



The word design describes the thought process which goes towards deciding how something should look. Wherever people have had an influence, our surroundings are shaped by design.

"The fact is that almost every man-made thing around us is designed, and because we live in a largely man-made environment, designers can be seen as contributing to the quality of life."

FHK Henrion,

introduction to Graphic Design Source Book

Dartmoor National Park is a combination of both the natural and cultural environment. Design plays an important part in regulating how humans affect the landscape. Good design can avoid man made structures intruding into natural and semi natural environments and can influence people's behaviour. This factsheet looks at the different areas of design and how they fit into the work of the Dartmoor National Park Authority (NPA).

Graphic Design

You may hear many different terms to describe graphic design. Graphic design is the putting together of visual images and usually text to communicate an idea, put across information, key messages or promote a product. This covers a vast range of things – logos, newspapers, leaflets, publications, packaging, signage, exhibitions and this factsheet. Any organisation or business needs graphic design to operate successfully, and a National Park Authority is no exception. Graphic design is necessary for putting across information clearly and aesthetically.

Corporate Identity/ Branding

Most successful organisations and companies have a strong individual corporate identity or branding which identifies its literature or products to consumers, through use of a logo, slogan or house style.

This can mean using a similar style for a range of material or applying the standard logo or typeface to different situations. When Dartmoor was designated as a National Park in 1951 the present logo was designed to represent it. A coherent thread running through associated products is essential for recognition and clarity.

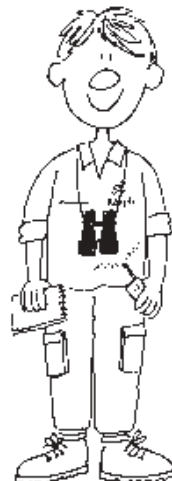


Sharing information

The NPA produces exhibitions, signboards, leaflets, other publications and updates its website to communicate information with its various target audiences. When providing information it is important to select the most appropriate medium, for the target audience i.e Ranger Ralph's newsletter is designed to be fun and full of interesting facts for children under 4-12.

Design Points

- What size, folds, type of paper etc?
- How will the leaflet be displayed?
- Will the leaflet need to fit in a pocket?
- Target audience
- Key messages



Leaflets and other publications are more appropriate in areas where a signboard would be too intrusive. They are also used for the distribution of information outside the National Park.

The Authority has **Information Signboards** at popular scenic sites and some towns and villages within the National Park. These boards provide a history of the area, a map and local information, eg. nearest garage, doctor, vet, etc.

Design Points

- Where should an information board go?
- Signboards are only used where they will not intrude on the landscape and are therefore best placed where there are already visitor facilities, eg. car parks, toilets.
- Think about lettering - how big does it need to be, and what typeface will be clear to read.
- Think about catering for all, i.e. people with special needs.
- Signboards, need to be weather proof and vandal proof.



Information Centres

The NPA operates from Information Centres, the Centres sell various publications, maps, leaflets and souvenirs as well as providing a general information service to the visitor.

Design Points

- The Information Centres offer exciting opportunities for design ideas, from point of sale (the presentation of goods) to the general layout and look of the centre. Each centre has its own interpretation displays relevant to the area.

Exhibitions

As well as the more permanent interpretation displays there are various temporary or mobile displays produced for use at outside events and by other organisations. The subject will vary depending on the event - eg. general Dartmoor, ecology, archaeology.

Design Points

- Mobile displays have to be designed to be assembled easily by one person and must not take up too much space.
- Could there be a system where panels go together in different combinations to give different themes?

Website

The NPA's website is currently undergoing re-development. The importance of content, accessibility and design and their relationships with each other will be reflected in the new appearance.

www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

Design Points

- It is important to bear in mind the age range that you are aiming at when designing educational material.

Education

The NPA has an Education section which answers enquiries from students and teachers, organise guided walks and talks. The graphic designer works with the Education section to produce factsheets to cover a range of subjects relating to Dartmoor, as well as exhibition material.

Buildings and related design

From prehistoric times people have left their mark on the landscape, whether clearing forests to make way for agriculture, or building settlements or ritual monuments.

Today our potentially destructive effects on the landscape must be kept to a minimum. Where once design would have had objectives towards religious ceremony, shelter, security, availability of water and cultivatable land, today's objectives are more related to enhancement of natural beauty and wildlife. The NPA gives advice to local bodies, carries out its own projects such as car parks, toilets etc. and publishes planning design guides.



Design Points

- Simplicity should be the aim in design, construction and detail.
- Features of old houses, display a wide variety of shapes - roof ends, porches, windows, chimneys etc. These can feature in modern designs.
- Buildings in the countryside require very careful siting - it is necessary to consider the position of any other buildings, contours, trees, hedges & other natural features.
- In towns or villages the siting of the building must be sympathetic to the character of the town. Buildings in rural settings have a strong horizontal emphasis, whereas in towns the emphasis is on the vertical.
- Buildings should be grouped to form settlements with enclosed areas.

The nature of granite means that details such as chimneys are bold, simple shapes. The relatively harsh climate on Dartmoor meant that window spaces tended to be small compared to the overall wall area. In more sheltered towns windows were larger.

STREET FURNITURE

Signposts, notices, street lights, seats, litter bins, bollards etc. are known as street furniture. They need to be carefully designed to fit into a scene without cluttering it.

Design Points

- Is an item of street furniture really necessary?
- Fixing items to walls leaves pavements clear for pedestrians, but the wall of which may be altered detrimentally!
- Signs - typeface, colour and structures should be consistent to avoid a cluttered appearance - use symbols instead of text wherever appropriate.
- Lighting should look as good by day as by night!
- Litter bins must be easily seen, yet as unobtrusive as possible.

Buildings

Traditional buildings are a visually important part of an inhabited landscape. The buildings and the surroundings in which they are set are inseparable, for one influences the other. In the past builders made use of locally available materials so traditional buildings reflect the geology of the area. On Dartmoor the stone to hand was granite. Because granite was a difficult stone to cut older buildings (pre 16th century) were built with large uneven blocks. Up until the 18th century when slate became more easily available, buildings were thatched. Thatched roofs are steeply angled to let rain run off quickly.

Useful web links for further information:

Other related factsheets:
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dnp/factfile/homepage.html>

Other publications:

- *Dartmoor National Park Management Plan*
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dnp/planning/mplan.html>
- *Dartmoor National Park Local Plan*
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dnp/planning/lplan/localplan2.html>
- *Dartmoor National Park Performance Plan*
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dnp/pubs/pplan2003.html>

For further information, and a list of other Fact Sheets available, contact the:
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