Colour

7.9 Historically, external joinery was either painted, or if it was oak it was left to weather to a natural silver grey. Although white is a relatively recent addition to the colour palette, it is now the predominant finish for windows to houses. It has the obvious advantage of reflecting light into rooms but can sometimes look too stark and harsh.

7.10 The doors and windows of traditional farm outbuildings are best finished in either a traditional farm colour (which may be a dull red or green) or a suitably recessive, neutral tone which picks up the colour and warmth of the stone. Taking a paint scrape from an existing door or window will often reveal the original colour scheme.

7.11 For new farm buildings or industrial units, the recommendation would be to use dark, recessive colours or a neutral tone.

7.12 While gloss paint is obviously an option, microporous coating systems which are in effect opaque stains have a great many maintenance advantages. They look like a satin paint and come in a range of colours. Their opacity helps to protect the timber to a greater extent than do transparent stains.

Brook House, Ipstones. White painted sash windows with central dark blue door

Using a soft, neutral tone for windows and doors of the barn conversion

Ornamentation

7.13 As a general principle, the design of new buildings should avoid ornamentation or over-fussy detailing. There is however still scope for variety. There are rarely two identical cottages or houses alongside each other. It is the details of stonework, the style of windows, or the nature of the door surrounds, not to mention the variation in eaves heights and roofs that create this interest.

Materials

7.14 New buildings should ideally be constructed from the same palette of materials used traditionally in the area. This means for the most part natural stone or brick for walling and Staffordshire blue clay tiles or slate for roofs.

7.15 Traditionally, materials have been selected and used in a way that promotes their durability in a harsh climate and ensures that buildings meet the purpose for which they were intended in the most economical way possible. Consequently, walling stone is laid horizontally, retaining the orientation it had in the quarry, with through-stones bonding the inner and outer skins of the wall. Corners are strengthened by the use of large quoin stones. Roofs pitches are dictated by the angle required to securely fix tiles with a slightly lesser pitch required for slates depending on their size.

Stone

7.16 Stone replaced timber-framing as the main exterior walling material from around 1600, and remained predominant in the rural areas throughout the 19th century. The predominant building stone in the Staffordshire Moorlands is gritstone and sandstone which vary in quality and appearance. At Leek the local stone was poor and rarely used unless lime-rendered. At Alton and Hollington the finer grained Hollington stone is of excellent quality and is highly durable.

7.17 While the exterior walling of a vernacular building was always built of the nearest available stone, the better quality Hollington stone was transported widely for dressings such as quoins and window surrounds. The humbler buildings and outbuildings were often built entirely of rubble and without quoins.

7.18 Most walling is of coursed rubble, finely-tooled ashlar being reserved for the grander houses except where the underlying rock is high quality sandstone such as at Alton, Hollington and Endon, where humbler buildings might also be of ashlar.

7.19 To the south-east of the District carboniferous limestone (a hard, grey stone) is the predominant building material. Limestone is harder to dress and is gritstone is often used instead.

7.20 It is important that the correct type, colour and finish of stone is chosen for each locality, especially when adding to, or altering, an existing building.

7.21 Pointing to stonework should be similar in colour to the stone using an appropriate lime mortar mix. The wider the joint, the coarser the aggregate should be to give the mortar a rougher texture.

St. Chad's House, Bagnall

Brick

7.22 Brick made its appearance in the second quarter of the 18th century in high status rural houses such as Harracles Hall (Longsdon) and Manor Farm (Checkley) and was soon in regular use in the towns. Elsewhere it was rapidly taken up at Cheddleton and Upper Tean where the local stone was poor or difficult to obtain. The early bricks were hand made locally and have a subtlety of texture and colour that is lacking from later mass-produced brick. In the 19th century the canals and railways allowed mass produced brick to be brought in. At its best this might be coupled with fine terracotta elements, or combined with stone dressings as in the Sugden buildings in Leek. Many of the 19th and early 20th century terraces in the District's towns have good quality detailing which makes a major contribution to the street scene.

7.23 In specifying the use of brick it is important to have regard to the colour and texture of the local bricks. Second-hand bricks should be used with caution as there may be problems with the durability of the material and tend to give a very rustic finish. There is now a wide choice of new bricks which will fit into historic areas as long as they are carefully selected. Pointing should be undertaken with care to ensure the most appropriate mix, colour and finish.

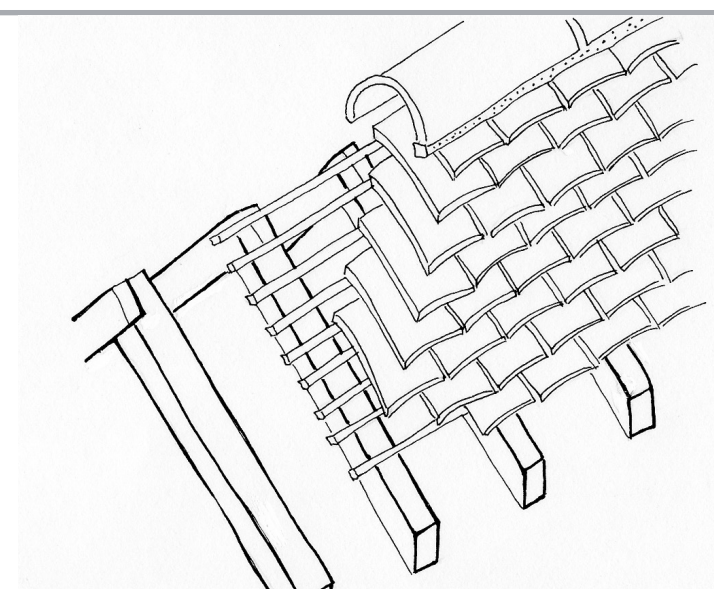
Render

7.24 Lime render was used over porous or inferior rubble stonework to give added protection to the wall. From the 18th century onwards, however, it was sometimes used for aesthetic reasons – to give a building more presence and a smarter appearance closer to the fashionable look of stucco. The use of traditional renders has a role in sensitive locations such as in conservation areas and on listed buildings although they have maintenance implications. Elsewhere, modern through-coloured acrylic render systems may be acceptable in certain circumstances.

Roofing Materials

7.25 The historic roofing material in the District was thatch, giving a characteristic pitch of about 40 degrees. More prestigious buildings used stone tiles of gritstone which generally had to be brought in to the area. They are laid in diminishing courses with large slates near the eaves rising to smaller slates near the ridge to make best use of the material available. The usual pitch is a relatively low 30 degrees.

St. Edward Street, Leek



Clay tile roof construction

7.26 The 19th century witnessed the mass production in the Potteries of Staffordshire blue clay roofing tiles, now regarded as the typical local roofing material. Early tiles were handmade with a distinctive camber and rougher texture whilst later machine made tiles have a more even profile and smooth sheen. A roof pitch of around 35 degrees is required to fix the tiles, which gives the characteristic narrow gable and steeply pitched roof. Some Victorian buildings can have very decorative roofs with elaborate fish-scale tiles. The improvement in road and rail networks also allowed for the import of Welsh slate which is seen on some Victorian properties and was useful for slightly shallower pitches.

Mixture of traditional roofing materials in Cheddleton

New Materials

7.27 New materials need to respect the building and its setting. Occasionally, high quality modern materials may be used as substitutes or replacements for traditional materials in exceptional circumstances where appropriate to the design or setting, provided they harmonise well. An example would be terne-coated steel instead of lead for flat roofs. More commonly, modern substitute materials are less appropriate and often less durable. Reconstituted stone weathers poorly and is not recommended in the open countryside or in protected areas such as conservation areas. In similar locations, upvc should not be used on environmental and aesthetic grounds whether in the form of windows, doors, barge boards or conservatories.

7.28 There is no tradition of external timber boarding in Staffordshire Moorlands. It was used as horizontal cladding on some early (14th and 15th century) cruck barns but by the 17th century such walls had been overclad with stone. Vertical boarding has been used more recently on large agricultural sheds as an alternative to metal sheeting but such buildings are regarded exceptions, as the development is seen in the context of traditional buildings or open landscape.

Decorative Staffordshire blue clay tiles

Craftsmanship

7.29 The Staffordshire Moorlands has a long tradition of craftsmanship in building. The skills and knowledge of generations of local builders are evident throughout the area. Such skills need to be nurtured and passed on at the local level. Without them, our architectural heritage will suffer.

7.30 These skills are needed not just for the repair and alteration of historic buildings but also for new buildings. Otherwise, new development will not take the local tradition into the future as seamlessly as it should.

7.31 Building materials, particularly stone, should be used in the traditional manner. With stonework, the bedding, width and height of courses, colour and finish all need the mason's careful attention. Other specialist skills include stone slate roofing, the use of lime mortars and plasters, the repair and renewal of traditional sash windows and the construction of dry-stone walls.

Sustainable Use of Materials

7.32 It is possible to source materials and products from all over the world. The extent to which this is damaging to the environment is becoming increasingly apparent. By exercising choice we can have a direct influence on the situation.

7.33 Some general principles to bear in mind:

- Design first to reduce demand for energy and to improve energy efficiency.
- Repair rather than renew.
- Use salvaged or recycled products/materials, including aggregates.
- Buy locally.
- Minimise the use of non-renewable resources.
- Avoid products whose manufacture, use or disposal causes harmful by-products.
- Choose materials with low embodied energy (the energy needed for extraction, processing, manufacture and transportation).

Cross restoration at Her Ladyship's Oratory, Alton Towers

Farley

Points to Remember:

- **New windows and doors need to relate to the age and style of the property.**
- **Avoid the use of upvc for windows and doors**
- **Proportion and subdivision of windows should have a vertical emphasis.**
- **Consider the use of colour for window frames and doors in relation to its use.**
- **Ornamentation and subtle variations can be applied to window and door surrounds**
- **Stone, slate, tile and brick are the predominant materials for roofs and walls in Staffordshire Moorlands.**
- **Read the Council's pointing leaflet for appropriate finishes and mortar mixes.**
- **In certain circumstances limited use of render is acceptable.**
- **Staffordshire blue clay tile is the predominate roofing material but stone still exists on older buildings.**
- **High quality modern materials may be acceptable in certain circumstances**
- **Use or specify sustainable materials.**

Further Information:

Repairs and Alterations to Historic Buildings

Windows and Doors Repair and Replacement

Pointing Leaflet

Design Guidance Note 1 – Windows and Doors

Design Guidance Note 6 –
Materials, finishes and colour

Appendix 1 – Related Topics and Further Advice

The following topics are not covered by the guide but advice on them is available from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council or other agencies

Archaeology

If a proposed development is likely to affect a site of archaeological interest, the Council can require measures to be taken to protect or record the site. In some cases this may involve conservation of the remains in situ; in others, professional archaeologists may need to record what is found on site before it is lost. If appropriate, the Council can require developers to undertake an archaeological evaluation of their site before the application is determined. The results of this will inform how the remains are dealt with at later stages in the development. We strongly advise contacting the Council's archaeologists regarding the archaeological potential of any site as soon as a development is being considered and certainly before an application is made.

Further information can be obtained from the County Archaeologist

Planning

Guidance on planning permission and pre-application advice is available from the Council Planning Department

Design and Access Statement

Further information on Design and Access Statements, what they should include and when they are required, can be found on the gov.uk web site.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

The Staffordshire Moorlands has a number of Conservation Areas. As each designation is reviewed, Conservation Area Appraisals are being published. They cover the history and development of the settlement, local architectural character, prevalent building materials, important trees, landscape features and open spaces. The appraisals aim to promote a better understanding of the special character of a settlement and to inform decision-making when new development is proposed. Adopted character appraisals are available to view on the Council's web site.

Landscape Character Assessment

The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment identifies key landscape characteristics and their implications for the siting, design and appearance of new development.

Building Regulations

Designers and applicants should ensure that Building Regulations requirements have been fully complied with and all necessary consents obtained. Approval under Building Regulations does not constitute planning permission, and vice versa.

Highways

Designers are advised to take into account the requirements of the Highway Authority (Staffordshire County Council) in a manner that is compatible with the principles set out in this document.

Pollution

In situations where development proposals could generate noise or other forms of disturbance or involves building on contaminated land, designers or applicants should contact the Council's Environmental Health Service. In some instances, a contamination report will be expected as part of a planning application.

Flood Risk

Some parts of Staffordshire Moorlands lie within flood risk areas. You can view the areas on the Council's interactive planning map.

Tree Management

How the Council manage trees is set out in the Council's Tree Strategy and associated good practice guides**.** The Council's Tree Strategy sets out the issues, general principles and best practice for managing both protected and Council trees. The documents that make up the strategy specifically include a Good Practice Guide on trees on Development sites.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The trust is a registered charity that work to promote and care for the natural environment and raise awareness of wildlife issues across Staffordshire. They offer a range of planning advice on wildlife issues and work to ensure that wildlife and valuable habitats are fully considered within the planning system.

Historic England

There are a significant number of Heritage Assets within Staffordshire Moorlands (conservation areas and listed building). If development proposals affect these or their setting further information and advice can be obtained from Historic England

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