Section Page 1 Introduction 3 The community's vision What is a Design Statement? How is it used? Local planning context Review of Design Statement 2 Parish Context 3 Landscape Setting 4 Settlement Pattern 5 B uildings and B oundaries Building density, form and style Hedges, walls and fences 6 Highways and Traffic 15 Local roads, lanes and parking Street furniture, utilities and services Public footpaths 7 Summary of Guidance 17 8 Building Design Guidelines 19 Roofs Chimneys Walls Windows Extentions and alterations External doors Garages Housing Groups 9 Further Information 23



The community's vision

Much Marcle, including its surrounding area, is unique and few of us would wish to see it change in an inappropriate way. When we alter its buildings or their setting we must ensure that we maintain and enhance the characteristic features which define the particular sense of place and local distinctiveness. We are the present guardians of our heritage and we should protect and develop it in a sustainable way for future generations to enjoy.

What is a Design Statement?

This Design Statement covers the Much Marcle Parish Council area including the village of Much Marcle and the adjoining hamlets of Rushall and Kynaston, and is centred on the crossing of the A449 with the B4024. It seeks to highlight those special characteristic features that are valued by the present residents, and the particular distinctiveness of its buildings and setting that make it what it is. The Statement gives design guidance so that future development is in keeping with those essential features.

The Statement was prepared by a design group with local knowledge and understanding of the area. It has been fully endorsed by the residents of the parish through an extensive consultation process, which included the children of the school, open meetings and individual questionnaires during 1998 and 1999.

How is it used?

Developments, whether on a large scale or merely adjustments to homes and gardens, paths, hedges or open spaces, all have the potential to alter the look and feel of the area. The Statement is therefore addressed to:

- Local residents, householders and businesses
- Designers, architects and engineers
- Planners, developers and builders
- Statutory bodies, public authorities and utilities

The Statement was approved by the Much Marcle Parish Council on 13th September 1999 and endorsed by the Herefordshire Council on 23rd February 2000. It is thus a "material consideration" to be taken into account by both the Parish Council and the Planning Authority when assessing planning applications for the area. It is also available as general guidance for other prospective changes.

Local planning context

The Statement supplements the policies set out in the Malvern Hills District Local Plan (adopted January 1998) with cross-referencing to particularly relevant policies set out in footnotes. The Local Plan concludes that "development opportunities are limited to infilling within the settlement boundary" (see Note 1 and inset map page 6) and sets out three objectives for Much Marcle Parish:

To prevent the spread of development into the countryside.

To protect the character and appearance of Much Marcle Conservation Area.

To protect "The Bartons" playing field from development. (see Note 2)

This means that new housing development will not be permitted in the countryside (i.e. outside the settlement boundary of Much Marcle, but within the Parish Council area) unless:

A dwelling is clearly necessary for use by persons employed in agriculture, forestry or horticulture; or it is affordable housing where there is a genuine need for low cost housing of a type and tenure which cannot be met in any other way. (see Note 3)

Industrial development is subject to the Economic Development and Environment Policies of the Local Plan, and the whole of the Parish is within both the Rural Development Area and the Area of Special Control of Advertisements (see Note 4), while part of the Much Marcle Settlement area lies within the Area of Great Landscape Value. (see Note 5)

The effect of designation as a Conservation Area is to give the Herefordshire Council powers to control the demolition of non-listed buildings (i.e. in addition to listed buildings), and the felling, lopping or topping of trees. These measures aim to protect the character of the area. In exercising its development control function, the Council must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

Review of Design Statement

It is intended to review the content of the Statement and how successful it has been in guiding new development or protecting the character of the parish

- when the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan is published
- thereafter as and when appropriate

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Note 1 Housing Policy 3; Landscape Policy 1
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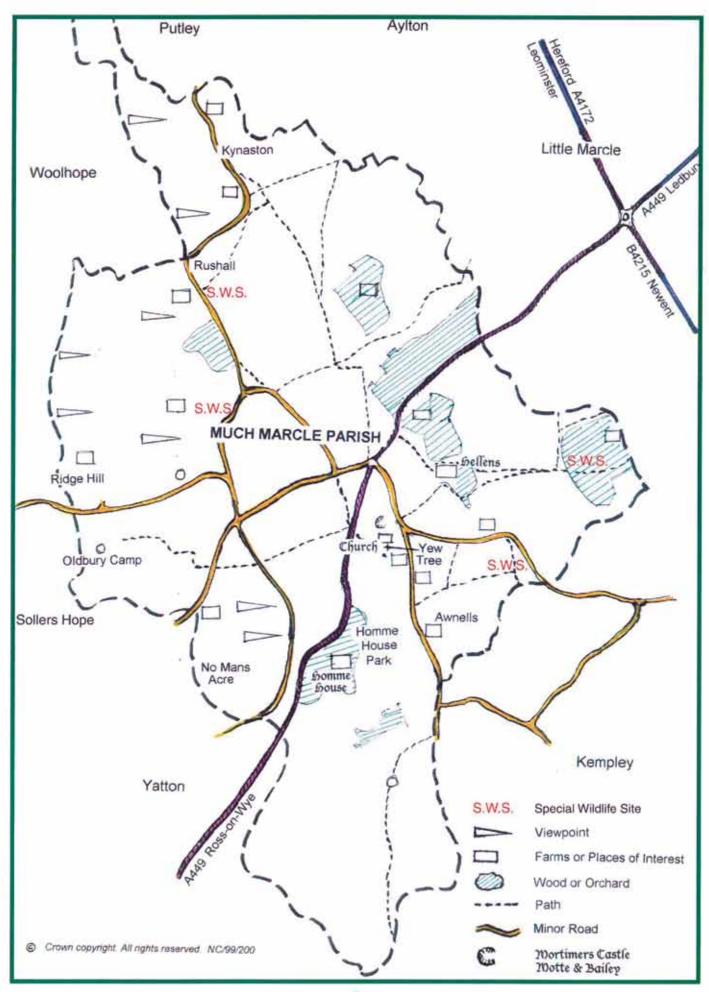
Note 2 Recreation Policy 22.

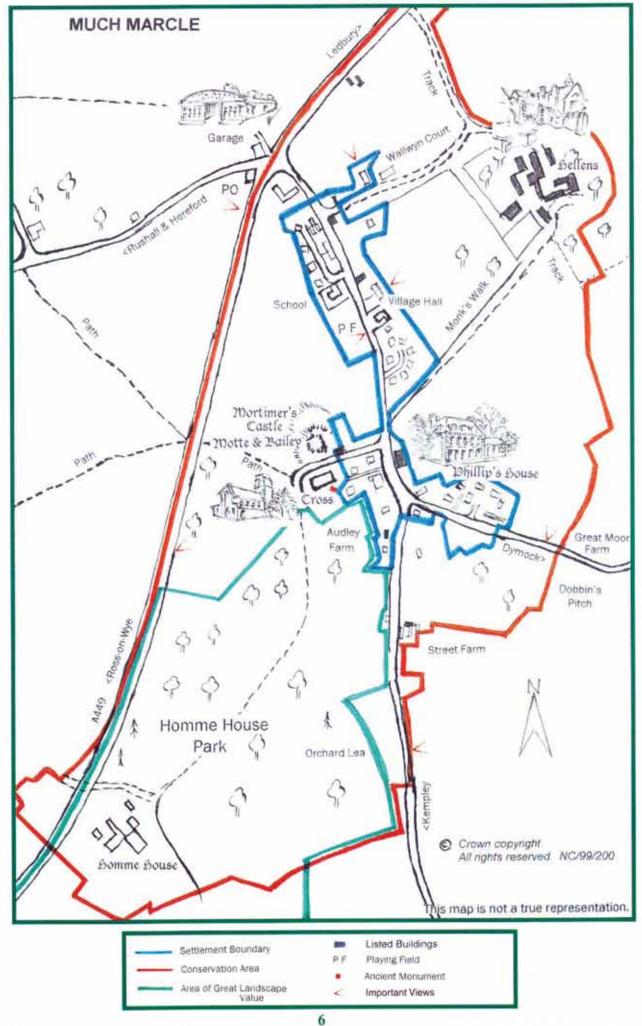
Note 3 Housing Policies 4-12 and 16; Conservation Policies 1-5 and 17.

Note 4 Conservation Policy 22.

Note 5 Landscape Policy 3.

4





Section 2 Parish Context

The name Marcle is believed to come from the Old English "mearcleah" meaning "boundary wood". The parish features in the Doomsday Book of 1086 (under the Roman name "Marcle Magna"), and has been a significant farming community ever since.



The historic core of Much Marcle is centred on: the Church of St. Bartholomew's (dating from the 13th century) with its famous Yew Tree; the adjacent remains of Mortimer's Castle, motte and bailey; and Hellen's (dating from the 13th century) which is open to the public and a centre for local cultural activity. The village also boasts two other large houses of significance: Homme House (dating from c.1500) and Phillips House (1703). To the north-west, outside the hamlets of Rushall and Kynaston, are Chandos (dating from the 16th century) and Hall Court (1608).

Today the parish contains about 270 dwellings, housing a population of some 700. About two thirds of the properties are owner-occupied. Agriculture is the principal industry, but other significant commercial activities are cider and perry making at Westons (established 1880); motor maintenance and recovery; Much Marcle's post office and general store; and three public houses. In addition Much Marcle has a Primary School.

Section 3 Landscape Setting

Much Marcle Parish is orientated roughly north-south, mainly low-lying but bounded to the west by Marcle Ridge. The parish is just over 3 miles (5km) long and about 2 miles (3.5km) wide, extending to about 4,600 acres (1,862 hectares). The A449 Ledbury to Ross-on-Wye road bisects the parish towards its southern end.

The overall character of the landscape consists of mixed farmland, orchards and hedgerows, with a large number of mature trees. To the west, Marcle Ridge reaches 620 feet (231 metres) above sea level and is surmounted by a high telecommunications mast visible from many miles away. The Ridge has one of the area's best footpaths along its length with splendid views to the west over the Woolhope Dome, part of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and to the east towards the Malvern Hills AONB.



Modern farming methods have led to the greatest landscape changes in the last 25 years with a gradual loss of traditional orchards, a marked increase in the size of fields and a consequential reduction in hedgerows. Despite past losses, traditional orchards remain a distinctive feature in the parish and contain many characteristic local varieties of cider apple and perry pear. The area also has several unimproved flower-rich grasslands and a number of ponds.

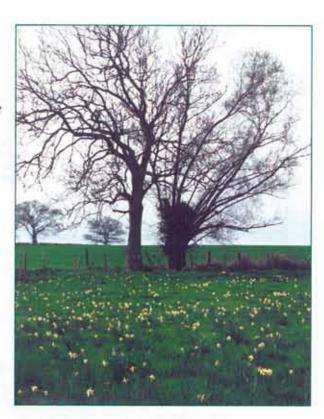




There are only two significant areas of woodland: on the Homme House estate along the A449 and at Hallwood on the eastern extremity of the parish. Hall Wood is an ancient semi-natural woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There are also several Special Wildlife Sites.

Guidance

- The skyline and slopes of Marcle Ridge should be protected. (see Note 6)
- Existing woodlands, traditional orchards, trees, hedgerows, unimproved grasslands and ponds should be protected and appropriately managed. (see Note 7)
- New planting, wherever possible, should be of species characteristic of the area, and existing flora and fauna should be maintained.
- Note 6 Landscape Policies 2 and 9
- Note 7 Landscape Policies 1 and 12



Section 1 Settlement Pattern

The villages contain most of the dwellings, but have no clearly defined edges. Open countryside and farmland, found right into their centres, is an important characteristic feature. Elsewhere the settlement pattern is more dispersed with isolated farms, houses and cottages. The vast majority of buildings in and around the parish are randomly spaced and have been built at various orientations in relation to neighbouring buildings and along minor roads and country lanes.

Much Marcle has no central focus (e.g. village green) although the A449/B4024 cross-roads may be considered the centre, comprising the post office and general store, garage and one of the village's three public houses. The area surrounding the cross-roads has been subject to serious flooding. The highest densities of dwellings are: along the B4024; in the vicinity of the Church; on a small estate of executive style houses adjoining the Memorial Hall; and to the south-east at Glebe Orchard where there is a 10 dwelling scheme of affordable housing for rent. Although the roadside houses at Glebe Orchard reflect local character, the density, form and scale of other new housing developments which have occurred since 1990 are not as sympathetic to neighbouring buildings and to the locality.



There is one Parish Council owned sports field known as "The Bartons" which is used principally by the school. Another important open space is the view of the Church from the A449, with its pastoral setting of parkland and farmland.

In Rushall and Kynaston there are small clusters of dwellings, along the roadside.

Guidance

- The open-space character of the villages with their predominantly roadside buildings and views through to farmland, orchards and open countryside should be protected. (See Note 8)
- The view of the Church from the A449 should be protected. (see Note 8)

Note 8 Conservation Policy 2.

Section 5 Buildings and Boundaries

Building density, form and style

The parish contains a wide variety of commercial and domestic buildings with no particular style predominating in either category. Much of the commercial property consists of farm buildings, some old and some new, which have in the main been sympathetically sited. Other commercial buildings, such as Weston's Cider, the Much Marcle Garage and Graham Baker Motors are constructed in a variety of materials, not all of which are sympathetic to or in keeping with local character. However, these buildings have become part of the fabric of the



parish over time and their history adds to, rather than diminishes from, its identity and distinctiveness. However, ad-hoc extensions to the primary school over recent years have failed to maintain a consistent style.

Similarly, there is no dominant style of domestic building. A high proportion are timber framed dwellings which were built originally for farm workers. Some are still thatched, but most are tiled. Others are solid and rectangular in shape, of natural stone or local brick (some of which have been painted white) and roofed with slate. These too, were mainly built as farmhouses or for farm workers. With the exception of the new estate dwellings, most are cottages of two storeys with sizeable gardens and open farmland or orchards in between. A significant number of buildings are listed. (See Note 9)

Existing building detail



Note 9 Conservation Policy 6

The majority of early buildings pre-1700 would have been small timber-framed thatched cottages and larger timber-framed tiled farmhouses. There would have been stone plinths and some stone walls and later local hand-made bricks would have been in evidence. The large stone chimney stacks have mostly been rebuilt above the ridge in brickwork.

With the coming of the railways in the late 1880's non-indigenous building materials such as slate and machine made bricks and machine made clay tiles were available and cheaper to use. This erosion of local character has continued unabated into the 20th Century with the use of cheaper materials such as mass produced bricks, concrete blocks, concrete interlocking tiles and synthetic slates. Indiscriminate use of modern materials will further erode the local character of the area.



It is also most important that the traditional detailing of the buildings, including windows and doors, are incorporated in new buildings. Many of these early houses would have had oak windows with metal casements and lead lights. The majority of these have been replaced with Victorian double casement softwood windows, often divided into 3 lights.

Some of the post-1700 houses are of brick (Phillips House) and have softwood sash windows. Phillips House also has some very fine detailing of brickwork and timberwork. Many of the earlier houses and cottages have been repaired externally on the south-western elevations due to the deterioration of the timber frames and now have had weather boarding, rendering or possibly a brick skin enclosing the original structure.

Often small, sometimes unsympathetic, extensions of differing types of materials have been added to these cottages and houses, some of which reflect the local character and others do not. A few of the houses and cottages have small dormer windows with steep pitched roofs which help to punctuate the roof-scape.

Most of the Victorian houses are of local brick or Hampton Park brick with slate or tile roofs. This tradition of brick building continued into the 20th Century, but after the 1950's standardised mass produced materials, bricks, concrete tiles, windows, door and even plastic took over from all the traditional materials and most of the new houses in the village will be found to have been constructed of these materials and could be anywhere in England.



Future community

For the future, and in order to retain a vibrant community, there may be a need for affordable housing for sale or rent as "starter homes". It will be important that any such dwellings reflect the character of neighbouring buildings and of the locality.

Guidance

General guidance follows and detailed Building Design Guidelines are contained in Section 8

- The density, form and scale of new development should reflect the existing relationship between buildings. (see Note 10)
- Any new development should have adequate spacing, parking and garden.
- New developments or building extensions should seek to retain important open spaces and through views.
 (see Note 11)
- All new buildings, whether housing or commercial, including affordable houses for sale or rent, should be of sympathetic design, proportion and colour, and of a variety of sizes and styles in keeping with the character of neighbouring buildings (i.e. not necessarily all the same style).(see Note 11)
- Conversions of disused buildings are encouraged for either housing or small business, provided that they comply with the general guidance. (see Note 12)

Hedges, walls and fences



Many properties have hedgerows as their boundaries. There are also a few very good examples of traditional brick and stone walls, weathered with moss and lichens, which blend well with the hedges. In contrast, some more recently built properties have resorted to modern walls and fences, some of which are not entirely in keeping. The new estates are open-plan, without hedges or boundary features.

Guidance

- New development should include boundary features which are appropriate to the scale and type
 of dwelling and conform to the established local pattern. (see Note 13)
- Note 10 Housing Policy 3 and Conservation Policy 2
- Note 11 Conservation Policy 2 and Employment Policy 7
- Note 12 Conservation Policy 12 and Employment Policy 6
- Note 13 Conservation Policy 2

Section 6 Highways and Traffic

$oldsymbol{L}$ ocal roads, lanes and parking



The villages are dispersed and linked by narrow roads and country lanes. Most are bounded by grass verges, ditches and mainly stockproof hedgerows. These are predominantly semi-natural and consist of a mix of blackthorn, dogwood, field maple, hawthorn and hazel with occasional holly and spindle. Some of the verges retain characteristic native flora, including wild daffodil, cowslip and meadowsweet. There are many springs and streams, which eventually feed the River Leadon near Ledbury. Deep drainage ditches have been made in the low-lying fields and along some lanes to alleviate the risk of flooding.

The main A449 is surfaced with hot rolled tarmacadam, but all the other roads and lanes are tar-sprayed with grey granite chippings. With one or two exceptions house driveways are similarly constructed and sympathetic.

The increasing traffic of large vehicles is cause for concern. These vehicles damage the road surface, edges and verges, place pedestrians and cyclists at risk and are disturbing for a village community.

Generally parking is adequate, although the increased number of school pupils, many of whom are brought to Much Marcle primary school by car, can cause difficulties. Traffic to the nursery school at the nearby Memorial Hall adds to the problem. When the Memorial Hall holds village functions, parking is sometimes inadequate. The three public houses have ample parking. There is virtually no on-street parking as most dwellings have garages and/or large gardens, except at Rushall where on-street parking is a problem.



Guidance

- The character of minor roads and lanes (i.e. their width, verges, ditches and hedges) should be protected.
- Concrete kerbs and other out of character features should be avoided.

Street furniture, utilities and services

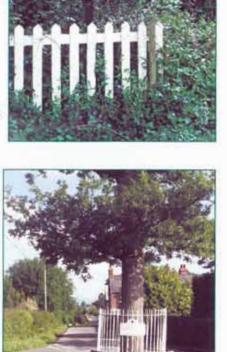


Much Marcle has very little street furniture. The two bus shelters are not obtrusive and the few seats are robust and sympathetic. Other than at the post office, post boxes are built into walls. There are three litter bins, and three red telephone kiosks. There are no street lights, although there is estate lighting on one new development. A number of houses have automatic security lighting. The brown 'historic' direction signs are acceptable, but the number of official and unofficial street and direction signs is increasing. Some would benefit from being modified to fit more sympathetically into their environment. Overhead power and telephone wires and their supporting poles are an eyesore.

Guidance

- All new public services should be underground and, wherever possible, existing services should be relocated more sympathetically. (see Note 14)
- Television aerials, satellite dishes etc. should be discreetly positioned. (see Note 15)
- Unnecessary signs should be resisted. Essential signs should be sympathetic to neighbouring buildings and to the locality. (see Note 16)
- Lighting, both estate and security, should be muted generally and not produce glare to drivers or adversely affect the rural character of the night sky. (see Note 17)





OPEN TO VISITORS

Public footpaths

There are only a few hundred yards of roadside footpaths, but a network of some 19 miles (30km) of public footpaths links the villages and outlying farms. These are generally well maintained and signposted with acceptable signs. Some stiles and gates could be improved. The village has no bridleways or cycleways.

Guidance

- Public footpaths should be kept open and maintained in good repair. (see Note 18)
- Note 14 Environment Policy 7
- Note 15 Conservation Policy 19
- Note 16 Conservation Policies 21 and 22
- Note 17 Environment Policy 6
- Note 18 Recreational Policy 4



- The skyline and slopes of Marcle Ridge should be protected.
- Existing woodlands, traditional orchards, trees, hedgerows, unimproved grasslands and ponds should be protected and appropriately managed.
- New planting, wherever possible, should be of species characteristic of the area, and existing flora and fauna should be maintained.

Settlement Pattern

- The open-space character of the villages with their predominantly roadside buildings and views through to farmland, orchards and open countryside should be protected.
- The view of the Church from the A449 should be protected.

Buildings and Boundaries

Building density, form and style

General Guidance follows and detailed Building Design Guidelines are contained in Section 8.

- The density, form and scale of new development should reflect the existing relationship between buildings.
- Any new development should have adequate spacing, parking and garden.
- New developments or building extensions should seek to retain important open spaces and through views.
- All new buildings, whether housing or commercial, including affordable houses for sale or rent, should be of sympathetic design, proportion and colour, and of a variety of sizes and styles in keeping with the character of neighbouring buildings (i.e. not necessarily all the same style).
- Conversions of disused buildings are encouraged for either housing or small business, provided that they comply with the general guidance.

$\emph{\textbf{H}}$ edges, walls and fences

New development should include boundary features which are appropriate to the scale and type
of dwelling and conform to the established local pattern.

Highways and Traffic

Local roads, lanes and parking

- The character of minor roads and lanes (i.e. their width, verges, ditches and hedges) should be protected.
- Concrete kerbs and other out of character features should be avoided.

Street furniture, utilities and services

- All new public services should be underground and, wherever possible, existing services should be relocated more sympathetically.
- Television aerials, satellite dishes etc. should be discreetly positioned.
- Unnecessary signs should be resisted. Essential signs should be sympathetic to neighbouring buildings and to the locality.
- Lighting should be muted generally and not produce glare to drivers or adversely affect the rural character of the night sky.

Public Footpaths

Public footpaths should be kept open and maintained in good repair.

Section 8 Building Design Guidelines

While these Guidelines may not be appropriate in every case, if local character is to be retained they should be followed unless good grounds exist for not doing so.

Roofs

Introduction

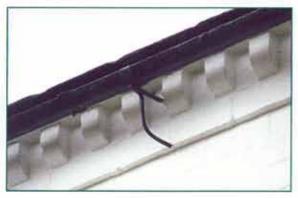
Roof Pitch To fit in with all the pre-war buildings in the village, the roof pitches need to be a minimum of 40-45 degrees, which are then of a suitable pitch to take a variety of roof coverings, such as small clay or concrete tiles, Welsh slates, stone tiles, pan tiles or even thatch.

Roof Span The span of most modern buildings is also far too great, thus creating a rather squat low building. All the traditional buildings have a more vertical look and a maximum span of 20 feet (6.1 metres) for a farmhouse or large village house, or 16 feet (4.9 metres) for a cottage, will give the correct proportion and should not also cause the ridge height of any extensions to go above the ridge of the existing house.



Eave and Verge Detailing It is also very important to get the correct eaves and gable verge detailing. On more traditional buildings the eaves would have hung over at least 1 foot (30.5cms), with exposed rafter ends, and the gable verge would also have extended over 1 foot (30.5cms), usually also showing the purlins. On later Victorian cottages, very often there would be corbel or dentil courses at the eaves and less overhang on the gables.

Roof Covering Generally most modern roof pitches are too low and, therefore, have to be covered with either modern sheet roofing materials, or alternatively, asbestos or synthetic slates or concrete interlocking tiles. All of these types of roof covering are very cheap and certainly acceptable for industrial and farm buildings. If a low pitch is essential for dwelling houses consideration should be given to modern Double Roman interlocking clay tiles. Roof coverings of existing houses or extensions should be re-used and matching tiles or slates should be used on the extensions. The preferable roof coverings would be 10 inches (25.5cms) by 6 inches (15cms) handmade plain roof tiles, or alternatively on a new house, machine made clay plain tiles, or possibly reclaimed or new concrete plain tiles. Where slate is to be used, natural slate either reclaimed or new, possibly Spanish, would be far more appropriate and preferable to modern plastic slates, which have a very limited life and do not weather the same as natural materials. The odd thatched roof would not be out of place, nor would clay pan-tiled roofs on outbuildings or farm buildings.



Guttering The guttering on the older houses is obviously cast iron, either half round or OGEE and this would be preferable; but if not within a budget half round black plastic or painted galvanised or aluminium guttering is an acceptable alternative.

Chimneys

Chimneys should be tall and prominent; chimneys provide potential for flexibility and future variation in heating. They are also vital for punctuating the roof-scape and need to be of a reasonable size, a minimum of 2ft 6 inches (76 cms) by 1ft 6 inches (46 cms) and preferably larger where they protrude from the roof. Earlier buildings usually have stone external chimney stacks until they reach the roof line where they go into brickwork. This type of chimney construction could be implemented in modern cottage-style housing.



Walls

The earlier buildings in the village had timber-framed walls with either wattle and daub or (later) brick panels, or some were constructed of stone. Both of these building materials are still available, although the stone is of varying quality. Many of the existing houses are constructed of hand-made mellow Victorian facing brick with lime pointing showing a variation of original colouring except where the bricks have been painted.



Extensions and New Buildings For all extensions, and hopefully new buildings, these types of building materials could be used either in the form of reclaimed bricks or possibly new, but preferably hand-made, bricks. Where new bricks are proposed their colour and texture must blend with the brickwork of traditional buildings in the village. It is often possible to construct a small panel of brickwork on site to check the colour and form of the brickwork.

Pointing Ideally a natural lime-rich mortar should be used for external pointing with a brush finish, or alternatively, white cement could be used; raised pointing should be avoided.

Concrete blockwork and weatherboarding Rendered concrete blockwork could be used for some new buildings and extensions if matching the original building, but it is even more important that the detailing of the other elements of the building should be correct if this type of wall construction is to be used. On small extensions and outbuildings weather boarding should be encouraged, ideally a minimum of 9 inches (23cms) deep and softwood boarding will normally be stained black, whilst oak should be left untreated.

Windows

Generally, double casement windows should be used to give the right vertical window proportions. All wooden windows should be painted to match those in the locality, except possibly oak framed casements in timber framed buildings, which could be left to weather naturally. These types of windows would often have a metal opening casement and lead lights.

Windows should be well recessed and could possibly have stone or tiled cills. In stone and brick houses, the majority of the windows have a curved window board above the window and then a small flat arch in brickwork following that curve and this should be replicated in all new construction.





The casements of the softwood windows should be divided into no more than three. Some of the larger existing houses have Georgian sash windows and any extensions should have a similar window construction, divided into smaller lights by glazing bars, with matching mouldings; larger new houses could use Georgian-style sash windows, although they would be inappropriate on smaller cottage-style houses. Occasionally, cottage-style, white painted bay windows with either wooden or metal frames could be used in the construction of new cottages, or possibly extensions.

Small dormer windows set into the roof plate of cottages are a feature and also occur set into the roofs of larger farmhouses and village houses. Correctly constructed, these dormer windows would be quite acceptable in extensions and new buildings. They should be no more that a maximum of 3 feet (91.5cms) square with pitched or single slope roofs.



Extensions and alterations

Extensions should, where possible, be to the rear of old properties, as also should conservatories which are not characteristic of older properties. Roof pitches should be kept the same as, and ridge levels should not be higher than, the existing house. Generally the materials and construction of extensions should respect the character of the existing property.

External doors

Doors should be plain planked doors, either painted softwood, or if in Oak be left to weather naturally. Alternatively they could be Georgian-type panelled doors, possibly with 4 or 6 glass panes in the top section, ideally of generous width up to 3 feet wide (91.5cms). Suburban type hardwood doors with imitation Georgian fan-lights, Georgian panels and the like should be avoided in this area.



Garages

Ideally garages should be situated behind houses, since old houses and cottages did not have garages. Any hard standing should be to the side of the property or behind, but not in front. Garages should ideally be detached from the houses and of a similar construction to the house it is serving, or possibly of the cartshed-style construction, open fronted and the walls could be weatherboarded. A 3-bay garage with the ridge running from end to end in the opposite direction of the cars is often a very pleasing and proportionally correct building. Carports should be avoided.

Housing groups



New developments should use a variety of sizes and forms in small groups, not in further estates. If development is on the edge of the village, it is imperative that it is in symmetry with the surrounding countryside.

Section 9 Further Information

Further information is available as follows:-

for information about the Design Statement:

Clerk to the Much Marcle Parish Council Tel: (01531) 660419

for advice on Policy Guidelines:

Forward Planning Herefordshire Council Tel: (01432) 260 000

for advice on Planning Applications, Design Matters and Listed Building Consent:

Development Control Section Herefordshire Council Tel: (01432) 260 000

for advice on Listed Buildings including Grants, Building Conservation and Archaeology:

Conservation Section Herefordshire Council Tel: (01432) 260 000

for Projects:

Village Focus Officer Herefordshire Council Tel: (01432) 260 000

The Partnership Team Herefordshire Council Parks and Countryside Service Tel: (01432) 260 000

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