

Chapter 3

Countryside & Heritage

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3.1 The planning strategy for East Hampshire seeks to ensure that development is sustainable in terms of its environmental, social and economic impacts. One of the main purposes of the Local Plan is to maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the District and its environmental assets.

3.2 East Hampshire has some of the most attractive and unspoilt countryside in Hampshire. The policies of the Plan reflect the richness of the countryside by providing protection and enhancement for the key features including the landscape, historic heritage, wildlife, rivers and ponds.

3.3 The overall strategy of the Plan focuses development within existing settlements. This must be balanced by the need to protect and enhance the existing environment and character of settlements and the quality of life within them. This means ensuring that new development is of the highest possible quality reflecting local distinctiveness and sense of place. The historic inheritance of the District is also outstanding, and the policies reflect the importance of protecting this special heritage.

Landscape Protection

3.4 Development proposals must pay particular attention to the District Council's Countryside Design Summary and Village Design Statements.

3.5 In 1996 English Nature and the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) introduced the concepts of Natural Areas and Character Areas in their document 'The Character of England'. The Countryside Commission intended that the character approach, "will set the scene for development planning and development control, complementing its work on design in the countryside. This should assist those who make decisions about Structure and Local Plans to consider how best to enhance and respect local distinctiveness".3.6 In order to ensure that the District's landscape assessment is compatible with the direction from the Countryside Commission a review of the 1991 and 1993 Landscape Assessments was made, together with a new study to identify Landscape Character Areas in East Hampshire.

3.7 The approach adopted was that advocated by the Countryside Commission and focused upon the recognition of the intrinsic character of the landscape rather than concentrating on areas of particular quality.

3.8 In planning, it is important to understand the landscape character of areas so that appropriate policies or actions can be applied at a local level. The Landscape Character Areas identified have a coherent and recognisable local identity or "sense of place".

3.9 The study initially identified 28 character areas in East Hampshire. For each of these areas the defining characteristics were recorded and embraced the following qualities:

- topography and landform
- vegetation cover; its character, quality and importance
- farming pattern
- settlement pattern
- degree of tranquillity, remoteness
- degree of openness or enclosure
- character of the road network and how it relates to topography
- homogeneity of the landscape character
- presence of ecological, historical and archaeological features

3.10 Buildings and small settlements are an integral part of the countryside. Where they are historic or vernacular in character, they can make a particularly striking contribution to the character and quality of the landscape. East Hampshire is particularly rich in the variety and intrinsic quality of its buildings, towns and villages and so it is especially important to encourage careful consideration of the relationship between landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. 3.11 The Countryside Commission's report CCP502 entitled 'Countryside Design Summaries' states that the preparation and use of Countryside Design Summaries should help to meet these challenges by offering a constructive way forward, by showing how necessary development can be accommodated in ways which protect local character and diversity.

3.12 The results of the landscape assessment work were used to define the different landscape areas for the Countryside Design Summary. The original 28 landscape character areas were grouped into six larger areas based upon their general landscape types as shown on Proposals Map 1.

3.13 The six areas are as follows:

1. The South Downs. Predominantly chalk but with clay present in the south.
2. The Clay Plateau. High ground which extends to the north and northwest of the District.
3. The Northern Wey Valley. Low lying area to the northeast, largely underlain by gently shelving Greensand.
4. Heathland. Ecologically important area but generally poor agricultural land, largely characterised by forest and heath.
5. The Rother and Slea Valleys. Low lying gently undulating area in mixed agricultural use.
6. The Hangers. Characterised by steep slopes, extensive woodland, small fields and narrow or sunken lanes.

3.14 In the Countryside Design Summary each of these areas is described separately and, in each case, detailed landscape, settlement and building characteristics are identified followed by principles for development and design implications arising from them.

3.15 From the analysis, the Summary identifies design considerations which should be applied to new developments and the implications of these factors for the design of new buildings and the spaces between them.

3.16 All new development in the countryside needs to take account of the considerations listed in the Countryside Design Summary if character, sense of place and local distinctiveness are to be respected.

3.17 The use of the Countryside Design Summary will ensure that new buildings will respond to the character of the different and diverse qualities of the countryside areas in East Hampshire. In particular, it is important in the countryside to be aware not only of the appearance of buildings but also their impact upon the wider landscape or settlement. The Countryside Design Summary has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance following a period of public consultation.

3.18 The Countryside Design Summary provides the background for the Village Design Statements being prepared by local communities.

3.19 Village Design Statements were put forward by the Countryside Commission as a means by which local communities could influence the quality of new development in their village in order to retain local distinctiveness. They are used to manage development, not prevent it.

3.20 Village Design Statements identify key features of the village which need to be protected (e.g., open spaces, important viewpoints, characteristics of certain areas within the settlement) as well as important building materials and styles which should be respected in any new development.

3.21 The District Council has given its support to Village Design Statements as part of its work on Local Agenda 21 and wider community involvement in local decision making. Several villages have already prepared Village Design Statements and more are in course of preparation. The aim is to have the Statements prepared by village communities in consultation with the Council and adopted by the District Council as supplementary planning guidance. Without the status of supplementary planning guidance, a Village Design Statement will still be used but its effectiveness will be considerably reduced.

3.22 Further information on the Council's Countryside Design Summary and Village Design Statements can be obtained from the Planning Department.

3.23 Policy HE1 of this Local Plan sets out in more detail the aspects of design that will need to be included in all development proposals.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Please note that in the light of the establishment of the South Downs National Park Authority, and the revocation of the AONB, this policy is no longer relevant.

3.24 The East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1962 by the Countryside Commission in recognition of the landscape which is considered to be of national importance. Approximately 40% of the District lies within the AONB which stretches from the Sussex border westwards as far as Winchester. In addition, a small part of the Sussex Downs AONB at Rowlands Castle lies within the District as a result of administrative boundary changes.

3.25 In the AONB the overriding consideration is to protect and enhance the environment in order to retain the special scenic quality and character of the landscape. The District Council aims to protect the AONB from obtrusive development and particular attention will be given to the siting and design of new development. New major developments within the AONB will be restricted to those in the proven national interest. Such developments must also demonstrate that there are no alternative sites outside the AONB. The Local Plan's housing and employment allocations within the AONB are not of a scale that they can be construed to be major development proposals within the context of this Policy.

3.26 Within the AONB the A3(T) passes, for the most part, through open countryside. This is landscape of the highest quality and is seen by a large number of people passing through and visiting the District. The Council is keen to protect the countryside along this corridor and would not wish to see the A3(T) becoming a boundary for development.

3.27 The AONB will be effectively and positively managed to maintain and conserve the special landscape characteristics and to allow for informative and quiet recreational purposes. This is the ultimate aim of the Management Plan published in 1994 under the direction of a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) which has been established for the AONB by the District Council, Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, the Countryside Agency and various other interested parties, including landowners and land users. Development control is not the purpose of the JAC, although they may pass comment on any future major proposals. Landowners within the AONB will be encouraged to work with the Management Plan which will be the responsibility of the AONB Project Officer. A South Downs Management Plan is currently being prepared.

3.30 The biodiversity of East Hampshire has long been recognised as being of significant value and has been documented by such eminent field biologists as Gilbert White, author of 'The Natural History of Selborne', published in 1789, and, in the present day, Dr. Francis Rose. The great variety of wildlife in East Hampshire is attributed to the geological diversity of the area and the interactions between man and the countryside over time. Indeed, outside of the New Forest, East Hampshire is the most diverse District in Hampshire and contains unique habitats of national and international importance. Policies C2, C3 and C4 are in place to protect and enhance wildlife habitats.

3.33 Policy C3 will be used to protect locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). SINCs are those sites which the District Council, Hampshire County Council, English Nature and Hampshire Wildlife Trust jointly agree constitute the additional areas of 'critical' importance for nature conservation within the District. The SINCs within the District are shown on Proposals Map 2. Criteria for the selection of SINCs have been prepared by Hampshire County Council, English Nature and the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and agreed by the District Council. The detailed criteria used for the designation of SINCs is reproduced at Appendix B of this Plan. Examples of SINCs include, or could include, ancient semi-natural woodland, agriculturally unimproved grassland, heathland, river corridors, roadside verges and sites of particularly high value to the local community. Where there is a risk of loss of, or damage to, a SINC the Council in deciding whether or not

to grant planning permission will consider the use of conditions and/or seek to enter into a planning obligation/contribution to provide nature conservation features to compensate for features lost or harmed as a result of the proposed development. In its determination of applications, the Council will attribute due weight to the special qualities of a SINIC in accordance with its third position following sites of international and national importance in the hierarchy of nature conservation sites set out in PPS 9 and this Local Plan. Policy C2 or C3 could apply to Local Nature Reserves.

3.34 Policy C4 will be used to protect local sites of nature conservation interest, for example roadside verges of particular botanical interest. Where there is a risk of loss of, or damage to, a local site of nature conservation interest, the Council in deciding whether or not to grant planning permission, will consider the use of conditions or seek to enter into a planning obligation/contribution for the provision of nature conservation features to compensate for such features lost or damaged as a result of the proposed development. The sites covered by Policy C5 are considered to fall within the category of 'constant' capital.

3.35 The idea of 'critical' and 'constant' capital of nature conservation interest is central to the District Council's approach which is to protect and enhance nature conservation interests in a sustainable way. Features of critical capital are either unique in some way or crucial to the maintenance of biodiversity by virtue of their rarity. To lose any site of critical capital would result in a loss of diversity of flora and fauna in the District which could never be effectively replaced. There are very rare exceptions to preventing the loss or harm of critical sites and in such cases compensating provision will be made.

3.36 Features of constant capital could be replaced but there should be no overall loss of such features which could adversely affect the overall natural balance of an area's biodiversity. The existence of such features should therefore remain constant. To ensure that this constantly important capital is not lost over time the Council will consider very carefully the implication of any proposal that might affect a feature of constant capital. Where there is no alternative to the proposed development, compensating provision of that feature will be made to ensure that the overall provision remains constant.

3.37 Some developments may result in increased human or domestic animal activity in nearby areas of designated nature conservation value. Such activity can adversely affect the nature conservation value of these areas. In these circumstances, if the development is permitted, the developer will be expected to contribute towards the management and maintenance of these areas in order to minimise such adverse impact.

3.38 When considering the impact of development proposals, individual wildlife habitats will not be treated independently from other sites, as it is the mosaic of different habitats and how they relate to one another, that contributes to the biodiversity of East Hampshire. It is important to ensure that wildlife corridors are retained to link habitats, including buffer zones along watercourses.

3.39 The District Council will encourage land owners and farmers to conserve ecological habitats and historical countryside features when undertaking farming,

forestry or other operations. Owners will be encouraged to enter into management agreements and to prepare and implement management plans to ensure the continued existence of their sites and their particular nature conservation interest. Similarly, wildlife sites should be managed in a way which keeps public access to a level which prevents harm to their nature conservation interests. Information on the various wildlife habitats in the District, factors affecting these habitats together with objectives and targets for managing the habitats, is contained in the Biodiversity Action Plan for East Hampshire and the Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire. The Action Plan targets should be promoted and incorporated into the management of all sites.

3.40 Policy C5 seeks to retain existing features of value to the local landscape, such as trees, hedges, copses, woodlands, ponds, commons, undeveloped or open areas on the edge of settlements and the thin green fingers or wedges which extend into built-up areas. The Council considers it is essential to retain these features wherever possible and, where appropriate, carry out further planting in order to maintain and enrich the landscape quality and variety of the District. The Council has only a limited range of powers to retain trees, woods and hedgerows mainly through Tree Preservation Orders and the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The retention of local landscape features will therefore be achieved primarily through development control, advice and grant aid. The Council will encourage further planting and the creation of other new landscape features in order to maintain the quality and variety of the East Hampshire landscape. Where appropriate owners will be encouraged to prepare and implement management plans for their land to ensure the continued existence of features of importance to the local landscape.

3.41 The District Council will be particularly keen to encourage the planting and retention of broadleaf woodland in view of its high ecological and landscape value. Such woodland should comprise a mix of native species appropriate to the particular location. Landowners will be encouraged to prepare management schemes for protecting and maintaining woodland, chalk downland and heathland.

Tree Preservation

C6

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would damage or destroy one or more trees protected by a tree preservation order or in a conservation area unless removal would be in the interests of good arboricultural practice.

3.42 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) will be made by the District Council on trees, groups of trees or woodland which are important in the local landscape for their amenity, scenic, recreational, ecological or historic value, particularly those which are considered to be at risk from clearance or felling. The landscape importance of the tree or woodland, the species and condition of the trees and their nature conservation interest are all factors taken into consideration when making a TPO. The Council is consulted by the Forestry Authority about applications for felling licences; in certain instances the Council may serve TPOs in order to protect trees and woodland of particular importance.

3.43 If the removal of one or more trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation Area is permitted as part of a development, a condition will require the planting of an equivalent number of, or more, trees either on and/or near the site. Where a specimen tree is lost it will have to be replaced by a tree of the same species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.

Forestry Operations

3.44 The District Council has no direct powers to control forestry operations, even though they may have a significant and long-term effect on the landscape. It is hoped that the implementation of the Local Plan's policies together with the Forestry Commission's Broadleaf Woodland Policy, will result in a change of emphasis in forestry operations in favour of retaining established woodlands and encouraging their regeneration by selective felling and restocking and the planting of new woodland. This approach will mean that the established appearance of the landscape can be maintained whilst minimising disturbance to wildlife habitats. Owners will be encouraged to prepare and implement woodland management schemes for their woods since these will be a key factor in maintaining woodlands in the District. Woodland management schemes should include proposals for selective felling, rather than clear felling, should be silviculturally sound and should seek to minimise disturbance to wildlife. It should be recognised, however, that certain open wildlife habitats, such as heathland, require the removal of trees to maintain or enhance their nature conservation value.

Management Plans

3.45 The Local Plan's policies will be implemented through a combination of preventing development which would detrimentally affect the character, quality and appearance of the countryside and encouraging owners and other agencies to prepare and carry out plans which will ensure the continued conservation and good management of the countryside. This will contribute to local Biodiversity Action Plan targets. A number of very effective conservation management plans have already been carried out in the District (for example the Hangers Project, the River Wey Project, the River Deadwater Project and the Liss Riverside Railway Walk). However, the responsibility for maintaining the landscape will remain with landowners. Grant aid is available from a number of sources for conservation work whilst changes of emphasis associated with the development of the Common Agricultural Policy include encouraging farmers to farm less intensively or in a more environmentally sensitive manner. Ultimately the control of new development, the preparation and implementation of management plans and grant aid schemes should result in the maintenance and enrichment of both the variety and quality of the countryside throughout East Hampshire.

3.46 The Forest of Bere is a significant and undeveloped rural area in southern Hampshire between Southampton/Eastleigh in the west and the West Sussex border. The Strategy for the Forest of Bere prepared by Hampshire County Council for the Forest of Bere Partnership aims to enhance recreation and tourism resources and to provide opportunities for creating jobs. Encouragement will be given to farm diversification and the positive use of surplus farmland together with the promotion of the timber industry.

3.47 A problem in certain areas of the District is the depletion and the deterioration in quality of groundwater and river water, due to excessive abstraction, intensive farming techniques, pollution and waste from development. Demands for water from new development in Alton, in particular, are likely to need new strategic infrastructure development by the supply company. This is confirmed in the supporting text where allocations are proposed in this part of the District. The Environment Agency has developed policies to tackle the problems of depletion and pollution of water sources and the District Council will liaise closely with the Agency on such matters. The Agency's Environmental Strategy has identified a number of immediate environmental issues and sets out the policy objectives and priorities for 5-10 years and beyond.

3.48 The Environment Agency, together with various external stakeholders, produces "our Local Contribution" which describes how they intend to deliver an improved environment over the next five years in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. It sets out issues that need to be addressed locally, their priorities, and how they will be achieved.

3.53 River corridors, including their headwaters, associated valleys, wetlands, woodlands and meadows are of great importance for nature conservation, recreation and fisheries, and often make a significant contribution to the character of the landscape. Such areas will be protected from developments which are likely to have an adverse effect upon them. Initiatives which seek to restore or enhance the natural elements of the water environment or which encourage public access where appropriate will be supported. For example, work has been undertaken by a joint working group involving the District Council and relevant parish councils into the River Wey and its tributaries, with particular reference to its ecology and producing a map of 'River Influenced Landscapes'. Where development is permitted, appropriate mitigation must be provided, e.g. the provision of buffer zones to provide undisturbed refuges for wildlife or suitable crossings where development impedes the passage of wildlife.

Protection of the Setting of Settlements

3.57 A major aim of the Structure Plan Review and this Local Plan is to protect the countryside setting, character, and separate identity of settlements. Policies C5, C11 and the strong countryside protection policies set down in Policies GS1 and GS3 seek to achieve this. They protect such areas from development which would threaten land essential to the maintenance of a physical or visual separation between settlements, or open land on the edge of, or extending into settlements.

3.58 The District Council will encourage improvement schemes which retain important landscape features and which improve areas which are derelict or unsightly. The preparation of management plans and improvement schemes may be necessary to ensure that the gaps, or undeveloped areas extending into or on the edge of settlements, do not become derelict or unsightly urban fringe areas.

3.59 In protecting the setting of settlements particular attention will be paid to the need to:

- a. retain woodlands, hedgerows, open areas and features of archaeological, historic, nature conservation or other local landscape significance;
- b. improve areas of derelict or unsightly land;
- c. take action to prevent land-uses which may have a deleterious effect on the landscape; and
- d. prepare and implement landscape improvement and planting schemes.

3.60 The Structure Plan Review proposes that 'strategic gaps' should be identified between Havant and Rowlands Castle, Havant and Waterlooville, and Havant and Emsworth. The area of East Hampshire within these gaps are indicated on Inset Map 38.

3.61 In addition the District Council considers that gaps which are perceived to be of great importance locally should be maintained between the settlements listed in C11(b); these are also identified on relevant Inset Maps. The Council will strictly control development in these gaps during the Plan period. In order to prevent coalescence and retain the separate identity of settlements, development will only be permitted between settlements in very exceptional circumstances.

3.62 The gaps include no more land than is required to maintain the physical and/or visual separation of the settlements adjoining the gaps. This complies with the Gap Policies in the Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) and the recommendations of the Inspector who considered objections into the First Review of the Local Plan.

Equestrian Uses

C12

Planning permission will be granted for stables, horse-riding schools and/or riding centres in the countryside provided that the scheme would:

- a. re-use existing buildings or, where none exists or is not capable of conversion, be sited within an existing group of buildings;
- b. be well-related to existing or proposed bridleways;
- c. not cause or exacerbate conflicts between equestrians and other users of the public highway;
- d. not harm the living conditions of existing or future residents; and
- e. not harm, by itself or in combination with existing equestrian establishments, the character of the local landscape including the countryside setting of settlements.

3.63 Horse riding is becoming increasingly popular in parts of the District. It is an activity which normally requires a countryside location, but does not fall within the planning definition of agriculture. Planning permission is therefore required for the equestrian use of land.

3.64 In some cases equestrian uses can have an adverse impact on the appearance of the countryside through the subdivision of fields into small paddocks, the erosion of vegetation from over grazing, the erection of fences, jumps, shelters and stables.

It follows that the cumulative impact of equestrian uses within a locality could, potentially, compound the harm to the countryside that may result from the use. Additional problems can be caused by horse trailers using narrow lanes and by events which attract large numbers of car borne visitors and by inadequate manure disposal or storage arrangements which can pollute surface water and/or groundwater. Accepting the need for a countryside location, the Plan allows for such development but seeks to minimise its impact by encouraging development at locations well served by existing roads, by the reuse of existing buildings, by careful design of new buildings where they are essential and by reducing conflict with adjoining uses.

3.65 When considering applications for equestrian uses, the Council will have regard to the need for on-site accommodation and the adequacy of existing accommodation. Residential development in connection with equestrian uses will not normally be permitted.

Rural Diversification

C13

Planning permission for an enterprise in the countryside which forms part of a farm diversification scheme will be permitted only if:

- a. the scheme where possible re-uses existing buildings;
- b. where a new building is required and no existing building is available for conversion, it is sited within an existing group of buildings;
- c. it does not harm the character of the local landscape or other local amenity; and
- d. the traffic generated is not of a type or volume that would cause inconvenience or danger on the public highway, or would require improvements that would harm the character of rural roads.

3.66 In the countryside the predominant activities are, and will continue to be, agriculture and forestry. However, in recent years there have been changes in agricultural policy which have led increasingly to farmers looking into ways of diversifying into other activities. The object of diversification is to allow the primary agricultural unit to be retained whilst being supplemented by another form of income. Examples of diversification into new rural enterprises include the processing of farm produce, farm shops, tourist accommodation, sports and recreation facilities or processing of timber.

3.67 The District Council considers that all proposals for diversification should be looked at on a comprehensive basis and that assets of a farm are not stripped on a piecemeal basis, without regard to the needs and the viability of the holding. The impact of uncoordinated development on rural areas, particularly the AONB would be significant. All planning proposals for diversification will be judged against the policies of restraint, the need to protect the quality of the landscape and the need for diversification to sustain the rural economy in the light of particular local circumstances.

3.68 Development proposals will usually need to be accompanied by an explanation of the implications for the farm unit, including a supporting statement showing the relationship between the proposed diversification and the current and future maintenance of the remainder of the land on the holding. Whole Farm Plans may usefully support applications relating to farm diversification proposals, they can demonstrate how a proposal fits into the wider farming picture and set out its environmental consequences. In the case of farm buildings, a structural survey statement on the condition of the buildings will be required. In appropriate circumstances the District Council may serve an Article 3 Notice under the General Development Procedure Order 1995 to require the submission of the relevant details. The Council will wish to be satisfied that the change of use will not lead to a demand to replace those resources with new ones, particularly buildings. In specific cases, the Council will impose a condition withdrawing agricultural permitted development rights, as contained in part 6 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995, particularly within the AONB.

Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

C14

The change of use and/or conversion of buildings for employment or community uses in the countryside will be permitted if:

- a. a structural survey shows that the building is of sound, permanent construction, is not derelict and can accommodate the proposed use without substantial reconstruction;
- b. the form, scale and general design of the building is in keeping with its surroundings;
- c. any conversion work respects local building styles and materials;
- d. the proposal would not harm rural amenities by reason of noise, smell, dust, smoke, lighting, vibration, or any form of water, soil or air pollution or operations at unsocial hours;
- e. the traffic generated is not of a type or amount inappropriate to the local rural roads or requires improvements which will harm the character of rural roads in the area;
- f. the scale and location of the development will not lead to unsustainable travel patterns through excessive use of the car or delivery vehicles;
- g. the proposed development has satisfactory landscaping or screening and does not harm the character of the countryside, AONB, the setting of a Conservation Area or a Listed Building;
- h. there is sufficient room in the curtilage of the building for any external storage required and the parking and turning of vehicles without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside;
- i. no new fences, walls or other structures associated with the use of the building or the definition of its curtilage or any sub-division of it will be erected if they would harm the visual amenity of the countryside;
- j. the scale of development, by itself or together with other employment proposals in the area, will not have an adverse effect on the viability or vitality of existing or proposed employment areas within a nearby settlement;

- k. additionally in the case of Listed Buildings or other buildings of historic or architectural interest:
 - i. the building is capable of adaptation to the proposed use without structural alterations or discordant changes, both internally or externally;
 - ii. the proposal does not detract from the setting of such buildings or complex within which it is located; and
 - iii. the proposal will not result in the building losing any of its characteristics and qualities.

The following additional criteria must also be met for the change of use and/or conversion of buildings in the countryside for residential purposes:

l. all reasonable efforts have been made to secure a suitable long-term reuse of the building for an employment or community use; or

m. the building or its location is not suitable for an employment or community use; and

n. the residential curtilage and associated domestic features would be enclosed within an existing group of buildings or existing walled yard, or otherwise appropriately screened from the wider countryside.

3.69 There are often opportunities for re-using or adapting existing rural buildings for alternative uses. Such re-use or adaptation can help reduce demands for new buildings in the countryside, can encourage new enterprises, and can provide jobs in rural areas.

3.70 Depending upon the merits of any individual case, further development, expansion or intensification may not be allowed and where appropriate, permitted development rights would be removed. On any farm holding where planning permission has been granted for re-use of rural buildings the Council will seek to restrict further new agricultural buildings by means of a planning condition or legal agreement. In appropriate circumstances, the Council will seek the provision of environmental improvements, including the removal of unsightly buildings, structures and reinstatement of despoiled land, together with the implementation of a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

3.71 Although changes in agricultural policy are causing farmers to diversify their farm incomes, the Council considers that the re-use of farm buildings for employment use should not form a major source of employment land in the District. It should not be allowed to take place to such an extent that it changes the character of the countryside. The Council does recognise that, in certain circumstances, farm buildings as well as being worthy of retention, may provide opportunities to help sustain the rural economy without harming the character of the countryside.

3.72 The criteria set out in Policy C14 will have to be satisfied before the Council will grant planning permission.

3.73 When the use of the building ceases, it will not always be appropriate to allow another use to take place in it because of planning policy, or it is an unsuitable structure or because it would cause environmental harm. A structural survey will be required with all proposals. The re-use of any building may not be permitted if the scale of the building, as existing or as proposed by structural alterations, would adversely affect the environmental quality and character of the area. The Council may, where appropriate, impose a condition on a permission for re-use which would have the effect of providing for a trial run of the use.

3.74 New uses should be small in scale and could include workshops, offices, design studios, local tourist facilities, craft or light industry or community uses, such as meeting halls.

3.75 The District Council's Rural Business Survey undertaken in 1998 aimed at improving understanding of travel to work patterns of employees of businesses in the East Hampshire countryside. The Survey revealed that 40% of employees live within 5 miles of their place of work; of these, 60% live in the main settlements. Only 16% of employees travel from rural areas within 5 miles of their workplace. Employees travelled up to 85 miles to work, although most (87%) live within 20 miles. Over 85% of employees travel to work by car, whether living local to work, or further afield. Many employees of businesses in the countryside are therefore travelling long distances to work by car, often from the towns. The conversion of large rural buildings to businesses with a large number of employees can, therefore, lead to unsustainable travel patterns, especially those remote from the main settlements and inaccessible by public transport. Rarely will such developments be permitted.

3.76 The conversion of large rural buildings, such as poultry units to businesses, can also provide large amounts of new employment floorspace. This floorspace may be cheaper and so more attractive to businesses than existing or proposed employment floorspace in nearby settlements. The viability or vitality of this employment floorspace in nearby settlements may be adversely affected by such large developments in the countryside. The pattern of travel to large developments in the countryside is likely to be less sustainable than that to similar developments in the main settlements.

3.77 When the rural buildings are of historic or architectural interest or form important features in the landscape, adaptation to a new use is recognised as one way of saving the building, particularly if it is in danger of falling into disrepair. Schemes to convert or change the use of such buildings must normally satisfy the criteria set out in Policy C14. Small scale alternative uses should be explored such as workshops, offices, design studios, local tourist facilities, craft or light industry, or community use. Uses such as these do not normally change the appearance and structure of the buildings.

3.78 A building which is derelict or in an advanced state of disrepair is not considered suitable for re-use or conversion unless it is of historic or architectural interest.

3.79 The conversion of barns to residential use can be too destructive if it requires a structure that many farm buildings cannot easily be adapted to match. Residential

conversion can break the tradition of a working building and often destroys the original fabric and interior spatial qualities, disrupts wall and roofs and breaks up roof lines with dormer or rooflight windows.

3.80 Residential use may be acceptable if it can be justified by a thorough assessment of the circumstances that the change of use or conversion is not possible for employment or community purposes or the building is unsuited to another use. The building and associated domestic features should be screened from the wider countryside.

3.81 It is important in farm conversions that the setting of the buildings are retained. In most cases this takes the form of a substantial courtyard. This is considered to be a key characteristic of farm groups in the District and it is expected that these spaces should be kept in order to retain the appropriate setting and spatial qualities that building groups demonstrate. In any residential conversions, garden and amenity spaces should be imaginatively considered so that courtyard settings are retained without a courtyard subdivision. It is likely that this will be best achieved through a communal based approach to amenity and garden space. Car spaces should also be discreetly located.

New Agricultural and Forestry Buildings

3.82 Legislation allows certain agricultural, horticultural and forestry developments to be undertaken without the need for planning permission. Information on these 'permitted development rights' can be obtained from Planning Development Services.

3.83 Where planning permission is required the District Council will permit new buildings in the countryside if they are essential for the efficient working of a farm or forestry holding. Wherever possible, these new buildings should be located within a group of existing buildings. Where new agricultural or forestry buildings are permitted, the Council will seek a legal agreement or impose a planning condition that would require the building in question to be removed once its permitted use had ceased and no other use found to be acceptable in accordance with C14, and for the land to be reinstated to its original condition.

3.84 In cases where buildings that have an adverse impact on the landscape already exist and are not subject to such a legal agreement, the opportunities for removal are limited to compulsory purchase by the Council and then demolition or seeking their removal as a planning gain in connection with a related proposal. Where new proposals relate to the site of an offending building, a similar legal agreement will be sought as in cases with wholly new proposals.

3.85 The District Council is seeking to promote the local identity and distinctiveness of East Hampshire; to achieve this new buildings should contribute to the sense of local identity, and be of an appropriate design and scale for its location (see reference to the Countryside Design Summary and Village Design Statements in the Landscape Protection section of this chapter).

3.86 Post war Britain has seen a proliferation of materials, both imported from other areas and totally new products. The use of shallow pitch interlocking concrete tiles and light coloured facing bricks in particular, has eroded the traditional character of areas. This has often resulted in housing estates of the same character wherever they are built and has led to a loss of local identity.

3.87 Contemporary designs should respect the context for development, in relation to both the immediate setting and the defining characteristics of the wider local area including local or regional building traditions and the use of local materials. The vernacular architecture of East Hampshire is varied in character but is predominantly dependent upon the use of traditional building forms in scale with their surroundings, and the use of local facing and roofing materials.

3.88 The principal facing and roofing materials are:

Wall

- Multi-red Hampshire facing brickwork.
- Flint with brick or stone dressings.
- Malmstone, local sandstone or ironstone, occasionally with brick dressings to doors and windows.
- Vertical hanging plain clay tiles.
- Timber framing with facing brick panels, wattle with daub panels, or weatherboarding cladding.

Roofs

- Plain clay tiles (45 to 50 degree pitch). This is the most characteristic roofing material of the District.
- Slates (30 to 40 degree pitch)
- Thatch (47 - 55 degrees)

3.89 The traditional span of buildings does not normally exceed 6 metres. Pantiles can occasionally be found on farm and out-buildings and on some dwellings.

3.90 Where appropriate, new development should use traditional materials and building forms characteristic of the area. Where local traditional materials are not available equivalent non-local materials will be considered.

3.91 Within Conservation Areas the use of non-traditional materials or building forms will only be permitted where they are clearly innovative and make a positive and enhancing contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

3.92 New housing development in the countryside should be designed and sited with particular care and sensitivity. Expansion of villages and towns should avoid ribbon development or a fragmented pattern of development. New development should reflect the established pattern of the streets, spaces, building forms and landscaping which best exemplify the settlement in which it is proposed. It should contribute

positively to the existing settlement in urban design terms and should contribute to its sense of place.

3.93 The steep pitch of roof forms of traditional housing in the District is an important characteristic to be noted. The scale of traditional housing is very often dependent on medium spans - normally not exceeding 5.5 metres.

3.94 Where appropriate, the retention of existing vegetation and the provision of additional landscaping will be a general requirement of new development proposals. The submission of a comprehensive landscaping scheme including management details will generally be a requirement of new development proposals and should be provided at the outset. New trees could be subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

3.95 PPS1 states that a key objective of design is to create safe environments where crime and disorder do not undermine quality of life. The District Council has prepared supplementary planning guidance on 'Crime Reduction Through Design' which encourages developers to consider the need for a layout and design which promotes safety and security measures. Attention should be paid to issues such as the design and layout of schemes, and use or location of fencing, landscaping, open space and footways. The lighting of garages and car parking areas should also be considered but it should minimise glare and light spillage. The layout, design and construction of any development should incorporate crime prevention measures to the 'Secured by Design' standard. Further advice on this can be obtained from Hampshire Constabulary.

3.96 The Policy sets out the main design criteria against which the Council will examine all applications for development. In addition, the Council will, from time to time, issue design advice notes to help guide applicants on the more detailed aspects of design, site layout, landscaping and the treatment of buildings of architectural and/or historic interest.

3.97 Applicants will be expected to provide a Design Statement as part of any application which will show how the design has been arrived at and how the proposal fits within the context of its surroundings.

Alterations and Extensions to Buildings

HE2

Alterations and extensions to buildings will only be permitted if they are designed to take account of the design, scale and character of the original building, its plot size and its setting. The roof form of any extension or alteration should respect the form of the original building.

3.98 Buildings are constantly being altered to meet the requirements of new occupants. The Council will wish to ensure that any alterations or extensions which take place are in keeping with the design, scale and character of the building, its plot size and surroundings.

3.99 Where alterations and extensions to buildings include functional additions, such as services, plants, lifts, solar panels and air conditioning, they should be located and designed to have a minimal impact on the appearance of the building.

3.100 A number of publications give advice on these issues (including 'Extending your Home' residential design guide) and the Council will be pleased to advise further on this.

Advertisements

HE3

Permission will not be granted for advertisement displays which fail to respect public safety or adversely affect the character, quality and appearance of the locality or any features of historic, architectural, cultural or other special interest.

3.101 The District Council aims to ensure that, wherever possible, advertisements enhance the appearance of the built environment whilst effectively advertising the service or product for which they are designed. In the historic towns and villages it is particularly important that signs are attractive and contribute to the character and interest of those areas. Badly designed and visually intrusive signage is counterproductive to the vitality of these centres.

3.102 Particular attention should be paid to the positioning, size, scale, colour and materials used in the advertisement to make sure they are in keeping with the building on which it is to be displayed and its surrounding area. More detailed advice is set out in the District Council's - 'Shop Fronts Design Guide' (1997) and in the 'Advertisement Guidelines' (2000).

Protection of the Historic Heritage

3.103 East Hampshire contains a considerable number of buildings and areas of architectural, archaeological or historic interest which contribute greatly to the appearance and character of the built environment. However, this rich historic heritage could easily be lost through decay, incremental poor alteration, neglect and destruction if action is not taken to protect and maintain it. The District Council is therefore resolved to protect as much of the historic and architectural heritage of the District as possible.

3.104 The satisfactory protection of a threatened area or feature of historic or architectural interest can require the added protection afforded to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. Whenever such situations arise the Council will try to obtain statutory protection for the area or feature by:

- a. serving Building Preservation Notices in respect of buildings and other structures threatened by demolition or unsuitable alteration; and
- b. designating new Conservation Areas and reviewing the boundaries of existing Conservation Areas, where appropriate.

3.105 Special care needs to be exercised in the location and design of new buildings in areas adjacent to Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings or any other building or feature of particular historic or architectural interest. The Council recognises that these important features can be adversely affected by development on adjacent sites and it will, therefore, apply similar considerations to adjacent sites to those applied to the historic features themselves.

Conservation Areas

3.106 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Section 72 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This statutory requirement underpins the Local Plan policies for proposals in Conservation Areas.

3.107 The District has 43 conservation areas the character of which should be protected and enhanced. The Council has identified a programme of Conservation Area review. This has identified new areas which may be considered for designation and existing areas which may require the revision of boundaries. The District Conservation Directory contains appraisal designation statements which set out the factors which contribute to the quality of these areas, and the buildings and spaces that result in their designation as areas of special architectural and historic interest. Planning permission for proposals which would damage or erode the quality of these areas will not be granted.

New Development in a Conservation Area

HE4

Development in a Conservation Area will be permitted only where it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Towards that end the following requirements will apply:

- a. the scale, design and proportions are sympathetic to the characteristic form in the area and compatible with adjacent buildings and spaces;
- b. the use and application of building materials and finishes respects local traditional materials and building techniques;
- c. historically significant boundaries or other elements contributing to the established pattern of development in the area are retained;
- d. open spaces important to the character or historic value of the area are protected;
- e. important views within, into and out of the area are protected; and
- f. trees and other landscape features contributing to the character or appearance of the area are protected.

Alterations to a Building in a Conservation Area

HE5

An alteration or extension of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area will not be permitted unless it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance

of the building and the Conservation Area by:

- a. reflecting the scale, design, finishes and landscaping of the building;
- b. retaining and, where necessary, restoring traditional features such as shop fronts, boundary walls, paved surfaces and street furniture;
- c. where appropriate, using materials traditionally characteristic of the area; and
- d. improving the condition of the building and ensuring its continued use.

Change of Use of a Building in a Conservation Area

HE6

Planning permission for the change of use of a building in a Conservation Area will be permitted provided that it would neither:

- a. require any changes in the appearance or setting of the building other than those that will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area; nor
- b. harm the surroundings as a result of traffic generation, vehicle parking and servicing, or noise.

Demolition in a Conservation Area

HE7

Development involving demolition in a Conservation Area will only be permitted if:

- a. the structure to be demolished makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area; and
- b. acceptable detailed plans have been approved for the re-use of the land and will usually be conditioned to the effect that the redevelopment or reinstatement of the site should take place within a specified period of time. Demolition may not take place until a contract for redevelopment has been let and outstanding planning conditions complied with.

Development Affecting the Setting of a Conservation Area

HE8

Planning permission for development outside a Conservation Area will not be granted if it would harm its setting or views into or out of it.

3.108 Within Conservation Areas, there are some buildings and spaces which detract from the quality and reason for Conservation Area status. The sympathetic redevelopment of these spaces will be encouraged when opportunities arise. In the

historic town centres of Alton and Petersfield sites will be identified as part of the recent Townscape Appraisals.

3.109 Townscape development policies for the District's historic town centres need to follow advice contained within the key PPGs and PPSs and English Heritage advice relating to Conservation Area management contained in, 'Sustaining the Historic Environment' (March 1997), 'Development in the Historic Environment' (June 1995) and 'Conservation Area Practice' (October 1993), together with advisory studies carried out by the English Historic Towns Forum ('Historic Towns - Vitality and Viability', November 1995 and State of the Heritage Survey Report, November 1996). As a result more detailed Townscape Appraisals were carried out for Petersfield and Alton in 1999/2000 to assess their character and to identify strengths, possible opportunities and problems and to provide a framework for enhancement and development guidelines.

3.110 Following on from the Archaeological Assessment of both towns as part of the Hampshire Extensive Urban Survey carried out by Hampshire County Council key factors have been identified:

- areas of high archaeological potential
- archaeological potential
- critical townscape views
- potential development and enhancement opportunities/sites
- marginal areas suitable for regeneration by conservation action, etc.

3.111 Conservation Area Character Appraisals are eventually to be undertaken for all Conservation Areas in the District. Development proposals will need to pay particular attention to them.

3.112 Where necessary the Council may make an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights in Conservation Areas or other sensitive areas where it would otherwise be difficult to maintain the particular character and appearance of the area. Article 4 Directions are subject to approval by the Secretary of State.

Listed Buildings

3.113 The District Council is resolved to protect as much of the historic and architectural heritage of the District as possible and places considerable importance on the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of Listed Buildings and their settings. The Council will, as necessary, draw the Secretary of State's attention to buildings which are considered worthy of "listed" protection.

Demolition of a Listed Building

HE9

Development involving the total demolition or partial demolition of a Listed Building, including the removal or alteration of any feature of special architectural or historic interest which contributes to its reasons for listing, will

only be permitted if:

- a. the building is beyond reasonable repair;
 - b. it is not practicable to continue to use the building for its existing or a previous use;
 - c. there is no other viable use for the building including charitable or community ownership;
 - d. demolition and the creation of a cleared site will not cause harm to the setting of any Listed Building, the character of a street scene or the character of a conservation area;
- or if,
- e. the character or appearance of the listed building will be clearly improved by partial demolition or demolition of features within its setting.

In addition, the District Council may require, by agreement or the use of planning conditions, that:

- i. the appearance, plan and particular features of the building and/or feature are properly recorded and investigated by suitably qualified persons;
- ii. certain features or materials of the building are either salvaged and stored, or re-used in the redevelopment of the site; and
- iii. the building or feature is dismantled and re-built or removed to an approved site so long as it does not result in the building or feature losing any of the qualities and characteristics which make it of special architectural and/or historic interest.

The total or partial demolition of a Listed Building will only be permitted when it can be demonstrated that the building is beyond reasonable repair. As a preliminary to this, the building should be offered for sale at a market price reflecting its condition and based on the assumption that the building will remain listed.

3.114 Whilst there is always a presumption in favour of the preservation, protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings, the Council realises that the Secretary of State may allow partial or total demolition subject to fulfilling a number of criteria.

3.115 Evidence that serious efforts have been made to continue the building's use or find an alternative, including offering the building for sale without restriction at a suitable sum reflecting its condition, will be an essential component of any case for demolition.

3.116 Where a proposed development conflicts with other policies the Council may be prepared to consider exceptions to these policies if this can secure the retention of the Listed Building. A Planning Agreement would be needed to ensure that such development achieves the appropriate aim.

3.117 The Government emphasis is that Local Planning Authorities should make every effort to continue the existing use or find a suitable alternative use for buildings

at risk from decay and demolition. In considering proposals for any enabling development the Council will require that minimum costs needed to achieve satisfactory repair are clearly established and will pay regard to any enhanced economic value of the building following its repair. Such development action is therefore likely to be acceptable only rarely. Further information is provided in English Heritage's 'Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets, June 2001.' 3.118 In exceptional circumstances where the Council considers that listed buildings can only be retained and repaired through profitable associated new development, permission may be granted provided that:

- a. Proposals will fit all design criteria and policies.
- b. It is demonstrated that proposals are sufficient only to ensure the satisfactory retention and repair of the Listed Building.

Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building

HE10

Development involving proposals to extend or alter a Listed Building, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which contributes to the reasons for its listing will not be permitted unless:

- a. the proposed alteration is appropriate in design, scale, materials and colour to the rest of the building and its setting and does not adversely affect the historic or architectural interest of the building and the features for which it is listed; and
- b. the alteration will not harm the condition of the building and ensure its continued use.

3.119 The best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. The solution can be by extending or providing alterations. Whilst there is a need for flexibility where such changes and uses need to be considered to secure the future of the building, it is necessary to ensure that any alterations or extensions are kept to a minimum and respect the character of the Listed Building and its reasons for listing. The architectural details, and above and below ground archaeology, should not be removed or unduly disturbed.

3.120 Where an extension or alteration is proposed to a Listed Building that would detract from its special interest and it is argued that it is required in order to maintain or secure a viable use of the building, the Council will require evidence of economic viability in support of the application.

3.121 Changes should be kept to the minimum necessary as there are particular changes that incrementally can be most damaging to listed buildings. These are:

- a. The blocking off of staircases to upper floors and cellars leading to the non use of parts of a building and lack of access which can result in undetected decay and the removal of available floor space for other viable users.

- b. The removal of internal walls in order to open up larger rooms; this can occur in shops and public houses to create larger but bland retail areas. This can significantly reduce the historical interest of the building and can result in structural problems which further compromise the historic interest of the building.
- c. The raising and lowering of floors which results in unusable or inaccessible voids between floors, and odd and poor relationship of floors to existing windows and possible later structural problems.

Change of Use of a Listed Building

HE11

A change of use of part, or the whole, of a Listed Building will only be permitted if:

- a. the use proposed is of an appropriate nature and scale of activity to the architectural or historic interest and character of the building or site and its surrounding area; and
- b. the change of use will result in the retention and continued use of the building and will not compromise its future repair or restoration.

Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all the intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their effect on its appearance, character and setting which should be either conserved or enhanced.

3.122 It is desirable that an historic building is used for the purpose for which it was designed. However, a number of poorly maintained Listed Buildings 'at risk' were identified in a survey carried out by this Council including others identified marginally 'at risk'. This problem occurs, in particular, where their original uses are no longer viable and buildings have been left empty. The problem is finding suitable new uses for these old buildings, for example, redundant churches and farm buildings. Many of these buildings form important features in the landscape and often represent a style of buildings peculiar to the District. Most of the older buildings for which it is difficult to find an alternative use are located in the countryside, where strict controls on development are operated. There are also others within the historic town centres which are situated in physically tightly constrained sites.

3.123 The District Council is prepared to accept, in certain instances, a relaxation of these controls if it will result in the retention of an historic building and thereby achieve an overall environmental gain. Proposals should aim to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric and qualities of a Listed Building including its setting whilst retaining its reason for listing. Proposals should take into account future uses and maintenance of the Listed Building.

3.124 When considering schemes to convert old buildings to new uses, applicants will be required to provide the following information:

- a. the special architectural, historic or aesthetic value of the building which makes it worthy of retention;
- b. the reasons why it cannot continue in its present use;
- c. detailed drawings of the existing building and how it can be converted to its proposed new use without significant structural alteration and without discordant external alterations; and
- d. proof that the building is capable of independent occupation without detriment to the use of surrounding buildings and that a curtilage commensurate with the size and use of the building can be provided.

3.125 In all cases it will be essential to show that the fabric and character of the building will remain relatively intact and that adequate access to the site can be obtained.

3.126 An application for Listed Building Consent should in most cases accompany such an application for change of use. Where change of use is granted as an exception to other policies, the Council may require a Legal Agreement to ensure the proper and appropriate repair of the Listed Building.

Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

HE12

Proposals for development will not be permitted if they would harm the setting of a Listed Building. In particular, proposals for development within the curtilage or grounds of a listed building will only be permitted if :

- a. the Listed Building is secured for future viable use;
- b. it can be demonstrated that the Listed Building's viability and future use has been respected in the proposals;
- c. access to the Listed Building is not adversely compromised;
- d. the future extension of the Listed Building and its maintenance are not compromised; and
- e. the proposed use is sensitive to the historic interest and setting of the Listed Building.

3.127 The Council recognises the need to preserve the settings of Listed Buildings and that the interest, character and contribution to townscape or countryside of these buildings can be harmed by unsympathetic development nearby. Therefore, special care must be exercised in the siting, design and appearance of new buildings that would affect their settings.

3.128 Within town centres the Council has experienced some pressures for residential building to the rear of Listed Buildings within their curtilages. The future ability of Listed Buildings to extend or alter to ensure their viability may be compromised should this occur, particularly in relation to listed buildings in disrepair and within physically constrained town centre sites.

3.129 Proposals to develop within the curtilage, rear garden or boundary of Listed Buildings will need to consider the future retention and viable use of the building as well as its setting.

Buildings of Local Architectural, Historic or Townscape Interest

HE13

Proposals for Buildings of Local Architectural, Historic or Townscape Interest (that is buildings not on the National Statutory List), involving alterations, additions or other development, including changes of use, will be permitted provided that such development does not adversely affect the character or setting of the building.

3.130 Buildings of local architectural, historic or townscape interest which have not been considered appropriate for listing, but nevertheless are important to the local character and townscape of the District as a whole, will be protected in order that their value is not incrementally reduced by insensitive changes. The Council will consider making Article 4 Directions in order to control and to maintain the character of such buildings.

3.131 Parts of the District's historic heritage, other than buildings and their settings, may be worthy of protection. Not all enjoy statutory protection. They include ancient water meadows and field systems and old travelways. They may constitute material considerations in the determination of a planning application for a proposal that might affect them.

3.132 Although buildings of local importance do not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing, the Council will nevertheless seek to ensure that these buildings are retained, maintained and, where possible, enhanced. It will, therefore, encourage proposals which secure their retention and continued use. Particular attention will be paid to applications for development which would involve their demolition or harm their character or setting. During the period of the Plan the District Council proposes to draw up a list of buildings of local architectural or historic interest. In preparing the list the Council will closely involve town and parish councils and other interested groups.

Under Utilisation of Historic Buildings

HE14

Proposals which would result in the under utilisation of the upper floors of historic buildings will not be permitted.

3.133 Various Government initiatives and advice encourage the greater use of upper floors of Listed Buildings and historic buildings in Conservation Areas. Opportunities exist to provide a variety of uses, including accommodation, which are important to the vitality and viability of the historic town centres and the retention of historic buildings. The District Council is keen to re-inforce the need to utilise this resource.

3.134 When considering applications affecting such historic buildings the existing separate means of access to upper floors should be retained and, where no such access exists, it should be provided by developers. In assessing proposals for such buildings the Council will consider as “material” the likely implications of the development and the future well being of the building as a whole.

3.135 Where changes have already taken place which have resulted in the vacancy of upper floors with no apparent means of access, the use of compulsory purchase powers may be considered. The re-use of otherwise redundant floorspace is considered important to the vitality and good management of historic town centres.

Commercial Frontages

HE15

Permission will be granted for new frontages and alterations to existing frontages of commercial premises which require planning permission provided that they are designed to take account of the architectural characteristics of the individual building and its surrounding area.

HE16

In order to protect the frontages of historic buildings which are in commercial use, any alterations which require planning permission will only be permitted if they involve the retention, or as far as possible reinstatement, of original features or the proposals are significant improvements upon the design of an existing frontage and are in keeping with the original building.

3.136 The design and construction of commercial frontages including shops, offices, banks, building societies, estate agents, public houses and hotels can have as dramatic an impact upon the appearance of an area as the fascias and advertisements displayed upon them. Without careful design, the introduction of a new frontage, alien in materials and appearance to the building and its surrounding area, can be extremely damaging to the appearance of the built environment.

3.137 Shop fronts within the historic town centres and villages provide interest and detail for shoppers and form a key part of the street scene. Attractiveness and sense of place is a major part of being competitive in encouraging local and tourist shoppers.

3.138 Shop fronts and signs will therefore be expected to follow the advice set out in the District Council’s ‘Shop Fronts Design Guide’ and to meet the following criteria:

- a. they are of high quality design and materials and relate well to the architectural composition of the building;
- b. they do not result in the loss of existing traditional shopfronts and signs and are in keeping within the scale of the street;
- c. any blinds are appropriately designed for the style of shopfront and are retractable;
- d. the access to upper floors are maintained;
- e. they respect the policies within the Local Plan regarding mobility;
- f. the colour and finishes are in context with, or enhance, the surroundings; and

g. illumination is appropriate for the use and integral to the shopfront design.

3.139 Through sensitive design, new shopfronts, signs and other street features can upgrade the shopping environment. The use of standard style alloy shopfronts, the 'wet look', or umbrella curved plastic canopies and modern plastic box projecting signs are inappropriate in most of the District's shopping areas and are detrimental to the visual appearance and long-term well being of the town centre Conservation Areas. Whilst not precluding innovative imaginative shopfront design, greater emphasis will be placed on the protection of and introduction of period shopfronts appropriate to the building in which they are situated.

3.140 Proposals for a new building within a Conservation Area should include details of the frontage at the same time as the application for the building is submitted.

Archaeology and Ancient Monuments

HE17

Development will not be permitted which adversely affects important archaeological sites, buildings, monuments or features, whether scheduled or not, or their settings.

If there is evidence that archaeological remains may exist whose extent and importance are unknown the District Council will require developers to arrange for an archaeological field assessment to be carried out before the planning application can be determined, thus enabling an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made.

The District Council will seek mitigation of the impact of development proposals by securing suitable designs to minimise physical destruction. Where this is not possible or feasible then the District Council will not allow development to take place until satisfactory provision has been made for a programme of archaeological investigation and recording prior to the commencement of the development.

3.141 Archaeological remains in the Local Plan area should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. In particular, care must be taken to ensure that archaeological sites and monuments are not needlessly destroyed.

3.142 Only a small number of archaeological sites are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. The majority of sites have no statutory protection and must rely on the sympathetic application of planning and management policies for their survival and protection. Lists of both the statutory and non-statutory sites are available at the Council's Planning Development Services, whilst more detailed information should be sought from the County Archaeological Officer. 3.143 The desirability of preserving archaeological sites and monuments and their setting will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications whether those sites are scheduled or unscheduled.

3.144 If preservation in situ is not possible or feasible, archaeological investigation and recording may be an acceptable alternative. The District Council will secure provision for archaeological investigation and recording either through conditions, a Section 106 obligation or similar powers.

3.145 The Council will refuse planning permission in cases where developers do not seek to protect or accommodate archaeological remains.

3.146 It is recommended that prospective developers should hold early discussions with the District Council and the County Archaeological Officer on the possible archaeological implications of their proposed development.

3.147 The District Council recognises the requirement under Article 10 of the General Development Procedure Order 1995, to consult English Heritage on development proposals likely to affect the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Historic Parks and Gardens

HE18

Development proposals which would adversely affect parks and gardens regarded as being of special historic interest or their setting, whether or not they are registered, will not be permitted.

3.148 Historic parks and gardens are an important part of the District's heritage and environment. The most important sites are included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Five sites within the District are currently registered as being of national importance. These are at Chawton House, Chawton; Little Boarhunt, Liphook; The Wakes and Zig Zag Path, Selborne; Rotherfield Park, East Tisted and Leigh Park, Havant (partly in East Hampshire).

3.149 As well as those on the National Register there are many more parks and gardens that make an important contribution to the cultural heritage and local environment. A Hampshire Register of parks and gardens, and other designed landscapes in Hampshire has been compiled based on survey, research and other recordings of sites carried out by Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Gardens Trust and others. Detailed information on specific sites can be accessed from the Register records kept at the Environment Department, Hampshire County Council in Winchester and can be examined by contacting the Historic Landscape Architect.

3.150 The District Council will not permit proposals which adversely affect historic parks and gardens or their setting. Their conservation, restoration and maintenance will be encouraged where possible. Where development proposals associated with historic parks and gardens are permitted, developers should safeguard the landscape setting and ensure the retention, management and, where appropriate, the restoration of surrounding gardens or parkland. Developers may be requested to enter into a legal agreement, planning obligation or other commitment in this respect. Applications for development within historic parks or gardens will need to be preceded by an environmental assessment including a survey of the historic interest.

Ancient Tracks and Lanes

HE19

Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect the character, setting or historical, ecological and archaeological value of ancient tracks and lanes.

3.151 Ancient tracks and lanes form an important part of the District's countryside heritage being of important landscape, historical and nature conservation value. A sunken lane may have been in existence from Saxon times and eroded over time to its present level. Its banks may be an ancient parish boundary and its hedges several centuries old. Its banks, hedges and trees may support a variety of wildlife and also play a major part in the local landscape.

3.152 It is important that improvements to the rights of way network do not endanger the continued existence of ancient tracks and lanes. Ancient tracks and lanes are also under increasing threat from three main sources: road improvements; development; and farming operations. The first two can be influenced or controlled by the local authority, but there is no comprehensive legislation at present which satisfactorily protects ancient tracks and lanes from the changes in the countryside. Their conservation and management, therefore, rests largely on the awareness, voluntary will and effort of farmers, landowners and the general public in pursuit of these aims. The District Council will encourage the preparation of management plans for the protection, maintenance and enhancement of ancient tracks and lanes.

Environmental Improvements

3.153 Although the overall quality of the environment of the District is good, certain areas could benefit from schemes designed to improve the appearance of the environment or to improve living and working conditions. The District Council will encourage the public and private sectors to extend their involvement in environmental improvement work and will continue to make available professional, technical and financial assistance for such work. The Council will continue to make finance available for conservation and environmental improvement work through the Historic Buildings, Housing Improvement and Environmental Improvement Grants in order to:

- a. maintain and enhance the Conservation Areas and other areas and features of historic, architectural or archaeological interest;
- b. improve the street scene;
- c. improve areas of poor environmental quality; and
- d. improve the surrounding landscape and increase the amount of tree cover.

3.154 The quality of the environment of the District is governed to some extent by the nature of the activities carried out within it. The gradual development of the settlements has resulted in several distinct land use types becoming established within each settlement. Where existing uses cause conflict with their surrounding environment, either through the nature of the activity or the appearance of the site and building, the Council will, wherever possible (and subject to financial

considerations), seek to relocate such activities in more appropriate locations. Similarly, where sites and buildings have been neglected or become derelict, the Council will take action to improve the condition and appearance of the site or building and encourage new uses for it.

3.155 The District Council will, wherever necessary, take action to improve the quality of the environment by:

- a. requiring the cessation of unauthorised uses and the restoration of the land to a specified condition appropriate to the surroundings of the site;
- b. requiring owners who have neglected to maintain their land properly to restore the land to a specified condition which respects the amenity of the surrounding area;
- c. resisting all applications for development which could create, consolidate or expand uses which are noisy or noxious, or which would generate unacceptable volumes or types of traffic for the area in which they are proposed to be located, and encouraging the relocation of such existing uses to more suitable sites;
- d. encouraging the re-use, through rehabilitation work or development of buildings and sites within the built-up area of a settlement which have become derelict and thereby detract from the overall quality of the built environment; and
- e. improve public access to these areas to enable community enjoyment of previously neglected areas. (An example being the Tilmore Road/North Road area of Petersfield, which would be suitable for public access improvements in conjunction with the Policy R4 designation.)