

local development plan

farm steading design guidance

proposed supplementary
planning guidance 2018



East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018

Proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance

Farm Steading Design Guidance

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed East Lothian Local Development Plan 2016 section on Diverse Countryside and Coastal Areas (pp 118 – 124) outlines the forms of development that are permitted in the East Lothian Countryside. East Lothian’s countryside contains a wide range of attractive, vernacular rural buildings which contribute to local character and distinctiveness. Some of these are no longer required for their original purpose and present opportunities for positive re-use. Many farm steadings and rural buildings in East Lothian have been converted to new uses while retaining their architectural and historic character and continuing to play a positive role in the overall appearance of the East Lothian countryside.
- 1.2 Paragraph 5.4 and Policy DC1: Rural Diversification supports the principle of restoration or conversion of vernacular buildings in the countryside provided that they are of appropriate character and designed in such a way that maintains or complements their layout and appearance. Paragraph 5.4 notes that advice on how to achieve this can be found in the Council’s Farm Steading Design guidance. This guidance was included in Appendix 2 of the East Lothian Local Plan 2008. This supplementary planning guidance will replace that farm steading design guidance. The following design criteria will be a material consideration in assessing and determining applications for planning permission and, where appropriate, listed building consent that propose the restoration or conversion of farm steadings to non-agricultural uses in the East Lothian countryside.
- 1.3 In addition to the Council’s farm steading design guidance the Historic Environment Scotland publication *Guide for Practitioners: Rural Buildings of the Lothians – Conservation and Conversion*, published by Historic Scotland, 1999, ISBN 1 900-168-89-PLU-2512 is commended as providing further more detailed advice on successful conversions of traditional rural buildings in the Lothians.
- 1.4 The overarching aim of the farm steading design policy and the Guide for Practitioners is to encourage new uses for redundant rural buildings in the East Lothian countryside and to ensure that the conversion and restoration retains the architectural and historic characteristics of the existing building and ensures that the building continues to look like a vernacular building that belongs in the East Lothian countryside.
- 1.5 There are many rural buildings, particularly farm steadings, in East Lothian that are in need of investment and a new use. As well as residential use, steadings have also been successfully converted to other uses including class 4 office, small scale retail, health related use, café restaurant, holiday let and other tourism and leisure use.

2.0 Local Development Plan Policies

2.1 Local Development Plan Policy DC1: Rural Diversification outlines the circumstances in which change of use or conversions of existing buildings will be supported and requires that any proposals for the restoration or conversion of vernacular buildings to accommodate uses supported by the policy should be of an appropriate scale and character and designed in such a way that maintains or complements their layout and appearance. Policy DC2: Conversion of Rural Buildings to Housing outlines the circumstances where conversion to housing use will be supported where:

- (i) The existing building is worthy of retention by virtue of its architectural or historic character;
- (ii) The building is physically suitable for the proposed use and any extensions or alterations are compatible with and do not harm any significant architectural or historic features of the building and are in keeping with its size, form, scale, proportion, massing and architectural character; and
- (iii) The building stands substantially intact (normally to at least wallhead height) and requires no significant demolition. To be satisfied that the existing structure is suitable for the conversion without significant demolition the Council must be provided with credible evidence of the building's structural stability at the time of the planning application.

2.2 Additionally, in the case of a change of use of agricultural buildings to housing, the change of use must involve the whole building group to avoid any conflict between housing and existing agricultural uses.

2.3 In the case of a farm steading conversion, a limited amount of new build may be acceptable where:

- (i) It reinstates a part of the original steading group demolished or altered by later development alien to its character and appearance, where there is clear physical and/or historic evidence of the original form; or
- (ii) It is a logical extension to an existing part of the steading that would provide a completeness to the steading's overall composition that is in keeping with its scale, form and character.

2.4 In all cases, the external finishes used must be sympathetic to those of the existing buildings proposed for conversion.

3.0 The Farm Steading Design Guidance

3.1 Detailed proposals require to conform to the following:

1. The design, fenestration, detailing, materials and finishing of any conversion works must respect the existing architectural characteristics and qualities of the steading. Existing door and window openings should be reused wherever practicable; existing cart shed openings, ventilator slots, distinctive detailing and any ancillary structures such as boiler houses and stalks should be retained.

2. Projections above the existing roof ridgeline, raising ridges or eaves and introducing porches or new dormers will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the applicant has demonstrated that such changes are sympathetically designed and detailed and no reasonable alternative exists to achieve the conversion. Use of new roof lights should be avoided wherever practicable.
3. Extensions post-dating the original conversion will only be acceptable where these do not adversely affect the architectural integrity of the steading. Normal permitted development rights for such later extensions will be withdrawn by condition on the permission for the initial conversion where this is considered necessary to secure the continuing architectural integrity of the steading group.
4. Open courtyards should not be subdivided by fences or other structures but should be held in common as one space, simply detailed in materials appropriate to traditional steading courts. Traditional courtyard finishes such as cobbles, setts and central walled or sunken middens should be retained and repaired where considered appropriate. Fencing of courtyards into individual house gardens is unlikely to be acceptable.
5. Landscape design and specification (both hard and soft) must be appropriate to the architecture of the steading and its setting. Existing trees should be retained and protected wherever practicable. Where common landscaped areas are proposed, property arrangements must be made to ensure their future management and maintenance. Individual garden areas will only be approved where appropriately designed and detailed in relation to the architecture and setting of the steading. New tree and hedge planting around the steading and along its approaches may be acceptable where this will enhance its setting in the landscape and is of appropriate species.
6. Car parking, landscaping, gardens, services and other ancillary development may be accommodated either wholly or partly outwith the immediate steading area. However, such provision will only be acceptable if it can be achieved without adversely affecting the operation of adjacent agricultural units and in the context of an appropriate landscape design scheme, and where such provision would not adversely affect the setting of the steading.
7. In designing such proposals applicants should not maximise the number of individual units at the expense of adequate space standards and inappropriate alterations to the external fabric. The privacy of each house should be considered in the design, particularly in relation to the arrangements of footpaths, roads and open space. However, privacy will not be accepted as an argument in favour of inappropriate designs.
8. Should there be a continuing need for residential accommodation for use in support of the agricultural unit of which the steading was formerly part, or any sub-division of that unit, then provision for this should be made within the steading conversion.

ACCESS AND SERVICES

9. Access, parking and the provision of services must all be to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with the responsible authorities. In particular:
- any development must be capable of being serviced by a water supply, surface and foul drainage, and sewage treatment acceptable to the relevant authorities;
 - all services should be provided underground or otherwise concealed where practicable.
 - the development should be capable of being satisfactorily accessed from the nearest public road. Where this road link is to be a private road, the Council must be satisfied with arrangements for its future maintenance.
10. Before any consent is issued, applicants will require to demonstrate that they have or can secure, control over all land needed to provide satisfactory access including, where relevant, that needed to meet planning conditions concerning the formation of improvement of a junction with a public road.
11. Where served by a single-track access road, adequate provision of passing places will be required. The standard of access road construction should allow for a pothole and water-free route and allow passage for refuse collection and emergency vehicles. Suitable turning area provision will be required and stances for mobile shops provided where appropriate. Full residential parking provision standards will be applied.
12. Sewage treatment facilities should be designed and built to a standard that would permit adoption by Scottish Water. In considering these matters, the Council will consult the relevant authorities.

PLAY FACILITIES

13. For residential conversions, the Council will expect the provision of any open space and play facilities to standards acceptable to the Council, in consultation with the Council Community Services Department, as appropriate. Due to the relatively isolated location of many steadings, the Council may require developers to provide play facilities to a higher standard than that normally required. In certain circumstances, facilities for community meetings and social events may also be required.

COMPLETION

14. It is important that elements such as open space, play areas, car parking, landscaping of roads and footpaths are completed timeously. The Council will apply conditions designed to secure this.

LISTED BUILDINGS

15. The policies and design criteria set out above will be taken into account where the whole or parts of a steading are statutorily Listed. Proposals must be of the highest quality. Any alteration must be kept to an absolute minimum and be fully justified in architectural terms. Where appropriate, the Council may seek the advice of Historic Environment Scotland before deciding applications relating to Listed steading buildings.

FURTHER ADVICE

16. For more detailed advice prospective applicants should contact the Council's Planning Service at John Muir House, Haddington

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

17. Developer contributions may be required for steading conversions in line with Supplementary Guidance: Developer Contributions Framework. In the case of farm steading conversions, a commuted sum may be considered in respect of the affordable housing requirement if on site provision is not appropriate.

4.0 SEA and HRA

- 4.1 This supplementary planning guidance has been pre screened and not found to require Strategic Environmental Assessment. Individual planning applications may require the submission of additional environmental reports to ensure compliance with Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment.
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