring together the preceding Site Appraisal/ Analysis, Context, Brief and Concept with the six qualities of place outlined in this guidance. The Design Solution should highlight how the proposal responds and contributes to the qualities of place outlined in the Placemaking section of this guidance.

Site Appraisal

Will the proposed development have adverse effects on the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQ's) of the Park

The Cairngorms National Park was designated as such because of its outstanding special landscape qualities and the sensitive ecosystems that exist there. The National Park's communities each have their own character and qualities and these contribute to the overall special landscape qualities of the overall Park.

High quality development can contribute to making the Park an attractive place for local people, visitors and investors.

Good development also utilises the existing assets of a location – for example by creating buildings and streets that utilise natural features such as mature trees or enhance important views that characterise places in the Park.

Site and Area Appraisal to inform design

Appraisal and design are integral to each other. Site appraisal should be an early stage of any development proposal and should inform any pre-application discussions.

Appraisal needs to be aware of the bigger picture but also be comprehensive enough so that problematic constraints are not discovered late in the design and development process.

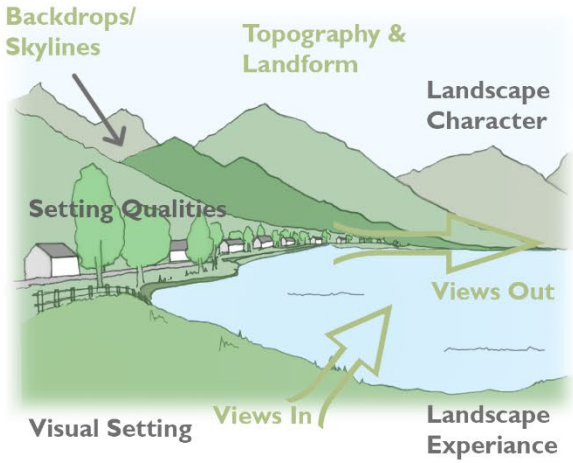
Appraisal can be conceptualised as having three stages relating to the different scales within which the development will be situated:

- Wider landscape context.
- The local area (character / environment.)
- The specific site itself (site analysis).

The factors that should typically be assessed are outlined on the next page however the unique characteristics of the site and the development proposal will dictate any particular areas of focus. The development appraisal will form part of the design statement submitted as part of any planning application.

Appraisal: Wider, Local & Site

Wider Landscape Context



What is the most appropriate scale, layout and type to fit the wider area?

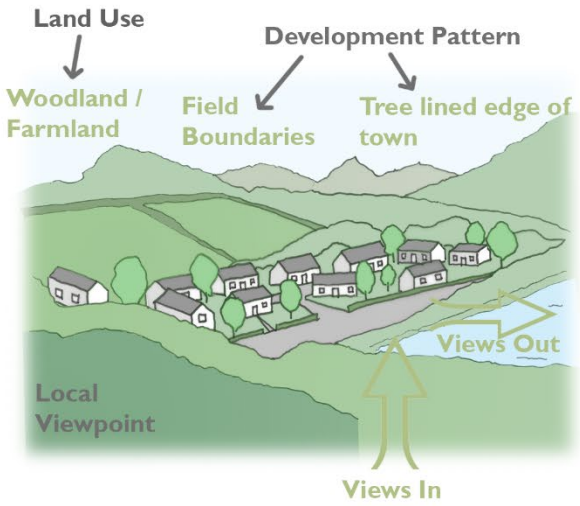
Have you considered landscape capacity or cumulative issues?

Would the development relate well to the skyline, backdrop and landforms?

What existing natural and /or built features provide a sense of place?

What natural and built features might add quality to people's experience of the proposed development?

Local Area Appraisal



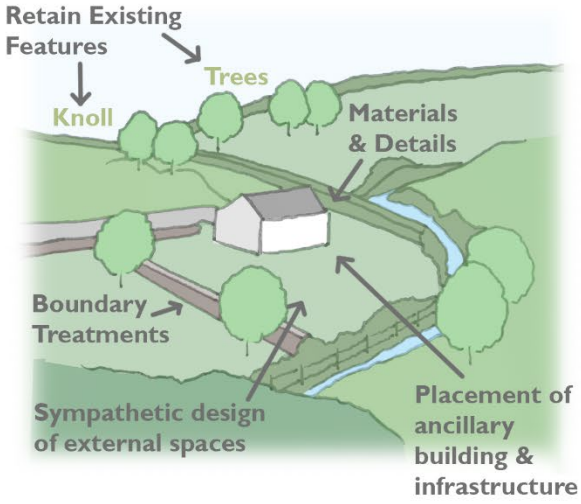
How would the development integrate into the local area visually and functionally? Have you considered:

- Connections to nearby destinations and existing routes
- Landuse
- Approaches and a sense of welcome
- Roofs and skylines
- The overall scale and composition

How will the development integrate in terms of boundary treatments, watercourses, open space, access, landscape features and key views?

What are the assets that can be utilised to add distinctiveness and quality to the development?

Site Appraisal



How will the development relate in terms of details, materials, spaces, landscaping (soft and hard), drainage, biodiversity, green infrastructure and access points?

Have adverse effects on natural and cultural heritage constraints been avoided through careful siting and design?

(Diagrams and text supplied by Loch Lomond National Park Authority)

Wider Landscape Appraisal

Views / Visual Amenity

What are the important views from the site and towards the site, particularly from local viewpoints or well-used places?

Landscape character

What are the landscape setting, features and topography within which the development will be situated?

Are there any specific landscape or scenic designations that apply?

Land form

Look at the topography of the land for the site and surrounding area. How could your development be sited to utilise shelter from prevailing wind, enable passive solar gain and appreciate any views without being visually disruptive in a way that negatively affects the area? Policy 5 of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and the supporting Landscape non-statutory guidance provide more detail about on what needs to be considered and how to assess the landscape interest of a site and surrounding area. Both should be read alongside this guidance and are available via https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/

Natural heritage

In line with the statutory aims of the National park, natural heritage features are a key part of any development appraisal and proposals should, where possible, make a positive contribution to the natural environment by promoting and creating opportunities for biodiversity. Measures should respond to the existing habitats and species found on site and in the surrounding area, rather than being identikit measures that are repeated at every development. Examples of simple measures that could be incorporated into the design of development where appropriate to the site include (but at not limited to): designing and planting SUDs ponds and blue-green infrastructure to create diverse habitats as well as attractive features for people; connecting green spaces in the development with those surrounding the development, to allow wildlife to move through the development; including areas of amenity space that are less managed, such as wildflower areas, to provide insects and other wildlife with an undisturbed place to live as well as attractive feature for people; retaining existing trees and mosaic of vegetation rather than creating a grassed monoculture; native tree planting to complement and enhance existing areas of woodland; providing bird and bat boxes in species appropriate locations; using hedges as boundary treatments to soften, or as an alternative to, fences or walls.

Development appraisal should assess natural heritage features in or near the site, including;

- mature trees or woodland in or near the site (particularly ancient/ semi-ancient woodland),
- green network features in or near the site,
- natural heritage designations such

as SSSIs, SACs, SPAs etc,

- the possible presence of protected species, and
- areas within or near the site that have or could have a particular abundance of flora and fauna.

Policy 4 of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and the supporting Natural Heritage non-statutory guidance provide further information on what needs to be considered when assessing the ecological interest of a site. Both should be read alongside this guidance and are available at: https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/

Other landscape designations

Development should be informed by any additional designations; for example development within a dark sky park is likely to require lighting provision that does not create extensive 'light pollution'. Policy 5 Landscape and supporting non-statutory guidance provides more information on landscape related requirements.

Conservation Areas, Listed buildings and other cultural heritage including archaeology

Consideration should be given to cultural heritage interests in the vicinity of the proposed development. Some interests, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, require specific consideration to comply with the legislation that designates and protects them.

Policy 9 of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and Cultural Heritage non-statutory guidance provide further information on different cultural heritage interests in the National Park and what needs to be considered. Both should be read alongside this guidance and are available at: https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/

Historic Layouts

The historic street patterns and rhythm contribute to the sense of place, along with older landmark buildings reflecting the cultural heritage of the settlement, such as railway stations, churches, civic buildings and hotels.

Such historic buildings may be listed or form part of a conservation area. Their setting and views of them should be respected.

Water Environment

It is important to take into consideration any existing water features, such as watercourses, ponds, field drainage, pipes, sewers and water table information.

Existing vegetation can be an indicator of how wet the ground is and areas of the site that may be prone to flooding.

Given the increased incidence of extreme rainfall events, flooding is of increasing significance. SEPA flood maps may give some indication of risk however professional assessment may be advisable and a Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Impact Assessment may be required.

Local Development Plan Policy 10: Resources and its supporting non-statutory guidance provides further information on the requirements regarding water resources, flooding and dealing with foul drainage.

Local Area Appraisal

Amenities and employment opportunities

What local amenities and services are in the vicinity of the proposed development, and what capacity do they have for the potential increase in people associated with the proposed development? Will new facilities be required? Policy 11 of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan and Developer Obligations guidance provide further information on what needs to be considered. They should be read alongside this guidance and are available at https://cairngorms.co.uk/planning-development/ldp-2021/

Are there local employment opportunities that would reduce the need for commuting or could economic / employment initiatives and spaces be included as part of the development?

Active travel network and sustainable transport options

Are there cycle paths, core path or active travel links in the vicinity that could provide a healthy and pleasant options to arrive at popular destinations? Larger developments in particular should consider how they can include and connect to the active travel and public transport networks.

Grantown-On-Spey: Signposting located in central areas near public transport

Access and Roads

Designers need to consider how the proposed development will link to the existing road network (if necessary). Separate restrictions generally apply to the use of private access tracks but all connections to a public road need to be acceptable in terms of visibility splays to allow safe access and egress.

Utilities Infrastructure

Utilities connections need to be considered from the outset of the siting and design process, as they can incur substantial costs, create constraints to the layout as well as be influenced by other constraints such as topography, ground conditions and ecology. Off-grid solutions require research and detailed consideration to identify the most appropriate options for the site.

Site Considerations

Waste Collection

New development should include appropriate space for bins to store waste and recyclable materials, as well as providing suitable access for their collection. Where structures are required to store bins, the design and materials of the structures should reflect other buildings on site.

Cycle Storage

Appropriate space should also be provided for covered and secure cycle storage. It should be located in areas of natural surveillance and provide safe access to routes in and out of the development.

E-Charging points

Given the need to enable the switch away from vehicles powered by fossil fuels, the provision of charging points for electric vehicles should also be included in the design and layout of proposed developments. Where practical, this should be linked to onsite renewable electricity generation and storage to reduce demands on the national grid.

Site Analysis

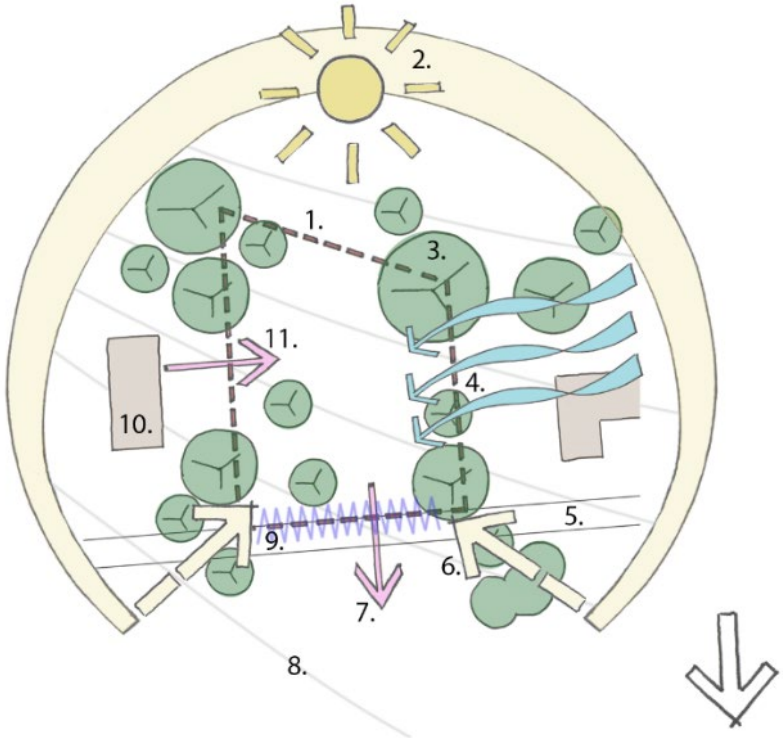
To inform a measured and appropriate design to the chosen site it is important to carry out a site analysis. This will vary from site to site but the main features will remain constant and will present opportunities and barriers for the design of the building.

Every site will be unique and may contain existing mature trees, waterways, differing topography, existing habitats and site specific ecology and weather patterns. The final design will need to respond to these elements as well as the existing built environment and the natural heritage in the area.

Protected species will need to considered, mature trees may need to be retained and the design will have to adapt to accommodate them. Prevailing winds will provide the opportunity for natural ventilation but also need to be considered when designing sheltered outdoor spaces.

As mentioned, good design starts with an appreciation of all the important aspects of a site and the surrounding areas. These can then be considered together to deliver development that makes the best use of site and area assets plus the synergies between them. As part of the design and placemaking process, early and ongoing engagement with Planners in the Planning Authority in which the proposed development would be located (e.g. Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray, Highland or Perth and Kinross Council) is strongly recommended to ensure relevant considerations are included from the outset and avoid costly delays later on in the planning and development process.

1. Site Boundary
2. Sunpath
3. Existing Trees
4. Prevailing Winds
5. Access Road
6. Summer Equinox Sunset
7. Views from Site
8. Contours
9. Noise from Traffic
10. Existing Building
11. Views into Site



Siting

When selecting your site there are many considerations you need to take into account to ensure its suitability and the probability of obtaining planning permission.

This section will explore site considerations, but is not intended to be a fully inclusive guide covering every scenario, as this would be impractical. Instead it is intended to act as a guide to best practice and highlight 'best avoided' scenarios that will be unlikely to be appropriate.

The first hurdle in the process will be to locate a suitable site. Care must be taken to carefully consider the suitability of the potential site to ensure problems don't arise during the design phase, which may ultimately make the scheme financially unviable and/ or unlikely to obtain planning permission.

Key Considerations

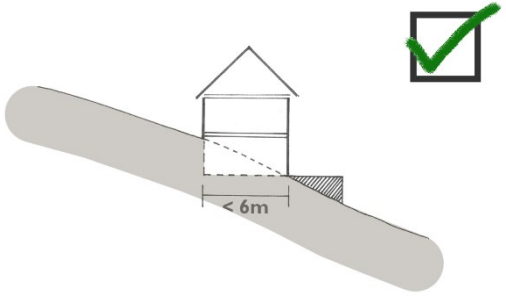
- Location and connectivity with areas protected for nature conservation, of archaeological importance or affecting the built heritage.
- Whether the site is suitable for development in relation to ground conditions and the amount of earth works that may be required, the sensitivity of the existing habitats and species that use the site.
- Is there a flood risk and if so, can this be mitigated.
- Does the proposed development;
  a) Provide a sheltered area, taking into consideration prevailing winds,
  b) avoid creating issues for existing development around the site, such as overlooking or blocking daylight,
  c) take into consideration shading from existing vegetation,
  d) provide good views out of the property to take advantage of the natural assets,
  e) include existing trees and shrubs that can be retained to enhance the eventual landscaping of the site,
  f) have an established or suitable location for access, including space for the necessary visibility splays,
  g) have provision for the connection to mains utilities such as water, electricity and broadband.
- Does the site already have planning permission for what you want to build? If not, you will have to apply for new planning permission. If there is planning permission for what you want to build, what are the planning conditions for that permission?
- Is the site suitable in terms of size relative to the proposed design, building regulations and other requirements? Large buildings with additional outbuildings will need more space.
- In addition to considering the ratio of building(s) to plot size, other considerations such as foul water treatment may need to be considered if the site is in a remote location (i.e. the requirement for a septic tank and/ or percolation filter beds).

Siting Integration

In the Cairngorms National Park the landscape is made up of hills, mountains and valleys and as a consequence, sites with sloping gradients will inevitably be put forward in housing and other development proposals.

Integrating the development into the landscape and lanform should be an early consideration in the design process. Buildings traditionally situated on a slope will be sited with the short axis permedicular to the gradient and this method will be most effective when:

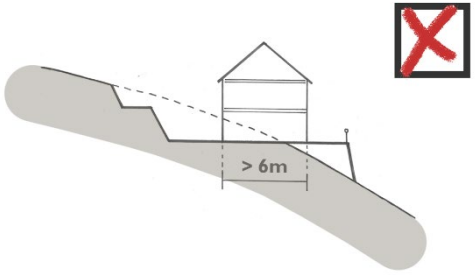
- the building is well integrated with the surrounding landscape form,



- when placing buildings in parallel with the contours ensure the depth does not exceed 6m minimising the need for excessive excavation of the hillside,
- ensure building heights remain appropriate to the setting, surrounding structures and features, and
- ensure landscaping and structural planting around new buildings integrates them with the natural environment, using native plant species appropriate to the location.

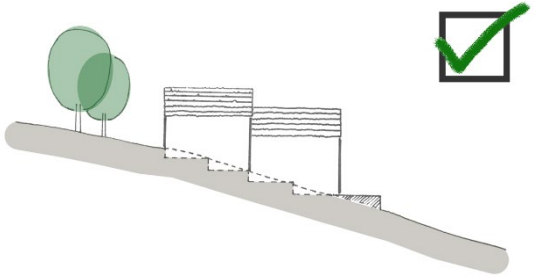
Best practice for designing on sloping sites will be to;

- avoid excessive landscaping that will look out of place in the landscape, including the need for high retaining walls,



- ensure the depth of the building does not exceed 6m and vehicle access and parking is kept to a minimum, and
- avoid buildings sited on the top of a hill as it will potentially negatively impact on the natural skyline.

A potential option for siting and designing buildings on slopes is to use the natural gradient within the internal layout, as shown in the drawing below. Buildings that 'step down' with the natural gradient perpendicular to the contours are likely to have reduced landscape and visual effects.



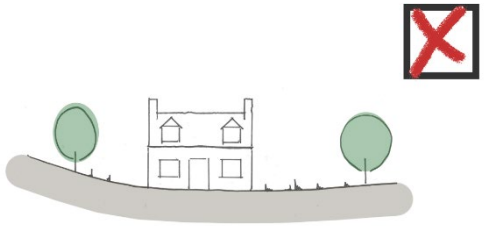
The siting and design of developments should respect and respond to their immediate and surrounding landscape and habitats. For example, in valleys, flat or open spaces, low and small scale developments are likely to have less effects on visual amenity. Large bulky buildings are unlikely to be appropriate in such locations. However, larger buildings may be more easily accommodated if seen in the context of landscape features of a

similar scale, for example mature trees or a hillside.

All proposals should seek to integrate with the natural landforms and features of the site. Where changes to the landform or removal of natural features (such as trees) is considered necessary to accommodate proposed development, a landscaping plan should be included with the application. The plan should demonstrate how such changes have firstly been minimised through careful siting and design, and secondly mitigated through ground profiling and appropriate planting of plant species native to the surrounding area.

A large building or buildings seen in isolation that do not integrate with the landscape are unlikely to be appropriate.

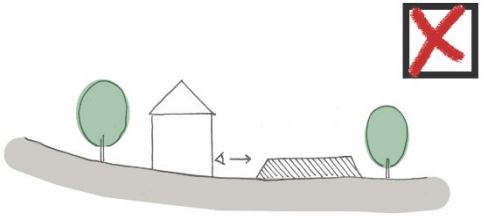
Siting and design also needs to consider other issues, such as drainage and flood risk. Buildings situated in hollows can face challenges with drainage and can be at risk of flooding from surface water.



Where there is a potential risk of flooding according to SEPA's flood risk mapping, a flood risk assessment in line with SEPA guidance should be submitted with the planning application. It must identify the level of risk and how the risk has been mitigated through careful siting and design. However development is unlikely to be appropriate in locations at high risk of flooding.

It may be necessary for a development to incorporate soak away drainage, for example an underground gravel pit to allow rain water from roof gutters and driveways to drain away into the ground, or where connection to mains sewerage is not possible and waste water treatment system need to discharge cleaned water into the ground.

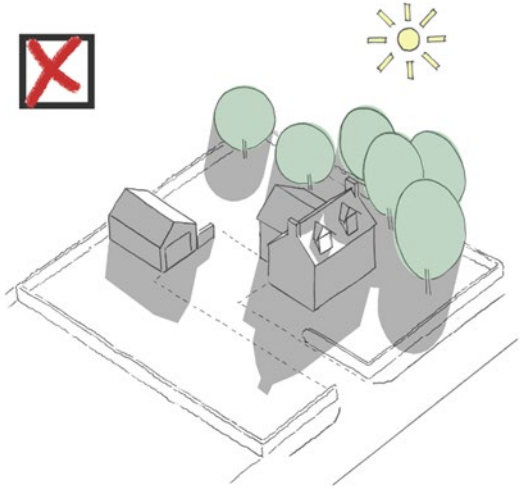
The location of soakaways should be informed by percolation tests, to ensure the ground provides sufficient drainage. Care should be taken with their siting to ensure that tree roots are protected during creation, and excessive ground excavations are avoided so that effects on surface vegetation and natural landform are minimised, and to avoid areas proposed for amenity becoming water logged and unusable.



Site Layout

Once the site has been selected the next consideration will be placing the building(s) in the best location on the site to take advantage of the natural assets, environmental considerations and protecting visual amenity.

The illustrations are generic examples demonstrating the benefits of good site layout, they are not an exhaustive list rather intended to prompt best practice by considering the scenarios.



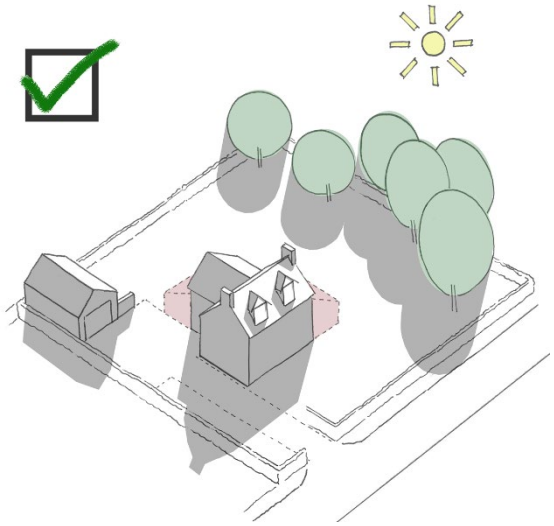
When considering the site layout with regard to existing trees it is important to consider the sun path implications of shading on the proposed building location. Situating the building too close to existing trees will affect the amount of natural light available for internal spaces.

The building will also cause additional shading on the site and reduce the usability of the adjacent spaces.

It is important to consider the effects of shading to maximise solar gain and the availability of natural light in both the building and the adjacent spaces.

Placing the building on the northern side of the site will increase the quality of the usable outdoor space and maximise the potential for natural light and solar gain in the building, avoiding the effect of the existing trees.

Parking, garages and access can also be placed on the northern edge as this area will not be used as external recreation space and therefore will not suffer from a lack of natural light.



Positioning the buildings away from trees will also have ecological benefits; protecting their roots and increasing their lifespan and growth potential.

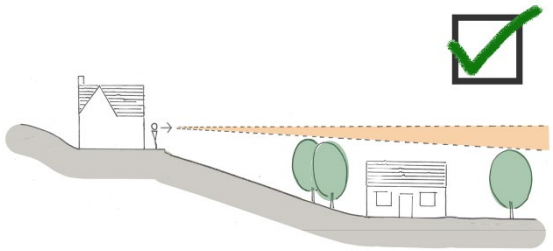
Additionally by placing the building appropriately on the site will increase the potential for future extensions to meet changing needs of the occupants that will also be able to benefit from natural light.

Similar considerations should be taken into account in relation to prevailing winds on the site to optimise the potential for natural ventilation to inform the building design.

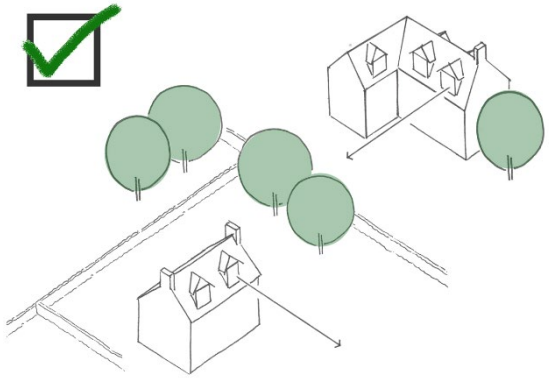
Views

When positioning the building on the site early consideration should be given to the potential views from the property to avoid overlooking neighbouring buildings and their private amenity space.

Siting and design should avoid overlooking of private space, such as living spaces and rear gardens, and other adverse effects (such as noise, disturbance and lighting) on the amenity of neighbours.



Planning applications are less likely to receive objections from neighbouring properties when adverse effects on their amenity have been avoided through sympathetic siting and design.



To avoid this scenario, new buildings should be positioned to ensure minimum overlooking of private space. This could be done by taking advantage of the natural landform to position new buildings at a lower elevation than existing buildings. Another solution could be to use a layout that has frontages facing away from the private space of existing buildings.

Scale and Massing

All buildings need to be in keeping with the surrounding built environment, landform and natural features. This includes being of an appropriate scale. Cramming as many buildings as possible into a site or squeezing an oversized building into a small plot leaving little amenity space is unlikely to be appropriate.

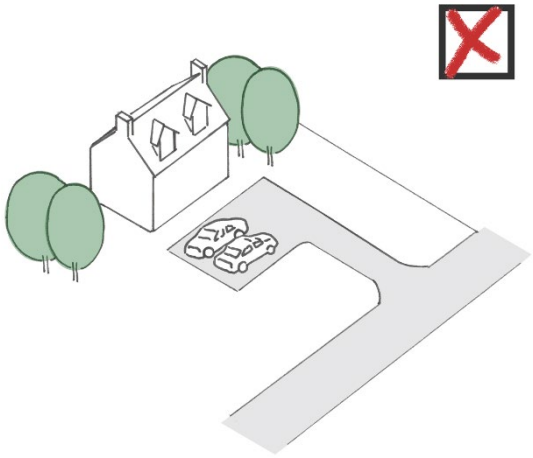
Very large buildings should be sited on plots appropriate to their scale. Landscaping should respond to the site and surrounding area in terms of landform, natural features, trees and other vegetation.

Massing should also be considered; large bulky buildings that stand out on the horizon or break the natural skyline are unlikely to be appropriate due to adverse landscape and visual effects. Smaller buildings that do not stand out or break the skyline are more likely to be appropriate.

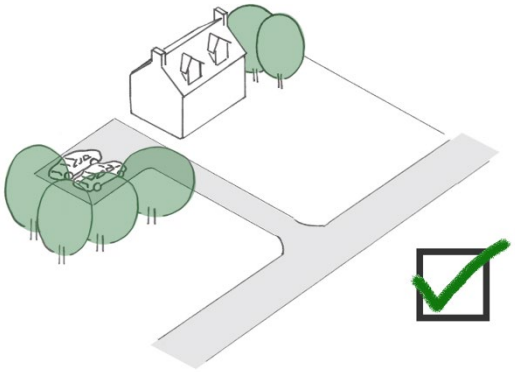
Access and Parking

Development that is centred and designed around existing road layouts all too often does not consider the visual impact of highly visible uniform parking immediately in front of the building.

This creates an environment visually dominated by the use and presence of motor vehicles, reducing opportunities to create safe, welcoming and visually appealing places. It is also not in keeping with national and National Park aims to promote sustainable travel through use of active travel and public transport over the private car.



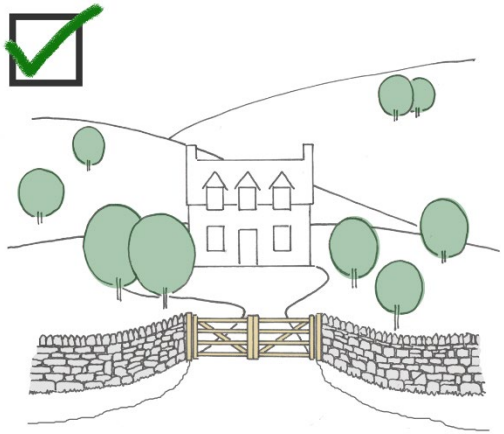
Instead, parking should be well integrated while minimising adverse visual effects, as shown in the example above.



Boundaries

Boundaries should be appropriate to their setting. Boundaries and fencing that is not in keeping with the local character are unlikely to be appropriate.

Boundaries should be in keeping with their surroundings, for example dry stone walling and hedges should complement existing walling, native trees and shrubs to enhance the setting of the area.



Hedgerows and trees should be considered first as an alternative to or in combination with fencing or walling, to reduce hard edges, increase biodiversity and enhance visual amenity.

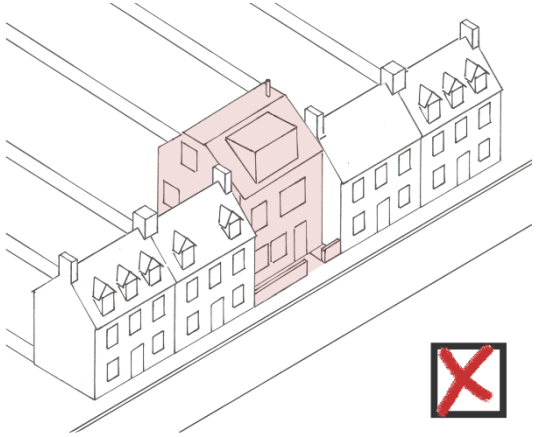
Post and wire fencing can be an appropriate boundary treatment in rural settings. Natural planting and hedges can be used to soften the visual effect of the fencing while enhancing biodiversity, as well as providing privacy and shelter.

On larger developments high fencing that disconnects the development from the surrounding environment will not be acceptable.

Development proposals should have landscaping sympathetic to the surrounding landform and features, helping new buildings fit into the landscape. However good landscaping should not be used to cover up badly sited or designed buildings.

Infill Development

It is inevitable that some new development proposals will seek to fill a gap or be positioned immediately adjacent to existing buildings. Development proposals should seek to make efficient use of existing land, as well as being in keeping with the local character and context in which they would be located.



Development should reflect or complement the characteristics of neighbouring buildings, in terms of form, facades and materials.

Infill development in a high street setting should reflect the existing form and siting of the adjacent buildings. Where appropriate, they should seek to use similar materials and finishes.

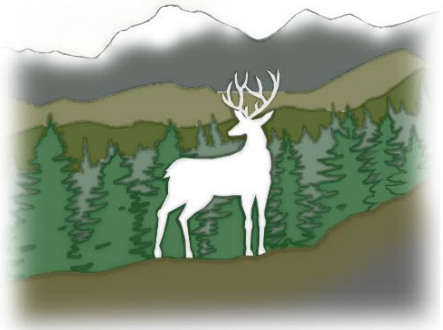
The effective use of land behind rows of housing should not have adverse effects on existing buildings, their setting or other relevant issues covered by policies in the Local Development Plan.

The Six Qualities of Successful Places

Successful placemaking involves collaborative, creative, pragmatic action involving all relevant stakeholders, including local people, with a focus on delivering successful places where people will want to live, visit and work.

Policy 3 of the LDP outlines 6 qualities of successful places. These require that development covers the main themes below:

This section will set out what this means and provide examples of where they have been applied successfully.



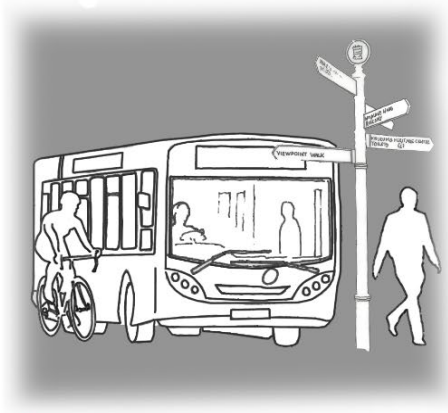
1 Distinctive

2 Safe & pleasant

3 Welcoming

4 Adaptable

5 Resource efficient



6 Easy to move around & beyound

Distinctive

Development that creates a sense of identity with a distinctive character whilst also complementing local features such as;

- landscapes and skylines,
- topography,
- spaces and scales,
- street layout,
- building form, materials and detailing

A high-quality, distinctive environment can improve people's experience of a place and increase their enjoyment, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Housing is the most frequent form of development within the National Park. The design, quality and character of new housing shapes the built environment of settlements across the Park and impacts the natural environment within which they are located.

The Cairngorms National Park is a special place - to develop that, distinctive quality design and innovative site layouts / uses are encouraged.

Place Character within or adjacent to Cairngorms Towns and Villages

Most development within the National Park will be either within or adjacent to existing settlements. Each town or village has its own distinctive character and sense of place - new development does not need to copy what is already present however it should respond to the existing built form and make a positive contribution to the particular place.

Local character varies depending on the way in which individual buildings and their plots relate to each other and to the pattern of streets and spaces within which they are located. Aspects of place character to consider include:

Building line: New development that is set well back or more forward than the existing building line can look out of place.

Urban grain: Each settlement has a distinctive identity based partly on the pattern, density and spacing of buildings. New development should respect and respond to the existing patterns, density and spacing of buildings, to complement and enhance the distinctive character of the settlement. This does not necessarily mean carbon copying, but responding in a way that compliments the existing character.

Place character, built form and settlement pattern

Design proposals need to consider the layout and built form of the existing buildings in the area. New buildings should respond to the existing scale, massing and density of development already present.

When considering siting and design, attention should be given to adjacent and surrounding built development and landscape form. New development should respect and respond to the existing patterns, density, spacing and styles of buildings and boundaries, to complement and enhance the character of the area. This does not necessarily mean carbon copying, but responding in a way that compliments the existing character and style.

Generic mass developed housing schemes with exposed high fencing and plain untreated facades are unlikely to be supported in the Cairngorms National Park.

We encourage early engagement with the Planning team to look at solutions that will help the proposed development better integrate into its surroundings.

Consideration for the façade and boundary planting will deliver proposals that are more likely to appropriate to the National Park setting.

Main Streets

Main streets often have dense blocks formed from rows of buildings often more than 2 stories high and typically with shop units on the ground floor. Lanes, arches and vennels can add character and texture.

Residential Streets

Residential streets display a wide variety of characters. Local character is created by features such as:

- House design and scale
- Materials and finishes
- Detailing
- Planting
- Plot layout

Detailing

Contemporary Entrance, Strathspey

Entrance Detailing, Newtonmore

Contemporary Garden Design, Nethy Bridge

Built Form

Traditional Housing with Stone or Render Finishes, Grantown-on-Spey

Contemporary Built Form Incorporating a range of timber, Newtonmore

Affordable Housing Grantown On Spey

Materials

Stone and Timber on Contemporary Design, Strathdon

Treated Timber with increased durability and lower maintenance, Nethy Bridge

Traditional Stone, Kingussie

Safe and Pleasant

Communities thrive where people have a sense of belonging and safety, where they know each other and have the chance to smile, stop and talk. Safe and pleasant places are attractive to use because they provide a sense of security and encourage active enjoyment of the place.

Safety is improved by giving consideration to factors that affect crime rates: for example by providing a clear distinction between private and public space, by having doors that face onto the street creating active frontages, and by having windows that overlook well-lit streets, paths and open spaces to create natural surveillance.

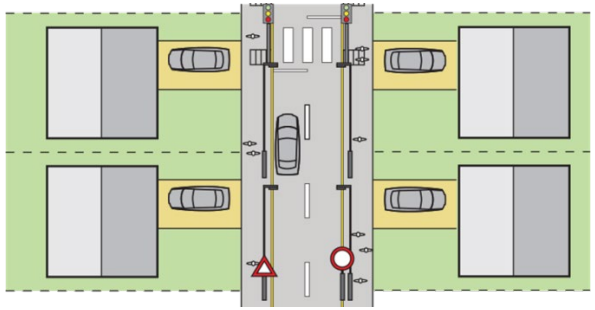
A pleasant, positive sense of place can be achieved by promoting visual quality and providing spaces that encourage social interaction, considering people and place before vehicle movement. In contrast, formulaic application of policy, poorly-sited and designed buildings and poor quality spaces can reduce the feeling of safety we experience when visiting or living within a well-designed community.

Leisure, recreation and garden space integrated with housing (left). Windows facing and overlooking public space can increase safety and help create an active space.

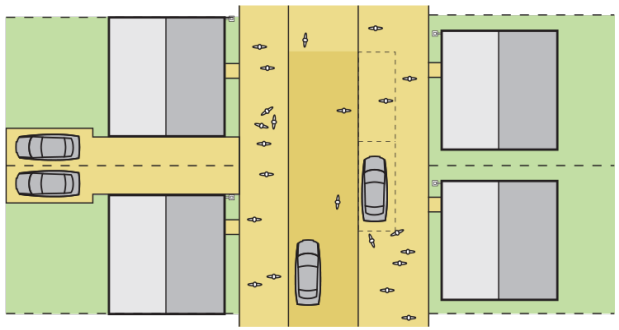
Traditional squares (right) are usually pleasing, adding light and character to the public spaces. They also provide a social space for meeting people and for larger events.

Streets should be designing to provide high quality spaces for the people experiencing them and deliver multiple functions in addition to vehicle movement. Creative consideration of the composition and arrangement of street features facilitates the enjoyment and use of spaces.

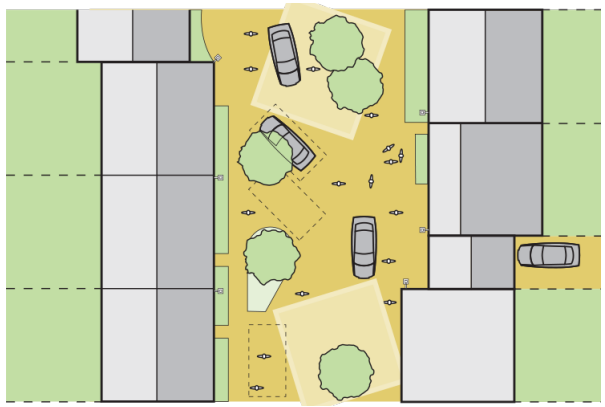
INCREASINGLY SHARED and CO-OPERATIVE , LESS SEGREGATED



- Guard railings
- Excessive road markings and signs
- Conventional kerbs
- Intrusive lighting columns
- Vehicle movement and parking dominant



- No roadmarkings or signage
- Informal crossing
- More dominant pedestrian area
- Low kerbs
- Common material for footway area carriageway
- Reduction in vehicle parking impact



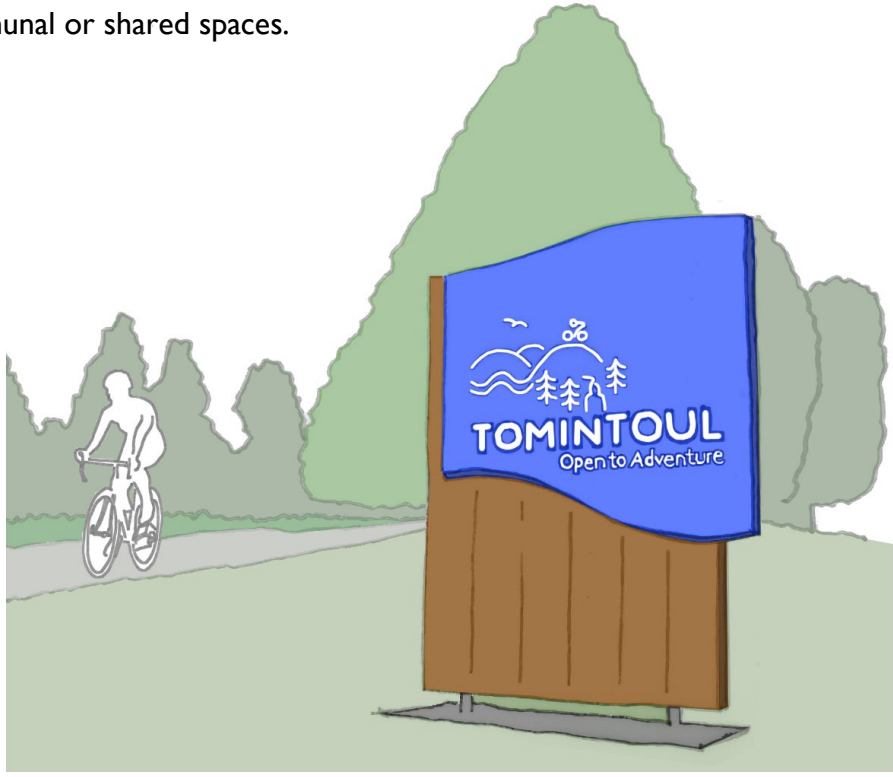
- More informal street compositioning
- Sensitive soft and hard landscaping
- Level surface – no deliniation between street user zones
- User hierarchy favours pedestrians

Diagram (left) from Designing Streets - Scottish Government, 2010

Welcoming

Development that invites people in and helps people to find their way around. A sense of welcome in a place can be achieved by:

- Retaining existing mature trees;
- providing or accentuating landmarks (for example, works of art) to create or improve views and help people find their way around;
- locating a distinctive feature to mark places such as gateways;
- distinctive lighting to improve safety and show off attractive buildings;
- designing with attention to the surrounding area and how the development will use the space within and around it;
- favouring an informal building layout in higher density developments to allow the opening up of views, rather than standard oppressive rows of uniformly sited buildings;
- ensuring new developments raise the aesthetic value of an area;
- integrating sensitive landscaping and well thought out access routes that connect places, with integrated communal or shared spaces.



CASE STUDY 1

Welcoming: Nethy Bridge Affordable Housing

In this development (below), the green space and landscaping forms an inviting frontage to the site. The communal seating is also welcoming and forms a small social space where people can meet outwith private areas – this space is also overlooked by the surrounding houses which increases safety. Small patio areas in front of each house also allow residents to socialise whilst also allowing for a little more privacy. The timber cladding and colour scheme appear lively also helping the houses to harmonise with the adjacent trees and more natural areas. For more modern developments the aim would be to make car parking less obtrusive and look at whether the housing layout could be less uniform. This development is a great example of how development can create a welcoming sense of place.

Adaptable

Development that can accommodate future changes of use because there is a mix of building densities, tenures and typologies where diverse but compatible uses can be integrated. Well-designed places should be multifunctional, for example a residential street being visually pleasing, providing a permeable surface and an area to play on. Adaptable design takes into account how people use places differently, for example depending on age, gender and degree of personal mobility; an increasingly important factor given the rising proportion of elderly people in our communities.

Adaptability in new developments can be enhanced by:

- Considering the landscaping and natural space of a development throughout the design process, rather than an afterthought once buildings, roads, paths and utilities have been designed.
- Creating open spaces, green and blue infrastructure that can provide a variety of benefits such as travel, play, active healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, attractiveness and water management. The Scottish Government's Green Infrastructure Design and Placemaking guidance (https://www.gov.scot/publications/green-infrastructure-design-placemaking/) provides further information.
- Considering the future adaptability of properties – for example the potential to extend or be converted for ease of use by the ageing population or those with a disability. Minimum standards for new buildings are regulated as part of the Building Warrant process, however further general information on designing accessible and adaptable homes is available at: http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/index.php.
- Providing a variety of building sizes and layouts in larger developments
- Incorporating multifunctional SUDs areas, designed to be a positive element of a development. They should be nestled within the landscape and provide open shared space whilst enhancing the local biodiversity.
- Considering any future impacts of climate change so that resilience is built into the site layout, building design, movement and open spaces.

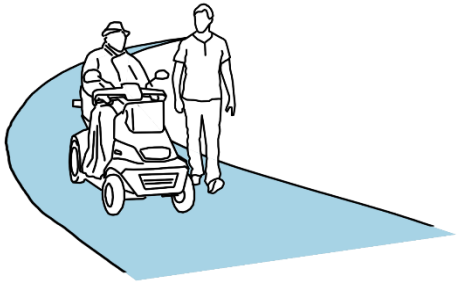
Accessible for everyone

Inclusive Places

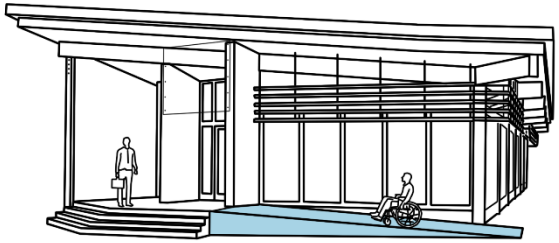
Designers and developers have a legal, social and moral responsibility to ensure the built environment they are creating is accessible to everyone. The Building (Scotland) Act 2003 sets out the minimum standards for accessibility delivered through the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004. Section 4.2 of the Technical Handbook building regulations in Scotland refers to the accessibility and use of buildings.

Designers should consider accessibility at the earliest stage to ensure relevant building regulations are incorporated into the design from the outset, rather than being an add-on at the end of the design process. Examples of good practice include, but are not limited to:

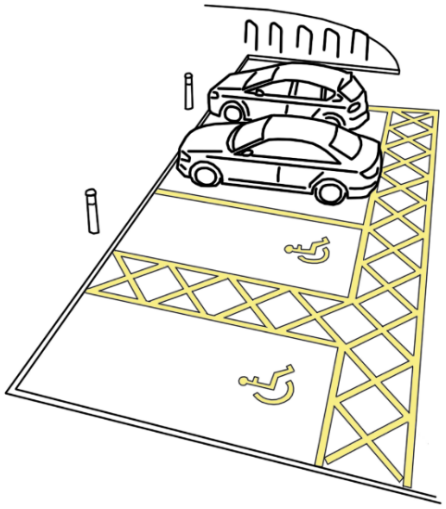
- accessible paths and walkways,



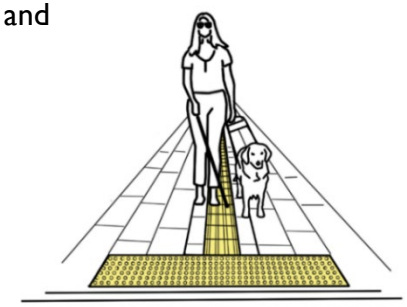
- accessible work places,



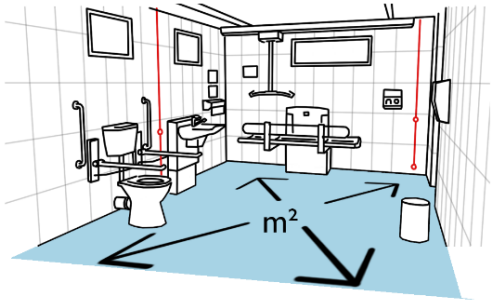
- where parking is required, include sufficient provision for people with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users,



- places that are easy to navigate for people with visual impairments and other conditions such as dementia, and

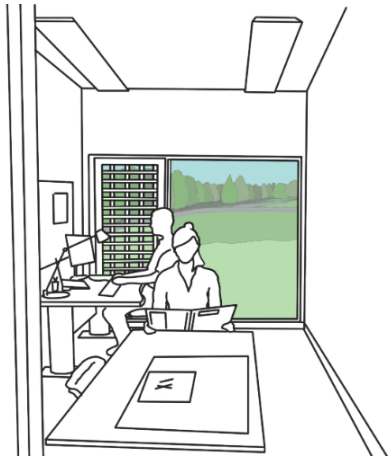


- disabled toilets that exceed the basic requirements, as many of the current facilities do not meet the needs of those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, spinal injuries and muscular dystrophy who often require more space.



CASE STUDY 2

Adaptability: Am Fasgadh



Am Fasgadh ('The shelter') provides space for collections of the Highland Folk Museum whilst also providing offices and flexible spaces for meetings, conferences and trainings. Despite offering substantial floor space, the design enables the building to harmonise well with the surrounding landscape and built form. Usability for people with differing mobility was an integral part of the design process and finished building.

Visual Connection with Nature

Implementing biophilic design strategies have been proven to increase productivity and improve employee well-being. At Am Fasgadh the inclusion of full height and width glazing not only utilises natural lighting to reduce energy consumption but also greatly improves the habitability of the spaces by creating a visual connection to the nature surrounding the building.

Resource Efficient

Well-designed development considers resource efficiency from the earliest stages of the design process. This minimises expenditure / resource use in the long term and can add value for a developer whilst not adding substantially to build costs. Although the resource efficiency of buildings is currently assessed as part of the Building Standards / Building Warrant process, consideration of these matters should be part of the design process to provide an effective solution and avoid costly delays.

Contemporary buildings within settlements (above) can incorporate high energy efficiency, low embodied energy materials and 'green' features that benefit biodiversity.

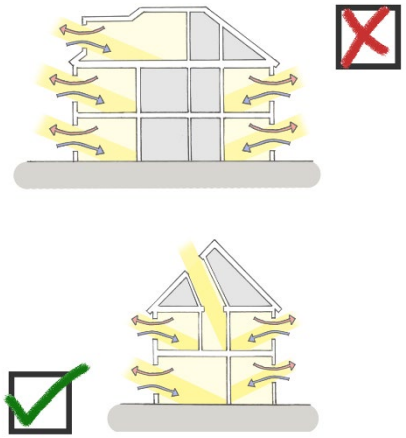
Resource efficient and resilient development is delivered by a holistic / ecosystems level awareness of how relevant factors interrelate, such as:

- development density,
- orientation and shelter,
- glazing that maximises passive solar gain while minimising unnecessary heat loss and overheating in summer,
- opportunities for active travel and low-carbon transport,
- co-location of housing near leisure, health, education, retail, employment locations and sustainable transport opportunities,
- high insulation values and thermal mass in buildings,
- utilisation and generation of renewable / low-carbon energy,
- infrastructure that supports efficient use and recycling of waste water and other resource, and
- landscaped SUDs ponds providing sustainable drainage and an attractive feature for people and nature

Renewable Energy

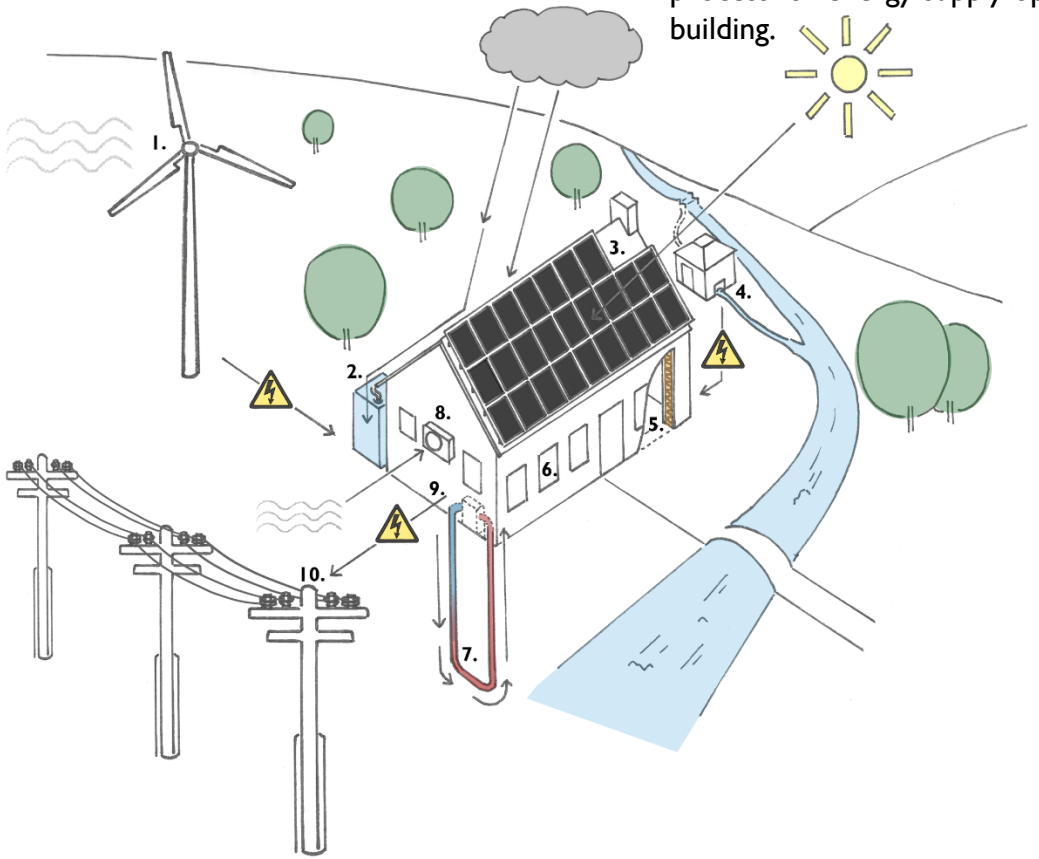
Proposals that support the delivery of alternative energy production and increased efficiency will be supported where they meet the requirements of other policies in the LDP. Opportunities for onsite micro energy production can be identified early in the design process, as previously mentioned, by conducting a thorough site analysis highlighting the opportunities for wind, solar, heat and hydro exploitation on the site.

Effective building design (below) can reduce the need for additional ventilation and lighting requirements reducing the buildings energy consumption.



The examples show how good design can promote natural lighting and ventilation.

The diagram (below) is not an exhaustive list but should be used as a reference to prompt alternative solutions in the design process for energy supply options for the building.



1. Wind turbine
2. Rain water harvesting
3. Photovoltaic cells
4. Small-scale run of river hydro scheme
5. Increased external wall insulation
6. Triple glazed windows
7. Ground heat recovery system
8. Air-to-air heat recovery system
9. Battery Storage in house with excess energy exported
10. Excess energy exported to the grid

CASE STUDY 3

Community hydro-scheme: Resource Efficient

With involvement from the community council, ideas for a Kingussie community hydro-scheme were developed from 2006. Utilising local knowledge, skills and initiative, in combination with public and lottery funding, a run-of-river hydro scheme was installed in 2014. The weir has a simple design that blends into the landscape, a larch-clad turbine house nestles within the gorge, ensuring that it has little visual impact.

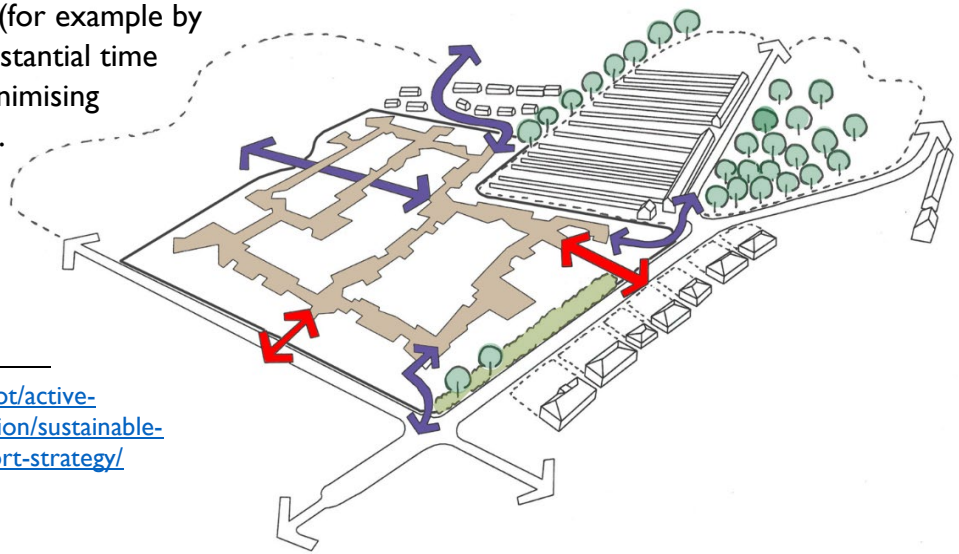
The scheme, administered by the Kingussie Community Development Company, now produces resource efficient energy, some of which is used directly by local organisations with sales to the national grid generating funds that can be used to support other community projects such as local path construction or repair and woodland management.

Easy to Move Around and Beyond

Movement and connectivity are an integral part of any development. Quality design often considers the character, look and feel of a proposed place and how people will move around it on foot, before the movement of vehicles. The needs of pedestrians and active travel are prioritised above vehicular forms of transport. An appropriate density of development and the proximity of housing or businesses near to community amenities, sustainable transport and employment opportunities contributes to both improved wellbeing (for example by reducing the need for substantial time spent commuting) and minimising greenhouse gas emissions.

Designing residential and amenity areas that accommodate the needs of walkers and cyclists along with spaces for people to relax and talk will also contribute to creating a liveable place that people will be more likely to use.

Providing safe and pleasant active travel routes that link places people want to visit and also connect to other sustainable transport options will support both social cohesion and healthy lifestyle choices.



Designing with inclusivity in mind will ensure buildings, spaces and places are accessible for all regardless of their physical ability; something of increasing importance given the greater proportion of elderly people in the Cairngorms National Park.

Paths and streets can utilise features such as trees and boundary walls to add character and identity (as well as providing opportunities to enhance biodiversity). Development proposals need to demonstrate how they have integrated movement and connectivity into their design and how this relates to the travel hierarchy set out by Transport Scotland[1].

Image (left): Polnoon Masterplan, Scottish Government

[1] https://www.transport.gov.scot/active-travel/developing-an-active-nation/sustainable-travel-and-the-national-transport-strategy/

CASE STUDY 4

Speyside Way: Easy to move around and beyond

Quality cycle paths and walkways within towns support people of all ages to move around in a way that avoids fossil fuel use while also being more sociable, healthy and pleasant.

The section of the Speyside Way between Boat of Garten and Aviemore provides local people and visitors with a scenic active travel route between the settlements. It encourages commuting by bike and e-bike which lowers greenhouse gas emissions whilst boosting fitness, health and wellbeing.

It has also supported the creation of events such as 'Parkrun' and 'Race the Train' providing multiple potential benefits including;

- trust and social connections which are associated with increased wellbeing and community action healthy lifestyle options, and
- awareness of the National Park supporting sustainable tourism and the local economy.

CASE STUDY 5

Timber merchant's showroom and office: All Aspects of Placemaking

Locating this office building adjacent to Newtonmore rail station offers both co-location with the housing, amenities and businesses of the town whilst also supporting local active travel and longer distance sustainable travel options. Kingussie is also within easy cycling distance along an off-road cycle path.

Despite a constrained site, the distinctive design offers flexible office space with glazing that utilises the asset of open views to the South and Southeast. The building and associated landscaping incorporates and showcases a range of the businesses own products – including to people travelling by train.

CASE STUDY 6

Dellmohr Affordable Housing: All Aspects of Placemaking

The six Dellmohr housing units in Inverdruie near Aviemore meet all of the Placemaking Principles while also delivering six much needed affordable homes onto the market.

The distinctive design delivers low energy efficient homes, with overlooked public spaces creating a safe and pleasant environment. The small development is also well positioned to connect to public transport and rail services departing from Aviemore, which is within cycling distance.

Image: 16/05133/FUL

CASE STUDY 7

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): All Aspects of Placemaking

All developments need to incorporate SuDS to manage rain water from roofs and impermeable surfaces like roads. For individual buildings, SuDS tend to be simple percolation beds buried underground. However larger developments generate more water, so are likely to need to create above ground features such as swales and SuDS ponds.

Above ground SuDS features present an opportunity for multifunctional use. Well designed, landscape and planted SuDS systems that are incorporated into the design and layout of a development from the outset can contribute to a sense of place providing numerous benefits to both people and nature.

They can provide spaces for recreation and learning, as well as providing an opportunity to enhance biodiversity by creating new habitats.

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 Non-statutory guidance Policy 3 – Design and Placemaking

This document is available in large print on request. Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on 01479 873535.
It is also available to view at www.cairngorms.co.uk

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