



Westmorland and Furness Design Code Glossary

October 2025



Glossary

Accessible dwellings

Houses designed for occupation by people with disabilities.

Adaptable dwellings

Houses designed so that they can be easily modified to meet the changing needs of its occupants.

Active frontage

Buildings having ground (and sometimes upper) floors with windows and doors facing onto the street, creating interest and activity.

Active Travel

'Non-motorised and sustainable forms of transport, primarily walking and cycling'. (National Model Design Code, 2021). Within the context of this Design Code, may also include horse riding, electric bikes, scooters and cargo bikes.

Amenities / local amenities

Useful or pleasant facilities or services (Collins Dictionary).

Amenity Local Green Space

See Local Green Space

Ancient woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites.

Ancient and veteran trees

An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Attributes can include its: great age, size, condition, biodiversity value, and cultural and heritage value. A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient (Natural England and Forestry Commission).

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Aspect

In building design terms the aspect is the direction a building or its principal rooms face or overlook. Dwellings (usually flats) with windows on one external wall only are called single-aspect dwellings. Dwellings with windows on two external walls (such as a mid-terrace house) are dual aspect.

Biodiversity

The variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi (National Geographic).

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development, land and marine management that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place. (Natural England)

Biosecurity

The prevention of disease-causing agents entering or leaving any place where they can pose a risk to farm animals, other animals, humans, or the safety and quality of a food product (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs).

Blocks

Part of the three-dimensional arrangement of built form, referring to parcels of urban land surrounded by road networks. See built form.

Building line

The prevailing distance that buildings are set back from the edge of the highway.

Built form

The three-dimensional arrangement of buildings, blocks, streets and spaces. For an individual building it can refer to its general shape and massing (National Model Design Code).

Capital (in shopfronts)

The topmost element of a column or pilaster

Carriageway

One side of a road on which traffic travelling in opposite direction is separated by a barrier. In most roads and streets in England this barrier is a dashed painted line.

Catslide roof

A roof that continues down below the main eaves height and allows you to have a greater depth of building without increasing your ridge height (English Heritage Buildings).

Character or local character

The character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive and memorable and helps people to find their way around. (National Design Guide)

Context

the location of a site and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings. (National Design Guide)

Cornice (in shopfronts)

A horizontal decorative moulding that crowns a building or shopfront

Cultural associations

The association a place has with past ways of life, activities, and traditions as well as any associations it may have with culturally or historically important people, organisations, movements, or events.

Dark skies

Places where the darkness of the night sky is relatively free of interference from artificial light (Oxford English Dictionary and utilised by the High Weald).

Defensible space

Any space outside of a building where the owners, occupiers or users of the building are justified and able to exercise responsibility for and control over the space, and who enters or uses it. There are often boundary features and/or changes in surface material between defensible spaces and public spaces. Examples of defensible spaces around homes include front and rear gardens, communal gardens, private car parks, driveways.

Density (of buildings or dwellings)

One indicator for how compact a development or place will be and how intensively it will be developed. However, in itself it is not a measure of how appropriate a particular development may be within an area type. For new or existing residential neighbourhoods, density is often expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

Design and Access Statement

A design and access (DAS) statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application. They provide a framework for applicants to explain how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. (Planning Portal)

Design Code

A set of clear, specific, and illustrated design requirements for a site or area, guided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Designated heritage asset

A world heritage site, scheduled monument, listed building, protected wreck site, registered park and garden, registered battlefield or conservation area designated under the relevant legislation. (NPPF)

Desire lines

The preferred, shortest or most easily navigated route for a pedestrian or cyclist between an origin and a destination. They are often seen as short-cuts, such as a mud path worn away across a grassed area in parks and open spaces (Designing Buildings Wiki).

Dispersed settlement

An area – at the minimum scale comprising an individual township or parish, but more commonly at the level of larger character areas – historically dominated and sustained by scattered, isolated hamlets, dwellings and farmsteads (Countryside & Community Research Institute and University of Gloucestershire and the University of the West of England).

Distinctiveness or local distinctiveness

see character

Dormer (window)

A window that sticks out from a sloping roof (Cambridge Dictionary).

Drystone

A building, wall or structure made of pieces of stone without any mortar is described as being made of drystone.

Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

Based on the information gathered during the PEA (see Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) and any subsequent survey work, and EclA is the evaluation of the impact of the development proposal on the biodiversity identified.

Embodied energy and embodied carbon

Embodied energy refers to the energy consumed by all the processes associated with the production of a building. Embodied carbon refers to all the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted in producing materials or developments. (University College London).

Enclosure of streets or spaces

The relative openness and shape of a street space or the public realm. Enclosure is the product of the building line(s) and variance of the buildings along the street or space.

Energy efficient

Using less energy to perform the same task (Environmental and Energy Study Institute).

Environmental net gain

Development will be expected to produce a +10% increase in biodiversity (see biodiversity).

Exceedance routes

Pre-planned pathways that guide excess water away from buildings during extreme rainfall events when drainage systems are overwhelmed.

Fanlight

A semicircular or elongated semicircular window sitting above a door but contained within the surround, with radiating glazing bars.

Fascia

A vertical frieze or band under a roof edge, or which forms the outer surface of a cornice. Also the high part of a shopfront that is traditionally where the main sign is positioned.

Frontage

Buildings having ground (and sometimes upper) floors with windows and doors facing onto the street.

Geology / geological

The study of the structure, evolution and dynamics of the Earth and its natural mineral and energy resources (The Geological Society).

Grain / urban grain

The balance of open space and buildings, or urban grain of a place is the result of the variety of the size and shape of building plots and the size and variety of buildings within them. These factors give streets their rhythm and character. Many of the settlements in Westmorland and Furness have a 'fine grain' because building plots are often small and dense and contain buildings of varied scales. It is possible for the grain to be 'damaged' by clearing plots or erecting much larger scale buildings by bringing several plots together. It is possible to 'repair' the grain through new development by respecting the prevailing urban grain and character.

Green roof and green wall

A form of urban Green Infrastructure consisting of a vegetated layer that sits atop or along the conventional surfaces of a building's roof or walls. (See Green infrastructure).

Green infrastructure

A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity (National Planning Policy Framework).

Greenfield run-off rates

The rate of surface water run-off that is expected from a site when it is in an undeveloped or 'greenfield' state.

Hard landscaping

The non-plant material used in landscaping, such as a park or garden. Hard landscape elements can include paths, patios, terraces, fencing, lights, walls and structures. (Designing Buildings Wiki)

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). (NPPF)

Heritage Statement

A document which assesses the significance of heritage assets and their settings affected by a development. It must detail the significance of the heritage asset and the potential impact of the proposed development on it. (NPPF),

Home Zones

Residential streets where people and vehicles share the whole of the street space safely and on equal terms, where quality of life takes precedence over ease of traffic movement.

Hydrology

The branch of science concerned with the properties of the earth's water, and especially its movement in relation to land. It includes surface water hydrology (how water moves and drains across land) and groundwater hydrology (how water moves below ground level).

Inclusive streets

Streets designed to consider the needs of all people from the outset of any transport and pedestrian infrastructure.

Infill development or scheme

The development of vacant or underutilised sites within existing built up areas.

Intangible

Impossible to touch, to describe exactly, or to give an exact value (Cambridge Dictionary). The intangible aspects of the built environment are the things that cannot be seen or touched, such as tranquillity, serenity, vitality, sounds and smells.

Landmark

A building or place that is easily recognised, especially one that you can use to judge where you are (Cambridge Dictionary).

Landscape

As defined in the European Landscape Convention, is 'An area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors'. Therefore, to be truly landscape-led, development must be guided by the natural, ecological, and cultural character of its location.

Lean-to

A shelter or simple building with a roof that slopes in one direction (Adapted from Cambridge Dictionary).

Life Cycle Assessment

Identifying the environmental effects of a building during its construction and operational lifetime. The assessment includes the energy and materials used to construct and occupy the building plus the waste and pollutants generated by construction and occupation.

Linear settlement

A group of buildings forming a settlement in a long line, usually following along a road.

Local Green Space

Can be defined as:

- o Amenity Local Green Space: Land which makes a significant positive contribution to the visual amenity or character of a settlement and/ or it provides opportunities for informal recreation (such as dog walking) by the local community. Not all Amenity Local Green Space is publicly accessible.
- o Recreation Local Green Space: Areas which, based on evidence, are important locally because they provide needed formal recreation opportunities, for example playing fields.

Massing (of buildings)

The way in which a building's bulk or volume is shaped into a form. For example, the same total internal volume of a building could be massed as one large block or broken down (or massed) into several smaller connected blocks.

Meeting place

Many neighbourhoods include public spaces as focal points at the heart of the community. They may include city and town squares, marketplaces, and village greens. Squares can be green spaces enclosed by railings, or paved surfaces for use as markets and public events. All of these spaces provide informal settings for activities such as meeting, resting, playing, holding events and parking.

Microclimate

The distinctive climate of a small-scale area, such as a garden, park, valley or part of a city (Met Office).

Mullion

A vertical element between the casements or panes of a window, the panels of a door, or the panels of a screen.

Natural surveillance

Streets that are characterised by active edges so that the street space is overlooked from homes and businesses.

Nature recovery

Supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation.

Nature recovery network

An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Net Gain

See Biodiversity Net Gain.

Non-designated heritage asset

(See Heritage asset) Non-designated heritage assets do not meet the national designation criteria but have been identified by the planning authority as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. (National Planning Policy Framework)

Nucleated settlement

A settlement clustered around a central point, such as a village green, market place or church.

Offshut

The Cumbrian name for a lean-to (see Lean-to).

Passive solar gain

See Solar Gain

Passive surveillance

See Natural surveillance.

Permeable surfacing

Surfaces that allow water to percolate into the ground including, natural surfaces, gravel and low traffic volume engineered road surfaces and hardstanding in front gardens.

Permitted development

A national grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application.

Pilaster (in shopfronts)

A load-bearing section of thickened wall or column integrated into a wall, or a purely decorative element in architecture which gives the appearance of a supporting column and articulates an extent of wall.

Pitch or roof pitch

The angle or slope of a roof (created as the rafter leaves the ceiling joist).

Plot ratio

This is the proportion of a site (or plot) occupied by a building or buildings. For example the proportion of a domestic property that is taken up by the house and garden as a percentage of the overall size of the plot is its plot ratio.

Polyfocal settlement

A settlement with more than one focal point for development. For example a settlement with a church, market and riverside may have development clustered around each of these focal points.

Priority Habitat

Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Public realm

Public realm relates to all parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses: all streets, squares, and other rights of way, whether predominantly in residential, commercial or civic uses. (Historic England)

Public right of way (PROW)

Paths that can be used by the public, this includes:

- footpaths - for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- bridleways - for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs;
- restricted byways - for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs; and
- byways open to all traffic - for any kind of transport, including cars (but they're mainly used by walkers, cyclists, and horse riders).

Public Spaces

Any highway and any other premises or place to which at the material time the public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise (Criminal Justice Act, 1972).

Rain garden

A planted space that takes advantage of rainfall and stormwater runoff in its design and plant selection. It is usual for rain gardens to be sited close to the runoff source (such as a highway or expanse of paving) and serve to intercept and slow the water runoff down as it travels downhill. The plants within the garden are best suited for withstand high levels of moisture and to absorb nutrients from runoff. (Designing Buildings Wiki)

Rainwater harvesting

Water butts and other rainwater harvesting systems collect rainwater for use in gardens or for non-potable uses reducing water consumption.

Recreation Local Green Space

See Local Green Space.

Reveals (of windows)

The surrounding sides of a window opening.

Render

A coating of plaster or cement on a wall (Cambridge Dictionary). Roughcast render has pebbles or small pieces of aggregate added to it for a textured surface and to give lime-based render a greater surface area from which moisture can evaporate.

Roofscape

A view of the roofs of buildings in an area, or of the roof of a particular large building (Cambridge Dictionary).

Rough cast render

See render.

Secured by Design

The official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit.

Set back zone

The space between the edge of the public highway and the front of the building. Front gardens are typical set back zones.

Setting (of heritage assets)

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. (National Planning Policy Framework)

Settlement pattern

The general distribution and layout of buildings and spaces in a settlement. A settlement pattern can be nucleated (i.e. concentrated around a single point such as a junction, bridge crossing or market place), polyfocal (have more than one place that development is focussed on), regular (such as a grid of terrace streets or a planned suburb of avenues) or irregular.

Shared street

The concept of shared streets and shared spaces is an urban design approach that minimises the segregation between types of road user, such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Shopfront

The outside part of a shop that faces the street (Cambridge Dictionary).

Significance (of heritage assets)

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance. (National Planning Policy Framework)

Slate

A dark grey rock that can be easily divided into thin pieces, or a small, thin piece of this used to cover a roof.

Soft landscaping

The use of vegetative material as part of a landscaped area, such as a garden or park.

Solar gain

In buildings, this is the heat gained by sunlight shining into rooms through windows or by the walls absorbing the heat of the Sun and passing this heat into the interior of the building. If designed and managed correctly, solar gain can be a carbon-neutral way of heating rooms. (Designing Buildings Wiki)

Stallriser

The solid, vertical base of a traditional shopfront, located directly below the display window

Street furniture

Any items or objects that are permanently fixed in place in a street or road, such as signage, streetlights, utility cabinets, railings, barriers, bins, benches, telephone kiosks, post boxes and information boards.

SuDS / Sustainable Drainage System

Drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses (British Geological Survey). Such solutions usually involve slowing or containing surface water runoff in soft or hard landscaping designed for this purpose, such as swales or rain gardens.

SuDS Management Train

Starting with prevention (preventing runoff by reducing impermeable areas), or good housekeeping measures for reducing pollution; and progresses through local source controls to larger downstream site and regional controls (Susdrain).

Swale

Shallow, broad and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey runoff and remove pollutants. They may be used as conveyance structures to pass the runoff to the next stage of the treatment train and can be designed to promote infiltration where soil and groundwater conditions allow.

Transom

A bar of wood or stone across the top of a door or window, or the window above such a bar

Topography / Topographical

The physical appearance of the natural features of an area of land, especially the shape of its surface.

Townscape

The appearance of a town or built up area.

Variance of a building line

How far new buildings can depart from the existing building line in terms of set-back and projections. This will depend on the uniformity or range of the existing building line's pattern.

Vernacular building

An indigenous building style using local materials and traditional methods of construction and ornament, especially as distinguished from academic or historical architectural styles. (National Design Guide)

Water efficiency

Using the appropriate amount of water required to carry out the specific task (Waterwise UK).

Wheeling

Wheeling refers to use of wheeled mobility aids, such as wheelchairs mobility scooters and walking frames. Wheeling is a term that many, but not all, disabled people identify with. It also includes prams, buggies and other modes of transport which may travel on footways, at speeds similar to walking. It excludes cycles and e-scooters.