

Hartland Peninsula Design Guide



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CORDIALE

Managing Landscape Change

Worcestershire | South West England | Herefordshire



Lighthouse at Hartland Point

1. Introduction.....	07
How to use this guide	06
Introduction	09
Purpose of the guide	11
North Devon AONB	12
Interreg Cordiale.....	14
European Landscape Convention	15
Policy background	16
Methodology.....	17
Landscape Character Assessment.....	20
2. Landscape Character.....	23
Landscape Environment Character	25
Landscape Types	26
Geology	27
Environmental Designations.....	28
Public Access.....	29
Wildlife & Biodiversity	30
Notable Buildings & Historic Landmarks	31
3. Settlement Character.....	33
Historical Background	35
Settlement Pattern.....	37
Hartland Village.....	39
Welcombe Village.....	49
Stoke Village.....	55
Hamlets.....	61
4. Design Guidance.....	67
Sustainable Design.....	69
Residential	77
Agricultural	83
Tourist and Commercial	91
Building Materials and Elements.....	95
Highways.....	107
5. Appendices.....	111
Appendix 1: References.....	113
Appendix 2: Glossary	114
Appendix 3: Public Consultation.....	115



Speke's Waterfall

section 1:
Introduction



Thatched Cottages, Stoke

How to use this guide

This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the relevant policies and Supplementary Planning Documents of the Torridge District Council Local Plan. Much of the guidance in this document relates to works which require planning permission. Some guidance also relates to works that will require building regulations consent or consents under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It is advised therefore that the local planning authority (LPA) is contacted before any future work to buildings is undertaken to confirm whether planning permission or other consents are required.

In all proposals involving new buildings and alterations to existing buildings, it is important to consider design issues early in the process. Designers, developers and landowners should give regard to the guidance when preparing their plans, proposals and strategies. Local authority planning officers should have regard to the extent to which development proposals reflect the guidance (where possible) when assessing planning applications. On the opposite page the sections of the guide are outlined to help direct the user to the most relevant information.

Section 1 - Introduction

Outlines the purpose of the guide, its planning policy context, its methodology, and how it has been informed by the Interreg CORDIALE project and the European Landscape Convention. It also emphasises the importance of good design within an AONB designated landscape.

Section 3 - Settlement Character

Sets out the historical background of the area and provides an analysis of the built form character of the three villages Hartland, Stoke and Welcombe. The key characteristics of the hamlets are also listed.

Section 5 - Appendices

Includes supporting information and the public consultation undertaken throughout the production of the guide.

Section 2 - Landscape Character

Looks at the character of Hartland Peninsula's landscapes. Outlines its geology, environmental designations, public access, key landscape characteristics, wildlife and biodiversity and notable buildings & landmarks within the area.

Section 4 - Design Guidance

Provides supporting 'good design' guidance to the varying types of development, with accompanying illustrations on how to apply these principles and objectives.



Welcombe Mouth

Introduction

This design guide has been prepared by the North Devon AONB (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Its production has been funded by the CORDIALE project, a cross border project with a focus on sustainable landscape management. It is intended to be of use and interest to anyone involved in the planning of both natural and built landscapes of the AONB.

The North Devon AONB has long been concerned about the detrimental impacts of urbanisation on the special qualities of the AONB and believes that the Design Guide is a useful tool for all those interested in development. The AONB chose the Hartland Peninsula as the study area for this design guide as it forms the westernmost part of the AONB, is least changed with a sparsely populated rural landscape and has an active local community. The Hartland Peninsula is also considered to be particularly sensitive to development, due to its high quality landscape of plateau scored by deep wooded combes, and continuous sequence of spectacular vertical coastal cliffs.

Encouraging high quality, sympathetic and well informed design is vital to the achievement of the vision of the AONB. Local distinctiveness and design guidance is a tool that can assist this vision by: informing decision-making and encouraging high quality planning applications; facilitating the development of green infrastructure and biodiversity; informing and encouraging sustainable living and working within the AONB; and by further developing the understanding and application of the Landscape Character Assessment.

The Hartland Peninsula design guide aims to gain an appreciation of the local distinctive characteristics of what makes the place special. It can provide guidance on ways in which the outstanding and distinctive qualities of the AONB can be conserved or enhanced, to positively inform the creation of new buildings and the adaptation of existing buildings, to strengthen sense of place and individuality.



Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this guide is to conserve and enhance the AONB by directing planned development that complements its setting and makes a positive contribution to the environment of the Hartland Peninsula. The guide will provide a context for new development, based on local character or sense of place, and will help manage change at whatever scale it occurs. It will accomplish this by: firstly providing a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the character of both the natural and built landscapes of Hartland Peninsula; and by providing specific guidance in relation to the most common types of development proposals that are submitted within the AONB. An overriding aim of the project is to effectively consult with communities in place, on the importance of their local landscapes, both natural and built. Engaging with local people to help them better understand how to manage their valuable landscape.

The aim of the study is to conserve and enhance the AONB by:

- identify and describe the local distinctive characteristics of the Hartland Peninsula, informed by local communities and the Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon and Torridge Districts 2011;
- develop public understanding and awareness of the importance of local distinctiveness through engagement with local communities;
- provide specific and helpful advice to designers, planners, developers, landowners and householders that in turn improves the quality of development within the AONB;
- reduce unsympathetic development by making it easier for planning authorities to seek improvements in planning applications and reject those which are not in sympathy with what local people want;
- to build a deeper understanding of the distinctive character of the Hartland Peninsula landscape and the Landscape Character process;
- to draw upon the wide resource of knowledge and expertise of CORDIALE partners and in turn inform their landscape mapping approaches;
- to act as a catalyst for new initiatives which may be started as a result;
- to speed up the development process.



Blackpool Mill and Damehole Point

North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The North Devon AONB was designated in 1960 under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, and is one of a family of nationally Protected Landscapes, which include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks designated by Natural England.

The AONB is the major environmental asset for the north of Devon and its natural beauty contributes substantially to the economy, as well as to the enjoyment and healthy active lifestyles of nearly two and a half million people who visit it annually. AONBs, alongside National Parks, have the highest status of statutory protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

The AONB's vision embodies the need for a sustainable future for the Hartland Peninsula that also accords with National Policy and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Hartland Design Guide seeks to respond to the AONB's vision through its management plan themes 'Landscape' and 'Sustainable Development' as outlined in the North Devon AONB Management Plan 2009-2014. It is these themes that provides the context for this document.

North Devon AONB Management Plan: Landscape Theme

The Hartland Peninsula Design Guide responds to the Management Plan 'Landscape' theme by:

- maintaining and enhancing landscape character to conserve and enhance natural beauty;
- providing an improved understanding of landscape character in the Hartland Peninsula;
- developing community action and understanding of the special features of the area;
- helping to understand the pressures for change (including climate change);
- developing guidance for a sustainable approach to development in the area;
- supporting and encouraging the production of renewable energy; and
- increasing greater public awareness, appreciation and action for biodiversity and geodiversity.

North Devon AONB Management Plan: Sustainable Development Theme

The Hartland Peninsula Design Guide responds to the Management Plan 'Landscape' theme by:

- embedding the guidance of the North Devon Landscape Character Assessment;
- providing a tool for planners, developers, designers, landowners and householders, to encourage development of high quality and sustainable design which in turn supports sustainable living and local distinctiveness;
- providing Parish Councils with an improved understanding of the special qualities of the AONB and their role in its protection and enhancement;
- providing guidance for tourism development in the AONB;
- establishing local distinctiveness guidance for highways management, on signage design, historic signage, wayside features and signage clutter;
- providing guidance for sustainable economic activity such as wood fuel, sustainable construction and energy efficiency; and
- engaging with local people in its preparation and delivery, raising awareness of the AONB and the importance of the Hartland Peninsula landscape.

Interreg Cordiale

Cordiale is a cross border project working on sustainable landscape management. Its vision is to 'adopt a common standard for informing and assisting the management of protected landscapes in furtherance of the European Landscape Convention and in the context of climate change.'

The key objectives of the project are:

- To build deeper understanding of the distinctive character of landscapes in the cross-border region.
- To inspire stakeholders and communities to engage with landscapes in the cross-border region.
- To promote the multiple benefits provided by landscapes in the cross-border region.
- To support integrated decision-making.

The Partnership

The partnership is made of experts from Normandy, Brittany, Devon and Cornwall. Protected landscape practitioners (SWPLF, PNR Armorique, PNR Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin, North Devon AONB and Tamar valley AONB) as well as experts on traditional building (Plymouth University) and sustainable agriculture (CIVAM du Finistère, Chambre d'agriculture du Finistère) all bring their expertise to this exciting project. The lead partner is Devon County Council.

These 9 partners along the Channel are working on 3 studios:

- Sustainable farming
- Mapping
- Traditional building



Cordiale was selected under the European Cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) – England, co-funded by the ERDF.

European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. The Convention established the need to recognise our landscape in law and encouraged local authorities to develop landscape policies that were dedicated to the protection, management and planning of our landscapes.

The Hartland Peninsula Design Guide has been prepared in accordance with the articles of the European Landscape Convention. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007 and is the first international treaty to address the protection, management and planning of landscapes. Developed and agreed through the Council of Europe (CoE), adoption of the Convention is voluntary by participatory national governments.



The practical steps needed to implement the European Landscape Convention

Policy Background

National Policy

The Government's strategy for improving quality of space, World Class Places, CLG (2009), recognises the essential role of the historic environment in providing character and a sense of identity to an area. Recognising how the design, materials and pattern of land use of the built environment provide character and definition to a locality can enable local planning authorities to better understand the appropriateness of proposed development.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) recognises the value of local distinctiveness and supports the use of characterisation evidence-bases in managing how places change. The Hartland Design Guide is endorsed within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as follows:

- **Requiring good design, paragraph 56** - 'The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people'.
- **Requiring good design, paragraph 57** - 'It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes'.
- **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, paragraph 115** - 'Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty'.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

The CROW Act provides a right of public access on foot to areas of open land comprising mountain, moor, heath, down, and registered common land, and contains provisions for extending the right to coastal land. The Act also provides safeguards which take into account the needs of landowners and occupiers, and of other interests, including wildlife. It provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is compliant with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Methodology

Approach

This design guide analyses the character of both the built and natural landscapes of the Hartland Peninsula. It not only, expands knowledge and understanding of what makes the area locally distinctive, but formulates guidance to inform future development. The methodology adopted by this study is underpinned by the North Devon Landscape Character Assessment (2011) which was used throughout the process: to determine the study area; as a vehicle to engage with local communities; and to inform the understanding of the distinctive character of the landscape. The development of this guide can be divided into the following three stages: firstly identifying character; secondly the formulation of design guidelines; and finally, consulting with public and local interest groups.

Stage 1: Searching for Character

The first stage of the assessment was to produce a comprehensive analysis of both natural and built landscape characteristics. Character can be defined as 'identifiable patterns made up of repeated elements in similar arrangements with sufficient variation to make a place distinctive'. This analysis took the form of a desk study and field survey. The desk study was undertaken using various information presented in Geographic Information System (GIS) format and reviewed the physical and human influences that have shaped the landscapes of the Hartland Peninsula. The field survey was undertaken from June 2011 to August 2011. It was a systematic rigorous exercise that involved undertaking written observations, map annotations, and taking photographs. Standard survey forms were used to ensure that the settlement features and characteristics were recorded in a consistent and objective way.

The desk and field survey allowed the villages of Hartland, Stoke and Welcombe to be assessed in terms of their: settlement form & views; access & movement; and built form character. The hamlets were assessed in more general terms. Finally an evaluation of both the desk and field survey work was undertaken, identifying the distinctive characteristics found throughout the Hartland Peninsula, and the broad patterns in which they occur.

Stage 2: Design Guidance

The second stage in the production of this document was the completion of design guidelines that responded to the AONB management plan and its themes 'Landscape' and 'Sustainable Development'. Essentially this stage considered issues such as appropriate quality, choice of materials, accessibility and layout, all with the overall aim of conserving the quality and distinctiveness of the built and natural environment, reinforcing local character.



Stage 3: Consultation

The third stage in the development of this guide aimed to ensure that community knowledge and perceptions were taken into account. Recognising that the identity of a place comes from the people who live and work in it, and local people bring valuable knowledge, as no one knows the locality like they do.

A range of engagement techniques were utilised that included:

- **exhibitions and a stakeholder workshop session;**
- **consultation with a local school;**
- **and circulation of the draft report.**

Exhibitions and stakeholder workshop - Three exhibitions were held and all were a great way to inform the wider public of the work being undertaken. They gave an opportunity for a broader spectrum of people to get involved; the AONB staff to inform the public of work already undertaken such as the Landscape Character Assessment; and provided a way for those who came to comment on the design guide itself. A focused Stakeholder Workshop was also held to gain more focused and specific information to feed into the document.

Consultation with local school - Various visits and workshop sessions were held with a local secondary school (The Small School), culminating in a small exhibition of work at an open day in the village hall and at the local farmers market in Hartland. Two projects were undertaken, the first a photographic project and the second a creative project that imagined what Hartland may be like in the future. Students ideas were developed throughout the course of both projects, with disposable cameras and art materials for model making were provided. The students produced a video in french of their project work which was shared with french partners and a french school in Cotentin, Normandy. For more information regarding the consultation undertaken with the school, please refer to the Appendix 3 of this document.

Circulation of the draft report - The draft report was circulated to key stakeholders (Parish Councils and special interest groups) for a six week consultation period in February and March 2013. It was again circulated for consultation to key stakeholders for a 3 week period in May 2013, with publication of the final assessment in June 2013. The consultees were invited to comment on the draft document and written responses were then received through the formal consultation process and incorporated into the text of the final guide.

