

## Environmental Colour Assessment (ECA)

*Colour is important, for many different and complex reasons, and most of us have to live with colours other people choose. When planning new development, however, deciding which colours to use can sometimes be problematic: 'The concept of colour is so elusive that it eludes even a majority of designers' says architect, landscape architect and colour consultant Michael Lancaster. Those choices are often highly subjective, influenced by current 'trends' and fashions, and controversial. As a result, the prevailing wisdom tends to err on the side of 'bland and conventional' ; this is reflected in the limited and uninspiring range of colours that are commercially available for man-made building materials. It need not be this way.'*<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Environmental Colour Assessment – Technical Information Note 04/2018 – Landscape Institute November 2018

The concept of ECA's was originally developed in France and Italy in the 1960's and 70's and was introduced in the early 1980's to the UK. It is an objective process that helps to resolve many of the issues associated with colour selection and specification, especially in the external environment.

ECA's are often undertaken in association with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA's) but are also sometimes requested as a separate exercise by Local Planning Authorities and statutory environmental bodies. This can happen where the proposed development sits within a particular sensitive landscape such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Heritage Coast. The ECA establishes the predominant colours within the landscape and is used to inform the design and finishes of the building or structure. Most of the work is undertaken in the field, making observations from visually representative viewpoints using the Natural Colour System (NCS) and the NCS Index 1950 colour fan.

RML's team of landscape architects can undertake ECA's as a standalone exercise or in tandem with a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) or LVIA and in accordance with the technical information note prepared by the Landscape Institute. Please get in touch if you have been tasked with the preparation of an ECA and we can discuss your requirements and help you define the scope of the assessment

