

Neighbourhood Character Study for East Hampshire District Council

Final Report: Classification and Description

December 2018

Section 2:

4. Site Specific Character Area Studies

4.1. North Western part of East Hampshire

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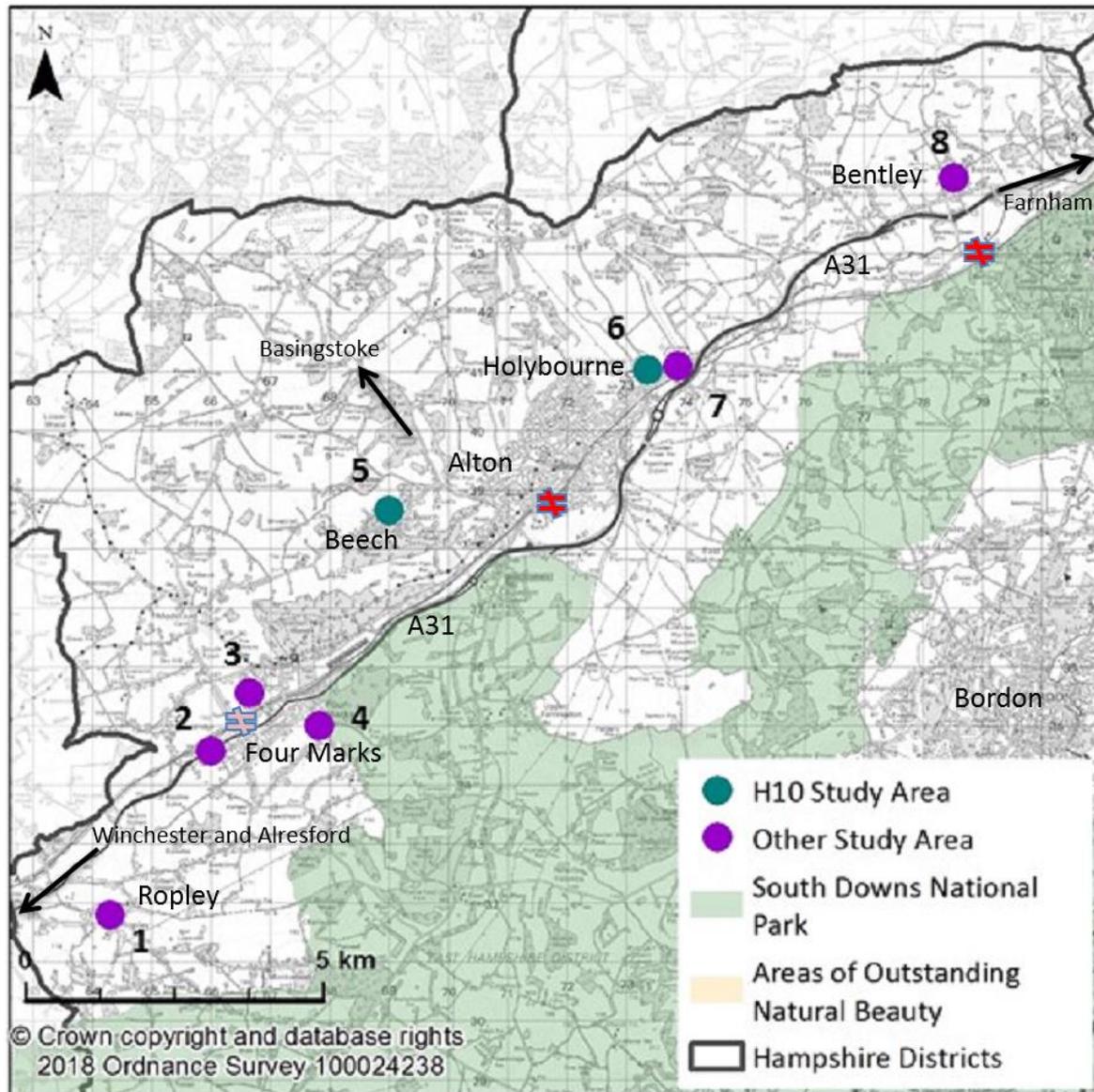


Figure 4.1 North Western Part of East Hampshire

North Western part of East Hampshire

The Study Areas

4.1.1. Eight studies were undertaken in the North-Western part of East Hampshire and are listed south-west to north-east, as they are arranged along the A31.

1. Eastern Ropley
2. Western Four Marks
3. Northern Four Marks (Medstead Parish)
4. Telegraph Lane, Four Marks (*suggested as potential H9/H10 policy area*)
5. Medstead Road, Beech (*current H10 Policy Area*)
6. Holybourne (*current H10 Policy Area*)
7. Eastern Holybourne
8. Northern Bentley

The first study area is situated in Ropley. The next three study areas are within Four Marks, one being on the western edge Four Marks, the second area sits on the northern edge of Four Marks, in the Parish of Medstead. The third study, Telegraph Lane Area, on the eastern edge, is a potential contender for H9/10 policy status. A fifth study area is the Medstead Road area, in Beech. There are no study areas in Alton, but two are in Holybourne, one in the centre, the other on the eastern edge. The final study area is on the northern side of Bentley.

Landscape and Townscape Character Areas of the North Western area of East Hampshire

4.1.2. The relevant Landscape Character Areas in this part of East Hampshire are:

- 3e: Ropley Downland Mosaic
- 2b: Four Marks Clay Plateau
- 4b: Northern Wey Chalk Valley Streams¹

4.1.3. Landscape Character Area **3e: Ropley Downland Mosaic** provides the setting for the Ropley area of interest.²

4.1.4. Landscape Character Area **2b: Four Marks Clay Plateau** provides the landscape context for four of the study areas: Western Four Mark, Northern Four Marks, Telegraph Lane and the Medstead Road Area in Beech.³

4.1.5. Central Holybourne, Eastern Holybourne and North Bentley are situated in Landscape Character Area **4b: Northern Wey Chalk Valley Streams**.⁴

¹ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2006 <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/landscape-studies>

² <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType3DownlandMosaic.pdf>

³ <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType2ClayPlateau.pdf>

- 4.1.6. The settlement pattern across the three landscape character areas tends to be low density isolated farmstead or small nucleated settlements, of late medieval or 18th-19th century origin, except for Four Marks, which is predominantly 20th century.
- 4.1.7. Across the three landscape character areas, where evident, traditional building materials include flint, red brick and clay tiles. All the study areas assessed, demonstrate a wider materials choice.
- 4.1.8. 3e: Ropley Downland Mosaic is a small-scale landscape, lower lying than other downland mosaic areas, with an enclosed and contained character. This is exemplified when approaching the character area from the east along wooded lanes which dip down the mini scarp from the clay plateau towards Ropley. Tree cover, hedgerows and the linked rural lane network provide continuity and unity. This landscape, contained by landform and tree cover, has limited views. The village of Ropley and Ropley Dean has a dispersed character, along the rural roads. Residential development is set within large garden plots and contained by trees and is frequently not visible from rural roads so that the area retains a strong rural quality. The A31 and the Watercress Line cross the north of the area. An extensive network of rural roads connects the settlement of Ropley with dispersed scattered farmsteads. Footpaths provide linkages between settlements in the area, with the route of St. Swithun's Way (representing the former line of the Pilgrim's Way linking Winchester to Canterbury) passing through the area. There is little other evidence of the area being used for recreational purposes, much of it having a largely settled, domestic character.
- 4.1.9. The Ropley Downland Mosaic area is characterised by the low settlement density with isolated farmsteads of 18th-19th century origin set within areas of recent enclosure, and the small villages of medieval origin (e.g. Ropley) surrounded by earlier enclosures. Some of the isolated farmsteads may represent shrunken medieval hamlets⁵.
- 4.1.10. Four Marks lies on an elevated undulating clay plateau with the clay cap overlying chalk bedrock. It is the highest settlement in Hampshire at roughly 220m above sea level. It is on the old Pilgrims' Way, the historical route taken by pilgrims from Winchester to Canterbury. Four Marks is a relatively modern village which only expanded significantly in the second half of the 20th century and which has continued to grow in recent years with much new housing being built. Before the turn of the century there was no settlement at Four Marks. Early OS mapping (1866 – 1889) shows the railway, which arrived in 1868 passing through open countryside.

⁴ <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType4ChalkValleySystems.pdf>

⁵ http://www.myropley.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RNP_DraftPlanforPublicConsultation.pdf

Large areas of woodland sat to the east and northeast, much of which remains together with many of the old field boundaries. By the turn of the century, some cottages had been built close to the inn and the settlement was identified as Four Marks. To the south a row of smallholdings on one and two-acre plots with small houses along Blackberry Lane built for veterans of the Crimean War was to follow. Further development of the village followed but most has taken place since the end of World War II. There have been a significant number of planning applications in recent years, many of which are recently completed or still under construction.

4.1.11. The village of Beech has a linear nature, sitting largely within a narrow valley that descends (by minor road) for almost two miles from Alton Abbey, which at 217 metres is one of the highest points in Hampshire, to the Alton – Basingstoke trunk road at 106 metres. The area in which Beech is situated is primarily rural. The parish totals 526 hectares and is a broad mix of woodland, farmland and, in the village area, residential developments. In the past, the area has had an agriculturally based economy, although this influence has declined with modern farming practices. The village is now primarily a residential area, serving surrounding business areas with little commercial activity within the village boundary. Beech is a growing village with, at present, some 600 people living in 205 houses.

4.1.12. Although Beech's origins can be traced back to the 12th century, modern Beech took shape in the 1890s when the local landowner began to sell off small parcels of land for housing: much of it in the colonial style of wood and corrugated iron construction. This process continued in the period between World War I and II. The parish church was built in 1902 and the existing village hall was established nearby in 1932. Since the 1960s the colonial-style housing has gradually been replaced by modern housing stock.⁶

4.1.13. Holybourne lies in the river valley of the Wey close to the eastern edge of Alton. It takes its name from the Old English 'Haligburna' meaning sacred stream, which refers to the small stream which rises near the church and runs from there to join the Wey some 0.6km to the south. The study area sits at the heart of Holybourne village, covering most of the Conservation Area and is within the settlement area boundary, with eight grade II listed buildings within it. The village is separated from Alton by a narrow 'Gap Between Settlements' and is surrounded by open countryside.

4.1.14. Holybourne was assessed as part of the Hampshire Integrated Townscape Assessment 2010⁷, and has been categorised as part of Townscape Character Area:

⁶ <https://www.beechvillage.org.uk/about/>

⁷ <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapeType-Alton-FinalAutumn2010.pdf>

ALT02 Holybourne and Anstey. This character area comprises two historic settlements, Anstey and Holybourne, both within designated conservation areas. Between and beyond these settlements is a mix of twentieth-century infill between London Road and the railway, and schools including the Lord Mayor Treloar School and the Grade II* listed Andrews Endowed Church of England Aided Primary School. The conservation areas include a diverse mix of historic building types and traditional materials which strongly define parts of London Road. The sense of being on the edge of the settlement dominates throughout and access to the open countryside to the north and south is an important characteristic of the character area, despite the presence of the A31 and the railway to the south.

4.1.15. Townscape Character Area **ALT02c: Holybourne historic core**, covers the Central Holybourne Area, and is characterised as follows:

- A semi-rural village character survives to the historic core of Holybourne with a survival of a lot of historic buildings of special interest of coarse very open grain.
- Land gently rises to the north and falls to the central (north–south) stream from the village pond.
- Small, medium-sized and large irregular plots with only limited sub-division
- Inconsistent building line to the lanes running north, consistent back of pavement development to London Road, boundary walls strongly define plots in the absence of buildings.
- Red brick, flint (knapped and cobbled), some ashlar malmstone, painted render and stucco, natural slate and handmade clay tiles and some survival of thatch (long straw in places) to roofs. Brick and flint combinations to distinctive boundary walls.
- Mostly two- with some two-and-a-half-storey houses (using dormers in roofspaces), houses are generally at a modest cottage scale.
- Almost entirely residential with single-family dwellings. There is also a church and a public house.
- Good tree cover mostly in the private gardens of large houses or the churchyard but providing high public amenity value, often lining lanes and providing positive enclosure.
- Good quality public realm; quiet roads lined with brick/flint boundary walls, or mature hedges and trees (or both). No street lights.
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian, with footpath networks giving direct access to the open countryside.

4.1.16. Townscape Character Area **ALT02c: Cuckoo’s Corner** covers the Eastern Holybourne Study Area, and is characterised as follows:

- Late-twentieth-century housing at a medium open grain
- The topography is gently falling east to the River Wey

- Semi-detached and detached houses set in groups or around small cul-de-sacs
- Inconsistent building lines due to the overly complicated road and plot layouts
- Red brick, modern clay tile and other modern interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses
- Entirely residential; single-family dwelling houses
- Good survival of mature trees throughout, strong tree belts to the boundary with the railway and the A31
- Shared pedestrian spaces, roads with grass verges and off-street parking
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian⁸

4.1.17. These findings concur with the studies undertaken as part of this report.

4.1.18. The history of Bentley can be traced back to Roman times with the discovery of a Roman burial site near Bury Court. In the Anglo-Saxon period the village is mentioned in various Charters as having ten hides of land and, in the 9th Century a period of tenure was granted to the Bishops of Winchester, which lasted until the mid-1800s. Bentley is mentioned as an agricultural settlement in the Domesday Book, with reference to cropping of rye, oats, and pease, with hay meadows. Up until the end of the 19th Century, Bentley was a typical rural community with several farms supporting most of the population living in the parish. Some of the residents, mainly females, were in service in the larger houses. Early commercial development was along the main road linking London with Winchester and serviced the road traffic. This included a garage and a transport business. A shop and three public houses were part of the village infrastructure⁹.

Movement, Access and Settlements

4.1.20. The main settlements within the North Western part of East Hampshire (listed South West to North East following the A31) are: Ropley; Four Marks; Medstead; Beech; Alton; Holybourne, and; Bentley. Following is a simple summary of where the study areas sit within the settlement hierarchy to give a general indication of resident access to services and is intended for understanding context. It is not a complete study of access to all services, as locations of schools, open space and employment areas are only discussed (in the detailed assessments) where they are in or adjacent to the study areas and the information on journey times and distances is approximate. Their position within the settlement hierarchy is:

⁸ <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapeType-Alton-FinalAutumn2010.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Bentley%20Neighbourhood%20Plan%2031.03%20Final.pdf>

North Western part of East Hampshire =	Position in Hierarchy ¹⁰
Alton	Market Town
Four Marks	Small Local Service Centre
Beech, Bentley, Bentley Station, Bentworth, Holybourne, Medstead village, Ropley, Ropley Dean, Upper Froyle	Other settlements with a settlement policy boundary
All other settlements	Small rural villages/hamlets within the countryside

4.1.21. The north-western area has a main linear south-west to north-east communication corridor linking Hampshire and Surrey containing the route of the A31 (and the rail line), along which most of the settlements are aligned. The Market Town of Alton forms a focal point for services for the north-west area, accessed primarily along the A31.

4.1.22. There are train stations at: Alton, Bentley, Farnham and Aldershot on South Western Railway, a spur that links to Clapham Junction and Guildford. The nearest direct London to Southampton/Weymouth line passes through Basingstoke and Winchester. The line continues as a Heritages Steam Railway from Alton, with a station at Four Marks, through to Arlesford.

4.1.23. Of the eight study areas, Central Holybourne is probably located with the most convenient access to services, having a small provision of local services within Holybourne itself, but also being located at approximately 1.8km (a typical 4min drive/6min cycle/22min walk¹¹) from Alton Town Centre and the Rail Station. Eastern Holybourne is less well connected, with a 2.5km (6min drive/8min cycle/30min walk) to Alton Town Centre and the Rail Station.¹²

4.1.24. The three study areas in Four Marks, the benefit from a reasonable proximity to Four Marks Small Local Service Centre, although walking and cycling along the busy A31 would not be particularly pleasant or convenient. Telegraph Lane is the nearest at approximately 700m-1.5km (average 2min drive/4min cycle/14min walk), with a 1.5km (2min drive/7min cycle/23 min walk) from the Western Four Marks study area to the centre. They are also located within approximately 10-12km (11min drive) of Alton Town Centre and Train Station.

¹⁰ East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy Adopted June 2014 Settlement Hierarchy page 25 <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/DP01EastHampshireDistrictLocalPlanJointCoreStrategy.pdf>

¹¹ Google directions, 26/Nov/18, without traffic implications

¹² National Rail Maps: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/maps.aspx

- 4.1.25. The residents of Ropley benefit from a modest provision of services within the settlement. Being placed almost equidistant between Alton and Winchester (approx. 15km to Alton and 17km to Winchester, via the A31), they also have a choice as to which town centre they wish to access but are also within 6km of Four Marks Small Local Service Centre. They have a range of choices but not within easy walking/cycling/public transport use.
- 4.1.26. Like Ropley, Northern Bentley is equidistant between two town centres, and has some services within the settlement, it is: 10km from Alton and 9km from Farnham (in Surrey to the North). It also benefits from have Bentley Station 3km to the South (6min drive/10min cycle).
- 4.1.27. Beech has no local services within the settlement and is situated approximately 4km from Alton Town centre and 7km from Four Marks.

Significant Environmental and Policy Designations

- 4.1.28. **South Downs National Park:** The proximity of the SDNP boundary to the southern edge of this area has a significant impact, particularly on landscape setting, views, and dark night skies. This is particularly important around Telegraph Lane in Four Marks, where the boundary of the SDNP lies immediately adjacent to both the settlement boundary and the south-western edge of the study area.

North Western part of East Hampshire

1. Eastern Ropley



Figure 1.2 Church Street, Ropley

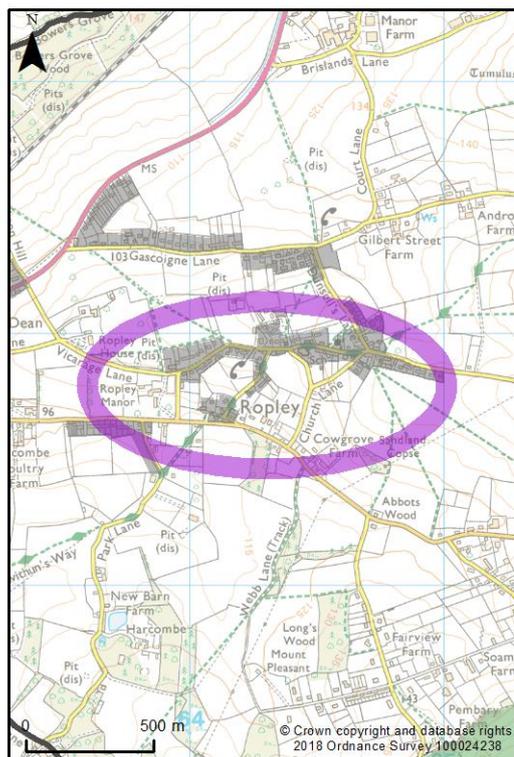


Figure 1.3 Ropley Location Plan

General Description

Ropley lies just south of the A31, 4km south-west of Four Marks, and 5km east of New Alresford. Rolling landform contains the village with the lanes following the valleys.

The area of interest focuses on the central part of Ropley village, within the settlement boundary, covering Vicarage Lane from Maddocks Hill to School Lane, Hammonds Lane, South Street and Church Street. The area of interest takes in approximately 137 residential dwellings and covers most but not all of the settlement. It includes the church (St Peter's), village stores and post office, village hall and recreation ground. Land use is otherwise mainly residential, but there is also some open pasture. Parts of the area alongside the lanes fall within the settlement boundary, but the adjoining fields are currently designated as countryside. The settlement boundary reflects the dispersed nature of the village along the lanes.

Within the area of interest, land slopes gently towards the south-west, at an elevation of between 102 to 122 metres. The land rises more steeply to the east and south, towards the South Downs National Park (SDNP) boundary at 178m. The SDNP boundary runs along the higher slopes, 1.5 km to the south.

Current planning policy designations

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10

Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

Eastern Ropley falls within Landscape Character Area **3e - Ropley Downland Mosaic**.¹³

Unlike other nucleated settlements, Ropley has a linear dispersed pattern of settlement along the rural lanes. Existing vegetation forms effective buffers between the areas of relatively dense settlement and open fields. The Landscape Character Assessment states: *“Woodland and hedgerows form strong edges along the rural lanes and settlement is not evident when travelling across the area.”* (page 89)¹⁴

There are short-range views across pasture between lanes and out to the north from the churchyard, and to the south from the school. There are longer-range views outwards to the countryside in the south (*Figure 1.4*), and Ropley station to the north-west. There are views into the area across the open farmland from the higher ground along the SDNP boundary (*Figure 1.9*), and from the train station, which serves the Watercress Line, a heritage steam railway (*Figure 1.10*).

The area has a leafy, secluded, and quiet ambience, and feels very rural. There is a strong sense of tranquillity due to the enclosed lanes (*Figures 1.3 and 7*), where buildings are often hidden from view. Much of the traffic noise from the A31 is reduced by landform and vegetation.

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in mid-range for East Hampshire.¹⁵ Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 7 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies)¹⁶ This category represents high value dark skies (i.e. in the range 7 to 9).

Historical Development and Assets

The original village of Ropley developed around the church in the 12th century, along with several outlying hamlets, including South Street. The village has a Conservation Area in two parts: one area centred on Church Street and the other on South Street. There are several Grade II listed buildings within the area, including the Church of St Peter (awaiting

¹³ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2005-2006:

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

¹⁴ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2005 -2006

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType3DownlandMosaic.pdf>

¹⁵ Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

¹⁶ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

reconstruction following a bad fire in 2014), the Forge, Hall Place and Ropley Manor, as well as some of the small cottages in South Street.

Over the last century there has been development along many of the lanes in the parish, but the centre remains at Church Street. An informal, rural character has been retained.

Urban Structure and Built Form

The principal townscape type is **TCT 03 Post Mediaeval development**, with most subsequent development, for instance along Vicarage Lane, covered by **TCT 08 Residential, Post 1945 to Present**.¹⁷

Ropley is a dispersed settlement with cottages and houses along narrow lanes in a rural setting. While some larger detached houses, such as Ropley Manor, are secluded and set back, most village houses are small in scale and are set close to the road, generally facing onto it. Some are in terraced rows, e.g. on South Street and opposite the churchyard. Most dwellings are two storeys although there are a number of bungalows. Frontages are generally green, often with grass banks and hedges, or low walls within the village core. Together with the frontage hedges, walls and mature trees, this creates a strong sense of enclosure. The lanes enclose areas of open fields and paddocks, and wind gently so that different viewpoints are revealed along the way, as described in the Ropley Conservation Area leaflet.¹⁸

There is evidence of recent plot subdivision, with bungalows being replaced with new terraced properties, for example at Church Street Farm. A cluster of new build properties has been developed on former agricultural land at Hale Close within the last ten years (*Figure 1.6*). These are mainly two storeys but some have been designed with the second floor within the roof, or with half-hipped roofs, making them less visually intrusive.

The net density of this area of interest is currently around 7dpha. This derives from a very varied plot size, with the largest plot being around 0.5ha and the smallest 150m², with a typical mid-range of around 0.15ha. Whilst the majority of plots are rectilinear, there is some variety in plot shape and position of dwelling within the plot.

A mixture of materials is evident in the historic buildings, including brick and flint, colour wash, tile-hanging and weatherboarding. Boundary walls are brick or brick and flint.

¹⁷ Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment Townscape Types:
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

¹⁸ Ropley Conservation Area Leaflet

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

Hedgerows and tree belts provide valuable buffer vegetation, maintaining a strong rural character to the village setting. Frontage vegetation includes hedges of both native and cultivated species. Frequent mature trees make an important contribution to character, as does vegetation within plots.

Trees located within the Conservation Areas are protected. In addition, the belt of trees to the west of the recreation ground, behind properties on Vicarage Lane, is protected under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), together with a few on the lane frontage.

The hedgerows and woodland blocks are important for biodiversity. There is a village pond just east of Church Street, maintained by local residents, but no areas are designated as having special ecological interest.

Movement and Connectivity

The village has its own local Post Office and shop, village hall and primary school. There is one bus stop within the area of interest, with a very irregular service¹⁹, otherwise the nearest bus stops are on the A31, 1 km to the west. A mainline train service runs through to London Waterloo from Alton, 16 km away. The village has its own restored railway station on the Watercress Line, a heritage steam line that connects Alresford with Alton.

Footpaths provide links between local settlements, and the long-distance St Swithun's Way (representing the former line of the Pilgrim's Way linking Winchester to Canterbury) passes through the village. A large recreation area with car parking adjoins the village hall.

The village is distinguished by its narrow informal lanes, which have no footways or street lighting. There is very little parking on street. Traffic is fairly frequent but moves slowly.

Evaluation

The key attractive qualities that give Ropley its 'sense of place' are:

- A historic village 'core' which retains some local services and a tranquil rural character.
- A very intimate 'meshed' relationship between settlement and surrounding countryside.
- Strong presence of green infrastructure enclosing the narrow rural lanes, and 'hiding' buildings, but also giving way to a variety of short and longer-range views out to the countryside, revealed sequentially along the winding lanes.
- Variety in size of dwelling from large detached house and plot to small terraces and bungalows, but all low-rise and modest in the landscape setting.

¹⁹ documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun18.pdf

Key Issues and Trends

- New housing development on former agricultural land, with visible rooflines, road access.
- Increased provision for vehicle access on existing properties, resulting in wider driveways, parking areas and garaging.
- Road markings on lane.
- Some suburbanisation of frontages.

Sensitivity

- Narrow secluded lanes – not suitable for a significant increase in traffic.
- Historic character – can easily be eroded by suburbanisation. Including the vernacular boundaries within the village.
- Views and sense of connection to countryside, including the pasture between lanes. Views into the area from adjoining higher land increase its sensitivity.
- Tranquillity levels, which are currently high.
- Vegetation - existing hedgerows, woodland and individual trees that contain and absorb development.

Broad Policy Objectives/ Neighbourhood Management Considerations

To retain the special qualities of the Ropley study area, the following is recommended:

- Conserve the small-scale rural character of Ropley village.
- Avoid highway improvements that would introduce urban characteristics, supporting proposals that respect the rural character of village lanes.
- Conserve views out, and 'green corridors' into the countryside.
- Restrict scale, but not necessarily density, of new housing. Avoid exposed rooflines against the sky wherever possible.
- Ensure the scale of new development can be contained by the landscape. Protect existing vegetation and make adequate allowance for new buffer planting, especially where there are views into the site.
- Carefully site any new development to avoid putting pressure on lanes as an access route.
- Encourage retention of green frontages and sympathetic accommodation of private vehicles.
- Where development is on or close to road frontage ensure design and materials complement existing built form and respect historic character of the village.

Photographs of Eastern Ropley



Figure 1.3: Church Street in the village centre



Figure 1.4 Views out across pasture by the school



Figure 1.5 Historic detail at the churchyard



Figure 1.6 New development at Hale Close



Figure 1.7 The narrow width of Hammonds Lane



Figure 1.8 Pasture between the village lanes



Figure 1.9 View towards the village from the SDNP boundary



Figure 1.10 View towards the village from Ropley station

North Western part of East Hampshire

2. Western Four Marks



Figure 2.1 Edge of settlement from south west

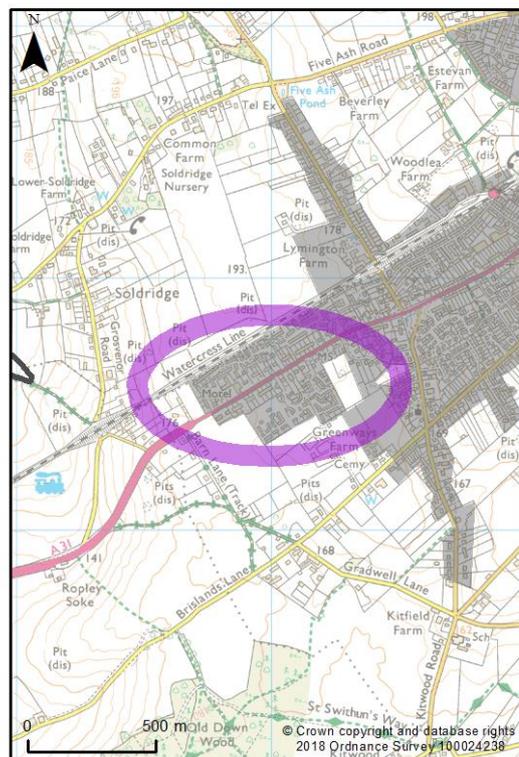


Figure 2.2 Western Four Marks Location Plan

General Description

Four Marks is a predominantly residential settlement situated at the edge of the clay plateau, just before the land drops away to the south. This settlement is one of the highest in the district, with the south-west edge at an elevation of between 187 to 175 metres.

The area of interest forms the south-west end of the settlement and covers both sides of the A31 Winchester Road. It includes Bishop's View, Goldcrest Way, Pheasant Close and Kingswood Rise and extends to Barn Lane in the adjoining countryside, at the top of the minor but steep south-west facing scarp slope. It is bounded on the north side by the Watercress Line, a heritage steam railway (which runs in a cutting at this point), and by farmland, allotments and recreation ground to the south.

A linear roadside settlement, it evolved from a distinctive pattern of former small-holdings. Land use is mainly residential, with a few commercial businesses including a hotel along A31, and arable farmland to north and south-west. Most of the area of interest is within the settlement boundary, but the most south-westerly part including Barn Lane is in the countryside.

The South Downs National Park (SDNP) boundary runs 2 km away to the south and along the eastern edge of Four Marks.

Current planning policy designations

Settlement boundary Policy CP10

Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

This area falls within Landscape Character Area **2b, the Four Marks Clay Plateau**²⁰.

Its high position on the clay plateau gives the area an open character. There is a relatively high level of greenery within the neighbourhood, including a number of large mature trees, and an outlook to the countryside in places.

Barn Lane, Chaffinch Road and Pheasant Close have views over the arable fields at this end, but existing buildings and vegetation on the relatively level plateau tend to restrict views within it. Its elevated position would allow views out from higher positions and there is the potential for certain taller types of development to be visible from outside the area. The recent development at Pheasant Close, including the three storey properties on the rural boundary, is clearly visible from Barn Lane, as there is no buffer planting (*Figure 2.6*).

The busy A31 cuts through the middle, with wide verges at the southern end (*Figure 2.8*). This road reduces tranquillity levels, but away from road, the lack of street lighting and a rural setting creates a relatively peaceful ambience and enhances the character of existing developments.

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in mid-range for East Hampshire²¹. Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 5 to 6 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies)²².

Historical Development and Assets

This area of interest, formerly farmland with a number of small gravel pits, was developed as a linear roadside settlement of long rectilinear plots from the 1920s, later than other parts of Four Marks. These reflect the influx of smallholders in the years before and after the World War I, attracted by the railway. Many of these small holder plots have been redeveloped with larger or multiple dwellings, over the last 30 years.

There are no Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings in this area of interest.

²⁰ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2005-2006:

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

²¹ Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

²² Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

Urban Structure and Built Form

The principal townscape type is **TCT 08: Residential, Post 1945 to Present**, but **TCT 07: Residential 1915-1945**²³ is also represented in the earliest properties on Winchester Road.

Most of the neighbourhood now consists of cul de sac estates, apart from the original roadside properties along the A31 and individual properties along Barn Lane. Since 2009, subdivision has progressed on the southern side of the main road allowing new access roads to serve estate developments including Goldcrest Way. On the north side, a car dealership site has been redeveloped for housing since 2011 (*Figure 2.10*). Apart from one replacement dwelling, there appears to have been little change to properties on Barn Lane.

On Winchester Road and Barn Lane, properties are aligned with the road, while the newer developments are set out in a variety of orientations. Properties are a mixture of mainly two and three storey detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, together with a number of three storey apartment blocks (*Figure 2.5*). Third storeys are often accommodated within the roof to reduce visual impact, but still result in quite imposing buildings. The newer sites south of the A31 have been more densely developed, but open areas have been retained around existing mature trees within some of the developments.

The average net density for this area is 19dpha, this is made up of larger plots facing on to the A31, and smaller plots within the cul-de-sacs behind. The dwellings facing onto the A31 are set back from the Road by about 20m typically. Within the cul-de-sacs this set back is lower, varying between 4-7m.

Materials used include brick, tile hanging, brick and flint, under 'slate' roofs. On the A31, frontages mainly consist of formal hedges with some low boundary walls, although parts have high fencing, for example in the section between Bishops View and the motel (*Figure 2.7*). Barn Lane has an informal hedgerow frontage, and the more recent developments have a mixture of open and planted front gardens.

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

A tree belt alongside the railway and scrub/woodland at south-west edge provide effective structure, but there is relatively little buffer to newer development south of the A31, which is clearly visible from Barn Lane (*Figure 2.6*). The area of scrub at the south-west edge of settlement provides dormouse habitat and has been designated a SINC.

Frontage vegetation includes a wide variety of cultivated species and grassed areas in the newer developments, and native species in Barn Lane.

Larger plots contain trees and other vegetation, which make an important contribution to landscape character. The newer developments, particularly on the south side of the A31,

²³ Hampshire Integrated Character Townscape Types:
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

have limited space for planting, however a large number of trees have been retained within the estates, mainly in areas of public realm, and are protected under TPOs. These also make an important contribution to landscape character (*Figures 2.4 and 2.5*).

Movement and Connectivity

Although close to a recreation ground on the south-east side, there are limited local services within walking distance. The main Four Marks shops are 1km north on the A31, with a few located at Lymington Bottom, 0.5km away. Four Mark Church of England Primary school is located approximately 1.2km to the south, lying outside of the settlement. There is a regular bus service from stops on the A31²⁴. The nearest mainline train service runs through to London Waterloo from Alton, 9 km away.

There are few public rights of way/footpath links connecting to the immediate area. Pedestrian and cycle links are provided by estate roads, for example to the nearby recreation ground off Brislands Lane to the south, and towards Lymington Bottom to the north east. Barn Lane provides a link to bridleways at the south end of the village, and to St Swithun's Way just under 2km away.

All roads are adopted, and most have footways with the exception of the narrow Barn Lane, which becomes an unmade bridleway at its southern end. The A31 has footways on both sides north of the motel, and street lighting from the junction with Bishops View. There is no street lighting within the recent developments. There is no parking on the A31, or elsewhere on street, as properties have off-road parking.

Evaluation

The key attractive qualities of this western part of Four Marks lie in:

- The visual and physical links to the surrounding countryside.
- Green infrastructure, especially the large number of mature trees retained within the estates.
- Grass verges within the highway.
- Good pedestrian and cycle links to the recreation area and countryside.

Key Issues and Trends

- Dominance of A31 and severance issues.
- Lack of local services within comfortable walking distance.
- Loss of green frontage on A31.
- Loss of views and connection with countryside where development has been extended.

²⁴ documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun.18.pdf

Sensitivity

- Existing trees and hedgerow vegetation, important for containing development in this elevated location.
- The sense of relative tranquillity once away from A31 where there are open views of the adjacent countryside.
- Open countryside south of study area is a strong contrast at the settlement boundary where the A31 descends from the plateau.
- The rural character of Barn Lane.

Broad Policy Objectives/Neighbourhood Management Considerations

Where opportunities exist for Western Four Marks:

- Establish good walking and cycling links to countryside and to local services, especially the primary school to the south-west.
- Maintain visual connection with countryside.
- Ensure scale of any new development minimises its visual impact, taking long distance views into account. Avoid prominent high rooflines against the skyline, particularly at the outer boundaries.
- Include proportion of green infrastructure to reflect existing recent development.
- Establish buffer planting to rural edges and between developments.
- Encourage retention of green frontages and sympathetic accommodation of private vehicles, for example along Barn Lane.
- Discourage suburbanising influences, including hard or ornamental boundaries on Barn Lane and other nearby rural roads, for example on Brislands Lane.

Photographs of Western Four Marks



Figure 2.3 Newer development at Chaffinch Road



Figure 2.4 Mature trees retained within development



Figure 2.5 Three storey houses and apartments, Pheasant Close



Figure 2.6 Development clearly visible from countryside at Barn Lane



Figure 2.7 Loss of green frontage, A31 Winchester Road.



Figure 2.8 Clearly defined south western edge of settlement



Figure 2.9 Retained hedgerow forms buffer to development



Figure 2.10 Recent development on A31 Winchester Road

3. Northern Four Marks (Medstead Parish)



Figure 3.1: Watercress Line

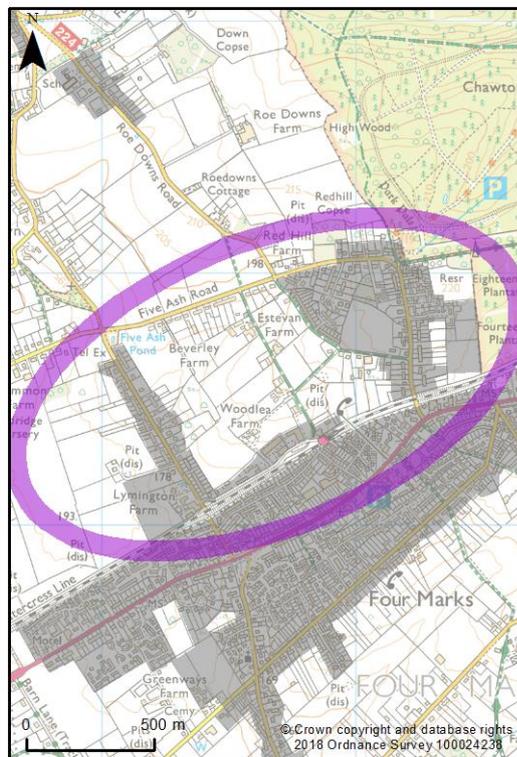


Figure 3.2: Northern Four Marks Location Plan

General Description

Northern Four Marks is a predominantly residential settlement situated at the edge of the clay plateau, just before the land drops away to the south. This settlement is one of the highest in the district, at an elevation of 220 metres. Part of the village lies north of the Watercress Line, a heritage steam railway, and is within Medstead parish. The greater part of Four Marks lies to the south with the village centre south of the A31.

The area of interest takes in most of two discrete settlement areas north of the railway line and extends beyond them taking in residential areas ranged along three principal roads: Lyminster Bottom Road to the west, Five Ash Road to the north, and Boyneswood Road to the east. The railway line provides the boundary to the south. The smaller village of Medstead lies about 2.5km north of the railway line and the town of Alton some 6km to the northeast.

Land use across the area of interest is mixed, taking in some 460 residential properties as well approximately 40 commercial properties, which are a mixture of industrial, retail and the Watercress Line station complex. It also includes some agricultural land and is

surrounded on three sides by open countryside (generally Grade 3 Agricultural land). Generally, the land slopes from north and east to south and west, with a change in level of some 40m.

Current policy designations:

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10 (part)

Bounded to west, north and east by Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

Northern Four Marks falls within Landscape Character Area **2b the Four Marks Clay Plateau**²⁵.

The Landscape Character Assessment describes the landscape as *“dominated by pasture but also with some arable fields, reflecting variations in soil type and including considerable areas of pasture managed by horse grazing.”* It also states: *“Tree cover creates a secluded and enclosed landscape contrasting with the openness of the arable fields.”* (page 53)²⁶

The rising ground through the area of interest and beyond northwards offers views down to development on the lower levels. Examples of this can be seen on Stoney Lane, the bridleway (*Figure 3.3*) that runs along a track from the railway station through fields to join Five Ash Road. In places, these lower developments offer views up to an open or treed skyline, but in many cases recent development has blocked these (*Figure 3.4*). As the development spreads outwards from the village centre it is becoming visible from open countryside (*Figure 3.5*).

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in mid-range for East Hampshire²⁷. Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area within a range up to 7 (categories run from 1 to 9, with 9 being the darkest skies).²⁸ The higher value occurs at the edge of the settlement and represents high value dark skies (i.e. in the range 7 to 9).

Historical Development and Assets

There are no Conservation Areas in Four Marks and few listed buildings: none within the area of interest. Throughout the area of interest some historic remnants remain: railway buildings such as the engine shed (*Figure 3.6*) and associated structures such as the bridges; one older house in the local vernacular, in flint with red brick dressings, is visually prominent on Boyneswood Road (*Figure 3.7*); and a pair of cottages and group of barns just north of the railway arch on Lymington Bottom Road are in brick with slate roofs, with the cottages

²⁵ East Hampshire District Landscape Assessment 2006

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType2ClayPlateau.pdf>

²⁷ Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

²⁸ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

sporting elaborate brick chimneys (*Figure 3.8*). Five Ash Pond at the top of Lymington Bottom appears on early OS mapping but now appears very overgrown and neglected.

Urban Structure and Built Form

Principal townscape type **TCT 08 Residential Post 1945 – Present (Houses Bungalows and up to 3 storey flats)**²⁹

The buildings generally form linear settlement along the three principal roads, together with loop roads and cul-de-sacs off these. Ribbon development along the three roads that bound the area of interest has been augmented in recent years with backland and infill development. Recently large developments on greenfield land represent a significant expansion of the settlement north of the railway line.

The dwelling density across the area of interest varies greatly, but averages at around 11dpha. The size of building footprint and plot size also vary but for a typical property, in the middle of the range, this is around 73 m² and 0.21 ha respectively.

Most of the earlier houses on the principal roads are set back within the plot and face the road (*Figure 3.9*). Some of the recent developments include low-rise blocks of flats of up to two and a half storeys (*Figure 3.10*). Much of the new development takes the form of detached or semi-detached houses (*Figure 3.11*). The short terrace of small houses at Watercress Mews (*Figure 3.12*) is unfortunately not typical of recent development. Within the newer developments the disposition of houses is more varied, and includes formal rows of houses, many in pairs and less formal groupings around a central open space (*Figure 3.13*).

Across the area of interest, there is a wide mixture of building styles and materials, as one would expect for suburban development of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Most of the earlier properties are one or two storeys with the bungalow or chalet form repeatedly used along the three main roads. Generally new development is two or two and a half storeys. Where situated on rising ground this can dominate views, especially where it is 'perched' on the hillside rather than being set into it (*Figure 3.14*). Where a whole development is single storey, as at Beechlands (*Figure 3.15*), the character is noticeably different, feeling much more open and with a backdrop of trees providing the setting. Some new bungalows have recently been built at Woodfield Drive but these are an exception. Unlike a traditional village layout, these detached houses tend to be very close together and the breaks in the building line and lack of space for planting combine to result in a broken up and visually 'bitty' streetscape (*Figure 3.16*). The roof form, especially where buildings are on higher ground and can be seen over a great distance, is very important but many of the new houses have very simple duo-pitched roofs without hips or half-hips resulting in a

²⁹ Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment townscape Types:
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapeTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

series of blank gables (*Figure 3.17*). Red brick dominates as a walling material, particularly in recent developments, but many other materials are present including painted render and tile hanging. Recent developments utilise an array of apparently unrelated materials including 'multi' brick mixes (*Figure 3.18*), random rubble stonework (*Figure 3.19*), panels of flint-work and dressings of reconstituted stone and coloured 'weatherboarding' (*Figure 3.20*).

The houses on the principal roads are generally set back from the lane and screened by vegetation along the frontage. Most of the earlier properties have relatively narrow driveway entrances, which restrict views into the plots. A few of the smaller properties, old and new, front directly onto the road.

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

Narrow belts of woodland, individual trees and hedgerows greatly help to break up what is becoming a relatively large settlement. Of particular importance is the vegetation, which forms a backdrop to development, particularly where buildings would otherwise dominate the skyline. Most of this green infrastructure is largely in the private domain and unprotected. Also important is vegetation within the built-up area that provides screening between developments and helps soften views across and into it from rights of way such as Stoney Lane.

Included in that vegetation is the combination of hedge and shrub planting that form plot frontages along the roads, lanes and access ways. Large trees on all three main roads bounding the area of interest contribute greatly to their semi-rural character (*Figure 3.21*).

A number of the recent housing developments have retained and incorporated existing mature trees in their layouts, which contribute greatly to the setting of the buildings (*Figures 3.22*). There is no evidence that new planting is being undertaken to provide significant structure planting within these new developments either within garden plots or in the public areas. Where tree planting has been included in the developments it is generally insubstantial, a few single trees of smaller species (*Figure 3.23*) in tight spaces which will not allow future growth (*Figure 3.24*). The overwhelming impression is of hard suburban-urban. There are some individual and group TPOs within the area of interest but they by no means cover all important vegetation most of which is essentially unprotected. Two small remnants of Boynes Wood south of Red Bushes Close remain in a backland area and are designated semi-natural Ancient Woodland. There are similar designated remnants of Redhill Copse to the north. Just outside the area of interest to the north-east is Chawton Wood covering almost 300ha. It is open access woodland that is part of the National Forest Estate and is also designated Ancient Woodland.

Movement and Connectivity

Within the area of interest, north of the railway line, there are several shops, a doctor's surgery and the small industrial estate on Station Approach. Generally, though, local services as well as a regular bus service³⁰ are to be found in the village centre south of the A31. The A31 forms a barrier to easy and pleasant pedestrian and cycle movement. It is a busy, noisy road, which is difficult to cross and it seems likely that trips to the village from the area of interest are made by car. As Four Marks has spread out from the village centre, new development is increasingly distant from both services and public transport, and therefore reliant on use of a car.

There are vehicle and pedestrian crossings under and over the railway line at Lymington Bottom Road and Boyneswood Road respectively. There is also a pedestrian overbridge at the station linking the two sections of Station Approach, north and south of the line.

The principal roads are all adopted, and close to the village centre they are suburban in character. There is no public open space within the study area other than incidental open space on the roadsides or small areas within recent housing development.

Lymington Bottom Road and Boyneswood Road have footways on one side and grass verges on both sides, and along with Five Ash Road, are unlit. Five Ash Road is more rural in character being bounded by field hedges and without footways (*Figure 3.26*). Stoney Lane (*Figure 3.27*) and Boyneswood Lane (*Figure 3.28*) are rural single-tracks, largely unmade and are unadopted. Both are bridleways.

Evaluation

Key characteristics of the Northern Four Marks area of interest are:

- A mixture of densities across the area.
- A mixture of uses with industrial, leisure (the station and equestrian use) and agricultural forming significant elements in the local landscape.
- A range of character from urban within built up areas, through suburban in the less dense housing areas, to rural at the outer edges.
- Some remaining green infrastructure: blocks of woodland, old field hedges, green frontages, pockets of farmland (mainly given over to pasture).
- Some unprotected historic buildings and features of interest.
- Very good walking, cycling and riding access to the surrounding countryside.

Keys Issues and Trends

- Ongoing significant expansion of settlement with new housing.
- Loss of rural setting/ agricultural land with consequent increase in visual density (no green gaps).

³⁰ documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun18.pdf

- Potential loss through redevelopment of the local shopping centre north of the railway line as a growing number of residential uses in this area might encourage its redevelopment.
- Main A31 is a significant barrier to movement between Northern Four Marks and local services
- New development impacting views from high ground to north.

Sensitivity

- Loss of skyline views at edge of settlement.
- Loss of open space/greenspace and landscape setting within settlement, especially along routes out to countryside
- Potential incursion of suburban development into countryside to north
- Long views to new development from high ground to north.

Broad Policy Objectives/Neighbourhood Management Considerations

To successfully accommodate future development in the northern part of Four Marks it would be beneficial to plan for:

- Expansion of mixed use including local services/facilities north of the railway line services/employment alongside new housing.
- Greenspace within settlement.
- North/south pedestrian and cycle links.
- Significant green infrastructure.
- Protection/enhancement of a clear settlement edge.
- Improvements to pedestrian and cycle access to village centre to the south, including 'greening' of main access routes.
- Ensuring the impact of development on long views from surrounding countryside is properly assessed as part of planning process and appropriate mitigation measures implemented.

Photographs of Northern Four Marks



Figure 3.3 View from Stoney Lane



Figure 3.4 New housing at Crown Wood



Figure 3.5 View from Roe Downs Road



Figure 3.6 Engine shed at the station



Figure 3.7 Boyneswood Road



Figure 3.8 Lymington Bottom Road



Figure 3.9 View along Boyneswood Road



Figure 3.10 Flats at Medstead Grange



Figure 3.11 Development off Windsor Road



Figure 3.12 Watercross Mews



Figure 3.13 Medstead Grange



Figure 3.14 Crown Wood



Figure 3.15 Beechlands



Figure 3.16 Crown Wood



Figure 3.17 Blank gables at Crown Wood



Figure 3.18 Woodfield Drive



Figure 3.19 New house on Stoney Lane



Figure 3.20 Friars Oak



Figure 3.21 Lymington Bottom Road



Figure 3.22 Mature trees at Friars Oak



Figure 3.23 Crown Wood



Figure 3.24 Friars Oak



Figure 3.25 Five Ash Lane



Figure 3.26 Stoney Lane



Figure 3.27 Boyneswood Lane.

4. Telegraph Lane, Four Marks



Figure 4.1: Telegraph Lane

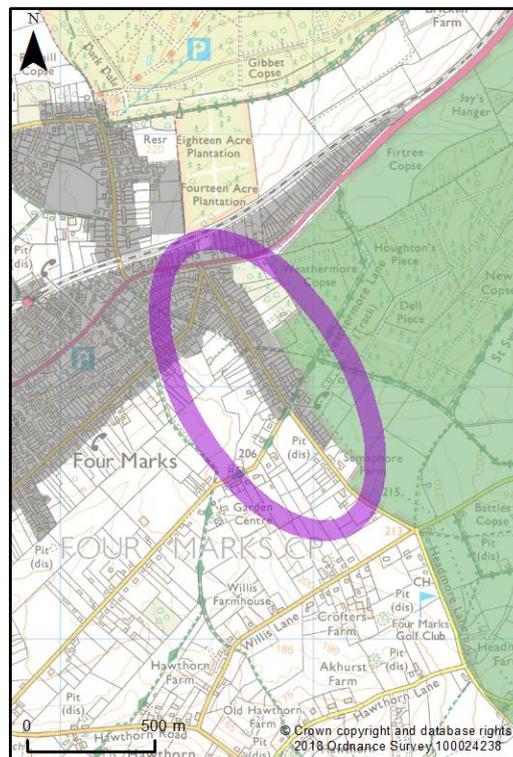


Figure 4.2: Telegraph Lane Location Plan

General Description

Telegraph Lane runs eastward from the A31, at the north-eastern end of Four Marks village. The area of interest covers the lane from the junction with Blackberry Lane, to the junction with Alton Lane and Weathermore Lane. As elsewhere in Four Marks, development has taken the form of a linear roadside settlement, originally small-holder plots. The approximately 100 properties in this area of interest are mainly residential apart from one agricultural business. An area of woodland plantation adjoins to the north-east.

Situated on the clay plateau, this area is one of the highest in the district, at an elevation of between 204 to 209 metres. The land within the area of interest is broadly flat with a slight slope to the south-west.

The SDNP boundary directly adjoins the north-eastern side of the site.

Current policy designations:

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10

Bounded to south and east by Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

Telegraph Lane falls within Landscape Character Area **2b – Four Marks Clay Plateau**³¹.

Despite its elevated position, the adjoining Weathermore Copse, roadside trees and hedges give an enclosed woodland character to this part of the Lane and many of the plots. There are short-range views along the lane and to the woodland backdrop behind the properties. A footpath route along the rear of the plots gives views of the open fields to the south-west. (*Figure 4.6*) Elsewhere in this section, trees and woodland screen long-range views. Further up the lane to the south-east is an Ordnance Survey trig point from where there are extensive views to the south and east as far as Butser Hill and the South Downs scarp.

The lane itself has a wide, spacious feel with a very green setting and, despite being fairly busy, particularly at the junction with the A31, has a tranquil rural ambience, helped by an absence of signs, road markings and street lighting (*Figure 4.3*).

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in mid-range for East Hampshire³². Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 5 to 6 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies)³³.

Historical Development and Assets

Telegraph Lane was undeveloped until the early 20th century; before this point it was mainly woodland plantation. Individual properties were developed from about 1920, in long rectilinear plots. These reflect the influx of smallholders in the years before and after the First World War, attracted by the railway. The lane was then lined with colonial type bungalows.

Urban Structure and Built Form

The principal townscape type is **TCT 08 Residential, Post 1945 to Present**, houses and bungalows, with very little remaining intact from earlier dates³⁴.

Settlement takes the form of a linear development of individual detached properties set back within very large, long plots along the lane. The original colonial type bungalows have been demolished and replaced with new, often larger dwellings. There are still a number of single storey and small properties (*Figures 4.4 and 5*). Buildings are generally aligned with the road, although a limited number of dwellings have been constructed off a private side road. The majority are detached one and two storey dwellings, in a variety of styles and materials, including brick or timber, tile hanging, render, weatherboarding, half-timbered.

³¹ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2005-2006:

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

³³ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

³⁴ Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment: Townscape Types:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

Second storeys are often, but not always, accommodated within the roof. Roofs are generally hipped or half-hipped, and rooflines are generally seen against a background of woodland, or have trees of equal height nearby, reducing their visual impact (*Figure 4.5*).

Apart from a few open grassed gardens, hedges sometimes in conjunction with low brick walls or fences mainly enclose frontages.

Development is of a very low density, at around 6dpha, made up of predominantly long rectilinear plots with the short edge aligned to the road (averagely 18m wide), with a typical set back from the road, of 20-25m for the dwelling within the plot.

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

Weathermore Copse, within the SDNP, forms the north-eastern backdrop and is a mixture of broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation. There are also blocks of woodland behind properties to the south-west (*Figure 4.8*).

Frontage vegetation includes hedges of mainly cultivated evergreen species, plus a large number of mature broadleaf trees along the roadside. Garden vegetation within plots is also important in maintaining the rural character of the lane. Areas of woodland to the rear of plots on both sides of the road, plus a number of individual trees, are protected by TPOs.

Some of the road verges have biodiversity value. The rare Violet Helleborine is a protected species found to be growing in a few areas along Telegraph Lane, which have been designated as SINCS (*Figure 4.7*).

Movement and Connectivity

The local shops are between 700m-1.5km away. There is a regular bus service³⁵, from stops on the adjoining A31, and the nearest station is 7.5 km away at Alton, with train services to London Waterloo. There are footpath links connecting to Weathermore Copse and Blackberry Lane, and St Swithun's Way (representing the former line of the Pilgrim's Way linking Winchester to Canterbury) follows Weathermore Copse and Alton Lanes at the southern end of the area.

Telegraph Lane is a fairly busy 'C' road with a 30mph speed limit. It has a footway on one side and grass verge on the other. There are no road markings or street lighting. The road is not wide enough for on-street parking, but this does not appear to be a problem as properties all have off-road vehicle access.

Evaluation

The key characteristics that give Telegraph Lane its 'sense of place' are:

- Spacious, low-density neighbourhood with large plots.
- Development has been absorbed and contained by woodland.
- Green, leafy road, with many plots having green frontages.

³⁵ documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun.18.pdf

- A tranquil, rural environment.
- Good pedestrian and cycle connections to recreational routes and countryside.
- Good pedestrian/cycle connections to local village centre.

Key Issues and Trends

- Larger buildings replacing or extending existing properties.
- Increased provision for vehicle access with wider driveways, parking areas and garaging.
- Some indication of loss of green frontages, although not significant at present.
- Verge biodiversity affected by inappropriate maintenance.

Sensitivity

- The built/green balance. Large plots are sensitive to backland development or subdivision.
- Frontage and boundary vegetation is important to the landscape character, especially in this elevated position.

Broad Policy Objectives/ Neighbourhood Management Considerations

To retain the character of Telegraph Lane:

- Encourage retention of green frontages and verges.
- Conserve the woodland backdrop and protect individual trees at risk.
- Ensure scale, design and materials of buildings and access does not detract from the green/built balance.
- Consider potential views of development from outside the neighbourhood.
- Discourage suburban style boundaries and features that would detract from the rural character of the lane.
- Avoid highway improvements that would introduce urban characteristics.
- Encourage walking and cycling access to local shops by improving routes serving the lane.

These key characteristics and sensitivities match with those currently described for H9 Areas of Special Housing Character, and therefore Telegraph Lane would be a suitable addition to the list of Special Housing Areas, subject to such a policy going forward in the emerging local plan.

Photographs of Telegraph Lane, Four Marks



Figure 4.3 Leafy character of Telegraph Lane



Figure 4.4 Single storey dwelling contained by landscape



Figure 4.5 Smaller dwellings contrasted with larger replacements



Figure 4.6 Views to open fields to the south



Figure 4.7 Rare species in verges

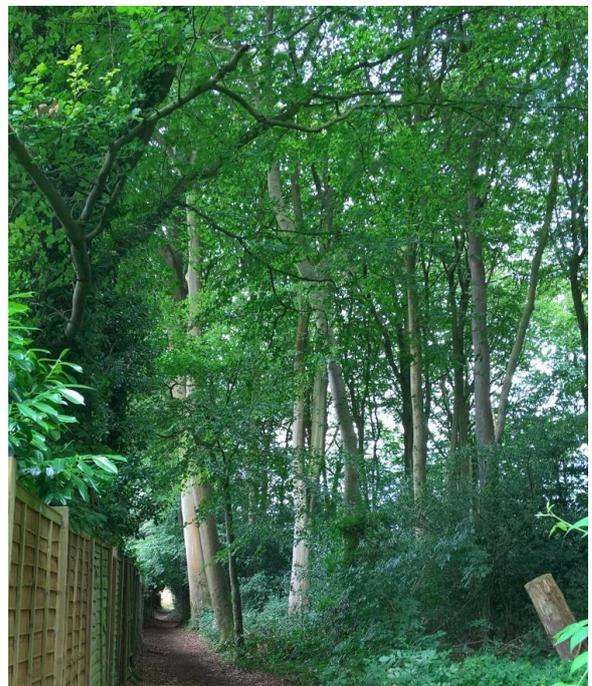


Figure 4.8 Footpath links within woodland setting

5. Medstead Road Area, Beech



Figure 5.1: Wellhouse Road, Beech

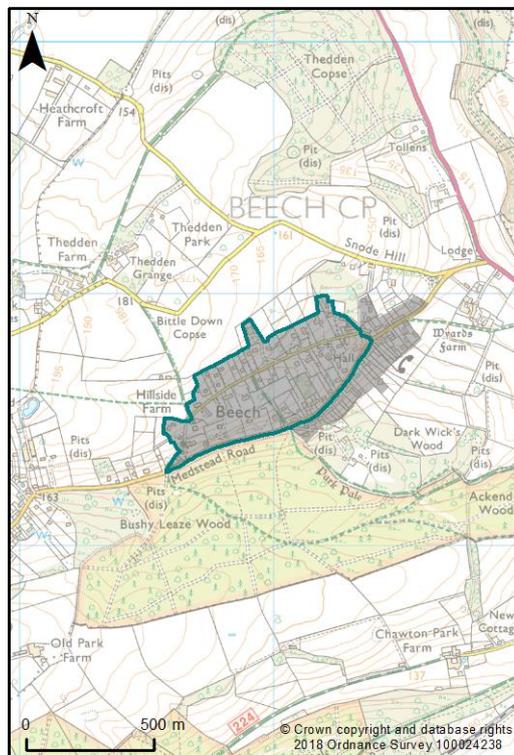


Figure 5.2: Medstead Road Area Location Plan

General Description

The study area covers most of the Beech settlement: the area north of Medstead Road, and; the length of Wellhouse Road. The 24ha study area is predominantly residential containing 96 residential properties but also takes in the church and village hall and some areas of woodland and pockets of agricultural land. A playing field in the centre of the site is accessed via tracks from both Medstead Road and Wellhouse Road. The farmland within the study area and around it is generally Grade 3 Agricultural land and appears to be used mainly for grazing.

The topography of the study area is dramatic which gives the village its character: falling from the north-west down to Wellhouse Lane, it then rises up to a ridge and falls again to Medstead Road before rising again to the south-east. From the high point in the west near Hillside Farm to the lowest by the village hall at 124m is a drop of 45 metres over approximately half a mile.

Current planning policy designations:

Area of Special Housing Character Policy H9

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10

Sits adjacent to area covered by Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

The study area falls within Landscape Character Area **2b Four Marks Clay Plateau** ³⁶

Described as an “*elevated undulating plateau with an almost continuous clay cap overlying the chalk bedrock*” with a “*...more rolling landform is evident to the north... indicating the transition to the chalk downland.*” The report goes on to say it is “*a peaceful and, in places, a tranquil and rural landscape.*” (page 53-54)³⁷

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in mid-range for East Hampshire³⁸. Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 8 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies) ³⁹. This category represents high value dark skies. (i.e. in the range 7 to 9).

Historical Development and Assets

The settlement appears to have grown up in open countryside around Beech Farm and Wellhouse Cottages, which show on 1st edition O.S. mapping. These buildings remain and are listed (Grade II). The 1st edition mapping shows clay and chalk pits to the southeast as well as blocks of woodland. Further development only took place in the early 20th century when plots for modest dwellings were set out along Wellhouse Road. The recently demolished ‘White Cottage’ may have been the last of these. A handful of larger properties were also built then including ‘Norton Bavant’, constructed of tin in the colonial style, which is grade II listed. St Peter’s Church of England mission church (*Figure 5.3*), a ‘tin tabernacle’, was built in 1902 with the help of a local resident. It is of historical and local interest but is not listed. The village hall opened in the 1930s on the site of an old print works. Historic mapping shows more houses having been built or replaced by the end of World War II, generally on large plots and set well back from the road. A second wave of replacement dwellings, mainly mid 20th century bungalows, is now being replaced with larger houses (*Figure 5.4*).

Urban Structure and Built Form

The principal townscape type is: **TCT 08 Residential Post 1945- Present.**⁴⁰

³⁶ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2005-2006:

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType2ClayPlateau.pdf>

³⁸ Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

³⁹ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

⁴⁰ Hampshire Integrated character Assessment Townscape Types:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

The buildings form ribbon development along the two roads of the study area with some backland development set behind it. The exceptions to this pattern are the recent gated developments where a typically suburban layout is evident (*Figure 5.5*). Wellhouse Road is effectively a dead-end street being unmade at the eastern end, however the unmade section of the lane does provide access to several properties (*Figure 5.6*) and it connects to Medstead Road forming a loop for utility vehicles.

Medstead Road (*Figure 5.7*) is relatively busy but is rural in character with few road marking or signs and is unlit. Wellhouse Road (*Figure 5.1*) is less busy as it takes no through vehicular traffic; it is narrower, has no footways and is again unlit. Hedges bound both roads. There is some public open space within the study area: around the church, the open space and playground associated with the village hall, and the playing field on backland between the two roads.

The study area density is generally very low at around 4dpha. The size of building footprint varies but the mid range is 90 m². Plot size also varies from around 0.74 ha to around 0.07 ha. Most houses on Wellhouse Road are set well back within their plot (*Figure 5.8*) in places by as much as 65m. Those on Medstead Road are generally closer to the road (*Figure 5.9*) but here there is also some backland development set behind these further up the slope (*Figure 5.10*). Throughout the area, houses generally face the road from which they are accessed.

The remaining mid-20th century houses, most of which are one or one and half storeys, use a mix of materials but are mainly brick built with some render and half-timbering, with pitched roofs in clay tile or concrete (*Figure 5.11*), many of a pitch lower than that of the traditional vernacular. The more recent replacement dwellings (*Figure 5.12*) are even more varied in terms of form and materials. Some have mono pitch roofs. They are also generally much larger both in footprint and height, many being two and half or three storeys high. Many of these houses have extensive areas of glazing to take advantage of the views the topography offers. Large openings, including double height feature windows, break with the traditional domestic vernacular. Extensive areas of glazing, in both roof and wall, have significant impact on dark night skies.

Most plots have high hedges along the road, however a significant number of properties have very open frontages, some with wide driveways and a few with very little vegetation within the plot between the house and the road. This leads to a suburban character with dwellings and parking areas very much open to public view (*Figure 5.13*). A number of properties also have 'hard' suburban frontages with brick walls and/or railings or close-boarded fences (*Figure 5.14*), some with elaborate gateways (*Figure 5.15*).

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

Virtually all the significant vegetation that determines landscape character is on private property. There is a block of woodland at one end of the recreation ground but otherwise vegetation on community areas is of a modest scale. Remnants of old woodland cover as well as ornamental planting from the early 20th century development create a sense of enclosure and privacy and screen many of the buildings. The trees within the study area, and around it, provide the setting for the village and the backdrop to individual properties (*Figure 5.16*).

Within the study area, there are a significant number of individual and some group TPOs, however this covers only a fraction of the existing trees.

There are no environmental designations within the site. The extensive woodland to the south of Medstead Road, Bushy Leaze Wood, is part of the National Forest Estate. It is a designated SINIC, Ancient Woodland (mainly re-planted but some Semi-natural) and is also open access woodland. It appears to be associated with historic Chawton Park to the south-west.

Movement and Connectivity

At a distance of approximately 4km, Alton is the nearest centre for local services including rail. There is a very infrequent bus service along Medstead Road connecting the area to Alton.⁴¹

The two roads in the study area are adopted, including the unmade section of Wellhouse Road. Public Rights of Way offer access to the surrounding countryside. A cycle track and bridleway (*Figure 5.17*) runs down from the high ground to the north, passes up and over the central ridge through the recreation ground (*Figure 5.18*) before running southwards, skirting the woodland.

The highway environment is generally rural in appearance with no lighting and few 'lines and signs'. Parking is off-street on private property or in the village hall car park. There are no footways other than a short section at the bus stop and shelter near the village hall.

Evaluation

Key characteristics of this area of Beech are:

- Dramatic topography.
- Very tranquil, with quiet rural roads, green frontages, wooded slopes, unlit roads.
- Very low density, where large plots are 'hidden' development.

⁴¹ documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun.18.pdf

Key Issues and Trends

In the study area:

- New development has been happening at a steady pace with gradual replacement of dwellings and some insertion of new
- Larger buildings, loss of vegetation and wider vehicle access ways have led to a more open feel in some parts of the study area (*Figure 5.19*)
- Large areas of glazing on some more recent developments are likely to have an impact at night. Some long views across the valley southwards are impacted also
- The topography is such that access for vehicles during construction and in occupation has led to some major earthworks and retaining structures being constructed on the hillsides, leading to further loss of vegetation and visual opening up of plots (*Figures 5.20*)
- Ongoing pressure to develop is clearly present with a number of permissions yet to be implemented and new applications pending decision
- More intensive uses of house plots and the need for greater space for cars and family activities is likely to lead to further loss of vegetation, an essential component of landscape character at present
- Some creep of garden use into adjacent areas outside the domestic curtilage has potential to have an impact on landscape setting
- An increase in the height of recent buildings to two and half or three storeys in many cases makes them highly visible (*Figure 5.21*) and, when close to the road, overbearing (*Figure 5.22*).

Sensitivity

- Topography means construction of larger houses requires major intervention in the form of earthworks or structures.
- Existing trees vulnerable to new development as the bulk of these are unprotected.
- Green suburban character of roads subject to changes to accommodate new driveways.
- Some historic buildings unlisted/unprotected (including the church).
- Tranquillity and dark night sky characteristics under threat through increased vehicle traffic activity associated with new development and 'modernist' aesthetic of some new dwellings with extensive glazing.

Broad Policy Objectives/ Neighbourhood Management Considerations

To retain the special characteristics of this area of Beech:

- Conserve and protect historic features, for example through the creation of a local list of historic buildings.
- Conserve and protect tree cover and encourage its management, including planning for succession planting.

- Assess and control building and finished ground levels of new development and their potential impact on views and potentially suburbanising ancillary structures and driveways through the planning control process.
- Consider impact on Dark Night Skies of any new development.
- Consider views from higher ground when looking at proposals for new development, particularly those from PROWs and open access land.
- Consider placing limits on height of buildings adjacent to the roads to avoid over dominance in streetscene.

Consider whether H10 policy should be replaced by a district-wide design policy and supporting supplementary planning guidance.

Photographs of Medstead Road Area, Beech



Figure 5.3 St Peter's Church, Beech Parish Church



Figure 5.4 New house on Wellhouse Road,



Figure 5.5 Gated development



Figure 5.6 Recent damage to vegetation



Figure 5.7 Medstead Road



Figure 5.8 Wellhouse Road



Figure 5.9 Medstead Road



Figure 5.10 Medstead Road



Figure 5.11 Medstead Road



Figure 5.12 New house on Wellhouse Road



Figure 5.13 Hard surfacing



Figure 5.14 Suburban boundary treatment



Figure 5.15 Formal gates



Figure 5.16 Wellhouse Road



Figure 5.17 Bridleway



Figure 5.18 the recreation ground



Figure 5.19 Medstead Road



Figure 5.20 Loss of vegetation on slope.



Figure 5.21 New house set on high ground



Figure 5.22 Medstead Road

6. Holybourne

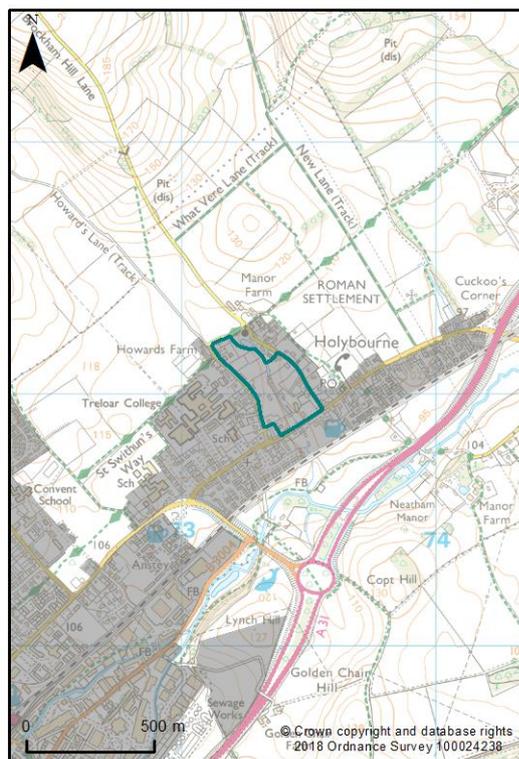


Figure 6.1 View towards Holy Rood Church Figure 6.2: Holybourne Location Plan

General Description

Holybourne lies in the river valley of the Wey close to the eastern edge of Alton. It takes its name from the Old English ‘Haligburna’ meaning sacred stream, which refers to the small stream which rises near the church and runs from there to join the Wey some 0.6km to the south. The study area sits at the heart of Holybourne village, covering most of the Conservation Area and is within the settlement area boundary with eight grade II listed buildings within it. The village is separated from Alton by a narrow ‘Gap Between Settlements’ and is surrounded by open countryside. The railway line to London and the A31 lie south of the village. To the north the downs rise steeply, affording long-reaching views down to the valley and the string of settlements along it.

The 7ha study area takes in 23 residential properties.

The buildings form part of a nucleated settlement. The area is bounded to the south by London Road, the main road through the village, and by Howard’s Lane and Church Lane,

which form a loop around this part of the village. Land is virtually all in residential use, with some small areas of woodland and farmland. The land slopes gently from northwest to southeast to a low point (99m above OS datum) where the stream passes under London Road, falling overall by around 9m. Locally there are steep gradients down to the stream where it cuts through the back of the gardens between the properties. To the north the downs rise to high point near Holybourne Down at 225m.

Current policy designations and supplementary planning guidance:

Area of Special Housing Character Policy H10

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10

Bounded to west by Gap Between Settlements Policy CP23

Village surrounded by countryside, Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Conservation Area (Holybourne)

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Setting

The study area falls within Landscape Character Area **4b: Northern Wey Valley – Chalk Valley Systems**.⁴²

The village is one of a string of nucleated settlements of medieval origin *“located on the slightly raised gravel terrace above the flood level. The settlements are surrounded by a mix of early and recent enclosures.”* (page 108)⁴³

From within the study area, there are views out to the open countryside (*Figure 6.3*). These visual connections between the village and the land at the heart of its economy give the area ‘time depth’. Although many of the agricultural buildings in the village are now in domestic use farming activity continues today right up to the settlement edge and continues to provide a backdrop to the village. Long views from the high ground to the north take in much of the village and Alton to the west.

The buildings are scattered across the area with the oldest centred on original farmsteads and the manor house, sitting generally on large but irregular plots.

The two lanes are generally very tranquil, single track with no markings or lighting, and having a rural character with views of farmland, barns and farm activity, with the downs as a backdrop. Mature green infrastructure including specimen tree in gardens, small blocks of woodland, field hedges, green garden frontages are a prominent feature.

⁴² East Hampshire District landscape Character Assessment 2006

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

⁴³North Wey Chalk Valley Systems:

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType4ChalkValleySystems.pdf>

Most houses have simple unaltered rooflines with a variety of pitch but of traditional design. This roofscape is a feature of the skyline. Throughout the study area the church spire is an important feature in views.

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in the low to mid-range for East Hampshire⁴⁴. Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 4 to 7 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies)⁴⁵. The higher value occurs at the edge of the settlement and represents high value dark skies (i.e. in the range 7 to 9).

Historical Development and Assets

The village developed in the early Norman period with the construction of a chapel, now incorporated in the church of the Holy Rood (listed building Grade II*) and continued to grow through the Middle Ages. Early OS mapping (1866 – 1889) shows the Manor House, the Firs, Howards Farm and the Priory as well as Holybourne Lodge on the London Road and several smaller properties, all extant. As well as small field parcels it shows parkland and orchards. Epoch 4 mapping c. 1942 shows little change with just a few additional houses of modest size. Recent change appears modest in scale generally with extensions, conversion of farm buildings to residential and construction of tennis courts and swimming pools in gardens, however two developments in 2012 are of note. Both are sizeable houses and are backland developments.

Urban Structure and Built Form

The principal townscape types are **TCT 02 Rural Settlement** and **TCT 03 Post medieval development 1600 – 1819**.⁴⁶

The study area includes a short section of London Road with just three properties that face onto it (*Figure 6.4*). Otherwise, the buildings are disposed along the two lanes that form a loop around the church but their orientation varies. The important houses such as the Manor House generally face the road but are set well back from it, cottages sit on or close to the lane (*Figure 6.5*) and the farmsteads and service areas of the larger houses are clustered around yards. There has been some infill development in recent years with some dwellings along the lanes set between the older properties (*Figure 6.6*). The two recent backland developments appear to be on a much larger scale in terms of footprint and height.

The access lanes are narrow and there is little highway ‘paraphernalia’ and minimal street lighting. There is no public open space within the study area, but the churchyard and the pond (*Figure 6.7*) lie just outside the study area and provide public open space.

⁴⁴Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008
<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

⁴⁵ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

⁴⁶Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment Townscape Types
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

The study area is very low net density, circa 3dpha. This low density is a result of the presence of a few very large plots, with the largest being greater than 1ha. In stark contrast there are a few very small plots of less than 200m².

There is a mixture of building form but generally buildings are one and half to two storeys with traditional pitched roofs of tile, many with hips or half-hips (*Figure 6.8*). Some houses have single storey extensions or outbuildings. The modern infill bungalows have a less traditional form but being low and screened by garden walls and/or hedges, they do not intrude on the streetscape. Brick and flint dominate the walling material, but there is a rich mix of other vernacular materials in use such as black weatherboarding and painted render.

At the southern end of the study area narrow lanes leading off London Road are bounded by high walls tight up to the lane edge (*Figure 6.9*). At the northern end, the lanes still narrow but softer verges and a mixture of garden boundary treatments allow views into gardens or out to farmland beyond. The buildings are set back from the roads and generally screened either by high formal hedges or garden walls in brick. A long section of close-boarded fence has been installed along Church Lane, which is an unwelcome addition. Most of the earlier properties have relatively narrow gated entrances off the lane, which restrict views into the plots. Some new properties have wide driveways and extensive paved forecourts, which together with mown grass entrance splays, are incongruous in this rural setting.

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

Green infrastructure within the study area is all on privately owned land. Mature trees in the study area and adjacent to it provide the green backdrop to the buildings. Many are fine specimen trees of some age and judging by historic mapping are part of plantings associated with the older properties. Garden frontages, where not walled, are generally high clipped hedges (*Figure 6.10*), mainly evergreen but some mixed hedges and some sections of remnant field hedges.

Mature trees are dotted along the boundaries and within the plots and there are small blocks of woodland set back within the backland areas. There are two small group TPOs but no other environmental designations. The farmland here in the valley is generally Grade 2 Agricultural land, with that on the downs to the north of the village Grade 3.

Movement and Connectivity

The Landscape Character Assessment describes the village as being on an *'an important route way since prehistory formerly part of the Pilgrim's Way linking Winchester to the North Downs'*. The long-distance path the St Swithun's Way now traces much of this route, passing along the northern edge of the study area along Howard's Lane. In terms of walking, riding and cycling the area is well connected by the rural lanes around the village, a network of PROWs and adopted unmade tracks. From Howard's Lane one of these leads directly up onto the Downs from the village.

London Road is the focus for local services and community facilities, which include a shop/Post Office, Public House and recreation ground. A regular bus service passes along London Road⁴⁷. Alton Station is within 1.8km/22min walking distance but is also served by bus.

All three roads within the study area are adopted. London Road is relatively busy as it carries through traffic and has on street parking and relatively low vehicle speeds. The two lanes are much quieter and parking is off-road on private property. North of the village Church Lane becomes Brockham Hill Lane, a back route to Odiham.

Evaluation

Keys Issues and Trends

This study area in Holybourne is an intact historic environment characterised by traditional building forms and materials. The rural vernacular is slightly undermined in places by small changes such as boundary fencing or introduction of new building materials. To date some modern backland and infill development has been accommodated without losing sense of place. Some non-residential parcels of land remain within the settlement

Sensitivity

Holybourne has:

- Historic environment with many built features and mature vegetation requiring sensitive and careful design and management
- Agricultural character could be lost as old farm buildings put to new use
- Highway 'improvements' including new crossovers/vision splays to new development could undermine existing character
- Visual links to countryside that could be lost
- 'Improvements' to streetlighting could affect dark night sky quality
- Remaining small areas of non-residential land between dwellings should be conserved to protect historic character.

Planning and Management considerations

- Protect /retain clear edge of settlement i.e. prevent spread of development or any domestic use into surrounding countryside

⁴⁷documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun.18.pdf

- Retain views to countryside outside the village
- Conserve and protect historic features, including those that are not listed but have some historic significance or interest
- Conserve and protect tree cover and encourage its management including planning for succession planting
- Avoid suburbanisation of access roads and frontages
- Resist any new lighting that will affect dark night skies and discourage introduction of large amounts of glazing and/ or rooflights
- Consider views down to the settlement from higher ground to the north when looking at proposals for new development

Consideration should be given to whether H10 gives any greater protection for the study area than its Conservation Area status and designated Listed Buildings do. The Conservation Area designation covers a wider area than the study area. In terms of issues looked at in this study it is recommended would be that the H10 policy gives no additional protection and could be dropped.

Photographs of Holybourne



Figure 6.3 Views of countryside



Figure 6.4 London Road



Figure 6.5 Howard's Lane



Figure 6.6 Bungalow on Church Lane



Figure 6.7 The pond by the church



Figure 6.8 Howard's Lane



Figure 6.9 Howard's Lane



Figure 6.10 Garden hedge, Church Lane

7. Eastern Holybourne



Figure 7.1. View eastward along London Road

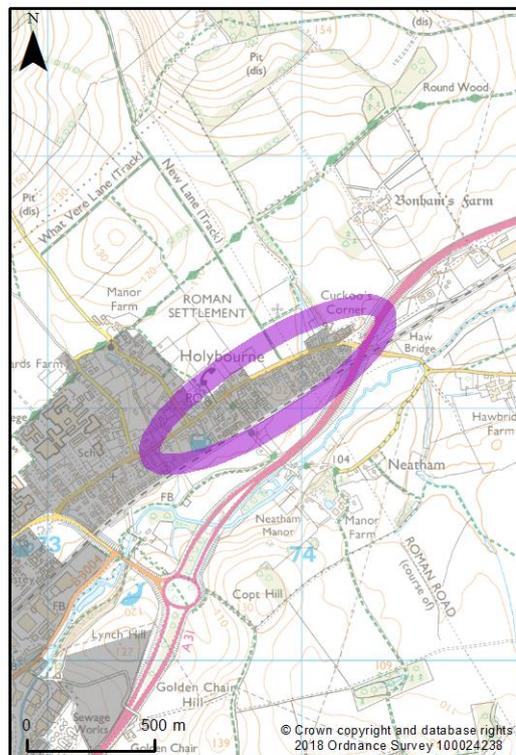


Figure 7.2. Eastern Holybourne Location Plan

General Description

This part of Holybourne, close to Alton and the upper River Wey, extends north-east from the original village centre. The main transport routes of the railway and A31 cut across the valley floor to the south, separating it from the river.

The area of interest focuses on part of the village core and its expansion along London Road between Church Lane and the A31 underpass. It includes the residential roads adjoining it: London Road, Lower Neatham Mill Lane, Inhams Road, Rakemakers and Smithy Close, Vindomis Close, Downs View and Bonhams Close.

The settlement form is of an extended historic village, with much of the residential area being developed since the mid-20th century. In addition to residential development, a mixture of land uses adjoin the main London Road, including agriculture, recreation areas, pub, shop and garage services.

The area is located in a shallow river valley, with slopes rising gently to the north-west. Part of it falls within the settlement boundary, while the recreation areas and fields on the north side of London Road are in the countryside.

The SDNP boundary is 1.7km to the south and east.

Current policy designations:

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10

Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Conservation Area (Holybourne)

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

This area falls within Landscape Character Area **4b Chalk Valley Systems - Northern Wey Valley**.⁴⁸

The ridges of Holybourne Down and Brockham Hill rise to the north, giving long-range views over the valley and area of interest. From the south, the settlement can be clearly viewed from the A31 with very little screening. From further south, views of development are largely screened by intervening woodland at present, but any construction at higher levels might be visible. Shorter-range views take in London Road and adjoining fields. East of the Conservation Area, the village has a semi-rural, suburban character.

The open land to the north-west currently creates a peaceful backdrop (*Figure 7.5*). On the other side, the A31 and railway affects tranquillity levels (*Figure 7.9*), although existing vegetation helps mitigate visibility and noise levels. Street lighting on London Road and within the estates limits the potential for dark night skies.

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in the low to mid-range for East Hampshire⁴⁹. Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 4 to 7 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies)⁵⁰. The higher value occurs at the edge of the settlement and represents high value dark skies (i.e. in the range 7 to 9).

Historical Development and Assets

The village of Holybourne is a historic settlement dating from the 11th century, one of a string of nucleated settlements of mediaeval origin. There are twenty two grade II listed buildings in the area of interest, including the black and white half-timbered cottages at 143 to 153 London Road, and 'Mapeys' on the corner of Lower Neatham Lane (*Figure 7.3*). Cuckoo's Corner, at the east end of the village, is the site of a Roman settlement (Scheduled Ancient Monument) where the Chichester to Silchester Roman road crosses the valley (*Figure 7.5*).

⁴⁸ East Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment

<http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

⁴⁹ Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

⁵⁰ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

Away from the core, the eastern part consists mainly of 20th and 21st century housing developments, apart from an older row of cottages on the north side of London Road (*Figure 7.4 and 8*).

Urban Structure and Built Form

The principal townscape type is **TCT 08, Residential Post 1945 to Present**, with earlier periods from **TCT 03, Post Mediaeval**⁵¹, represented along the main London Road.

The main road has cottages and houses built in a variety of styles using traditional local materials, such as flint, red brick and clay tiles within the Conservation Area. In this area many of the buildings are set close to the road and generally face onto it.

Since the mid-20th century there has been progressive residential development eastwards along one side of London Road, on what was previously farmland. The newer development consists of a series of cul-de-sac estates.

The average net density across the area of interest is 23dpha. This is broadly made up of varied plots sizes in the Conservation Area and historic settlement at the western end of London Road; long narrow ribbon development plots at the eastern end London Road and the shorter and wider plots in the cul-de-sacs between London Road and the Railway line.

London Road has generous grassed verges towards the north-eastern end, and open areas have been retained around existing mature trees within developments. Older properties on London Road and Inhams Road are mainly aligned with the road, while buildings are clustered at various orientations within the more recent developments. Plot sizes are relatively small.

There is a wide variety of building form. Within the Conservation Area, buildings are mainly two storey cottages and short terraces, with a few larger houses. A mixture of materials is evident, including red brick, coursed cobble or ashlar blocks of malmstone, painted smooth render or stucco, knapped or cobbled flint. There are steep pitch roofs of clay tiles with full hips and plain gables, and slate roofs with wide verges and decorative bargeboards. The generally unaltered roofscape is a feature of the skyline. Much of the newer development is of detached two storey dwellings, although there are a few terraces, single storey (Inhams Road) and three storey houses and apartments (Penton Close). Red or buff brick and tile hanging are frequently used (*Figure 7.6*). Roofs are a mixture of hipped and half-hipped, as well as some gabled which can be prominent, especially where there are no trees adjoining, (*Figure 7.10*).

Frontages on the London Road and Inhams Road are commonly defined with hedges and low walls, fences or railings. Frontages within the estate developments are generally open plan.

⁵¹ Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment Townscape Types:
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

London Road is characterised by hedges and trees, with the number of trees increasing towards the eastern end where there are also wide grass verges. On the north side, fields are large and open. Roadside planting provides a limited buffer between the settlement and the A31, but the railway has very little screening and directly adjoins a number of properties (*Figure 7.9*). Frontages within the estates are generally open with grass and low shrubs.

Individual plots, which are generally small to medium in size, have relatively little vegetation apart from some older properties on London Road.

Several trees have been retained within the newest estates, mainly in areas of public realm, and are protected under TPOs. These make an important contribution to landscape character (*Figure 7.7*).

There are no environmental designations within the study area, but the adjoining agricultural land is classified as Grade 2, one of the highest quality productive soils.

Movement and Connectivity

Holybourne Post Office and shop are accessible within the area, while Alton town centre is 2.5 km away. London Road has several bus stops, with regular services⁵². Alton Station, with services to London Waterloo, is 2 km away, and the road junction with the A31 is 1 km away.

A play area and sports field occupy parts of the north side of London Road. The long-distance trail of St Swithun's Way (representing the former line of the Pilgrim's Way linking Winchester to Canterbury) passes by the northern edge of the study area. The Writer's Way (wet weather route) runs along London Road.

All roads are adopted, and most have footways apart from Lower Neatham Mill Lane. All have street lighting. There is parking on London Road, however properties in the estate developments have off-road parking.

Evaluation

Key characteristics of Eastern Holybourne that give it a 'sense' of place' are:

- Historic character of London Road within Holybourne Conservation Area.
- Good integration of existing trees within new housing developments.
- Views out to the countryside.
- Good pedestrian connections to recreational routes and the countryside.
- Good pedestrian connections to village services.

Key Issues and Trends

⁵² documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun.18.pdf

- Continued expansion is putting pressure on local services, likely to encourage greater use of private cars.
- Some evidence of increased provision for vehicle access – wider driveways, parking areas and garaging mainly associated with the older properties on north side of London Road.

Sensitivity

- Historic character of the Conservation Area and archaeological monuments at Cuckoo's Corner.
- Open outlook and connection with the countryside, including the skyline of the adjacent downland where changes are very visible from the valley floor.
- Existing trees and hedgerows, which can help absorb development.
- Green frontages on London Road.

Broad Policy Objectives/ Neighbourhood Management Considerations

To successfully accommodate future development in Eastern Holybourne it would be beneficial to:

- Ensure that new development within or close to the Conservation Area complements the historic character.
- Conserve the setting of the village and views to the church spire.
- Conserve the green space along London Road and the outlook to the countryside (with a view corridor if land developed).
- Conserve vegetation and tree cover. Identify and protect trees at risk.
- Conserve Grade 2 Agricultural land.
- Ensure the scale of development avoids exposed rooflines against the skyline.
- Establish buffer planting to contain development, particularly around high points.
- Maintain good pedestrian and cycle links with village centre.
- Allow for the provision of additional local services as part of any major settlement expansion, to reduce reliance on use of private cars.

Photographs of Eastern Holybourne



Figure 7.3 Historic buildings within village centre



Figure 7.4 Suburban development at eastern end of London Road



Figure 7.5 Cuckoo's Corner Roman site and views to countryside



Figure 7.6 New development at Pentons Close



Figure 7.7 Mature trees retained within development



Figure 7.8 Increased areas for parking, east end of London Road



Figure 7.9 Railway directly adjoins properties, Pentons Close



Figure 7.10 Prominent roofs against the skyline, Pentons Close

8. Northern Bentley



Figure 8.1. Main Road

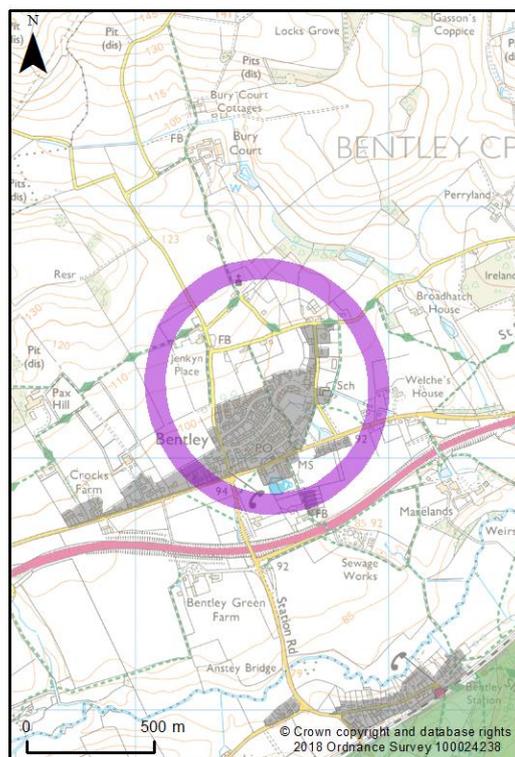


Figure 8.2. Bentley Location Plan

Study Area General Description

Bentley sits in the valley of northern River Wey in the north-west of the district. The village lies to the north of the old road between Alton and Farnham, now 'Main Road'. The name 'Bentley' means a grass clearing in the forest and it was in the past set within Alice Holt forest. Main Road is relatively quiet, as the A31 enables a lot of traffic to bypass the village. A smaller settlement at Bentley Station, on the main Alton to London line, lies some 1.5km to the south on the other side of the River Wey, on the border with the South Downs National Park (SDNP). Historically, the settlement was made up of two parts - one to the north, a typical nucleated settlement on the higher ground, and a second along the main coaching route.

The area of interest takes in the core of the modern village, most of the defined settlement area and a part of the Conservation Area. It also takes in part of the historic rural settlement, a scattering of houses and farms around the church of St. Mary. The area of interest includes seven listed buildings. The area of interest covers roughly 26ha and takes in approximately 220 residential properties, a residential nursing home and several non-residential uses, including a shop, a Public House, two small business parks housing approximately 15 business units, a primary school and medical and community uses.

The buildings along Main Road form a linear settlement behind which further building has taken place. The northern settlement around St. Mary's Church is a discrete nucleated settlement. The area also includes a significant area of farmland (of around 5 ha) between Hole Lane and the settlement boundary, woodland and open space at Broad Flood, an allotment site and the school. The farmland is generally grade 3 agricultural land with some grade 2 in the northwest of the area. Generally, the land slopes gently from north-west to south-east from a high point of around 107 m falling overall by 17m.

Current policy designations:

Settlement Boundary Policy CP10

Bounded to west and south by Development in the Countryside Policy CP19

Key Neighbourhood Characteristics

Landscape Character

Bentley sits within Character Area **4b Chalk Valley Systems - Northern Wey Valley**.⁵³

It is one of a string of nucleated settlements of medieval origin on the gravel terrace, which forms the lower valley slopes and is surrounded by a mix of early and recent field enclosures. The Landscape Character Area describes the valley floodplain as "*predominantly pastoral with arable cultivation on the valley sides*" (page 105).⁵⁴

The gently sloping topography and relatively open farmland landscape allow expansive, long views across the valley towards the river, although the latter cannot be seen. Similarly, the relatively open pattern of development allows views through the older parts of the settlement out to the countryside beyond to and particularly up to St Mary's Church, which sits on higher ground. However, the late 20th century housing within the cul-de-sacs is in contrast relatively dense and enclosed.

Tranquillity mapping places the study area in the mid-range for East Hampshire⁵⁵. Dark Night Skies mapping places the study area in category 6 to 7 (categories run from 1 to 9 across the country with 9 being the darkest skies)⁵⁶. The higher value occurs at the edge of the settlement and represents high value dark skies (i.e. in the range 7 to 9).

Historical Development and Assets

Early OS mapping (1866 – 1889) shows both the settlement along Main Road and the rural settlement to the north. The existing footpath running northwards from what is now Eggars Field to Hole Lane (*Figure 8.3*) also shows on this mapping along with field boundaries, remnants of which remain. Two Public Houses on the main road, the school and Brick Kiln

⁵³ <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/FinalReportChapters1to6.pdf>

⁵⁴ Chalk Valley Systems

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LandscapeType4ChalkValleySystems.pdf>

⁵⁵ Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a robust methodology for planning support, CPRE 2008

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil-places/item/2046>

⁵⁶ Night Blight CPRE website: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

cottages next to 'Clay Field', the scattering of houses along the lanes, Inwoods (*Figure 8.4*) and Binleys farms and the church to the north remained the extent of the village until after World War II. Further development within the study area followed through the first half of the 20th century and up to the present day, in the form of suburban housing on cul-de-sacs, including Eggars Field sitting north of Main Road (*Figure 8.5*).

Aerial photography shows little change over the last 18 years, with the most significant development being a new housing development to the west of the settlement built in 2017 (*Figure 8.6*).

Urban Structure and Built Form

Principal townscape types for the residential properties are **TCT 03 Post medieval development 1600 – 1819**, **TCT 04 Residential 1820 – 1849** and **TCT 08 Residential Post 1945 – Present**⁵⁷

The linear settlement along the north side of Main Road and the 20th century housing behind it are visually separate from the nucleated settlement around St Mary's Church. The area between the two, made up of fields and pockets of woodland (*Figure 8.7*) has remained remarkably intact with little if any development to date. Recent development on the west side of the village has been laid out in a more open fashion than the older suburban housing and this allows views out to the countryside beyond (*Figure 8.8*).

Main Road is wide and straight but nonetheless is very much a rural road in terms of character except in the centre of the village where there are buildings on both sides (*Figure 8.9*). West and east of that centre there is little development to the south and smaller village properties to the north and there are virtually no highway 'lines and signs'. The old lanes, Hole Lane and School Lane are both narrower and have footways only at their southern end where the housing is denser (*Figure 8.10*). The northern section of Hole Lane, which runs west-east is a narrow single track with hedgerows on either side (*Figure 8.11*). There is public open space at Broad Flood (*Figure 8.12*) and the recreation ground just to the east of it, as well as allotments on Hole Lane.

Most of the development within the study area is low-density, the average density being around 16 dpha, with some more tightly packed housing on Eggars Field and the other cul-de sacs.

Throughout the area there is a mixture of building form. The older properties are generally two storeys with a traditional palette of materials - red brick, clay tile for roofs (*Figure 8.13*) and some tile hanging and some pebbledash or render, which is generally painted white. There is a rich mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced housing through the Conservation Area. The 20th century housing is also a mix of house type - generally the

⁵⁷ East Hampshire District Landscape Character Assessment Townscape Types
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/landscape/HICATownscapesTypesDescriptions-Autumn2010.pdf>

houses are one or two storeys and again brick dominates as a walling material, but the range of colours used for bricks and tiles is much more varied. Traditional pitched roofs are the norm. Some of the recent development is very different from the local vernacular in its use detailing, proportions and colour (*Figure 8.14*).

The way the buildings sit in relation to the roads varies enormously through the study area. On Main Road they sit close to the footway with a variety of boundary treatments including old brick or stone garden walls and hedges. On the smaller cul-de-sac roads, the street scene is much more suburban with more hard boundary treatment such as high close-boarded fencing (*Figure 8.15*) or dwarf brick walls backed by clipped hedges. The properties on the northern section of Hole Lane are very much in the countryside, with much less formal frontages.

Green Infrastructure and Environmental Designations

Much of the significant planting within the study area is on private land, with Broad Flood and some incidental green space within the modern housing being the exceptions to this. Most is outside the Conservation Area and, although there are a handful of individual TPOs and one group TPO, is also unprotected through any designation.

There are some significant blocks of woodland, which break up the built-up area and provide a backdrop to the housing. These include woodland between Fox Hall (listed building) and Eggars Field (*Figure 8.16*), and groups of trees beside Hole Lane.

There are significant trees within plots but very few on street frontages and no street trees on highway land. Trees within gardens do contribute something to the street scene but those in the denser housing areas tend to be small ornamental varieties. It is the mature trees in gardens around older properties, which dominate. To the east of Jenkyn Place, there appear to be remnants of parkland part of which is covered by the only group TPO within the study area (*Figure 8.17*).

There are no environmental designations either within or adjacent to the study area.

Movement and Connectivity

There are limited local services within Bentley itself and these are centred on Main Road. A regular bus service passes along Main Road⁵⁸. A small business park within the study area (*Figure 8.18*) and a slightly larger light industrial area south of Main Road offer some local employment.

All the roads within the study area are adopted although there is quite an extensive service area of access roads and parking sitting behind the properties on Main Road, which is privately owned. There is a good network of public footpaths around the village allowing

⁵⁸ documents.hants.gov.uk/passenger-transport/HampshireMapsandfrequencyGuideJun.18.pdf

easy access to the countryside around it. St Swithun's Way⁵⁹ runs east-west to the north of the village running along part of Hole Lane. A footpath runs up from the business park on Main Road through Eggars Field and on to Hole Lane, passing through a patchwork of fields and parkland.

All roads within the study area tend to be relatively quiet. The by-pass (A31) takes most through traffic going west-east and vehicle speeds appear low. The narrow lanes (Hole Lane, running both north-south and east-west and School Lane) to the north are quiet and the 20th century housing in the centre of the area, is arranged in such a way that through traffic is discouraged. Parking is generally off-road.

Residents in the development along the cul-de-sacs in Eggars Fields, benefit in terms of tranquility with no through traffic, but the variety in orientation of dwellings in the cul-de-sac development of Eggars field results in a few too many long runs of high blank fences around rear/side gardens, reducing natural surveillance and the visual quality of the streetscene. Whilst there appear to be several footpath links between the cul-de-sacs of Eggars Filed and Babs Fields and another unadopted road, these are not particularly well overlooked by adjacent housing, and 'defensive' garden fencing and overgrown vegetation cuts off views through and make the routes less appealing to pedestrians. There is also a missed opportunity for a pedestrian connection between the cul-de-sacs of Bonners Field and Eggars Field, which would have made local journeys by residents to community facilities easier and facilitated walking. School Lane for the most part is narrow and retains a 'rural village lane' feel although it is evident from the amount of zig-zag lining around the entrance to the School and the Playing Fields car park to the South, that on-road parking is likely to be an issue at times. North of the school, the lane is much quieter, with a number of properties with direct access off the lane.

Evaluation

Key characteristics that give Northern Bentley its 'sense of place' are:

- Strong village character amongst the older parts of the village
- Plenty of public open space and good access to the countryside including St. Swithun's Way and the SDNPA to the south
- Historic houses and farmsteads scattered north of the area of interest add 'time depth' to the landscape setting. These include a remnant of historic parkland north of Eggars Field, Pax Hill (outside the village), which was the home of Baden-Powell and Jenkyn Place (also outside the village).

Keys issues and trends

- New development on agricultural land to west

⁵⁹ The Pilgrim's Way, an important route way since prehistory, which linked Winchester with the North Downs is now partially incorporated in the long-distance footpath the St Swithun's Way.

- Relatively little infill/replacement within the last 10 to 20 years.

Sensitivity

- Some historic buildings unlisted/unprotected as outside Conservation Area, for example the school.
- Edge of settlement currently buffered/screened by vegetation.
- Countryside extends into study area between village and the northern section of Hole Lane, loss of rural village feel if all green /open space developed.

Broad Policy Objectives/Neighbourhood Management Considerations

In Northern Bentley it is recommended to plan for the following:

- Retain important vegetation/trees especially on the edge of the settlement and along PRowS
- Protect views out to countryside beyond and retain gaps and pockets of greenspace.
- Avoid 'urbanising' highway treatments to existing rural lanes.
- New development should be orientated with front facades facing the road where possible, to avoid long stretches of blank rear/side wall/fences.
- Improvements or new links in footpath and cycling routes should be designed to be legible, signposted, well-connected and overlooked by surrounding residential properties, and connect the local residents to the facilities on and just behind main road, and to the Local Bentley Primary School and Playing Fields.

Photographs of Northern Bentley



Figure 8.3 Footpath, Eggars Field



Figure 8.4 Farmhouse on Hole Lane



Figure 8.5 Babbs Field



Figure 8.6 New housing off Hole Lane



Figure 8.7 Hole Lane



Figure 8.8 Views of countryside to West



Figure 8.9 Main Road



Figure 8.10 Southern end of Hole Lane



Figure 8.11 Hole Lane



Figure 8.12 Broad Flood



Figure 8.13 Dwelling off School Lane



Figure 8.14 New housing



Figure 8.15 Eggars Field



Figure 8.16 Eggars Field



Figure 8.17 Parkland trees



Figure 8.18 Industrial estate