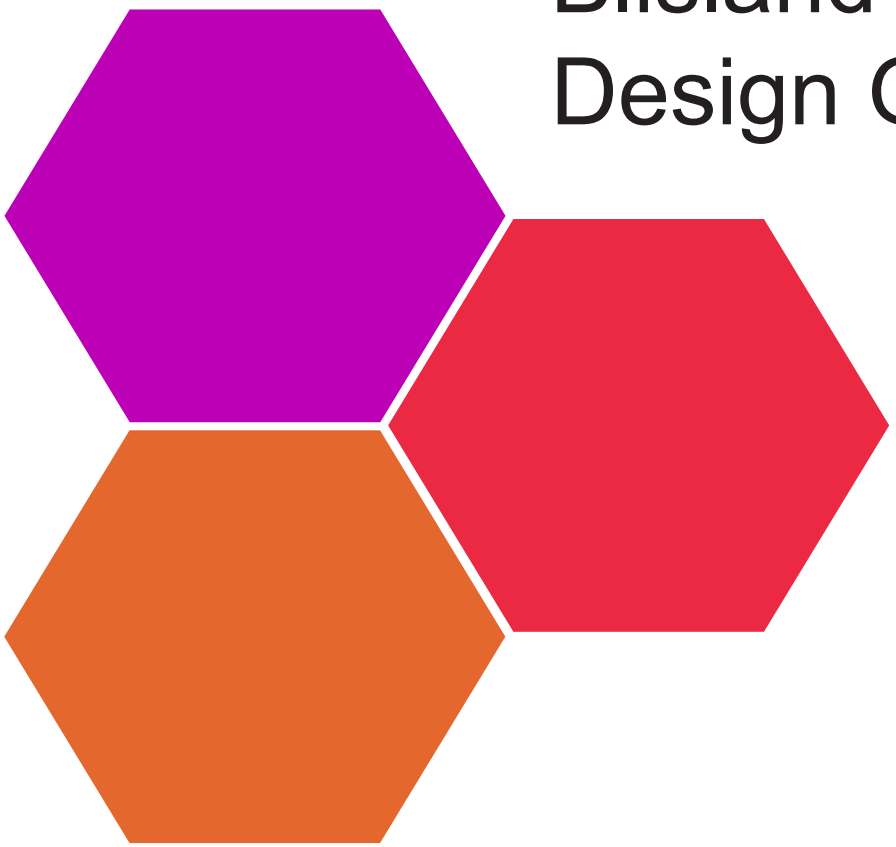
# The Blisland Parish Design Guide



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# Blisland Parish Design Guide

Introduction

The 2021 Cornwall Council Design Guide provides relevant and highly practical guidance as to the principles of good design on a County wide basis. The purpose of the Blisland Design Guide is to take these six properly informed principles below and enhance them to be specifically relevant to Blisland Parish.

## 1 Effective Design Process

Design and Access, and where necessary Heritage, statements, will need to illustrate how the proposed development enhances the form and qualities of the village, its heritage assets and its rural setting.  It must explain the design and thinking and aspirations inherent in the development proposal.

The core of Blisland village including the village green is designated a Conservation Area.

See map on Page 13

To meet the statutory requirements of the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act (1990), Cornwall Council adopted the Blisland Conservation Area Appraisal and the  Blisland Conservation Area Management Plan which underpin this Design Guide.

*https://www.blislandparishcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Blisland-CAA-endorsed-web-version-2008.pdf*

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As part of the planning process the Parish Council welcomes presentations and consultation meetings with potential developers to discuss their design ideas and any site-specific concerns that they or the Blisland Parish Council may have.

## 2 Locally Distinctive

Within the village and surrounding Parish of Blisland, there is one Grade One Listed Building, four Grade Two Star listed buildings and one hundred and one Grade Two Listed Buildings, Monuments and Structures.

There is a diverse range of architectural housing styles within the village and Parish from granite dwellings with stone mullioned windows to well-proportioned fine 18th century houses.

There is also a range of traditional Cornish stone cottages within the conservation area and scattered throughout the Parish.

Over the years additional modern housing development has taken place reflecting the materials, style and period in which they were built.

None of the existing housing mix within the village exceeds two storeys in height reflecting the traditional building form of stone cottages, timber and stone barns and outbuildings.

A large proportion of the historic dwelling were constructed using either surface stone, slate or locally mined granite, materials that blend with, and are part of, the natural landscape of the Parish.

The topography and the height of dwellings allows for vistas and views through the built settlement to the moorland, woodland areas and across the valley to open countryside.

Any new dwellings should not obscure or detract from the essential rural village character.

They must be sensitive to its positioning in the landscape, look to incorporate vistas and views and links to footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes which are part of the Parish's green infrastructure.

## 2 Locally Distinctive

Over the last 15-20 years development within the Parish has grown organically and this has reduced its impact on the village. This has been achieved through small-scale, low density development of less than 10 dwellings in all but one site. These have been on infill sites or in one case on a brownfield site.

### 2.1 Appropriate Building Styles and Materials

When considering a proposed development, the following must be taken into consideration.

* Any new build should be sensitive to and take account of the natural materials used in the vernacular architecture of the Parish which is stone, granite, slate, and timber.
* The use of red brick in the construction of a dwelling is not part of the vernacular architectural character of the local built environment and will not be supported.

Consideration/encouragement will be given to innovative design solutions that offer a fresh interpretation of Cornish distinctiveness and use of local materials whilst being mindful of the use of modern materials where they achieve the same degree of sensitivity and responsiveness to their setting.

Typical building materials are, surface stone, granite for walls with natural slate roofs (ragged slating) and red or black ridge tiles. Granite is also used for door and window lintels and quoins and for other decorative features.

Porches also play a part in the overall design of the rural housing landscape. Well-proportioned sash, dormer and casement windows are seen, particularly where development has taken place in proximity to the Conservation Area.

Because of the cost of UK slate, a substantial amount is imported although if chosen with care can blend in.

The most appropriate exterior cladding/finish would be hung slate or timber both of which can be used in a flexible modern way.

Cement cladding board would be resisted as an exterior finish in proximity to the Conservation Area and sensitive buildings and structures.

## 2 Locally Distinctive

Houses follow the design style of the era in which they were built and can easily be identified as from that particular period, for example those built in the Georgian, Victorian and the 1930s Art- Deco style. It is important that new builds reflect the natural materials identified as being part of the landscape whilst at the same time being designed for today's flexible living style with windows that provide maximum light levels within their design, and with pitched roofs that provide opportunities for future household growth, (such as loft conversions.) Sympathetic and sensitively designed dwellings can contribute to the enhancement of their setting in the rural landscape whilst creating a healthy lifestyle.

Any new housing should be futureproofed by being flexible and adaptable to meet people's needs throughout their lifetime. This should be articulated and illustrated within the Access and Design statement.

### 2.2 Varied skyline

The settlement's varied skyline provides visual interest and contributes to the character of the village.

The use of subtle roofline variations including the use of chimney stacks and dormer windows which break up the roofscape will help integrate any new development into its setting whilst enhancing the village skyline.

Incorporating varied building design types and styles in a development will help add character to the street scene.

Overhead service cables will not be supported for any new development or within proximity to the conservation area or any listed building.

### 2.3 Roofing Materials

The typical roofing material of the Parish is natural slate and therefore this should be the first choice of roofing material used /incorporated within any new development.

The use of clay pantiles or cement fibre slate which create a dark and shiny appearance or similar must be avoided. Ridge tiles throughout most of the Parish are typically grey or red and new roofs should reflect this.

Chimney stacks and dormer windows are part of the Blisland roofscape.
On a practical level chimneys can provide an additional method of heating for homes.

The design pitch of the roof can provide additional usable room space that will allow for future home expansion such as loft conversions.

Lead and Zinc have their place as roofing materials but should only be used in exceptional cases. Any Design and Access Statement must include an illustrated approach to use of roofing materials and should be subject to any design review.

Blisland is within the designated International Dark Skies area therefore rooflights especially have the potential to cause light pollution damage, by directing light upwards, and can overtime have an adverse cumulative effect on this specific designated area and will therefore be resisted.

Dormer windows would be supported if appropriate.

### 3.1 Residential Car Parking Design and Layout

Blisland is not served by public transport and therefore the car is a necessity as a means of travelling to and from the village.

The number of allotted car parking spaces for new development needs to:

a. Proportionally relate to the dwelling size and provision should be made for one parking space per bedroom as required within this parameter.

b. Balance the requirement to support sustainable transport against the rural nature of the Parish and the lack of public transport.

Careful consideration of adequate car parking space needs to be illustrated within the design.

In the case of development of more than two dwellings, properly designed and integrated on-street parking that makes the most efficient use of the communal space available for parking should be carefully considered at an early design stage.

Off street parking /dedicated parking spaces even if only a short distance from a property tends not to be regularly used, residents preferring to park outside their front door.

Parking should be set discreetly between houses to avoid vehicles dominating property frontages.

Where parking is located in front of dwellings then soft landscaping will be required to reduce / minimise any visual impact on the street scene .

With the growing trend for working from home and the development in technology which will help further increase this method of working, new homes should be designed and built to accommodate, support and future proof this trend. This in turn will help reduce the need for work life travel especially in rural areas.

Within the settlement there have been several historic instances of poor design involving inappropriate parking arrangements and the provisions of the Blisland Design Guide should be carefully applied to any future development to prevent a repetition of these; ‘car clutter’ and in-appropriate and inefficient on street parking has an unnecessarily adverse effect on the infrastructure of the settlement, the Designated Landscapes and the Heritage Assets and should be avoided.

Car parking must not dominate the character of any proposed development or of the street scene.

Poorly designed car parking can have a detrimental effect on the quality of a development.

Garages should be designed to be consistent within the architectural design of the property and set back from the road frontage.

Garages linking two separate dwellings especially in a terrace will not be acceptable within a new development.  By their design they create a visual massing of solid structure in the form of garages or vehicle parking.

The massing of garages and parking spaces can easily have a negative impact on a rural setting.

To negate urbanisation of the countryside it is important that prospective applicants introduce ways of incorporating natural screening for vehicle parking within the development design, the layout of the site and curtilage of individual dwellings.


Stone walls and natural hedging play an important part in defining the character of a place and its setting.

The introduction of natural soft landscaping that will enhance the development and the rural setting whilst at the same time providing habitat for wildlife long term will be expected.

As part of an access policy statement there will need to be included a visually defined landscape planting plan for the proposed development.

### 4.1 Visual Impact

The landscape setting of Blisland is made up of steep valleys with river bottoms, ancient woodlands, country lanes, bounded by traditional Cornish hedges and trees, open countryside, and moorland. The layout of buildings in any new development must be designed to integrate into this landscape, be sympathetic to it and take into consideration the existing settlement patterns.

Where appropriate, design layout should follow the landscape topography of the area or the historic settlement patterns, thereby avoiding consistent uniformity of layout.

Where topographical considerations have not been followed it has impacted on the overall layout of some dwellings with access to garages via steep driveways near impossible to use.

The small organic developments that have been built over the last two decades have been on infill sites which have mostly reduced any negative impact on the village. From the 1960s there has been some small housing schemes that reflect the period in which they were constructed and are in the main tucked behind the historical settlement, although in the 1980s some unsympathetic ribbon development has meant the loss of Cornish hedges and wildlife habitat along a country lane.

Development in these areas has mostly been in the reuse of redundant farm buildings.

There are a number of hamlets and settlements within the Parish.

A visual landscaping plan (shrubs and tree cover) will be required as part of the developments overall layout design submission thereby illustrating how the new hard built landscape will integrate into its natural rural setting.

Existing views and vistas should be retained as part of sustaining and improving the green infrastructure thereby incorporating it into the site and layout of any new development. Where possible links to the wider natural landscape through existing or newly defined green corridors, linking existing footpaths, bridle ways and the Camel Trail will help to deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits to its residents.

Within the Parish there are several communication masts. Any new development proposal sited in proximity to an existing communication masts and/or electrical pylons should be avoided and will not be supported.

The community would prefer not to have communication masts sited in proximity to any new or existing residential properties. (Through the media, health concerns have been raised related to communication masts in proximity to residential properties.)

### 4.2 Development site boundaries

Boundaries and edges help define the transition from the built environment to open countryside. They are critical to the design of any development and play an important part in defining private and public spaces and creating a sense of place.

Sensitive street / road alignments and residential boundaries can provide continuity of vistas and views along country roads/lanes.

Any removal of existing natural boundaries during the build stage such as, Cornish hedges, hedge and earth-banks, trees, and stone walls must be reinstated once work is completed and will be part of any planning conditions.

Boundary treatment has varied when development has taken place, especially when accommodating vehicle parking.

A more sympathetic and sensitive approach to boundary treatment for new dwellings that front country lanes and roads will be encouraged and will be required to be articulated in an Access and Design Statement.

The following types of fencing should be avoided where such fencing would front the country lanes/roads or would replace Cornish walls and hedges:

* timber boundary in place of traditional Cornish boundary walls
* Lapboard fencing
* metal railings and gates in particular settings
* concrete and plastic fencing should not be used where visible from the main public areas.

### 5.1 Building Density

The density of buildings within a development should be informed by its local site-specific character. It should be comparable with that of adjoining properties and should properly reflect the sense of place and local distinctiveness of the settlement.

The settlement growth of Blisland has been organic, of low density with mostly well sized amenity garden spaces. In any new development proposal, the density and private space should be articulated as part of any application; particular attention should be given to ensure that any proposals are of an appropriate density with a private space/amenity garden of commensurate and meaningful size. Open green landscaped spaces within a development will be required as part of such plans

### 5.2 Building Scale

The massing of new buildings in a development must be sensitive to the rural nature of the village and its wider setting. Widths of roads and views in and out of any proposed development can have both a positive or negative impact depending on how site sensitive the design, style, mix and grouping of house units have been set out. The houses should be of mixed styles in order to lessen the massing and density of development impact.

None of the existing housing stock exceeds two storeys in height. Any new housing should be of a similar height that blends with existing buildings and does not obscure or detract from the essential rural village character. The individual houses should be of mixed styles and of low density in order to lessen the impact of the development's massing.

### 5.3 Street Lighting Design

The Parish has minimal street lighting and the need for additional street lighting should not be assumed and should be kept to a minimum.

Any new development will be required to have an integrated low-level street lighting schemes that takes into consideration the International Dark Skies designation of the area and helps minimise its impact on wildlife and their habitats. The Access and Design Statement will need to set out clearly and in detail the proposed lighting scheme for the site. Any development proposal will also be required to articulate in the access and design statement how it is intending to mitigate internal light spillage thereby containing and reducing light pollution levels and supporting the Dark Skies designation.

### 5.4 Designed storage

The storage and siting of refuse and recycling bins can impact either positively or negatively on the quality of a new development and the street scene, therefore, storage facilities should be well designed to screen bins from public view whilst being easily accessible for residents. Within the Parish the majority of refuse storage bins tend to be positioned to the rear or side of properties although there are some where the design of the properties (steep driveways) means bins are not readily accessible and therefore have been more conveniently placed by some residents to the front of their property placing them on open display.

To date storage facilities have not been integrated into house design and it has been left to individual house holders' to decide where to place their refuse/recycling bins. The design of future housing will be required to include user friendly bin bays which are well designed easily accessible for both filling and emptying and are well screened from the road.

It is a well-known fact that most garages today are used as overspill family storage spaces for cycles, surfboards, pushchairs etc. Therefore, consideration should be given to redefining and extending the garage footprint as a flexible multipurpose space, designed as an integral part of the house providing sufficient square floorspace for both a vehicle and as family storage space accessible both externally and internally.

### 5.5 Design Details

The preferred option for aerials and satellite dishes is for them to be incorporated within the roof space wherever possible. Where this is not practical, they should be sited to have minimal visual impact especially in a conservation area or in proximity to a listed building.

### 5.6 The design of extensions

When designing an extension, careful consideration should be given not only to the increase in domestic space but also to the following:

* The style and massing of the extension and its harmonious and sympathetic integration and relationship with the existing building and the street scene.
* Material used for the construction of the extension will need to be in keeping with and complementary to the main dwelling.
* Consideration should also be given to the extension's impact and relationship to neighbouring properties.
* That badly designed extensions can reduce the value of a property.

## 6.1 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Blisland Parish recognises and supports the importance of carbon reduction and energy efficiency, this is especially important in respect of new housing. (Home Quality Mark home certificate standards should be a desired aim for new builds).

Careful housing orientation can help protect properties and reduce their exposure to the 'wind chill' factor whilst at the same time taking advantage of potential solar gain.

Therefore, where possible any new development should work with the topography of the landscape in which the new build is sited.

New properties should be future proofed to adapt to emerging renewable technologies. The Future Home Standards to be introduced in 2025 for new homes, will include upgraded insulation, solar roof panels for green electricity, ground heat source pumps and rainwater harvesting goods

Incorporation of solar panels is encouraged but should be sensitive to the location especially in a conservation area or in close proximity to listed buildings.

For these specific sensitive areas, solutions such as solar panels on the rear of properties or the use of solar rooftiles would be the preferred option and would be supported.

**The Blisland Village Conservation Area**