

Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council Eco Design Guide

The Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council are endeavouring to encourage the adoption of the highest standards of eco construction. Below you will find the list that we wish to see designed into new housing and also refurbishments and extensions.

We will aspire to include these standards within the Neighbourhood Development Plan at which point they would become supplementary planning requirements.

The Parish Council have decided to forward this Eco Design Guide to all developers and are asking Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to make applicants aware at pre-planning application stage.

- The Fabric First Approach – get the envelope – walls, windows, doors, floors and roof right.
- Airtightness – seal all gaps and avoid thermal bridging where cold can enter via an uninsulated area. Reduce the number of air changes per hour to below 1. This also prevents draughts which is a sign that air can leave the building unchecked.
- Insulation - substantial levels of insulation to achieve the desirable U value (the measurement of how much heat can leave through the surface).
- Ventilation – if you have airbricks, trickle vents and open chimneys, you are allowing warm air to leave and cold air to enter your home without any control. The answer is mechanical ventilation with heat recovery. This takes the stale and wet air from mainly kitchen and bathrooms, passes it through a heat exchanger which warms up fresh incoming air and that then goes to the other rooms. So there is always a flow of fresh air coming in and stale, wet air leaving the building.
- Orientation – As far as possible have the largest windows facing south (care also needs to be taken to make sure that there is no problem with overheating in summer) and the north facing windows should be small.
- Triple glazing
- Passivhaus approach. These points above are the basis for passivhaus. Obviously there is a lot more to it, but if you can build to or towards passivhaus standards you will be able to forget about having a central heating system which will mean a huge saving in installation and running costs.

Also on the list, in no particular order:

- Working chimneys with a balanced flue Ecodesign woodburner – wood is plentiful, cheap and CO² neutral.
- Solar Panels and photo voltaics – although not essential with passivhaus standards – but free electricity and hot water is not to be sniffed at assuming the roof is suitable.
- Rainwater recycling to minimise water consumption.
- Reduce sewage by the use of highly efficient washing machines, dishwashers and particularly showers.
- Use local materials to reduce delivery miles and to help fit in with the local vernacular.
- Electric car charging points.
- Composting areas.
- Outdoor clothes airers.
- Bat and bird boxes.

We are very enthusiastic to promote excellence in building standards, we do also recognise that the cost of building will be increased by a small amount - but the benefits and savings will very quickly pay everything back and continue to benefit bank accounts for decades.

P.S. You can still open windows with passivhaus standards!

Reviewed: January 2023