

Eden

Design Summary



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Preface

The purpose of the Eden Design Summary is to provide guidance on the design of development, based upon the considerations set out in this regard in the adopted Eden Local Plan. Although concentrating on new development, particularly housing, the design principles can also be applied to extensions, alterations and conversions of existing buildings. The approach taken reflects the Government's guidance on design as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 "General Policy and Principles. This indicates that Local Planning Authorities such as Eden District Council, should promote good design, but that guidance should avoid being doctrinaire in nature.

The Eden Design Summary also responds to the Countryside Commission's initiative concerning "local distinctiveness" which has Government support. It does this by seeking to encourage design which responds to the local context for development, reflecting the special characteristics of design and materials found in the District. It seeks to inform the user about the built tradition of the area and to focus attention on specific factors which should be considered in order that designs for new development have proper regard to their context.

The Design Summary provides a broadly based analysis of these characteristics which may be used by individual communities as a basis for more detailed Village Design Statements. The Countryside Commission publishes guidance on how these may be prepared.

This Design Summary applies to that part of Eden District outside the Lake District National Park.

The Eden Local Plan sets out the District Council's aims with regard to the design of development. The Design Summary represents adopted supplementary planning guidance, and is intended to provide a more detailed level of advice than is practicable within the Local Plan.

The Design Summary includes that part of the District lying within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, a separate and more detailed design guide is also currently being prepared for the whole of the North Pennines AONB by the relevant local authorities and statutory agencies, in recognition of the special qualities of that area. That guide will be available in draft form in Summer 1999, and, although very different in style, should complement the advice to be found in this Design Summary. It is also intended to be adopted as supplementary planning guidance in due course.

Developers and property owners are encouraged to have early discussions with development control officers of the Council concerning ways of ensuring that their proposals enhance and develop landscape and village character. While the Design Summary provides basic guidance, it cannot substitute for the contribution that an appropriately qualified design professional can make to the satisfactory completion of many development projects.

The District Council would welcome designs that demonstrate a positive response to the Eden Design Summary.

Using the Eden Design Summary

Chapters 1 and 2 provide an introduction to the Design Summary and to Eden District.

Chapter 3 provides a brief description of the three main character areas which have been identified, focusing on the materials and design features which make them distinctive. This section also describes characteristics which appear more widely throughout the District. It is intended that this section of the document will provide a context for the design framework which is set out in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 represents the core of the Design Summary. It provides a detailed checklist of points to consider and questions to be answered by designers and developers in relation to three distinct aspects of a site and its setting;

- ◆ the surrounding landscape,*
- ◆ settlement form,*
- ◆ surrounding buildings and spaces.*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 *England has a rich diversity of landscape and scenery and the countryside within Eden District is no exception. Located between, and including parts of, the Lake District and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the landscape of Eden is of exceptional character and quality.*
- 1.2 *The District's small towns and villages are an essential part of the countryside and their distinctive character and variety is a reflection of their history, landscape context and the underlying geology. Pressure for change has resulted from the demand for new buildings and for refurbishment to accommodate new uses. In addition, improved mobility and transport infrastructure has led to a loss of local diversity and distinctiveness and the gradual erosion of that special local character which is so highly prized.*
- 1.3 *Whilst it would be inappropriate to prevent development, new buildings should respect patterns of regional diversity and local distinctiveness. Harmony should exist between the character of the landscape, settlement patterns and the buildings themselves.*
- 1.4 *The Design Summary describes the essential character of the District. In so doing it focuses on the distinctive vernacular character of buildings in each area, rather than on the character of the landscape which has been described in detail in other publications. It also provides guidance on the general principles that should be adopted by designers, developers, builders and property owners in order to ensure that all development, from a major new estate to a small house extension, enhances countryside character rather than detracts from it. Although the Design Summary takes traditional design and materials as its starting point, it does not preclude innovative design solutions where these respect or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, or the use of non-vernacular styles or materials where the site is considered suitable and the architectural approach is justified.*

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- 1.5 *Opportunities for a broad range of development occur throughout the District. It is recognised that a special approach should be taken to achieve the very highest standards in designated areas such as the North Pennines AONB and in Conservation Areas. Equally, it is of vital importance that more modest development, for example on the edge of a settlement or as infill of vacant plots, is undertaken with sensitivity throughout the District. It must be emphasised that such sensitivity to local character need have no adverse cost implications to the developer.*
- 1.6 *The Design Summary does not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the architectural development of the District or a detailed guide to design in the countryside, or prescribe specific design solutions. It does, however, seek to capture the distinctive spirit of broad areas of Eden which share similar characteristics. It is hoped that this context, and the Design Framework set out later in the document, will help individual projects to be designed in a sympathetic and creative manner. To this end three broad character areas within the District have been identified which show a measure of homogeneity of design or materials.*

2. The Eden Countryside

2.1 *The diversity of the Eden countryside and the settlements within it, are the products of physical and historic influences which have acted through time, shaping the basic structure and appearance of the landscape and the materials available to its inhabitants. Drawing upon this resource, the settlements and buildings of Eden vary in terms of their materials, layout and design. These variations are a response to the landscape setting, materials available, climatic conditions and historic influences. The Design Summary attempts to outline the basic characteristics of the domestic vernacular tradition as found within the District's settlements.*

2.2 *The vernacular tradition outlined in this document relates primarily to those buildings constructed from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, with the earlier of these buildings being more truly vernacular in character, reflecting also earlier medieval styles. In referring to the vernacular tradition, the Design Summary is alluding to a process whereby local craftsmen met functional requirements according to traditional plans and procedures, utilising local materials and constructional methods. Later buildings in the area tend to incorporate "polite" styling and detailing*

in response to a wider knowledge of formal architectural design and fashions, adapted to suit local materials, in a way that has become part of the established character of the area.



Fig 1. House showing typical 'polite' styling and detailing

2.3 *Although there are minor variations throughout the District, and particularly within the larger settlements, three broad character areas have been identified which reflect distinct variations in building traditions and materials. These are:*

- ◆ *The Eden Valley*
- ◆ *Westmorland Limestone*
- ◆ *The North Pennines*

2.4 *These variations derive principally from the underlying geology and as a consequence there is a close correlation between these and the character of the broader landscape as described in the Countryside Commission's work relating to landscape character areas and the "Cumbria Landscape Classification" published by Cumbria County Council.*

2.5 *In addition to the three main character areas, there are several localities where clear variations exist. Of particular note are:*

- ◆ *The area around Kirkby Stephen where a local stone, brockram, is widely used;*
- ◆ *Tebay where slate has been used for building; and*
- ◆ *Temple Sowerby where brick produced at the nearby Culgaith brick and tile works appears in a limited number of Georgian buildings.*

2.6 *Although villages and towns grow and evolve or shrink and disappear, many of those within the District have a broadly similar pattern reflecting medieval farming practices. This is characterised by a rectilinear pattern with narrow fields at right angles to the village street or green, divided into*

crofts and strip fields by a back lane. The dwellings and associated farm buildings tend to be located fronting onto, or at right angles to, the village street in a "long house" (with dwelling and byre or barn under a single or continuous roof) or courtyard form. A number of villages are loosely developed and feature central rectangular greens.

3. The Character Areas

3.1 The Eden Valley

3.1.1 *The Eden Valley character area centres upon the valley formed by the River Eden but extending eastwards to include the rolling foothills of the North Pennines and westwards to include the sandstone ridge and broad open landscape of the Inglewood Forest area. This is a varied landscape in both topography and character which is united by land-use, a majority of the area being in farming use, and in the character of its buildings and settlements. The area is well treed with many woods, copses and hedgerow trees. In addition, higher ground in the locality is frequently used for commercial forest planting. This character area is closely related to the Countryside Commission's "Eden Valley" character area.*

3.1.2 *Settlements in the Eden Valley vary in their size and character. There are, however, common features such as a rectilinear layout, often with buildings fronting onto a rectangular green. This form is a striking feature of villages such as Temple Sowerby, Milburn, and Dufton. Others have a more organic form developed around a topographical feature such as a stream or ford, as in the case of Morland. The towns of Penrith and*

Appleby lie within this character area, and, although more varied and robust in design and material characteristics, many of the features found throughout this character area may be observed in these towns.



Fig 2. Plan of Milburn

3.1.3 *A unifying feature of this area is the use of sandstone as the dominant building material. This varies significantly in colour, from the orange/brown of the St. Bees sandstone along the Pennine foothills, the salmon pink and red of the Penrith sandstone, to the beautiful grey/pink of the sandstone from Greystoke and Appleby. The widespread use of this material for buildings and boundary walls lends the whole area an immediate and distinct character.*

3.1.4 *This is reflected not only in the colour of buildings, but also in their architectural detailing. When first quarried the sandstone is readily worked. As a consequence it is very widely used in finely dressed form for quoins and window surrounds, even on humble buildings where the walls may be of coursed rubble. On finer and more substantial buildings the stone is frequently dressed and used as ashlar and finely carved window and door heads are common. In addition to the use of sandstone as an exterior finish, many buildings of rubble construction in this identity area have been lime washed or rendered. Where render appears, it is either as a wet-dash or roughcast finish, or as a smooth surface marked to mimic ashlar (stucco), with walls painted white or in bright pastel shades and window surrounds picked out in a contrasting colour.*

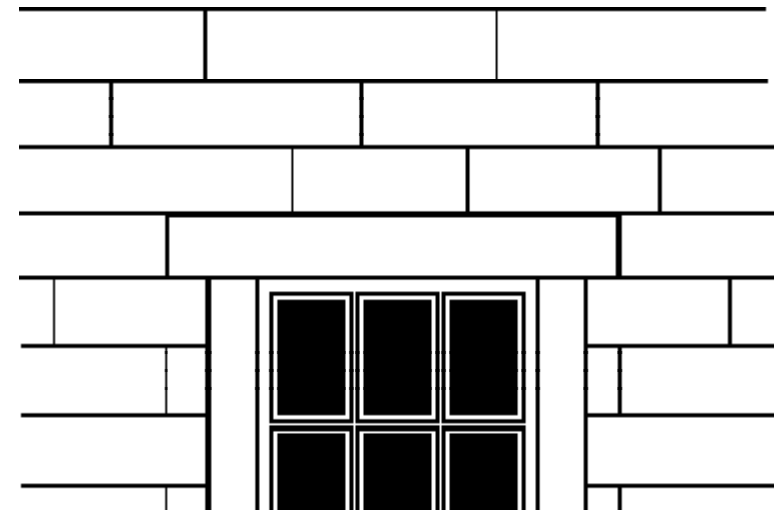


Fig 3. *Fine-jointed ashlar stonework*

3.1.5 *The most frequently found traditional roofing material in this area is Westmorland Green slate, a thick green slate laid in diminishing courses giving roofs a distinctive colour and texture. The use of this thick and heavy material results in roofs usually having a slope of about 35°. Red/brown sandstone slates are also frequently found, particularly on farm buildings. This again is a thick and heavy material. Its large unit size, however, allows the use of a rather shallower pitch of about 30°. These materials also often appear together, with a first course of sandstone slates being used at eaves level and the remainder of the roof being Westmorland*

Green slate. In this character area, ling thatch was at one time common and a number of buildings still feature the very steep roof pitch required for that material.

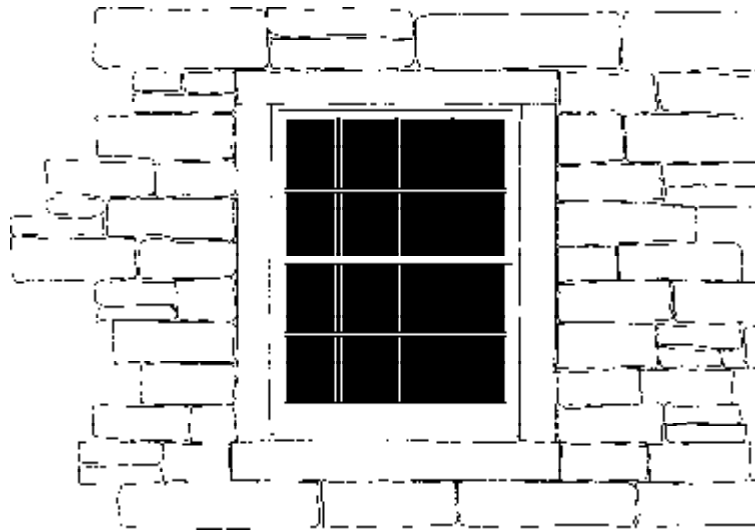


Fig 4. Sash window with sandstone surround and squared coursed rubble walls

3.2 Westmorland Limestone

3.2.1 Much of the south of the District falls within this character area. The area includes the Westmorland Fells, Lune Valley and Howgills. The character area largely coincides with the Countryside Commission's "Orton Fells" character area. In landscape terms this is "characterised by large expanses of moorland and limestone upland with settlements restricted to lower land."

3.2.2 A majority of settlements in this area are to be found clustered around streams and springs in valley bottoms. Village greens tend to be linear, reflecting this type of location. Many settlements retain well preserved features which reflect early medieval farming practices such as crofts, strip fields and back lanes. Throughout the area is evidence of the long history of human activity with prehistoric settlement and burial sites being frequently found, especially on the upland ridges.

3.2.3 The principal building stone in this area is limestone, reflecting the underlying geology. It is a hard stone varying in colour from light grey to pale yellow. Because it is not readily worked it is most frequently used randomly with limited coursing

and in fairly small pieces. Window and door openings are often treated simply with stone cills and lintels, lacking the dressed surrounds found elsewhere in the District. Where dressed stone features do appear they are frequently made from more easily worked sandstone imported from neighbouring areas. In both Kirkby Stephen and the Lune valley some ornate window detailing occurs in the form of gothic revival tracery and carving.

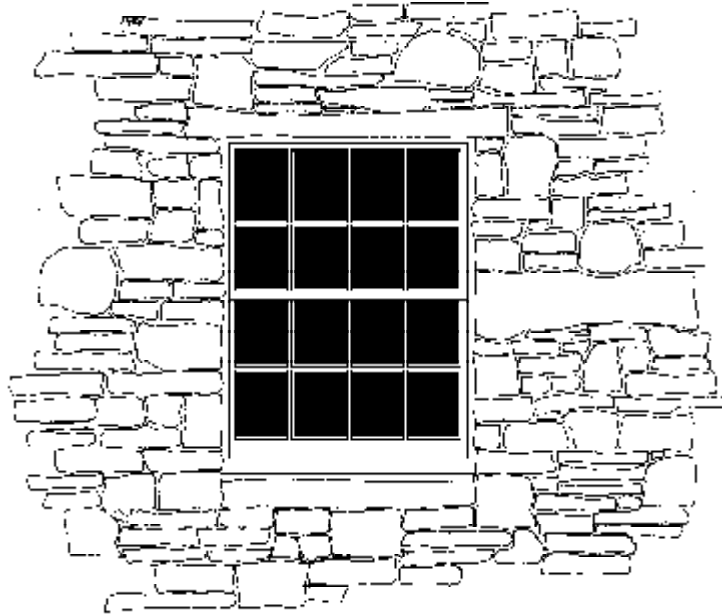


Fig 5. Typical detailing of window opening in limestone rubble wall

3.2.4 While limestone is the most commonly found material, others do occur. For example a pale yellow sandstone is found particularly on more important buildings such as churches in and around the Lyvennet valley. This reflects variations in the underlying geology which changes to include both this material and Penrith sandstone.

3.2.5 Throughout the District, but especially in this character area, buildings are frequently lime washed or have rendered and painted exteriors. This is a reflection of the quality of the local building material and the inclement weather. Where render occurs it usually has a textured wet-dash finish and tends to be self-coloured or lime washed in white.

3.2.6 As elsewhere in Eden, the most commonly found traditional roofing material is Westmorland Green slate laid in diminishing courses to a pitch of about 35°.

3.3 *The North Pennines*

3.3.1 *The North Pennines character area covers that part of the District to the east of the Pennine ridge. This is a distinctive open upland landscape, the importance of which has been recognised by designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is little tree cover, what there is being confined to the valley bottoms. Due to the elevation and exposure of the locality, farming extends only part-way up the valley sides, the higher fells being open moorland. Again, there is a close correlation with the Countryside Commission's "North Pennines" character area.*

3.3.2 *Development within the area tends to be confined to the valley bottoms, notably around the settlements of Alston, Nenthead and Garrigill. These have grown organically and their forms reflect differing backgrounds:*

- ◆ *Alston its market function,*
- ◆ *Nenthead its mining history,*
- ◆ *Garrigill its agricultural role.*

3.3.3 *Millstone grit is the predominant local building material. Its honey colour gives buildings in the area a warm and attractive appearance. The stone is, like*

the sandstone of the Eden valley, readily worked. It is used, therefore, in random rubble and coursed squared rubble form and as fine dressed ashlar, for quoins and for window and door surrounds. In detailing, buildings share many features with those of the Eden Valley although external staircases are an unusual feature of some domestic buildings in Alston. Similarly, Bastle houses represent a significant building type within this area, particularly in isolated locations. These are defensive thick-walled farm buildings with living accommodation at first-floor level over a byre.



Fig 6. *Coursed, squared rubble stonework*

3.3.4 Unlike other parts of the District, the traditional roofing material for the North Pennines is a yellow sandstone. This is used in large, thick slates. The unit size allows the use of a shallow roof pitch of about 30°. This slate is, however, heavy and requires a substantial roof structure. As a result the area has seen the introduction of others including both Westmorland Green slate and Welsh slate.



Fig 7. North Pennines detail at Alston

3.4 Generic Features

3.4.1 There are certain design characteristics and use of materials which are found throughout the District. These reflect a response to the particular climatic conditions of the area, the materials to hand and the building practices which were commonly used from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. This is the period from which the present form of the majority of the traditional buildings date.

3.4.2 In terms of building form, traditional domestic buildings in the District fall into two main categories, both generally of two storeys. The first and earlier is a derivative of the “long-house” form with both house and farm building under a continuous roof, often with a cross passage. The second and later form is a three bay house of largely symmetrical design with a central doorway flanked by a window on either side. In addition, groups of smaller 1.5 and 2 storey cottages are a common feature of the District’s villages. A variety of other traditional house forms have developed in the District such as the “outshut”, with a rear single storey extension under a continuation of the main roof, and the “double pile” house with a rear two storey extension covered by a separate pitched roof.

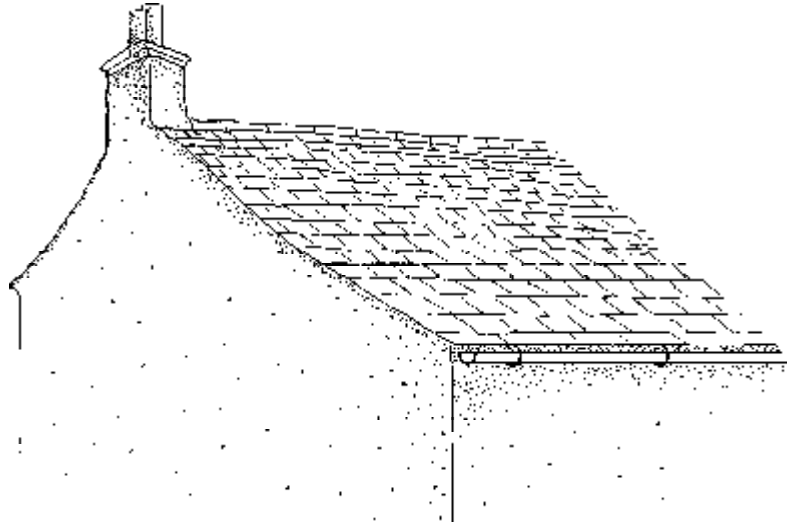


Fig 8. House with outshut roof

3.4.3 Other building forms also occur, particularly in the case of larger or more important buildings or those which survive from the medieval period. These show an interesting variety such as the pele tower and “H” and “T” plan houses and there are also more recent Georgian and Victorian large houses and mansions of formal design. These buildings often display a wide range of decorative detailing including carved stone hood moulds or, in the case of later houses, carved stone surface decoration. Other features of interest include spiral staircases often built within the thick walls of medieval buildings or within semi-circular stair towers

projecting from the rear walls. Overall, however, such buildings are modest in number and whilst important, make only a small contribution to the overall character of the area. Some of these architectural details, such as hood-moulds, have often been incorporated into humbler and more recent buildings.

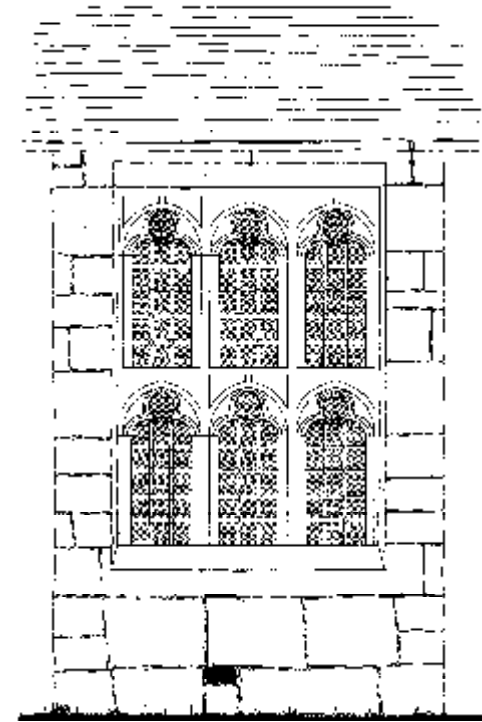


Fig 9. Unusually ornate medieval mullioned window

3.4.4 *The design and detailing of buildings also falls into two main categories. Older, medieval buildings tend to be lower in height and often have a roof of “cruck” construction reflecting a tradition of steep, ling thatched roofs, especially in the eastern parts of the District. Many of these have been heightened and the roof pitch reduced to a still steep 35° to accommodate Westmorland slate roofing. Window openings tend to be narrow, two or three light casements separated by thick stone mullions. These usually have small-paned timber casement windows. Although some older iron and leaded windows remain, these are becoming increasingly rare. Frequently these openings have been adapted to take “Yorkshire lights” or altered to take vertical sliding sash windows with twelve or sixteen small panes. Doors are often vertically boarded oak, but six panelled doors are also common. Whatever their form, windows usually have a vertical emphasis either in the shape of their openings or in the proportion of individual panes. Throughout the area white paint is commonly found as the final surface treatment for timber, including windows, although other paint colours are not uncommon and can prove very attractive.*

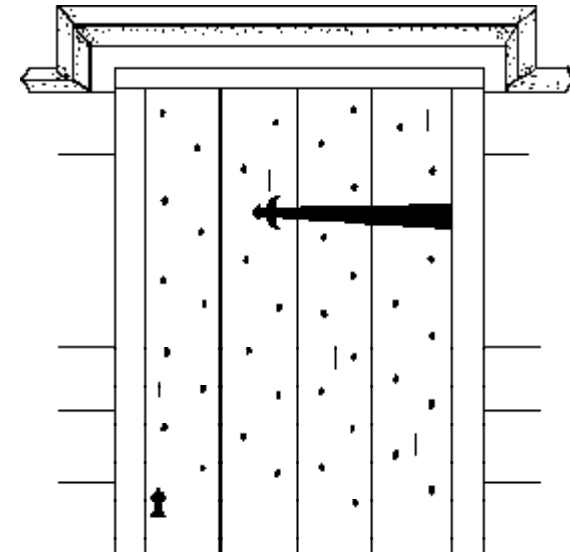


Fig 10. *Vertically boarded or plank door with hood-mould*

- 3.4.5 *More recently built houses tend to have a similar 35° roof pitch usually supporting graduated Westmorland slate. Many display classic Georgian sash windows of 12 or 16 panes and doors of 4 or 6 panels. Some later, Victorian, detailing includes plainer two or four paned sliding sash windows and exterior decoration such as porches, overhanging eaves and carved bargeboards.*
- 3.4.6 *Throughout the District, certain characteristics are found on buildings of all ages and types. For example, gables tend to be blank and the proportion of window to wall is low, giving buildings a sturdy*

appearance. In addition, apart from occasional examples of more ornate Victorian design, the exteriors of buildings are treated in a simple manner with both the eaves and particularly verges of roofs set almost flush with the faces of the supporting walls. Guttering is generally of cast-iron fixed directly to the wall face by hangers and brackets. Roofs tend to be unbroken and dormer windows are rare. Stone copings along verges, and kneelers are also found.

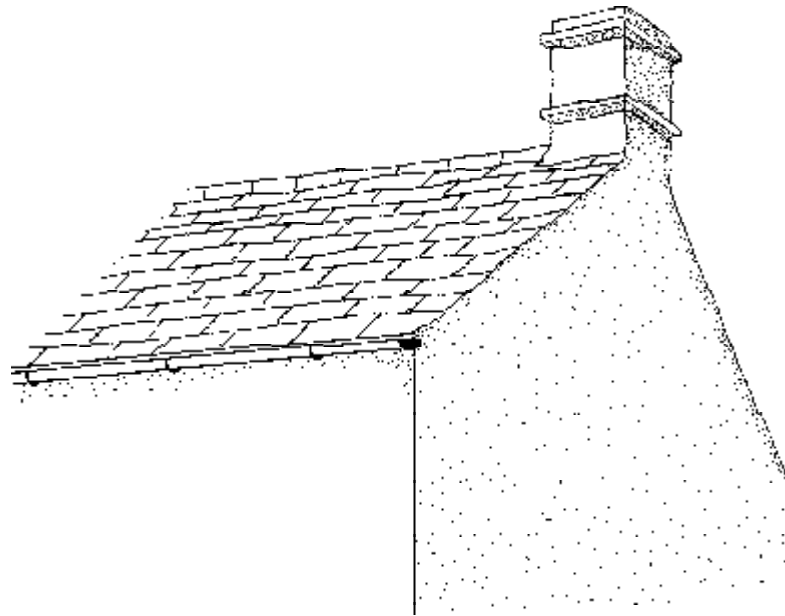
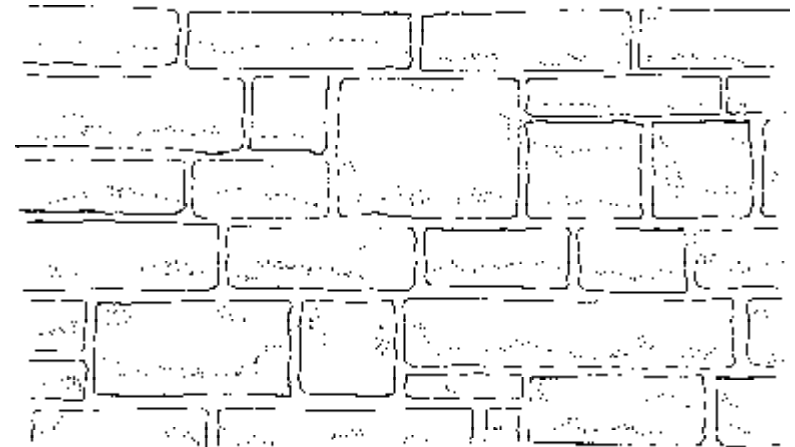


Fig 11. Typical eaves and verge detailing

3.4.7 Throughout the District, walls of natural stone construction dominate. These are generally of random rubble, coursed squared rubble, or ashlar form. The use of partly-coursed squared rubble, (sometimes called random-coursed squared rubble or mixed-coursed squared rubble) although found, is not common, and the use of this stonework, particularly when the stone is machine cut, tends to look incongruous and should be avoided.

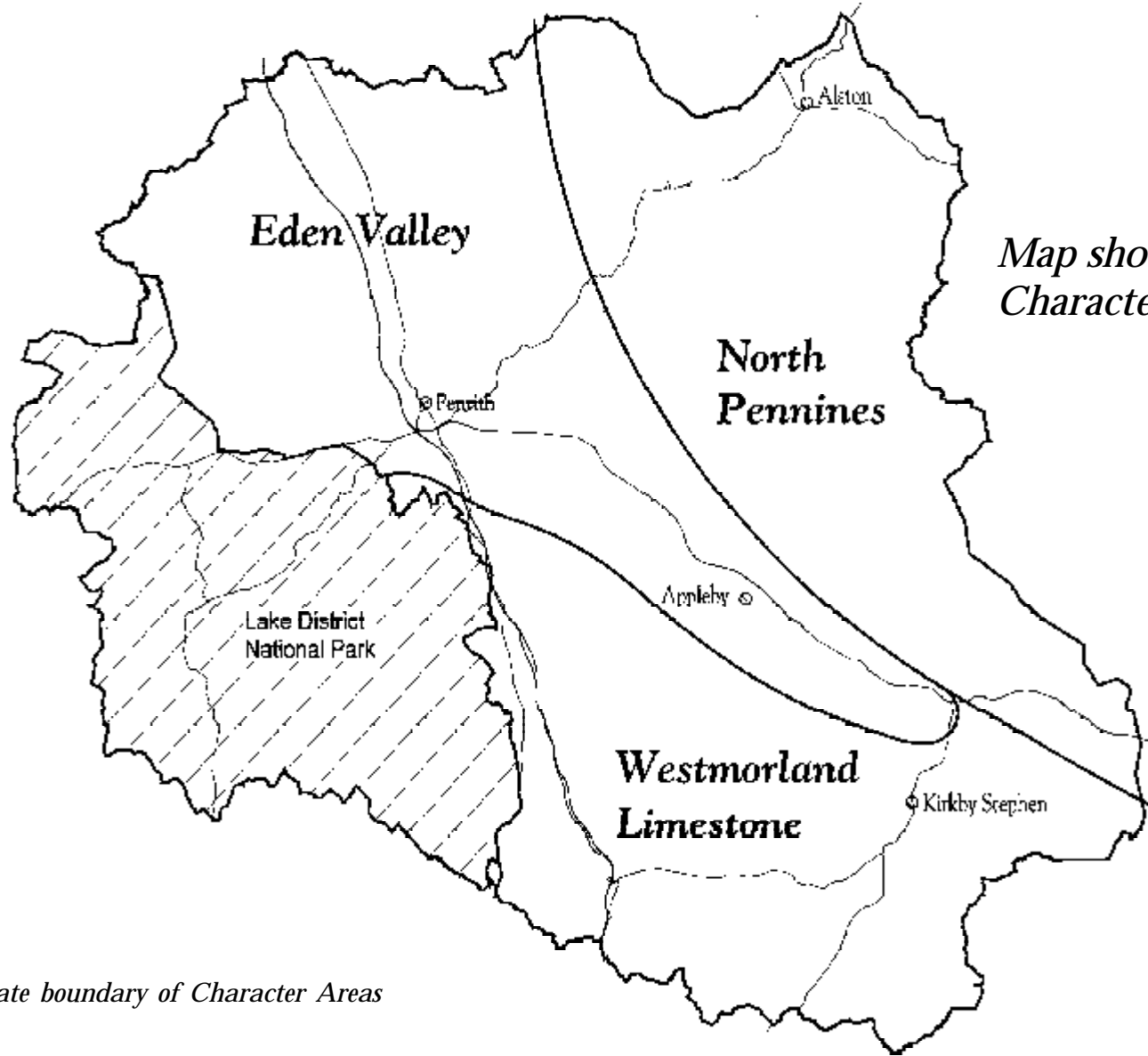
Fig 12. Partly-coursed squared or machine cut stonework



can look incongruous and should be avoided.

3.4.8 *Of considerable importance to the traditional character and appearance of settlements is the simple, informal nature of the roads, farmyards and verges. The carriageways of roads and accesses are generally narrow, often with wide grass verges without kerbs. Although the majority of public roads are now finished in tarmac, many access lanes and farmyards are still finished in hard-core or with hard-core runnels, or in rough cobbles rather than formal setts.*

3.4.9 *The treatment of boundaries is a final unifying feature. Reflecting the climate and availability of materials, boundaries are most frequently marked by stone walls, constructed of the stone most readily to hand. The local materials of each identity area are, therefore, reflected in clear variations in walling styles and materials.*



*Map showing
Character Areas*

— *Approximate boundary of Character Areas*

4. *The Design Framework*

4.1 *The Eden Design Summary seeks to provide general guidance to designers, developers, builders and home owners, in order to ensure that the developments which are proposed are compatible with and complementary to the distinctive and diverse character of Eden's countryside and villages.*

4.2 *The guidance takes the form of a Design Framework which is intended to encourage those involved in the development of new buildings to consider the characteristics of the local landscape, settlement pattern and building character, and to use these as a starting point in planning and designing their development. An appreciation of the local area is essential to the development of good standards of design in the countryside. The descriptions of character areas and generic features set out in Chapter 3 are intended as a basic introduction to these considerations and a context for the use of the Design Framework.*

4.3 *The Design Framework is not intended as a "strait jacket" to design, but aims to encourage good practice and a creative and imaginative approach to new development which is sympathetic to the character of the countryside and villages of Eden.*

4.4 *It considers some of the basic elements of character which should influence:*

- ◆ *the setting of development within the landscape,*
- ◆ *the siting of development within a settlement,*
- ◆ *the character of development in relation to surrounding buildings and spaces.*

In relation to each, the Design Framework outlines a checklist of points to consider and then poses a number of questions designed to test the proposed design in relation to its setting, siting and detailed character.

4.5 *Using the Design Framework*

4.5.1 *The following actions define the basis of this approach to designing for a particular site.*

- ◆ *Start by deciding which character area your proposed development would be located in.*
- ◆ *Using the broad descriptions of the area and local building characteristics provided in this Summary, together with your knowledge of the local area, consider the principle aspects of the characteristics of the area at three broad levels; landscape setting, village form and character, character of surrounding buildings and spaces.*
- ◆ *Now test your proposed development by considering the questions posed in each section. These should lead you to decide how it would sit within the landscape, how well it would be sited within a village, and the extent to which it would reflect the characteristics of local buildings and spaces. In other words, does your proposed development respond to, and complement the character of the countryside and of the settlement within which it would be located?*

- ◆ *Finally, consider whether there are ways in which your proposed development could be altered and improved, so that it responds more sympathetically to the character of its countryside setting and of the village location.*

4.6 *Landscape Setting*

4.6.1 *Consider the following aspects of the landscape setting for your development:*

- ◆ *the main natural and built elements of the landscape such as ridges, valleys, parkland, farmland, woods, hedgerows, walls, trees, streams, scattered farms, etc. which may characterise the countryside which surrounds your proposed development.*
- ◆ *the ways in which these elements and features add to landscape variety combining to form distinctive landscape patterns.*
- ◆ *whether the landscape has an open character, with long views and broad horizons, or whether views are restricted by vegetation or landform giving the area an enclosed or intimate character.*

4.6.2 *In the context you have assessed, answer the following questions:*

- Q *Does your proposed development complement the character of the surrounding area?*
- Q *How will it appear, in relation to the existing features in the landscape, when viewed from short range, or from longer distances?*
- Q *Are there any viewpoints from which the development would be particularly prominent?*

4.7 *Village Form and Identity*

4.7.1 *Look carefully at the form and identity of the settlement within which your development is to be located, paying attention to the following aspects:*

- ♦ *the character of the edges of the settlement, and their relationship with the wider landscape beyond. Lines of trees, copses, hedgerows, walls and streams may extend from the countryside into the village, creating a varied edge which may enclose or conceal the settlement.*
- ♦ *the character and pattern of the settlement, which will probably have evolved over many centuries and which relies upon the inter-*

relationships between buildings, road pattern, open spaces, features such as historic village greens, back lanes, crofts and strip fields, often defined by walls or mature hedgerows and trees. These are all important elements which together combine to produce a harmonious whole.

4.7.2 *In the context that you have assessed, answer the following questions:*

- Q *Is your proposed development sited to complement the form of the village, and to avoid disruption of historic patterns of enclosure, or of landscape features which may define or conceal the settlement?*
- Q *If sited on the edge of a settlement, does it integrate well with both the settlement and the surrounding countryside?*
- Q *Would your proposed development occupy an open space within the settlement which is important to the identity and harmony of the settlement and/or to the settings of other buildings?*
- Q *Would your proposed development affect public views of landmark buildings, roofscapes or other locally valued vistas?*

4.8 *Building Character*

4.8.1 *Finally, consider the following aspects of the character of nearby buildings and of the development that you propose:*

- ◆ *the position, scale, volume, proportion, density and height of your proposed development in relation to adjacent building lines or frontages, roads and open spaces.*
- ◆ *the design of surrounding and adjacent buildings, in particular the unity which may be apparent within a building frontage. Look particularly at the features of those buildings which give the settlement or area a particular character.*
- ◆ *the contribution to the village character made by features such as roof pitch, orientation and relative height of roofline, the presence of gable ends, chimneys and porches, the site, shape and frequency of windows and doors etc.*
- ◆ *the traditional materials which have been used in the construction of the settlement. These will include various types of stone, sometimes rendered and sometimes in combination, and the ways in which these materials have been used to produce a vernacular style.*

- ◆ *the contribution made to local identity by such features as boundary walls, fences, hedgerows, verges, trees, avenues, orchards, copses, streams and ponds.*

4.8.2 *In the context you have assessed, answer the following questions:*

- Q *Is your proposed development compatible with and complementary to surrounding and adjacent buildings within the settlement?*
- Q *Does it conserve and incorporate existing features which make a contribution to local such as boundary walls and established trees and shrubs?*
- Q *Is it designed to respect the scale and density of surrounding buildings?*
- Q *Does it reflect, in its design, detail and materials, the particular character of the settlement?*

5. *Contacts*

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6. Further Reading

Statutory Development Plan

Eden Local Plan. Eden District Council (1996)

Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan: Development for the 1990's. Cumbria County Council and The Lake District Special Planning Board (1995)

Other Supplementary Planning Guidance

Parking Guidelines in Cumbria (1997)

Layout of New Residential Developments (1996)

Agricultural Buildings Design Guide. The North Pennines AONB. (1998)

(Building Design Guide for the North Pennines AONB: Draft 1999)

Other Relevant Publications

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