

Design Guidance

7.1 The following section of the neighbourhood plan explores the origins and character of Ticehurst parish in order to inform the best way to design new buildings and enable changes and modifications to existing buildings. Understanding what defines the neighbourhood area will help inform the design of future development, ensuring that any new additions are appropriate for their context.



Objectives of the Design Guidance

7.2 The design guidance section within the neighbourhood plan seeks to achieve four key objectives:

- To create living and working environments that respond to the Ticehurst parish’s rich heritage together with the demands for high-performing standards of sustainable development
- To ensure that the layout, form and density of all new development reflects the historic layout and rural fabric of the area and the specific design characteristics of each part of the neighbourhood area
- To maintain and enhance the village settings of the Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate, their locations within the High Weald, their field patterns, roofscapes and landmark buildings
- To ensure that applicants demonstrate through the planning application process how their proposals relate to the wider parish context, with specific reference to clear and convenient connections to local services and facilities and with surrounding adjacent areas

General Approach to Design Matters

7.3 In terms of a general approach to design matters, it is expected that all new developments and redevelopment proposals will be designed and built to a high quality in accordance with the housing and design policies of this neighbourhood plan. The Design Council’s “Building for Life” gives excellent advice. The High Weald AONB expects to publish a design guide later this year.

7.4 As well as general design advice on the AONB and Conservation Area context, density, layout, form, views and roofscapes, green space integration and streets and lanes, the neighbourhood plan also provide specific guidance and illustrative examples on the following topics: building typologies; plot layout and boundary treatments; materials and details; external finishes and decoration; the wider landscape and village edges; sustainability and resource efficiency.

Design & Access Statement Requirement

7.5 Rother District Council require a Design & Access Statement (DAS) for major developments of 10 or more houses, for house building within the Conservation Area, or for listed building consent. The impact of any such proposed development, especially the visual impact along with any required landscape mitigation measures, should be specified in a well-written and well-illustrated DAS submitted as part of any planning application.

7.6 It is expected that all DAS documents will to show how development proposals responds to the different design topics as addressed by the neighbourhood plan. As an alternative, or in addition, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be submitted.

The High Weald AONB Context

7.7 A medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills studded with sandstone outcrops, small, irregular-shaped fields, scattered farmsteads, and ancient routeways, the High Weald is one of Britain's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a nationally significant designated landscape. Its natural beauty is defined by its five character components:

1. Geology, landform, water systems and climate including sandrock outcrops and gill streams
2. A dispersed settlement pattern, including historic farmsteads
3. Routeways, including ancient droeways and sunken lanes
4. Woodlands comprising ancient woodlands and archaeological remains of lost woodland
5. Field and heath system of unimproved grassland, heathland and historic field boundaries

7.8 Together, these five character components — which are found consistently across the High Weald, from Rye in the east to Horsham in the west — help constitute the fundamental character of the area.

They have made the High Weald a recognisably distinct landscape for at least the last 700 years and will continue to define it in the future. The settlements of Ticehurst, Stonegate and Flimwell and the wider neighbourhood area all fall within the AONB.

7.9 The High Weald AONB Management Plan has been adopted by the Area's 15 constituent local authorities in order to help conserve and enhance this natural beauty. The Management Plan defines the Area's natural beauty, including the five character components, and sets objectives for these components. The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan therefore has regard to both AONB Management Plan and its objectives in its assessment of new development proposals.

Ticehurst Conservation Area

7.10 The central, historic core of Ticehurst benefits from a Conservation Area status (see plan on page 97). Development in conservation areas is more strictly controlled than elsewhere, the intention being not to prevent change but to ensure that the main features of the area are conserved and that new development is sympathetic in character.

7.11 For this reason, detailed planning applications or detailed reserved matters applications (and not outline applications) are preferred for new development in conservation areas. The Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan endorses this approach and expects only detailed plans and drawings for developments and alterations in the central areas of Ticehurst.

7.12 The neighbourhood plan also extends this expectation of detailed planning applications to the centres of both Flimwell and Stonegate, notwithstanding neither village currently enjoyed conservation area status.

7.13 The neighbourhood plan requires new development in the Ticehurst Conservation Area to have close regard to the scale, traditional building forms, materials and techniques characteristic of the areas. The height, size, design, roofscape, plot width and visual appearance of new development and the design of any new vehicular access, will be required to respect the character of the conservation area in Ticehurst.

7.14 The character is composed of many elements; the mixture of historical periods, the informality of the streetscape; the absence of formal rectilinear compositions; broken sight lines and profiles of buildings and interesting skylines. This not to say that contemporary design themes will not be allowed but the neighbourhood plan acknowledges that such approaches may present the designer with a considerable challenge if they are to be successful.

Layout, Form & Density

7.15 The layout, form and density of all new developments across the parish needs to reflect the historic form of the area and the specific rural and High Weald characteristics of each part of the neighbourhood area. An understanding of settlement patterns will be critical to inform the layout, form and density of new development proposals.

Design Integration

7.16 All development and redevelopment proposals need to demonstrate how they will relate to the wider context of Ticehurst, Stonegate and Flimwell. Specific reference needs to be made to the delivery of clear and convenient connections with the services and facilities of the parish and the creation of public access to the wider AONB countryside, where this is possible subject to land ownership constraints.

Views & Roofscapes

7.17 The local character of Ticehurst, Stonegate and Flimwell is typically defined by architecture of fewer than three storeys. New buildings which adhere to this height will be designed in keeping with the surrounding context, thus creating visually a more integrated and seamless addition to the built environment of the parish. New buildings should not be permitted to interrupt views or roofscapes within the Ticehurst Conservation Area.

Settlement Patterns

7.18 Map 22 shows how development in Ticehurst village has developed over time by highlighting the additions to the built environment every decade or so. This diagram allows the different layouts and street patterns typical of each era to be clearly recognised.

7.19 Future development should respond to the more historic street patterns where possible, rather than late 20th Century layouts, that are often suburban in nature and therefore do not always sit comfortably alongside traditional rural development patterns.

7.20 Higher density will be sought in and around the village centre, without inappropriately located cul-de-sacs. Such design measures will result in a layout more suited to the rural context, with coherent, legible streets with improved connections and accessibility. This expectation will apply equally to Ticehurst, Stonegate and Flimwell.

Green Space Integration

7.21 The integration of green spaces within the settlements of Stonegate, Flimwell and Ticehurst is also important. This information is key to understanding how people navigate the villages and access the services and facility that are currently provided.

6.22 All developments should aim to incorporate green spaces of an appropriate scale and type within the site.

Streets & Lanes

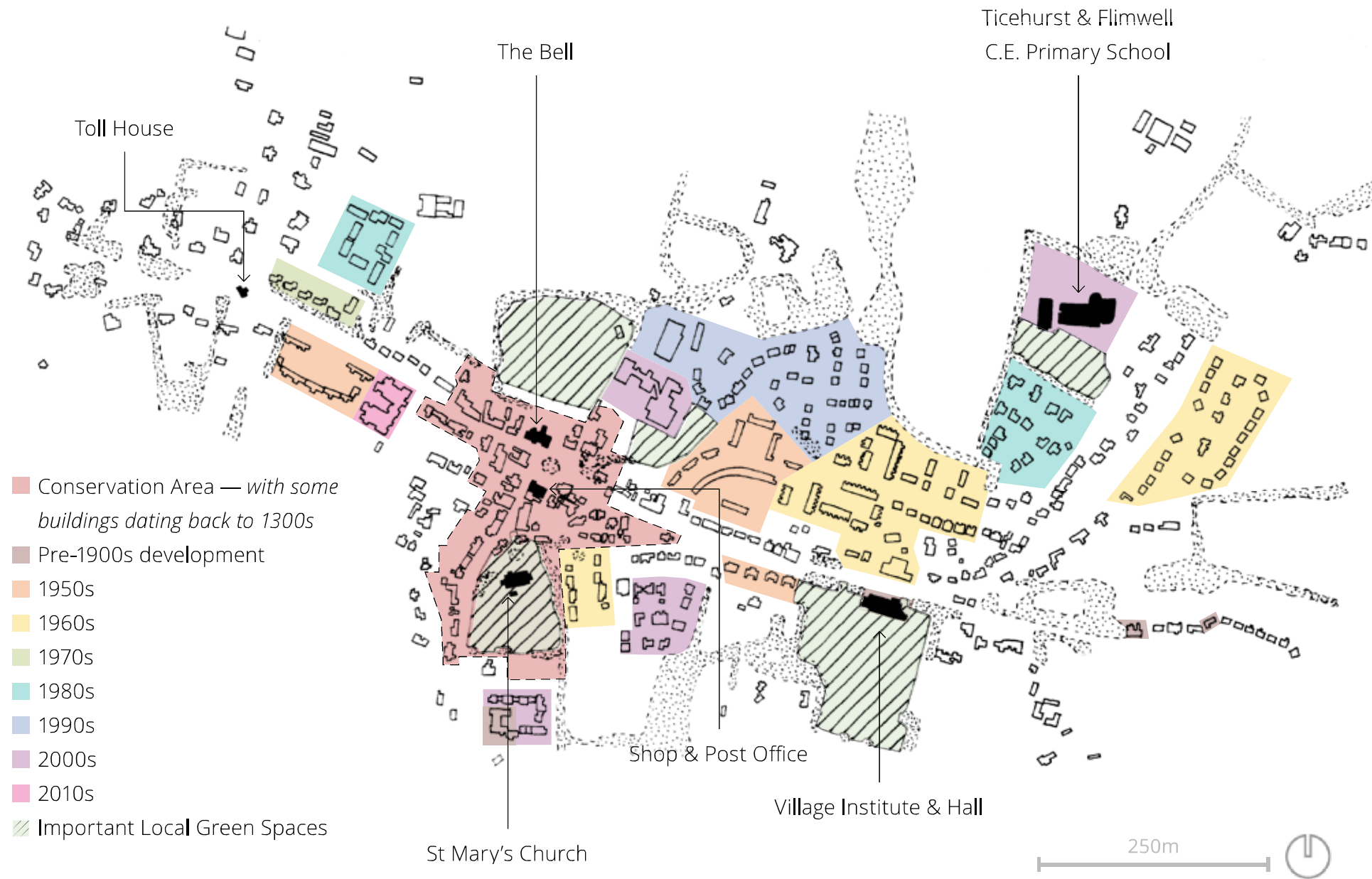
7.23 The irregular width and form of the streets and lanes found across the neighbourhood area, together with their surface treatments, are an important contributing factor to the rural character. It is typical to find parts of the main settlements without defined footways (i.e. raised pavements with a kerb edge) and this helps reinforce both a rural feel and a sense of pedestrian priority within a shared area.



Lack of defined pavements is a positive quality within the conservation area and should be preserved.



Typical sunken lane found in the AONB.



Map 22 — Ticehurst development over time.

Building Typologies

7.24 Different typologies of building are found across the neighbourhood area. These include domestic dwellings, agricultural buildings, and commercial buildings. They are each defined by their differing form and mass, roof pitches, proportions, fenestration and openings. Typical vernacular examples of each typology should be researched and considered before designing new buildings.

7.25 The context of development is important here; flexibility should be given to different approaches depending on the location. For example, proposals for new buildings within the historic core of each settlement may be more traditional than in an open woodland setting, which could suit a more innovative and contemporary approach, as exhibited by the Woodland Enterprise Centre in Flimwell.



7.26 Woodland workspaces — The sailing roof-line helps give the building a distinctive identity as well as allowing lots of natural light to flood into the interior helping making for efficient use of energy.

7.27 Car parking immediately outside the premises may be suitable for a commercial operation such as this but not necessarily appropriate for a domestic setting within the village as it can lend a suburban feel to what should be rural residential areas.



7.28 The Bell — The building's bulk and massing of the building is appropriate for the cultural, social and commercial use in the heart of the village.

Plot Layouts & Boundary Treatments

7.29 The external public spaces, the private gardens, courtyards and parking areas should be defined by the building itself rather than by car parking and highway considerations. Plot layout should help create streets and spaces which put the pedestrian experience ahead of the needs of vehicles.

7.30 There are several distinct boundary treatments found in Ticehurst Parish. Those to be encouraged are chestnut post and rail fencing, native species of hedging, and low stone or brick walls. The use of reclaimed building materials is also encouraged.



7.31 The house pictured has several windows facing in different directions onto public areas. This creates a safer environment through natural surveillance. The fence and hedge line define the threshold between public and private space yet both are at a low level which avoid hidden areas and creates a more welcoming atmosphere.



7.32 The Twitten in Ticehurst comprises a winding path, designed at a human scale i.e. the width of the street and the proportions of the adjacent development are not overbearing.

7.33 These types of layout can be intriguing for pedestrians, encouraging exploration. It can also accommodate a higher density of housing more appropriate to a central location.



7.34 Eden Court is seen as an example of a successful modern courtyard development. Cars have been tucked away to the side of properties or into integral garages. The central area is softened with vegetation, further reducing the visual impact of parked cars.



7.35 Front porches in Eden Court allow for personalisation with hanging baskets, yet greater enclosure would allow for the safe storage of deliveries and so on. Upper windows have been offset to prevent overlooking between properties in close proximity.



7.36 This house in Ticehurst uses both a low stone wall and hedging to successfully define its outside space. New developments could usefully adopt a similar approach to boundary treatments.



7.37 The Ticehurst Village Institute has a low brick wall to define its boundary. While this is successful towards the centre of the settlements, softer materials and treatments may be required towards the edges of the villages.



7.38 This chestnut fencing complements the natural environment, with its twisted and roughened finish making it even more suited to the context. The chestnut fence comes from local coppicing.



7.39 A lack of a physical boundary treatment (e.g. fence, hedge or wall) between the public foot way and private property can fail to give clear distinction between public and private space. The use of traditional local boundary detailing can help better define this distinction.

7.40 The lack of such treatment is often to enable on-plot car parking and efforts should be made to reconcile these competing demands.

Materials & Details

7.41 The materials and details of buildings can be crucial to delivering the overall character of the area. Equally important to the material itself is how the materials are constructed, the craft of construction and the quality of material. All new buildings shall be required to enhance the character of the area and use materials appropriate for the High Weald. In most cases, this will mean buildings with pitched roofs being clay tiled.

7.42 Vernacular buildings throughout the parish are often clad in tile hanging and timber weatherboarding, with tiled roofs and distinct chimneys. There are many variations in tile decoration, most noticeably rounded tiles. Clay tiles range from a pale red to dark brown, giving a rustic appearance. The distinctive effect of hand-crafted tile corners, curving up and blending into the rest of the facade is typical of the High Weald and is encouraged in new builds. The camber and module of new tiles requires attention.



7.43 The distinctive effect of hand-crafted tile corners, curving up and blending into the rest of the facade is encouraged in new developments. Depth of window reveal when using brick is also important. The easy detail is to place the window close to the external wall face but buildings with deeper window reveals generally have more relief and visual interest.



7.44 Typical examples of tile hanging from Ticehurst parish, a technique encouraged on new buildings.

Signage & Lighting

7.45 Details that enliven the public spaces adjoining development are to be encouraged, subject to quality of design.

7.46 Exterior decoration has a significant impact upon the street and it is important to give this proper consideration in all forms of development, both residential and non-residential alike.

7.47 For example, employment uses should make sure signs are clear and legible, but not too obtrusive in a countryside setting. Signs should suit the rural context in terms of their traditional appearance and construction.

7.48 Traditional street lamps can be found throughout the parish, softly illuminating the streets without causing light pollution. A recently implemented policy has replaced concrete columns with more traditional Windsor street lanterns.



7.49 In any new development, light pollution shall be minimised by use of the lowest light levels compatible with safety, fittings that emit no upward light, low reflectance ground surfaces and use of spillover lighting where possible. This is particularly important given the High Weald AONB context.



7.50 The public realm is enhanced through features and designs that make life more comfortable and welcoming.

Wider Landscape & Village Edges

7.51 It is vital that any developments on the edge of the current built areas successfully address the interface between the village and open countryside.

7.52 A preferred response would be higher densities in central areas and edges that connect with existing built areas, gradually breaking down to create softer, lower densities edges towards countryside.

7.53 This approach will prevent homogeneous developments with a generic suburban feel rather than designs which respond to the local rural context. A more permeable outer edge also allows for wider views of the landscape from a greater number of vantage points.

7.54 Important planting and trees existing on site should be retained within new development, and new planting added where appropriate. This may be required for visual mitigation or to replace any trees unavoidably lost during design and development.

7.55 New planting should use tree species which are native and suited to local conditions: oak, hornbeam and ash with hazel under storey, chestnut and hornbeam coppices, field maple, wild cherry, alder and willow in the stream valleys.



7.56 A key characteristic of the parish is a sense of enclosure down deep lanes from dense trees, with the occasional break out into a sweeping view of the wider landscape. This combination needs to be appreciated and recognised by all new development proposals.



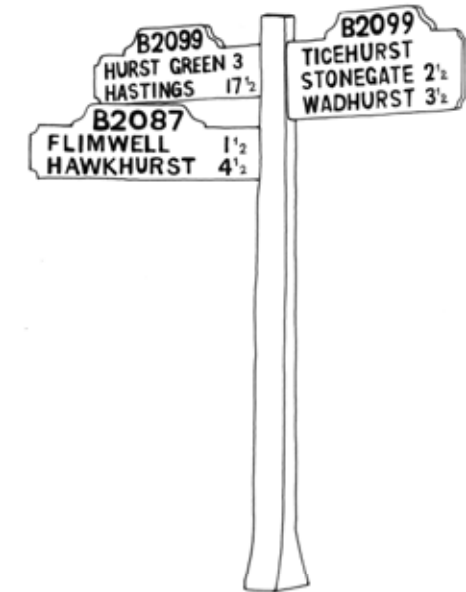
7.57 The Flimwell crossroads, where the existing furniture store meets open countryside. This sense of openness should be maintained in this location, and other similar gateway locations, even in areas where future development is proposed.



7.58 The Toll House is the first notable building at the street edge on the western approach to Ticehurst, surrounded by mature landscape. The low development densities at this point gradually increase towards the village centre. This transition should be recognised by new developments near settlement edges.



7.59 At the rear of St Augustine's church in Flimwell, the landscape falls away to a sweeping view. This break in the landscape is typical of the area and future development should aim to incorporate such views where possible.



7.60 A concern frequently expressed by residents is for there to remain distinctive and recognisable “green gaps” between the settlements. Development towards the edges of the three primary settlements should not encroach into these green gaps and should seek to reinforce the separate identities that currently exist.

Sustainability & Resource Efficiency

7.61 Sustainability and resource efficiency is an important aspect in the context of a building's design, form, orientation, construction, the impact of energy use and the use of renewable energy technologies. A building's lifespan and the weathering and maintenance of its fabric should also be considered.

7.62 To help achieve both the sustainability goals of the neighbourhood plan and the wider objectives of local, national, and international planning policy (such as the Climate Act 2008) all developments in the parish should help reduce the carbon footprint of the neighbourhood area through the promotion of good design, as follows:

- High levels of energy conservation in the construction and use of new buildings
- The use of local and recycled building materials
- The use of sustainable on-site energy sources, where applicable such as solar, wind, ground-source heat pumps, biomass
- The promotion of low CO₂ transport options through the design of new buildings
- Integration of rainwater capture and grey water recycling technologies in new buildings and the minimization of the amount of impermeable ground cover around them

7.63 Efficient use of water and its recycling are important considerations which can be easily achieved by simple design measures. This lessens the effort of the individual to ensure water efficiency, resulting in a positive impact on the environment.

7.64 New development should seek for ecological enhancement to the immediate area, such as provision for birds and bats to be incorporated into new buildings. In order to support the local wood fuel industry and thereby the management of AONB woodlands, new residential development should preferably include provision for working log burners through the inclusion of a working chimney except where it can be demonstrated it is not feasible or practical on smaller properties. This design measure has been recommended by the AONB Unit.



The Woodland Enterprise Centre in Flimwell uses locally-sourced timber, naturally-sourced insulation materials, and is heated by an automated wood-fuelled boiler system.