

CONSERVATION AREAS IN EAST DORSET

EDMONDSHAM



East Dorset District Council Policy Planning Division
Supplementary Planning Guidance No.3 September 2005



Foreword

This document is based upon work carried out in 1994 to define the special qualities of the Conservation Area that was subsequently published as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the East Dorset Local Plan (see paragraphs 6.118 to 6.131 and accompanying policies BUCON 1 to 4 of the East Dorset Local Plan adopted 11 January 2002).

The text and illustrations of the original publication have been revised and updated to reflect any significant changes that have taken place in that time since the original survey and appraisal of the area were undertaken.

The appraisal provides guidance to those elements and characteristics that should be taken into account when considering proposed developments and other works requiring consent. The information contained in the appraisal will be treated as a material consideration by the Local Planning Authority when considering planning applications.

The revision does not extend to reviewing the boundaries of the designated area. This work will be undertaken between 2006 and 2010 in parallel with the Local Development Framework process, as currently programmed.

The maps used in the document are based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping currently available to the Council.

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Setting

The village of Edmondsham, which is recorded in Domesday, is situated on the edge of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where the open chalk-land meets the wooded Reading Beds. There are a number of reminders of the village's former self-sufficiency, such as the Old School-house, the Old Post Office, the Old Rectory and the Old Farm House. The surrounding landscape has a major influence on the character of the settlement. This is an intimate landscape, enclosed by woods and copses and hedgerow trees.

Approaches

From whichever direction, Edmondsham is approached from quiet country lanes and footpaths. From the south, the settlement appears as a linear grouping of houses on the hillside, with no dominant feature, except for the trees. Edmondsham House and the Parish Church are concealed from view.

View from the south



From the west, the lane skirts the boundary of Edmondsham Park. Its regular, clipped beech hedging with stately trees behind, including some yews which give form and colour in winter, contrast against the open, arable land opposite. A gap in the hedge reveals a view of the Church, approached by a track through a small grassy meadow.

Scope

The Conservation Area was designated in June 1991. The boundaries are drawn to include the whole of the village, together with Edmondsham House, which is an integral part of the settlement, both visually and historically. The garden of the House is also included as this forms the setting for the building, and an important approach to the village. The boundary hedge to Edmondsham House and the properties on the Woodlands Road form a well-defined boundary to the west. But elsewhere, the setting of the Conservation Area merge with the surrounding landscape. The boundaries are drawn to coincide with field boundaries that enclose the immediate landscape setting of the village.

Lodge to Edmondsham House



Form

Historically, Edmondsham was essentially an Estate Village centred on the House, and to a large extent this legacy still exists. The historic social structure is still clearly expressed in its buildings. It is important that new developments should not disrupt this distinctive pattern.

Edmondsham is a small linear settlement, extending eastwards from the Parish Church of St Nicholas, itself surrounded by the grounds of Edmondsham House. From the Church, the dwellings, of varied styles and periods, follow the meandering lane as it ascends the gentle hillside to the village pump, before descending past Upper Farm. Buildings on the south side are mostly sited close to the road, whilst those opposite are located some distance away, often on elevated ground.

Open spaces between the cottages allow the surrounding countryside to permeate the village.

Generous gardens, bounded by hedges, give a soft appearance to the village streets. The gardens, paddocks and parkland around Edmondsham House form a physical separation from the rest of the village and provide an idyllic setting for the group of Grade II* buildings.

Buildings

The Church is of outstanding architectural interest. The walls of this diminutive building are of Heathstone rubble and flint, with ashlar dressings. The roofs are tiled with stone gable copings. The Nave and Chancel date from the twelfth-century and the North Aisle was added in the fourteenth-century. The squat tower, with corner pinnacles projecting above the plain parapets, is early fifteenth-century.

Church of St. Nicholas (Grade II Listed Building)*



Overlooking the Church to the north stands Edmondsham House, a five-bay house dating from 1589. The building has rendered brick walls with stone dressings under tiled roofs and this too is of outstanding architectural importance. The celebrated south-west Front has a three-storey middle section having three projecting bays, each with an ogee gable parapet and ball-finials. Two-storey wings on each side have rounded gable parapets with shoulders and decorated with vase finials. The wings date from the eighteenth-century.

At the rear of the House, on the eastern side, are the service buildings, grouped around a courtyard. The stables form an imposing group of buildings having a symmetrical plan and elevational treatment. The brick and tile buildings, dated 1862, are single-storey with attics, expressed as dormers. An open timber lantern with steep pyramidal roof stands over the central bay. A high brick wall on either side of the formal entrance creates an inner courtyard.

Edmondsham House (Grade II Listed Building)*



The West Entrance to the Park is marked by a pair of eighteenth-century gate pillars constructed in brick with moulded stone capping and urns above. A similar entrance occurs on the southern boundary, at the village cross-roads. The adjacent Edwardian lodge has steeply-pitched tiled roof with gable parapets and shoulders in stone. The brickwork has stone dressings. Four Tudor-style pots form an important feature on the central stack.

West entrance to Edmondsham Park



Prominently sited immediately to the east of the Gardens is a two-storey house, constructed around 1960. The walls are of brick, with stone dressings to the mullioned windows. The roof is tiled, with verges of stone slates and gable parapets. The long, straight driveway to the house, which also forms the access to the service yard of Edmondsham House, is edged with horizontal bar fencing on the park side.

Opposite the Lodge is a three-bay house, dated 1734. It has rendered walls with a prominent plat band at first-floor level and central brick porch. The roof has alternate courses of scalloped and plain tiles which creates a decorative effect between the gable parapets.

The house is set behind a small front garden bounded by low, brick walling. Further down the village street are two pairs of semi-detached Estate houses, built at the turn of the century. Each matching pair is built of brick and slate, with timber porches.

The former Rectory dating from 1734



Historically, the Old Rectory and the Old Farmhouse represent the two most important buildings in the village, below the Church and Edmondsham House. The Old Rectory is a substantial house of two distinctive periods. On the south side is the original Georgian rendered two-storey building. Attached is a much larger brick house with second floor dormers that was added in 1900. There is a strong contrast in scale and style between the two periods, the former having elegant classical proportions in form and fenestration. A single-storey outbuilding, built of brick with a hipped slate roof, links the Edwardian element with the road frontage. Its end elevation coincides with walling on the edge of the village street.

The Old Farmhouse, next door, is a two-storey with attics brick and tile house dating from the eighteenth-century. The three-bay house has a distinguishing brick dentil course beneath the eaves, gable parapets with moulded copings and a first-floor plat band. The house is located close to the road behind a small forecourt partly screened by small trees and bushes.

The Old Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building)



The Estate cottages that make up the majority of the village were built within a 60- year period from 1860's to 1914. These are distinctive semi-detached two-storey houses spaciouly sited facing along both sides of the village street and on the western side of Woodlands lane. Some have date-plaques at first floor level with the initials 'H.E.M'. The houses vary in their style and detailing according to the time in which they were built, but share a similar pallet of building materials. Some are relatively plain, but others adopt a 'cottage-ornee' style, with decorative barge boards and diagonal chimney flues. Substantial stacks occur on all the Estate houses and many feature prominent 'lych gate' porches. The buildings remain largely unaltered and all retain their original windows.

The Old Post Office



The Old Post Office is a simple brick and slate building currently being converted into a single dwelling. In common with other Estate houses, the forward facing windows are small and symmetrically arranged.



Built in 1931, the village pump-house, with its distinctive four timber posts and pyramidal tiled roof, forms an important focal point at the top of Station Road. Inside the open structure stands the pump itself, a cast iron pumping mechanism with fly wheel. On it is inscribed 'HEM 1885', referring to Hector Edmond Monro who was the squire at that time. Both the pump-house and the pump within are listed.

Pump House in the village street (Grade II Listed)



Some recent housing developments are beginning to infill the gaps between the older cottages, leading to some dilution of Edmondsham's distinctive character. Spaces between dwellings and open paddocks and fields in and around the village are vitally important in preserving this character. Where new dwellings or building extensions are proposed, it is important that the siting, size, form and materials should respect the existing village houses.

Boundary Walls

Boundary hedges, rather than walls, are an important characteristic of the village. However, immediately to the east of the House high walls of brick and cob enclose the large kitchen garden. When viewed from the east, a long cob wall provides a setting for the House and stables.

Boundary hedges provide a unifying element in the village street



Trees and Hedges

Except to the west, where arable fields extend from the chalk down land, woods and copses surround the village. These, together with parkland and village trees, form a sylvan setting that conceals most of the village buildings from outside. Within the village itself, however, although trees make a significant contribution to its character, they do not block views to the surrounding farmland.

Within the Conservation Area there are many important individual park and village trees. An outstanding feature of the area are the oaks. It is claimed that some of the finest oaks in Dorset today grow in the vicinity of the village (Hawkins). On the edge of the park to the east of the crossroads stands a huge specimen. Another important oak occurs further up the lane opposite the Post Office. In the grounds of the Old Rectory are an important group of oaks and other trees, including a large *Macrocarpa* that stands close to the road on a bank.

Scots pine occur frequently in the Conservation Area and there are some well-placed yews. Several are in the grounds of Edmondsham House and the Churchyard. Near the South

Lodge are yews that extend across the road to form a pinchpoint. There are also Scots pine that give height to the group. At the West Entrance, a large yew blocks the view into the Park. At the other end of the village is an Irish yew that forms an important road-side feature.

An Evergreen Oak is situated adjacent to the south driveway to Edmondsham House, to the north of the Lodge. This is a very large specimen that is in keeping with the rural situation. It is probably contemporary with the House itself. An Atlantic Blue Cedar, planted nearby more recently, however, is less harmonious.

The remains of orchards can still be seen in some cottage gardens. These old trees add significantly to the character and appearance of the village. The fruit-growing tradition should be rekindled.

Oaks are an important feature of the area



Hedging forms the predominant boundary treatment around the building curtilages. The most significant is the high beech hedge that surrounds the House to the west, with its distinctive sloping top. On a more modest scale, hedges around front gardens provide an important unifying element in the village, tying the frontages together and reinforcing the informal character of the Conservation Area. Where front boundary hedges do not exist, the ensuing gaps disrupt this pattern.

Spaces

The surrounding landscape has a major influence on the character of the village, reinforcing its rural tranquility and charm.

The areas of communal grass in front of the recent bungalow development opposite the Old Rectory, in contrast to front gardens, are

unenclosed and have a sterile appearance that make little contribution to the conservation area. The spaces should be planted with medium sized native trees, such as wild cherry and under-planted with spring bulbs.

Streetscape

There are no pavements or kerbs in the village, so the surrounding lanes appear to flow through the settlement almost without interruption. The twisting nature of the narrow village street as it mounts and then descends the hill, with soft verges on either side, is an important feature of Edmondsham. The informal road junction near the House, with its finger-post, is also important to retain.

Traditional finger post



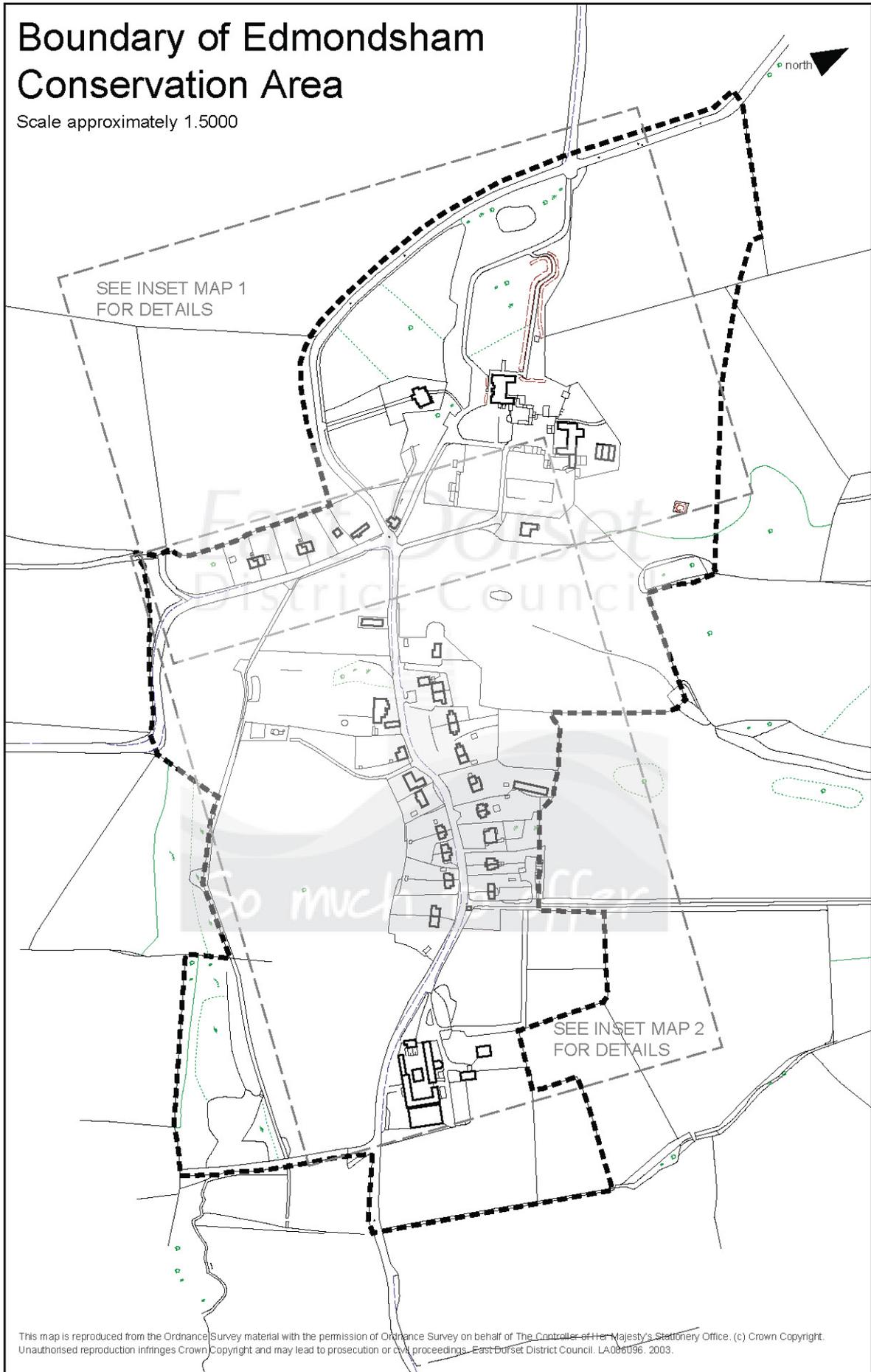
On the south side of the junction is a canalized brook that follows the lane for a few yards before disappearing underground. It is flanked by a brick wall at the rear and an iron railing in front.

The red Gilbert Scott telephone kiosk, near the foot of the hill, form an important focal point in the road, especially when descending the hill. The village pump is similarly important at the top of the hill.

The Old Post Office, half-way down the hill, retains its 'GR' post box set in a small stone structure on the edge of the highway, adjacent to a wrought iron sign announcing 'Edmondsham Post Office'.

Boundary of Edmondsham Conservation Area

Scale approximately 1:5000



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Edmondsham Conservation Area Inset Map 1



Scale 1:2500 approximately



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Edmondsham Conservation Area Inset Map 2



Scale 1:2500 approximately



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Planning Policy in Conservation Areas

East Dorset has many attractive villages of special architectural or historic interest.

In order to protect their character and appearance, the best of these, including the historic centre of Wimborne Minster, have been designated as Conservation Areas by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Under this legislation additional planning controls are exercised by the Council within designated Conservation Areas in order to preserve and enhance those aspects of character and appearance that define an area's special interest.

These include controls over the demolition of most unlisted buildings. An application for Conservation Area Consent is needed for the demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area.

The Council encourages the retention of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Any proposals which involve demolition of existing buildings will be carefully assessed for their impact upon the character of the area. The local planning authority will also need full details about what is proposed for the site after demolition.

Certain types of development, which elsewhere are normally classified as permitted development (such as the insertion of dormer windows in roof slopes, the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway) will require planning permission.

Guidance and application forms can be obtained from the Planning and Building Control Division.

Trees

Trees are an invaluable visual asset to the character and setting of many Conservation Areas.

Trees in Conservation Areas may already be protected by a Tree Preservation Order and the Courts can impose heavy fines for unauthorised felling or lopping.

In addition to these controls, and in recognition of the contribution that trees can make to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area special provisions apply to the lopping or felling of other trees which are not otherwise protected. Anyone wishing to fell or lop such trees needs to notify the Council in writing six weeks before carrying out any work.

Householders are also encouraged to seek advice from the Department on the management of their trees. By taking the correct action now mature trees can be made safer and their lives extended.

New Development

When contemplating alterations to existing buildings or the construction of new buildings within a Conservation Area it is advisable to obtain the views of your local Planning Officer at an early stage. The Department is glad to help and the advice is totally impartial and free of charge.

When considering applications for new development, the Council as Local Planning Authority takes particular care to ensure that it fits in satisfactorily with the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Positioning, massing, design and choice of materials are of particular importance, as well as the visual impact of 'building over' an area of hitherto open land.

The special character of these areas stem not only from the age, disposition and architectural interest of the buildings, but also from the treatment of the spaces in between.

The presence of gardens, paddocks, soft verges, hedges and old boundary walls contribute greatly to the individual sense of place.

Applications for new development must demonstrate that the proposal will harmonise with the Conservation Area i.e. that it will preserve or enhance its character. Potential applicants are strongly advised to seek proper professional advice.

Therefore when considering such applications the local planning authority will pay particular attention to the following elements of the design:

1. the positioning of the building and its relationship with adjoining buildings, existing trees or other features;
2. the proposed building materials, particularly the walls and roof, and their suitability to the area and in relation to neighbouring buildings;
3. the proportions, mass and scale of the proposal and their relationship with the area in general and adjoining buildings in particular.
4. whether the proposed development might adversely affect existing trees, hedges or other natural features of the site.

In some cases it may be necessary to reproduce an historic style of architecture in order to match existing buildings. Generally, however, the Council encourages new construction to be designed in a modern idiom provided the criteria listed above are applied. Poor copies or imitations of architectural styles detract from the genuine older buildings and are normally discouraged.

Full details of any proposed development must be submitted, showing existing site conditions with the proposals clearly marked. Details of the elevational treatment, including windows and doors, will normally be required. In many instances the planning authority will expect details of hard and soft landscaping including a specification of all the proposed materials.

Conservation Area analysis

The District Council has carried out and published detailed studies of the Conservation Areas to identify those elements which contribute towards the unique character of each area. Any proposal which has an adverse effect on these features will not be permitted. Proposals that can be seen to enhance the Conservation Area will be encouraged.

Grants

Grants may be available from the District Council towards the alleviation of eyesores, or measures that improve the street scene, such as tree-planting, hedging or other boundary treatments. Grants or loans may also be available towards the repair of Listed Buildings, particularly where such repairs make an impact on the Conservation Area.

Design and Conservation Services in East Dorset

Conserving the best features of our environment, our historic towns, villages and countryside, is one of the most important of our planning functions.

Historic Buildings

Our buildings are a record of our architectural and social history. As a society, we hold them in trust for future generations to cherish and enjoy. Investment in our architectural heritage assists local and regional social and economic development

The supply of buildings of the eighteenth century and earlier is finite; once demolished they are lost forever. Others suffer almost the same fate from alterations made without regard to their original design and character.

Historic buildings require special care if their character, which relies upon traditional building materials and practices peculiar to each region, is not to be spoilt by insensitive alterations or inappropriate methods of repair.

Owners of Listed Buildings contemplating altering or extending their building are advised to obtain Guidance Notes obtainable free from the Department.

An important function of the Design and Conservation Section is to advise owners of historic buildings and assist in achieving solutions which preserves their intrinsic interest.

The Section can help seek out the right materials for the job and advise on the correct method of repair.

It can also provide advice on both the law relating to listed buildings and sources of financial assistance.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are groups of buildings, villages or areas of towns having special architectural and townscape interest, the character of which should be preserved and enhanced.

East Dorset has 17 Conservation Areas, which range in size and nature from small villages such as Almer to the historic town centre of Wimborne Minster.

The siting, design and materials of new development, or alterations to existing buildings, are scrutinised by the Department to ensure that the character of such areas are protected.

Since 1980 the Council has invested in a programme of environmental improvements within the centre of Wimborne Minster. The effect of these measures has been to create an attractive place for residents and visitors to shop and to enjoy.

Designated Conservation Areas in East Dorset



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Advice

For advice on any aspect of the Council's building conservation work, the availability of financial assistance or to discuss your individual building, please contact our Design and Conservation Leader Ray Bird, or his assistant Alan Turner on 01202 886201 or e-mail: planning@eastdorset.gov.uk.