Countryside Design Summary

East Dorset District Council Planning Department, Supplementary Planning Guidance No.21 (August 1999)

Contents

Foreword

The encouragement of high standards of building design was central to the 'Quality in Town and Country' initiative, introduced by John Gummer in 1994.

A year later, the White Paper: 'Rural England: A Nation Committed to a Living Countryside'* emphasised the need to safeguard local character, especially in rural areas.

These messages were embodied in PPG 1** which now form central tenets of planning policy. Achieving quality in countryside design forms the underlying aim of the Countryside Design Summary.

* Department of the Environment/MAFF 1995

** Planning Policy Guidance: General Policies and Principles – PPG1 (Revised) February 1997, Department of the Environment

Introduction

What is a Countryside Design Summary?

Introduced by the Countryside Commission, the 'Countryside Design Summary' (CDS) sets out a method which aids an understanding of local landscape and traditional building in order to influence the design of new development in rural areas. The main objective is to encourage greater regard for, and sensitivity to, the distinctiveness and character of each locality when designing new rural housing.

The East Dorset Countryside Design Summary comprises a descriptive analysis of the relationship between the landscape, settlement patterns and traditional buildings of the District. The document identifies those settlement and building characteristics that give certain areas their distinctive quality. By recognising the variety and diversity of the District's rural heritage, we are in a better position to appreciate how to protect and reinforce it. One positive way of achieving this is to use this research to guide the form and design of new development.

The Countryside Design Summary supplements design policies in the District Plan. Having completed a public consultation period, the document was finally approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Plan in August 1999.

*Cranborne Chase Landscape Assessment SPG No 18
*Areas of Great Landscape Value SPG No19

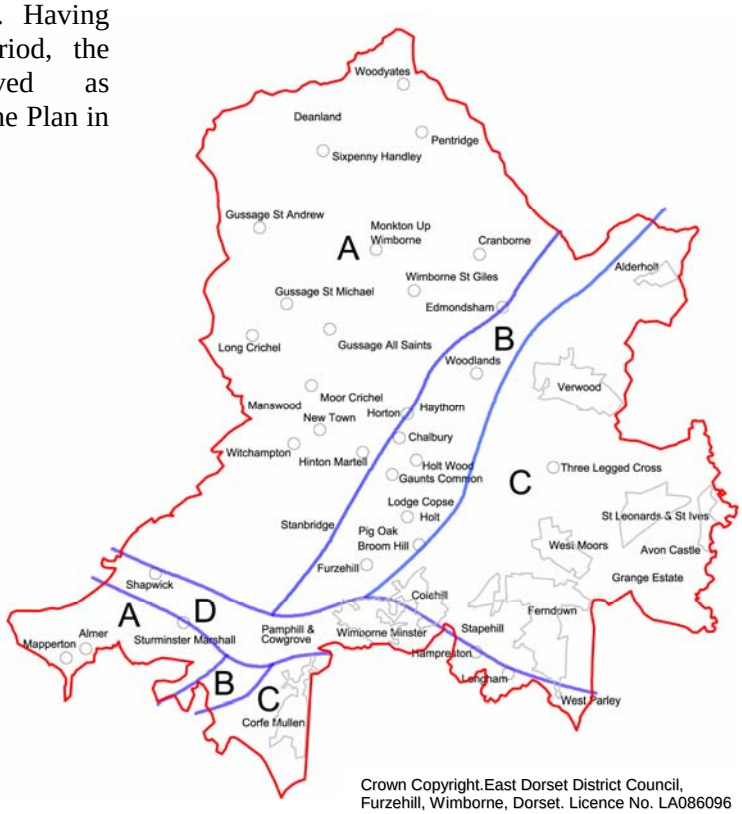
The Study

The Countryside Design Summary comprises a descriptive analysis of:

- the landscape and the setting of buildings and villages within it;
- the form of settlements and their relationship with the surrounding landscape;
- the form, design and materials of traditional buildings.

The diagram below shows a map of the District divided into four 'landscape zones' relating to the area's main geophysical formations. (This is shown in greater detail in Chapter 2 together with the main communication routes and settlement pattern.) Field surveys were undertaken in June and July 1997 on a zone by zone basis.

This document comprises a summary of the main findings. It complements the Landscape Assessments previously published by the District Council* and the Character Appraisals in respect to the District's Conservation Areas.



1. Background

1.1 Dorset is predominantly a rural county of great beauty. Its landscape is diverse and highly distinctive, qualities which draw thousands of holidaymakers each year. The County's varied landscape of rolling downland with prominent hilltops and ridges, lush river valleys, magnificent coast-line, heathlands and attractive villages, merge into a singular, strongly unified, unmistakable image.

1.2 East Dorset forms part of this image. Whilst the southern extremities of the District are influenced by the Bournemouth-Poole conurbation, most of the District remains as unspoilt countryside. This countryside has certain characteristics which are distinctive to East Dorset. Its landscape is a reflection of the underlying geology and the results of uninterrupted human activity that has impacted on the area since prehistoric times.

Cobley Farm towards Pentridge

Geology and Topography

(see maps in Appendix pages)

1.3 The geology gives rise to two distinct landscapes. To the north and west is Chalk downland, which descends gently from the Wiltshire border in a south-easterly direction to altitudes of 150-250 feet where it is overlain by more recent Eocene deposits.

1.4 The dip-slope is drained by four parallel streams: Gussage and Crichel Brooks and the headwaters of the rivers Allen and Crane. The valley bottoms are of narrow strips of valley gravel and alluvium until the Stour is reached. Here the broad meanders of the river have formed a wide band of alluvium with valley gravel terraces. Upstream, there are numerous dry valleys which cut further into the dip-slope to produce a series of shallow, open valleys separated by flat-topped hills.

1.5 The south-eastern half of the District has been overlaid with Eocene sands, gravels and London Clay, which appear as successively widening bands extending south-eastwards. Adjacent to the Chalk is a narrow band of sands and gravels of the Reading Beds, followed by a wider band of London Clay. Beyond this, is a more extensive area of sands and gravels of the Bagshot Beds. This area, which tends to be lower and flatter, is drained in a south-easterly direction by numerous small tributaries of the Crane.

1.6 These formations give rise to four main landscape types:

A Chalk Downland. Extensive areas of open rolling farmland interspersed with blocks of woodland that enclose the landscape. Near the Wiltshire border the landscape has a heavily wooded character.

B Hilly Clay Zone. A transitional area of sands and gravels of the Reading Beds and London Clay, which give rise to a varied landscape characterised by relatively short, steep hills and numerous mixed woods and copses.

C Heaths, Conifer Plantations and Oakwoods. Acidic sands and gravels of the Reading Beds, which give rise to heath-land and large conifer plantations.

D Pastoral River Valley. The wide alluvial valley of the River Stour cuts through each of the formations identified above imposing its own special character.

Indigenous Building Materials

1.7 The rock formations have had a profound influence on the character of buildings within the District. Clay, sand and gravel, mixed with straw, form the main ingredients of cob, an unbaked material used extensively throughout the County since the 16th Century, although most surviving examples date from the 18th Century. The material continued in use until the mid nineteenth-century, when it was succeeded by brick. On the downland areas, Chalk was added to the mixture, either as pure Chalk or as a Chalk aggregate. The raw materials were often dug directly from the construction site and mixed together before building up the walls in a

series of layers or lifts, usually without shuttering.

Rendered cob cottage at Dean End, Sixpenny Handley.

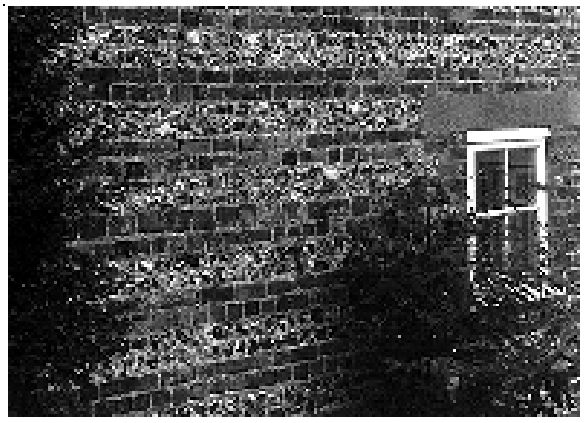
1.8 Traditionally, cob walls were protected by a lime render, consisting of limestone which was first burnt and then slaked with water to produce a 'putty', before mixing with sand. Wall surfaces were then lime-washed, using the residue from the slaking process.

1.9 Cob was almost exclusively used in the construction of modest cottages and farm buildings, together with that other highly distinctive roofing material, thatch. High boundary walls were also built in this material, but few of these have survived. It is not uncommon for cob buildings to be later faced with brickwork. Cob buildings and boundary walls make a vitally important contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the District as a whole and to individual settlements in particular.

Cob boundary wall protected by thatch 'capping', links harmoniously with brick and flint outbuilding.

1.10 Found in association with Chalk are flints, seen today strewn over cultivated fields, and used in early cottages as a base or plinth for cob walls. In some local areas, cottage walls are constructed entirely of flints. Flints were also used in combination with local Green Sandstone, and later on, with brickwork in alternating bands. Chequer-board patterns may occasionally be found on certain prestige buildings, such as churches and manor-houses. Flints used in this manner were normally split, or knapped, and carefully butt-jointed to give a black, shiny surface. Banded flint-and-brick boundary walls are common in most settlements on the Chalk and make a vital contribution to their character, especially when they are weathered and affected by lichens and mosses. Flint-stones extracted whole from the ground and laid in a less orderly fashion are much less architectural and more rustic in appearance. These too may be used in conjunction with alternating brick layers.

Cob walls containing whole flints at Woodyates. Un-rendered walls are painted white.



Knapped flint alternating with brick in regular horizontal bands. Apple Tree Cottage, Gussage All Saints.

1.11 Strata of Greensand underlie the Chalk. The nearest small outcrop is at Bowerchalk, exposed as a result of the erosion of Chalk by the River Ebble. In East Dorset, the material is commonly associated with medieval churches, usually in the form of ashlar dressings to rubble or flint walls. There are a few secular buildings with similar architectural dressings. At Long Crichel, the former rectory has complete walls of Green Sandstone. However, unlike certain

areas of the County, for instance Shaftesbury, Green Sandstone represents a less familiar building material. Hurdcott Green Sandstone is still available from Teffont Quarry, Chilmark, Wiltshire .

Green sandstone ashlar and knapped flint in chequer board pattern. Manor Farm, Woodcutts.

Lodge Farm, a 14th Century, first -floor hall house. with ironstone walls.

1.12 Heathstone, quarried from the Eocene area of the south and east, is a characteristic building material of early churches and important secular buildings, either as rubble-stone or dressed as ashlar. As with Green Sandstone, the material is not extensively seen, but concentrated on relatively few important buildings. Sometimes, Heathstone and other stones may be found in walls of modest cottages. These represent early examples of materials reclamation, often associated with the demolition of earlier priories or manor houses.

Rubble Heathstone reused in walls of 15 High Street, Sturminster Marshall.

16th Century timber-framed cottages with brick nogging. St. Margaret's Almshouses, near Wimborne Minster.

1.13 The County is not noted for its stock of timber framed buildings, but those which do exist tend to be concentrated in East Dorset. Within the District they are found in small numbers on the edges of the Eocene deposits, from Edmondsham to Pamphill, where there were plentiful supplies of oak. Groups of timber framed buildings characterise Pamphill, which is where the largest concentration occurs (16 buildings). Elsewhere, it is individual buildings which make a local impact, either in villages or in the open countryside. Brick 'nogging' has largely replaced the original wattle and daub panels between the timber frame, and today only fragments of this latter material exist, normally within internal partitions. During the restoration of Court House, Cowgrove in 1988, traditional wattle and daub panels were applied between the repaired timber frame. Both panels and timbers were then lime washed. Surviving timber frame buildings, which in East Dorset consist of square panels and straight braces, are mostly of seventeenth-century origin, although a small number from the sixteenth-century may still be seen.

1.14 The earliest example of the use of brick in the District, indeed within the County, may be

seen at Abbey House, Witchampton, which dates from 1500.

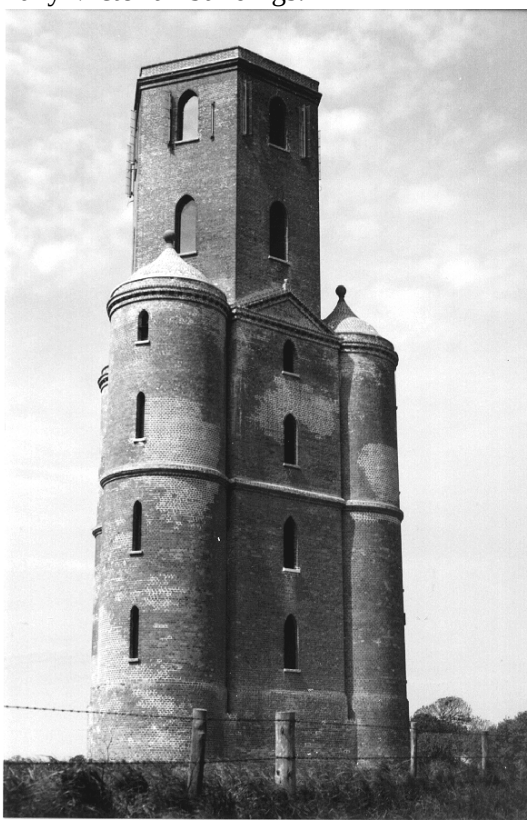
Abbey House, Witchampton.

Local brickworks were numerous in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries throughout the County in those localities where there were deposits of clay. There were 325 brickyards and tilekilns county-wide, with the main concentration occurring in eastern Dorset, extending southwards from Alderholt to Bournemouth, Poole and Wareham. Brick-making clay is a mix of sand and alumina and may contain chalk, lime, iron oxide or other materials. There are 15 or so different types of clay located in different parts of the County, giving rise to a wide variation in brick colours and textures. Different mixtures, methods of handling and firing techniques resulted in some 60 variations. Most brickworks in East Dorset occurred on London Clay (See paragraph 1.63), producing bricks that had an essentially warm, orange-red colour of soft texture.

16th Century Chapel at Woodlands Manor Farm, another example of the very early use of brick .

The subtle variations of colour and texture which stemmed from these traditional brickworks are seldom achieved in the highly standardised, quality-controlled bricks of today. The sizes of bricks have also varied from century to century. Generally, brick sizes have increased from the Tudor period to the Victorian, and have then tended to reduce in size during the 20th Century. Old walls may contain an irregular mix of brick sizes, adding further to their character. First confined to more superior secular buildings, bricks were later used more extensively as the availability of the material improved. By the second half of the 18th Century. it was cheap enough to be used on cottages, as new walls or to re-face existing cob walls. One of the oldest timber frame houses in the District, Abbey House, Horton, conceals its age by the eighteenth-century brickwork that encases its earlier structure.

1.15 Even the earliest use of brick displayed how the material could be used decoratively. Special effects were created using strongly contrasting brick, especially dark blue burnt or 'flared' brickwork, as seen on Abbey House, Witchampton. Later, buff coloured bricks were used as dressings around windows, string courses and quoins, a characteristic feature of many Victorian buildings.

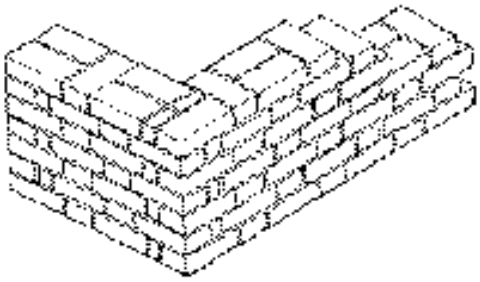


Horton Tower, built for Humphrey Sturt in 1740.

1.16 Until the common usage of Portland Cement after the Second World War, most buildings were constructed using lime mortar, which was made on site by adopting the same process as for lime render. The mortar has allowed buildings and walls to settle over time without causing structural damage and accounts for the irregularities of historic buildings which are so much admired today. The colour and texture of the mortar forms an integral part of the character of each wall. The traditional lime mortar joints can be easily recognised by their light colour and soft texture that exposes the graded aggregate within. Importantly, such mortar, being less hard than the bricks which they bond together, allows rainwater to be absorbed and given off through the joints, the effect of which is to preserve the brickwork. In order to ensure the continued longevity of good, historic brickwork it is vitally important that traditional materials and methods are used in their maintenance, especially when they are due for re-pointing.

1.17 Traditional brickwork is also characterised by variations in bonding; stretcher-bond is common in brick nogging in timber-framed buildings where a single skin is required, but seldom seen elsewhere. Flemish bond and English Garden Wall are the most common, and Flemish Garden Wall and other variations often occur. Such patterns, as well as a range of capping and other details, give old walls immense character.

English Garden Wall Bond



Flemish Bond

1.18 Until improvements in transport in the nineteenth-century and mass-production facilities at Poole, brick was largely confined to houses, rather than cottages, and farm-houses, stables and barns. There are many notable examples of the use of brick in East Dorset, especially the grand houses, but also many other structures, such as fine stables (e.g. the Riding House at Wimborne St. Giles), gazebos, water-towers and other towers (e.g. Horton Tower), and vast boundary walls, (e.g. those around Charborough Park). Unique buildings and structures such as these make a major contribution to the special character of East Dorset District.

1.19 However, it is the vast majority of more humble traditional brick buildings and boundary walls which, when combined together in street scenes, account for the distinctive sense of place of our villages and hamlets. The ingenuity of past craftsmen can still be enjoyed in abundance, in chimney details, window heads and other decorative features.

Curiously named the Round House, this 18th Century brick gazebo situated in a field near Wimborne St. Giles has a square plan.

1.20 Although tile-hanging is not an old East Dorset tradition, there are several examples of nineteenth-century use of this practice. It was used for decorative effect, rather than as a functional requirement as evident on many half-timbered houses in Hampshire and the South-East. Early Victorian, hand-made tiles were rich in colour and texture and featured scalloped or fishtail tiles and other distinctive shapes.

1.21 Weather-boarding is commonly associated with traditional agricultural buildings. Square-edged oak or elm boards are fixed horizontally over supporting timbers, sometimes extending to ground level or more often, above a brick plinth. Weather-boarding is also associated with granaries and other little buildings, and is

commonly used to clad cottage out-shuts and porches.

Weatherboarding, Firs Farm Barn and Granary, Cowgrove.

1.22 The strongest visual images of the District inevitably focus on the thatched roofs of our humble cottages. Thatching has taken place in Dorset for over 2,500 years and the tradition continues today.

1.23 Long straw thatching technique was prevalent in East Dorset until the turn of the twentieth-century. But changing agricultural practices resulted in the near extinction of this practice and the development instead of combed wheat thatching. A device, known as a 'comber', was added to the threshing drum to ensure that the straw stalks remained undamaged, essential for its use as a thatching material.

1.24 Today, combed wheat thatching is a speciality of Devon and Dorset. Subtle variations of style around the County form part of the thatching tradition. In East Dorset, roof coverings are thick and rounded, with smooth 'wrap-over' ridges and wide eaves. 'Ligger' patterns of split hazel at the ridge, and occasionally at the eaves, represent the only decoration. (Patterned block ridges, points at the hips, and other superimposed features are imported from other parts of Britain and are not representative of the local tradition.)

1.25 Traditionally, thatched roofs are repaired by adding successive layers of material, retaining sound older layers beneath. Over a period of time the thatch increases in thickness, which adds to the billowy character of many old cottage roofs.

1.26 The use of water reed, common in East Anglia, also involves a different thatching technique. Repairs using water reed often involve the replacement of the entire roof, necessitating the loss of historic features such as wattlework and smoke-blackened thatch. Water reed possesses quite different properties from wheat, being longer, wider and stiffer. The material is applied directly onto the timber roof structure and in consequence, seldom develops any appreciable thickness. Water reed roofs tend to be angular with hard edges and often have a coarser texture. For these reasons, water reed is not considered an appropriate thatching material for East Dorset.

1.27 Thatch was not only the cheapest roofing material, compared with tiles or slate, but also the lightest, and eminently suitable where the wall structure was relatively weak, as was the case with unbaked earth walls. Thatch required but a lightweight framework of thin poles, usually of sweet chestnut or larch.

1.28 Thatch is also common on timber-framed and brick buildings where the supporting framework comprised split hazel battens fixed to oak trusses.

Materials taken from the immediate locality give traditional buildings a strong sense of belonging.

The East Dorset thatching tradition is characterised by smooth, fine textured thatch with a flush, sheared down ridge. Old Forge, Pamphill, before restoration.

Simple geometric patterns, formed from split hazel liggers, are decorative as well as helping to secure the thatch at the eaves and ridge.

1.29 If the character and distinctiveness of East Dorset are to be preserved it is important that traditional thatching materials and practices should be encouraged. A number of local thatchers now produce their own supplies of wheat reed, using traditional binding and threshing machinery. Growing corn locally ensures adequate supplies of materials when needed, always a problem for thatchers. It also enables the thatcher to control its quality, during the growing stages, at harvesting and subsequent storage.

A local thatcher reaping specially grown corn, using a 1910 binder. The stooks will be taken to a nearby barn for threshing before being stored. Horton Heath.

1.30 Although there are still around 200 Listed Buildings that are thatched in East Dorset, and perhaps as many again which are not Listed, this number represents but a small fraction compared with the situation a century and a half ago. Many cob and thatch cottages have been demolished on account of their poor condition, any defect in the roof would soon affect the condition of the cob walling beneath. Other thatched roofs, including their historic pole rafters, have been destroyed by fire. In the nineteenth-century, thatch was often replaced with clay tiles or Welsh slate as their availability widened and as and when these 'superior' materials could be afforded. To support the new roof, sawn timber rafters would be needed, often supported by a new external skin of brickwork that also served to conceal the cob.

Sometimes when thatch was replaced (perhaps following a fire), the opportunity was taken to increase the height of a cottage at Shapwick.

1.31 Although less common than the County as a whole, some early buildings would alternatively, have been roofed in stone tiles, quarried from the Purbeck hills, either as a complete roof, or used in conjunction with thatch. In such cases a narrow margin of stone tiles was used on the verges, overlapped by thatch. The remains of this tradition can still be seen on plain tiled roofs having several courses of stone tiles at the eaves. Some eighteenth-century buildings may have consciously been designed with this detail.

Targetts Farm, Lower Holwell, Cranborne, featuring quoins and stone gable coping.stone tiles, stone

1.32 Small, plain tiles represent the most common roofing material in the District. The earliest tiles, which were made in association with the local bricks, were known as 'peg-tiles'. These contained small holes through which oak or sweet chestnut pegs would be inserted in order to hang onto roofing laths. Increasingly, this traditional method of fixing is being

replaced with galvanised nails. The external appearance of the roof, however, remains unchanged. The hand-made tiles produce a texture and richness of colour seldom found in the machine-made products that were to follow. Today, old peg-tile roofs are further enhanced by a patina of age and lichen growth, which ought to be preserved wherever possible.

Old tiles used to protect cob walls, sometimes rendered, sometimes faced in brick, add to the rich variety of textures.

1.33 Pantiles, Roman tiles and their derivations occur on isolated buildings but are not representative of the District vernacular.

1.34 Welsh slate became a popular roofing material in villages with easy access to the railways, notably Wimborne, Sturminster Marshall, West Moors, Verwood and Alderholt, but also in some remote parts of the District including a cluster of settlements near Sixpenny Handley: Deanland, New Town and Woodcutts. Many slate roofs have a lower pitch than tiled roofs, often with wider eaves. The material, in common with corrugated iron, is commonly used on mono-pitched roofs for single-storey extensions to thatched or tiled dwellings.

Many slate roofs are characterised by their low pitches and wide soffits. Newtown, Sixpenny Handley.

1.35 The aim of the Countryside Design Summary, pursued in Section 2, is to identify patterns of use of the respective materials in order to give clear guidance on what materials are appropriate to use in particular areas today.

Historical Background

Early Settlement Pattern

1.36 In order to understand how the present distribution, size and form of settlements within the District have come about, it is important to go back in time and briefly trace the evolution of the East Dorset landscape.

1.37 The landscape has been influenced by a long and continuous period of human occupation. Except for the highest parts, most of the area was once covered by extensive oak woodlands, but these were progressively cleared for agriculture, house-building and fuel. The light, acidic soils to the south and east of the District became impoverished and, unable to sustain agriculture or woodland, reverted to heath.

Unimproved Chalk grassland is rare and occurs only on the steepest slopes. (Pentridge Hill).

1.38 Since the Iron Age, most human activity occurred on the drier, more fertile Chalk, as small settlements or hill-forts. Badbury Rings represents the largest hill-fort, enclosing some 17 acres. Other settlements, such as Gussage Hill, Oakley Hill, Woodyates and King Down were also sited on hilltops or upper slopes which could be more easily defended.

Cranborne Ancient Technology Centre aims to reproduce Iron Age and other early technology and husbandry.

1.39 The Romans also favoured the Chalk to site their settlements and roads, except for three settlements along the Stour. These were located at West Parley, Dudsbury (an important military fort) and Lake Gates, west of Wimborne (a military supply base). The Roman sites of Holwell (near Cranborne), Stanbridge and East Hemsworth (near Witchampton) and Shapwick lay in or near valley bottoms.

1.40 Badbury Rings, which the Romans occupied as a fort, was the hub of the Roman road network in the area, and with Ackling Dyke, formed part of an arterial route from London to Dorchester. It is characterised by its straight alignment across the gently undulating landscape. The only village in East Dorset that falls directly on the route of the Roman Road is Shapwick, which formed a bridging point across the Stour. Few sections of the road have been incorporated into our modern road system. One exception is (the inappropriately named) New Road, that extends from Shapwick to the Blandford road. Another is the Salisbury Road at Woodyates.

1.41 In common with most other parts of Britain, the departure of the Romans in the fourth century probably led to a reversion to tribal kingdoms until the Saxon Conquest. The Saxons were responsible for extensive woodland clearance and the introduction of new agricultural techniques into the area. Wimborne Minster developed on a river terrace of the Stour at its confluence with the Allen. Elsewhere, villages, hamlets and farms were sited in sheltered river valleys, close to water supplies, some of which, such as Long Crichel, Wimborne St. Giles and Shapwick exist as villages today. The Saxons established a Priory at Cranborne in 930, and the village became one of the most important in the area. Other settlements have since diminished in size or disappeared altogether: Knowlton, Brockington and Hemsworth, for example. Other monastic centres were at Wimborne and Horton. In Wimborne, the monastery was in existence before 705 and its site today is now occupied partly by the present Minster and by Dean's Court. The village of Horton stands adjacent to the site of the tenth-century monastery.

1.42 The Chalkland villages were commonly associated with strips of cultivated land that extended back from the streams onto the chalk, either on one side of the settlement or on both sides. Many of these boundaries are evident today as hedgerows. They could also account for the way in which the older cottages are sited within their plots end-on, close to the road.

1.43 For centuries, the landscape of East Dorset was characterised by open downland, with small arable fields or strips leading out from small settlements sited at or near the valley bottoms. The identity and character of the area, however, has been profoundly influenced by historical events.

Water meadows of the upper Crane, Holwell.

Royal Forest and Chase

1.44 As a geographical area, the Cranborne Chase has existed since pre-historic times, bounded by the New Forest in the east, Holt Forest and Dorset heaths in the south, the Forest of Blackmore to the west, and the wastes and forests of the valley of the Nadder in the north.

1.45 Since Norman times, most of this area became subjected to the special laws and management associated with the Royal hunt. Within these 'outer Bounds', the lands remained

within the direct control of the first two Norman kings before passing to the Earls of Gloucester.

1.46 Contiguous with the Chase was another Royal hunting ground, centred on Holt Forest. This area, which extended from the River Allen in the west to the Moors River in the east, and from the northern edge of Wimborne to Horton, formed part of manorial lands of Kingston Lacy. It remained in the ownership of the Crown until 1107 when it was given to Robert de Beaumont, First Earl of Leicester.

1.47 Since passing from direct royal control, Cranborne Chase ceased to be the private domain of one individual, but of several independent estates.

Importance of the Landed Estates

1.48 These estates stemmed from the dissolution of the monasteries and the rise of a small number of families. Of particular relevance to East Dorset were the Ashleys of Wimborne St Giles and the Cecils of Cranborne. The site at Wimborne St Giles belonged to the Ashleys since the early 15th Century, whilst the Cecils acquired previously monastic land from the Crown in the 1590's. These estates became the seats of the Earls of Shaftesbury and Salisbury respectively. The Pitt-Rivers Estate, which extended southwards to include Sixpenny Handley, also had its origins in Elizabethan times. The Kingston Lacy Estate was acquired by Sir John Bankes in the 1630's which began a new phase in the Estate's development. Within East Dorset, these estates were complemented by other 'noble seats' established in the 18th Century notably Crichel and Drax, and by smaller estates, at High Hall, Gaunts, Deans Court and Edmondsham (until the mid 19th Century, part of the Shaftesbury Estate). Today, these Estates still control substantial areas of the District.

1.49 Settlements which lie within these estates have for centuries been influenced by estate decisions, sometimes quite dramatically. Part of the village of Abbott Street on Pamphill was cleared away in the mid 18th. Century for extensions to Kingston Lacy Park and its residents moved to a new site, known today as Little Pamphill.

1.50 Moor (or More) Crichel comprised a cluster of hovels along the lane above Crichel House (there are still signs of their entrances in the high wall that borders the road). These dwellings were removed in the 1840's as a result of the Health and Sanitation Act and new houses built in Newtown by Henry Charles Sturt.

1.51 Cranborne, Wimborne St. Giles and Edmondsham are quintessential Estate villages and owe much of their settlement pattern and character to the proximity of their respective Great House and associated park. Each of these 'Great Houses' is a little detached from the respective village, but close to the parish church.

At Edmondsham, as in other Estate villages, parkland bounded by hedges and walls separates the 16th Century house from the village.

1.52 Importantly, the estates have safeguarded villages, hamlets and cottages within their jurisdiction and succeeded in preserving their identity and special character. In addition, purpose-built estate houses have been added, mostly in the nineteenth-century, which, by virtue of their form, materials and architectural detailing, have enhanced their respective settlements. There are outstanding examples at Moor Crichel, Long Crichel, Witchampton and Wimborne St. Giles.

Well preserved Estate houses at Long Crichel.

1.53 The estates have had a pervasive influence over the way in which much of the rural landscape has been managed. This is especially so on the Chalk, but the National Nature Reserve

at Holt Heath still remains as it was when a Royal Forest. The attractive hilly landscape on the north side of Colehill still forms part of the Kingston Lacy Estate. However, the decision of the National Trust, when it acquired the Estate, to designate certain parts as 'alienable' means that Estate control over these peripheral areas is diminishing. Unprotected cottages remain vulnerable to development and many of the distinctive oaks are becoming very old. Their loss would affect the character of the area as a whole.

1.54 The importance of historical events on the evolution of settlements is well illustrated by the neighbouring villages of Shapwick and Sturminster Marshall. Shapwick has remained very small whilst nearby Sturminster Marshall now represents one of the District's largest villages. At the beginning of King John's reign around 1200, the Manors of 'Sturminstre' and 'Cerletone' (Sturminster Marshall and Charlton Marshall) were at the centre of an ownership dispute between the de Beaumonts of Kingston Lacy and William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke. The Crown settled in favour of Marshall, whose name was then suffixed to each village. Since then, these two villages have remained independent from the Manor of Kingston.

Modern Farming

1.55 The Enclosure Act of 1794 and the disfranchisement of the Cranborne Chase in 1841 led to an increase in farming activity on the Chalk as the old order made way for new agricultural ideas and practices. Arable became increasingly important as mechanisation developed. There were copious quantities of long-stalked corn suitable for thatching and cheap labour to apply it.

1.56 From 1900, large areas of previously managed grassland on the chalk were brought into cultivation. Fields of wheat and barley still dominate the Chalk countryside but, increasingly, alternative crops such as oil-seed rape and linseed are introducing contrasting bright colours into the landscape patchwork. Field sizes have continued to expand in line with extensive farming methods and the number of individual farms have diminished. The replacement of the old fashioned binders and threshing machines with modern equipment, and the introduction of short stemmed varieties of wheat, mean that local thatchers today, who do not grow their own, need to rely on imported supplies.

1.57 The well-wooded landscape of the Chase today reflects the importance which the Estates place on timber production as a long-term source of income, as well as the continued importance of game, which is increasingly managed on a commercial basis. The great plantations of the 18th Century make a significant impact, especially the Drive Plantation at Wimborne St. Giles established by the fourth Earl of Shaftesbury. It is now managed as a commercial woodland but retains some of the original species. So too is Chetterwood and the woods of the Rushmore Estate, where several Ancient Woodlands form a direct link with early Chase history.

1.58 The poor, acidic soils of the southern and eastern part of the District remained sparsely populated until the turn of the twentieth-century. Squatters' settlements on the edges of the once-extensive heaths grew independently from the earlier hamlets and tended to be dispersed in form, each cottage having its own paddock or small-holding.

Forestry

1.59 After the First World War and the establishment of the Forestry Commission a number of major conifer plantations were established on the former heathland. These now constitute an important part of the District's landscape character. Many plantations enclose and form a backdrop to urban areas as well as providing a valuable resource for recreation.

1.60 The complex of mixed woodlands that extend from Pamphill to Alderholt, on the edge of the Eocene geological formation, is managed for a variety of purposes by many diverse interests, including the landed estates, business

concerns and many individual farmers and land-owners. Such woods make a strong impact on the setting of Pamphill, Holt Wood, Woodlands and Edmondsham.

Industry

1.61 Corn mills have, until the twentieth century, been an important part of the local agricultural scene. Some of the most important trades, millwrights, smiths and farriers, were all dependent on agricultural activity. Walford Mill, Crichel Mill, Didlington Mill, Stanbridge Mill, Witchampton Mill and the mill at Wimborne St. Giles are sited on the Allen, most occupying sites on which earlier structures have stood. Similarly on the Stour, White Mill and the Old Mill at Corfe Mullen occupy much earlier mill sites.

White Mill, Sturminster Marshall, restored in 1994/5 by the National Trust.

1.62 Historically, earthenware pottery represented the most important single industry in East Dorset. Kilns were concentrated on sites where there were easily-accessible supplies of clay for pots and timber for fuel: between Alderholt and Cranborne; and extending southwards to Horton and Holt. The industry developed gradually throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, supported by the growing local population. The number of kilns peaked in the eighteenth-century, but remained essentially cottage industries. However, they could not compete with cheaper mass-produced wares transported by the new railways from the English Potteries. From the beginning of the nineteenth-century the industry was in decline and by the 1880's all but a handful of kilns in Verwood had closed.

1.63 Brick-making was also important locally and shared many of the characteristics of the pottery industry, in terms of their size and location. Brick-making too, depended on supplies of clay, and timber (often in the form of coppice) for fuel. Transport was also an important consideration, both in terms of transporting clay to the brickyard and the carriage of bricks to the building-site. Consequently, the materials were used locally, often confined to the immediate locality of the clay-pit. The former clay-pit on the hillside between Horton and Horton Tower, for example, can still be detected. Locally-extracted, locally-manufactured and locally-used materials help to explain why traditional buildings in villages, such as Horton, appear unified and in harmony with their landscape setting. The brickworks at Horton, in common with those near Cranborne and Corfe Mullen, were located on the Reading Beds. Most brick-making in the District, however, was confined to seams of London Clay, which included two brickyards to the east of Cranborne and six in Corfe Mullen. By the nineteenth-century, there were 28 brickyards located on the London Clay, in Alderholt (3), Holt (4), Sandleheath (6), Sturminster Marshall (1), Verwood (3), Wimborne (2) and Wimborne St Giles (1).

Urbanisation

1.64 The most dramatic changes within the District have taken place since 1960 with the growth of suburban housing in Ferndown, West Parley and West Moors, Verwood, Alderholt, Corfe Mullen and Colehill, together with the development of new industrial estates. Much of this expansion has occurred on the Bagshot Beds, leaving the Chalk landscape largely unaltered. However, planned growth, albeit on a much lesser scale, has occurred in Sturminster Marshall and Sixpenny Handley.

1.65 Even small amounts of development can make a significant impact on small villages, particularly when its siting, form and design are suburban in character. Some Chalk villages which have been taken out of Estate control, such as Gussage All Saints, have been affected in this way.

Brick and rendered walls in juxtaposition characterise most East Dorset villages. Farmhouse and cottages near St. Mary the Virgin, Sturminster Marshall.

1.66 One of the objectives of this study, pursued in Section 2, is to examine how settlements relate with the surrounding landscape; how they relate to topography, water-courses, vegetation and field systems and to describe how these factors have influenced their form.

Building Types

1.67 The size and status of buildings have traditionally been a reflection of the social order, the relative importance of community buildings and the prosperity of particular farms. Most of the District's villages still preserve this hierarchy of buildings although their social structure may be very much different. This pattern has been summarised by R.W. Brunskill ('Vernacular Architecture') as follows:

The Great House (and park), country seat of the nobility and centre of extensive landed estate.

The Large House, originally occupied by people of some importance such as the squire, a successful yeoman or farmer or a favoured parson.

The Small House, originally occupied by the ordinary farmer, school-teacher, the unfavoured parson and other figureheads of the village.

Cottages, occupied by labourers and artisans, often close to subsistence level of existence. These may be tenanted from their employers or owner-occupied.

1.68 Most cob and thatch cottages fall within the 'Cottage' category especially those of single-storey with attics However many have since been joined together to form larger single dwellings or extended in other ways. Other cottages may be of brick and tile. The 'Small House' category consists almost entirely of larger detached and paired dwellings, normally of two storeys and of brick and tile construction. Most of the Estate Houses fall within this category, whose designs tend to reflect the aspirations of the incumbent lord rather than to fit the status of its inhabitants.

1.69 As the most common building types are small houses and cottages, it is these which tend to give particular areas their special character and distinctiveness. This study examines patterns of distribution, form and materials relating to these building types that existed before the First World War. Buildings since this date have tended to be influenced by national styles and the mass production of materials. The effect has been to progressively dilute local distinctiveness of individual buildings and their siting has tended to be more influenced by legal constraints than physical influences.

East Dorset District Council Planning Department, Supplementary Planning Guidance No.21 (August 1999)

2. Identifying Local Distinctiveness

A) CHALK DOWNLAND

Landscape Setting

2.1 Much of the Chalk landscape is managed by a small number of large Estates. Arable farming represents the predominant land-use, characterised by large, rectangular fields. Field sizes have continued to expand in line with highly mechanised farming practices, far removed from the traditional farms associated with Hardy novels. Unimproved downland occurs in only a small number of isolated areas, usually on the steepest slopes. Fields extend down valley sides to the edges of each village. In consequence, the character and atmosphere of each village is strongly influenced by surrounding agricultural activities.

Communications.

2.2 Narrow, winding lanes that were in existence in medieval times and before connect minor settlements together. These lanes contrast with Ackling Dyke that passes in a straight trajectory over hills and valleys from Badbury Rings to Woodyates. The Roman road has similarities with the 18th Century turnpike roads (Wimborne-Cranborne turnpike, Blandford-Salisbury turnpike and Horton turnpike) which are also straight and largely clear of settlements. The Wimborne-Cranborne turnpike originally passed through the village of Wimborne St. Giles, before being diverted to the east of St Giles Park.

Settlements.

2.3 The largest settlements, still small compared with other centres in the District, are Cranborne and Sixpenny Handley. Elsewhere, the villages and hamlets are very small, and very quiet. Most villages are linear in form and concealed by the landscape. When travelling though the area on the main traffic routes, the former turnpike roads, the general impression is of a largely uninhabited landscape. A notable exception is Witchampton which is sited on rising ground overlooking the Allen valley and is prominent when viewed from the east.

Gussage All Saints lies concealed within the valley of the 'Terrig" or Gussage Stream, a tributary of the River Allen.

2.4 Within the Chalk zone three groups of settlements can be identified:

i) Chalk stream settlements. These include Cranborne, Wimborne St. Giles, Gussage All Saints, Gussage St. Michael, Witchampton, Long Crichel.

ii) Edge of Chalk settlements The villages of Hinton Martell, Horton and Edmondsham occur in a line along the eastern extremity of the Chalk where it adjoins the Eocene deposits. Their landscape setting varies from the typical Chalk stream settlement.

iii) Settlements of the Inner Chase . A group of hamlets in the vicinity of Sixpenny Handley: Deanland and New Town, Woodcutts, Cobley and Woodyates, which lie to the north of the Blandford - Salisbury Road. This area forms

the heartland of the Cranborne Chase; its historic character still pervades this remote landscape.

The Chalk villages are all characteristically self-contained and separated by open countryside. Whilst they share many common characteristics, each has its own unique identity, derived from its landscape setting, settlement pattern, building form and materials.

i) Chalk Stream Settlements

Landscape Setting.

Woods managed by the Crichel Estate enclose the south-eastern end of Long Crichel, in contrast to the rest of the village which is open in character on account of the lack of trees.

2.5 Each village is surrounded by pastoral or arable land. In some villages, the valley is open in character such as Monkton up Wimborne, Long Crichel and Mapperton with relatively few trees and with farmland that penetrates the villages. In other settlements, the valley setting is more treed, as at Witchampton, Gussage All Saints and Almer. The nucleus of Wimborne St. Giles is enclosed by the close knit treescape of St Giles' Park, whilst the majority of dwellings are sited in the open valley. Mature treescape in many villages provides enclosure and shelter, one effect of which is to heighten the contrast between the lush valleys and the open Chalk downland. Fine specimen trees are often clustered around the local church and manor house. Manswood is unique on account of its location adjacent to the extensive woods of Chetterwood. This small, seemingly isolated Estate village is strongly influenced by its woodland setting.

Former wood cutters cottages at Manswood, loosely clustered within a leafy hollow between historic Chetterwood and Oakhills coppice.

2.6 Although Chalk stream villages share many common characteristics, each relate differently to its water-course. At Cranborne, the River Crane flows as a winterbourne through the centre of the settlement. Elsewhere, dwellings tend to be sited on slightly higher ground near by, away from poorly-drained land. In Wimborne St. Giles, the Terrig (otherwise known as the Gussage Stream) flows between two parallel lanes; cottages extend along the lanes and face towards the river.

Water Street, Cranborne is one of the few instances where cottages look directly onto the watercourse.

Settlement Pattern

2.7 In these linear settlements, cottages are commonly located close-to, and orientated end-on to the village street. These are set in long, narrow plots that extend away from the road and which follow the ancient field pattern. Siting the dwelling at one end allows maximum use of the plot for husbandry. 'Small houses' may also be close to the village road, but tend to face directly onto it and frequently have front gardens bounded by low walls or hedges.

The village street in Gussage All Saints is spatially articulated by these cottages, a pattern which unfortunately is not followed by modern development elsewhere in the settlement.

Building Form and Materials

Cottages

The basic form of the vernacular cottage, such as building width and roof height, is generally consistent, but a variety of features makes each one unique, Elm Tree Cottage, Gussage All Saints, features a single gable and half hip and irregular fenestration pattern.

2.8 Most of the cottages are thatched and date from the 17th or 18th Centuries. Such buildings are quintessentially small and humble in character and it is fortunate indeed that so many remain close to their original form. The roof pitch of these cottages is typically 40 - 45 degrees, with building spans of 5 metres. Eaves heights are characteristically low, often little more than single storey, with attic rooms ventilated by a small 'eyebrow' window. Donkey sheds, wood-stores and other ancillary single-storey buildings attached to the ends of these cottages have now mostly been incorporated within the domestic accommodation as an 'outshut'. The mono-pitched outshut is also common at the rear of these cottages, used as a kitchen and/or bathroom. The main entrance door was traditionally centrally placed, although subsequent small additions have often altered this relationship. Early cottages have a central chimney stack, but those on 18th Century cottages tend to be at one or both ends of the ridge.

The Buildings at Manswood is reputed to be the longest continuous row of thatched houses in England. Note the rear slate roofed outshut and their tall chimneys.

Small Houses.

2.9 These are mostly 18th and 19th Century, reflecting the increasing wealth and widening social range of the community. The buildings have spans of 6 metres, with a higher eaves height. These are normally constructed of brick but knapped flint bands are not uncommon. Plain tiled roofs are a particular feature of the area.

No.8 Village Street, Edmondsham fits the 'Small house' category, as defined by Brunskill. Note the alternating plain and fish-tail clay tiles on the roof and parapet gables. Identical stacks incorporated within each gable and symmetrical fenestration are common features of such buildings.

2.10 19th Century Estate houses feature in Long Crichel, Wimborne St. Giles, Witchampton and Cranborne. They are normally constructed of mellow brickwork with tiled roofs, but are particularly noticeable on account

of their ornate detailing, especially those belonging to the Crichel Estate. This is expressed in the use of decorative roof and ridge tiles and finials, tall chimney stacks and pots, window head details and other embellishments, all of which combine to create houses of great individuality and character. Despite the variety of motifs, the total effect is completely harmonious and unified, reflecting the craftsmanship and quality of materials that have been invested in these modest buildings.

Solid, substantial houses contrast with equally characterful clapboard bungalows, all built at the turn of the Century by the Crichel Estate.

2.11 A clear hierarchy of buildings is still evident in several villages, especially those which have evaded recent development pressures, such as Long Crichel. This hierarchy, focuses on the manor house or converted rectory and reinforces the rural and historical social structure.

ii) Edge of Chalk Settlements

Landscape Setting

2.12 Unlike the Chalk stream villages, these are not focused on a watercourse or water-meadows, but are compact villages surrounded by open fields that extend to the village as distinct edges. The topography of each settlement varies but each is partly enclosed by nearby woodlands which occur on the adjacent Eocene deposits.

2.13 Horton, for example, lies amongst open farmland at the head of a shallow valley, enclosed to the north and east by woods on the nearby Reading Beds. Nearby, springs source Uddens Water. Hinton Martell lies on level ground, close to springs at the foot of a steep, wooded escarpment, again on the Reading Beds. Edmondsham House and the parish church are located on Chalk, but the village itself is mostly sited to the east on a rounded hillock overlooking Edmondsham Brook, which is on clay. Once again the settlement setting is enclosed by woodland to the north, east and south.

2.14 Each village is approached by winding lanes which descend towards the settlement. On the Eocene edges these descents tend to be steep, with deep, wooded hedge-banks.

Settlement Pattern

2.15 The linear villages of Hinton Martell and Edmondsham comprise Small Houses and Cottages which face onto the road behind hedged gardens. This pattern is repeated in Horton, another linear village, but several buildings are adjacent to the road and boundaries are walled.

Building Form and Materials

2.16 The most common building type is the two-storey house, which is typically of brick with a plain tiled roof and, occasionally with stone tile eaves courses. Welsh slate is not uncommon. The colour and texture of bricks vary from tones of orange to red. Burnt headers also occur.

Brick comprises the most common building material in Horton. In the 18th Century clay was dug from the adjacent hill and used for brickmaking.

2.17 Building spans of 5.5-6.0m, with eaves height of 4.5m are common. Roof pitches are commonly of 40 degrees, giving an overall height of 7.0m.

2.18 Cottages in the area are single storey with attics and are commonly of rendered cob under thatched roofs.

The scale and character of vernacular cottages derive from small rooms and low ceiling heights. Attic room windows are normally within 60cm. of the floor. Harkaway Cottage, Woodlands

iii) Settlements of the Inner Chase

Landscape Setting

2.19 This group of villages and hamlets are sited close to an irregular band of Clay-with-Flints, near the northern edge of the District. This represents some of the highest land in the District affording long panoramic views south and eastwards. Immediately to the north, forming a backdrop to these settlements, is a heavily-wooded ridge. This provides an important landscape edge, visually dividing the Cranborne Chase from the West Wiltshire Downs. Most of the villages are contained within dry valleys, surrounded by farmland and close to extensive beech, oak and ash woodlands.

2.20 Fields are large and of regular shape to facilitate corn production, but are surrounded by thicker hedges, often containing hedgerow trees. Similar hedges line the narrow winding lanes, which add to this area's seclusion and sense of remoteness. Villages, hamlets and farms are largely hidden from view to give the appearance of a seemingly empty landscape.

Settlement Pattern

2.21 Most settlements have a linear form focusing on the single village street. In Sixpenny Handley, this tradition was repeated after the disastrous fire of 1892. However, the Estate hamlet of Woodcutts is uncharacteristic: it is neither located in a dry valley, nor has a linear form. Instead, it stands on elevated, flat ground and is loosely based on a cruciform configuration near the 18th Century Manor Farm-house.

2.22 In New Town, buildings are grouped informally on the steep north slopes of a dry valley. Most are single-aspect cottages facing south, with outshuts at the rear under catslide roofs.

Chase Woods form the backdrop to New Town. An informal path leads up the steep hillside, linking this close-set group of cottages.

Building Form and Materials

2.23 Flint walls and Welsh slate roofs are a characteristic feature of this area. Some walls are entirely of flint, but more often are combined with brick. Wide bands of flint alternate with one, two or three courses of brick. Flints are also used to form plinths for cob walls, which are rendered, either having a natural finish or colour-washed in pale tones. Occasionally, cottages may be thatched, these tending to be located in more sheltered sites. In Sixpenny Handley, several cottages have pantile roofs which replaced thatch following the Great Fire.

2.24 The majority of traditional dwellings are cottages. Typically, these have spans of 4.5 to 5.5 metres. Most are two storeys but have a low eaves height of 4.0-4.5m. Many cottages have shallow pitches giving an overall height to ridge of less than 6.0m. These are mostly simple two-bay buildings with small, square windows with casements and a central doorway. Stacks are commonly located at each end of the ridge, flush with the end walls.

A narrow span two storey house in Woodyates; its low pitched slate roof extending at the rear to cover a two storey outshut. The walls are of flint, with brick quoins and horizontal bands.

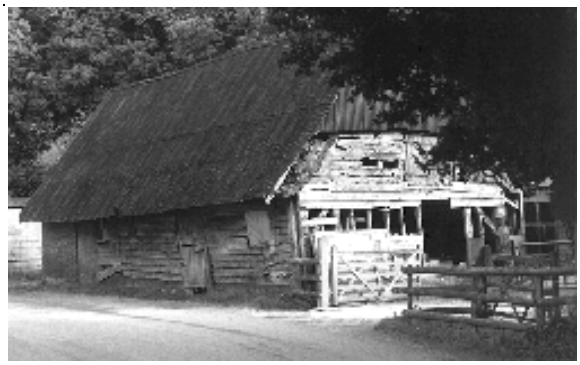
Other Characteristic Features of the Chalk Zone:

Farm-Buildings in the Chalk Zone

2.25 The density of farms outside villages is low within the Chalk zone compared with the other geological areas, but they are often larger in size. Farms feature in all the villages, or are closely associated with them. Some villages contain more than one farm, notably Long Crichel, which possesses four. Traditional farm buildings reinforce the rural character of the villages as well as introducing a pleasing contrast in scale and form. Mapperton Farm totally dominates the tiny settlement of Mapperton. Elsewhere, farms often occur at the edges of the settlements.

The size and position of the farmhouse often reflected the size of the farm. Middle Farm, Long Crichel.

2.26 Traditional farm-buildings are still common, built normally of brick or of timber-frame construction on a brick plinth and clad in weather-boarding. Roofs are characteristically plain tiled, though many post 1840 buildings are roofed in slate. Barns constructed in the 18th Century and earlier were originally thatched but have since been re-roofed with slate, tiles or corrugated iron. Only one complete thatched barn remains in the District, at White Mill Farm near Sturminster Marshall, although at the time of the survey this was over-clad in corrugated iron.



White Mill Farm barn, before restoration in 1998.

2.27 The traditional arrangement of barn, cattle shed, cart-shed, stables, granary, pigsty and other minor buildings around the farm-yard is still evident on many farms, but supplemented with large, modern portal-frame structures and silos. Many of the traditional buildings are unsuitable for modern farming. They are still being maintained by farmers and landowners, but the stock of such buildings is gradually diminishing. In Witchampton and Hinton Martell, farms which once stood in the centre of their respective villages have been converted into housing.

Modern sheet metal silos surrounded by traditional farm buildings near Cobley.

Churches

2.28 Historic churches represent an important feature of each village. At Sixpenny Handley, the church is on high ground and forms a focal point from the surrounding landscape. Elsewhere, the churches tend to have limited landscape significance on account of their sheltered location and presence of trees. Most

churches contain towers, which often form the oldest part of the structure. The church at Pentridge is the exception, having a squat, broached stone spire. At Moor Crichel, the church is located in private parkland between Crichel House and the lake.

2.29 Many churches represent the oldest remaining village buildings. Their longevity is largely due to the robust materials used in their construction. Green Sandstone and flint, indigenous to the Chalk, form the characteristic materials for walls, although heathstone (brought in from the adjacent Eocene area) occurs in Cranborne and Witchampton churches. Originally, the medieval churches would have been thatched or clad in lead, but are now tiled.

All Saints Church, Gussage All Saints, parts of which date from the 14th Century

Boundaries

2.30 Old boundary walls of brick-and-flint or chalk-cob with tile-capping are common in and around Chalk villages. Notable examples of cob walls occur in Cranborne, Long Crichel and Moor Crichel. Flint walls become more common further north, especially in Sixpenny Handley. At Witchampton, the boundary wall to Abbey House forms one of the earliest examples of brickwork in the County.

Old boundary walls often display strong sculptural elements and textural qualities. Manor Farm, Woodcutts.

High chalk cob wall with Roman tile capping surrounding an old orchard in Long Crichel.

Coursed flint work with random ashlar pieces, capped with brick. Moor Crichel.

Treescape

2.31 The dominant indigenous tree species are beech, ash, oak, and field maple, with willow and alder in the valley bottoms. Douglas fir and Scots pine are also common trees on account of the forestry activities over the last 100 years. Yew is a characteristic chalk landscape tree and can be found in most churchyards. Occasionally, yews occur as roadside trees, as at Dead Man junction, south of Cranborne. It is reputed that

these wind-blown trees are in excess of 1000 years old and were planted to act as road-markers in snowy conditions.

2.32 Some of the finest trees occur where parklands meet villages, as in Cranborne, Wimborne St. Giles and Pamphill.

2.33 Hedges in the rural landscape are predominantly of blackthorn, hawthorn, elm and hazel. Hedges of yew and box feature in Witchampton, especially near the church.

B) HILLY CLAY ZONE

Landscape Setting

2.34 The eroded dip-slope margins of the Chalk are overlaid by Clays and Sands of the Reading Beds, producing a hilly landscape of farms and woodland. Farms are mixed, with grazing for dairy and beef cattle more common than on the Chalk. The number of individual farms has declined, especially in recent years. Fields are now often rented out to neighbouring farms on a year to year basis, for arable or cattle grazing or for horses.

2.35 Field sizes vary, but in many areas the landscape is characterised by relatively small fields, bounded by thick hedgerows. These hedgerows, thicker and taller than those commonly found on the Chalk, often connect woods and copses which are prevalent in the area. They also form continuous boundaries to the country lanes, often associated with hedge-banks, to create an enclosed and intimate landscape. The hilly topography affords a number of long-distance views, most notably those from Chalbury churchyard. Substantial parts of the zone are designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value in the East Dorset Local Plan (Deposit).

2.36 Although much woodland has been cleared for farming, many small oak woods and copses remain. These, and the thick hedgerows that connect them, form the most important landscape feature of the Clay villages. Because of their dispersed form, these settlements tend to filter out into the surrounding landscape. Often, large, well-treed enclosures merge with nearby woods and copses.

Communications

2.37 The only road of significance, the Shaftesbury-Ringwood turnpike (originally a drove road), cuts briefly east-west through this narrow zone at Horton. Most characteristic are narrow, winding lanes that permeate the area. These connect a clutch of villages, hamlets and farmsteads, most of which are distributed in the southern half. Linking these lanes is a dense network of public pathways and tracks.

Settlement Pattern

2.38 Early settlements have avoided the narrow band of Reading Beds that lies between the Chalk and London Clay. The only exception is Pamphill, which contains cottages that date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

2.39 The Clay zone is drained by numerous small brooks and ditches which flow south-eastwards towards Mannington Brook and the River Crane. The availability of water from wells meant that early settlements were not dependent on water-courses. Most of the villages, hamlets and farmsteads are irregularly scattered throughout this zone.

2.40 Agriculture appeared late in this densely-wooded area and the distribution and size of settlements have historically reflected the reliance on commoners' and warreners' rights to sustain livelihoods. Throughout the area can be found common-land, sometimes no more than narrow strips alongside the country road. Holt Wood, Gaunt's Common, Broom Hill, Lower Row, Chalbury Common, Woodlands, Woodlands Common and Pamphill are shown on the 1903 O.S. maps as being centred on triangular or irregular greens.

The triangle at Gaunts Common has been gradually built over.

2.41 Within the last 50 years, many of the settlements between Woodlands Common and Holt have experienced considerable change. Many tiny cottages, considered unfit by modern standards, have fallen victim to redevelopment, partly as a result of pressure for new housing and partly through the enforcement of public health Demolition Orders. Although much development is dispersed amongst paddocks and small fields, the once separate settlements are beginning to coalesce. The enclosed, well-wooded nature of the landscape appears to help absorb development without impacting on the wider environment. However, the siting, form and materials of post-war building bears little resemblance to the traditional forms and materials of this area. At Woodlands, for example, an intricate and irregular grouping of traditional cottages and out-buildings east of the Old School has been replaced with a uniform row of post-war buildings.

2.42 East of Horton, the Shaftesbury-Ringwood road is now thickly clustered with a succession of farms and farmsteads, far removed from its sparse occupation at the turn of the century.

2.43 In contrast to these changing landscapes, to the north-east of Edmondsham, on higher land from the southern villages, are the hamlets of Cripplestyle, Crendell and Daggons; ancient place-names but seldom comprising more than a few cottages and farmsteads linked by narrow, hedge-lined lanes. Despite its proximity to the expanding settlement of Alderholt, this area has remained unaltered and maintains a strong sense of seclusion and remoteness.

2.44 The clear hierarchy of buildings manifest in the Chalk villages, is less apparent in the Hilly Clay Zone. Large Houses are a rarity; Great Houses are absent altogether.

Building Form and Materials

2.45 Timber-framed buildings in East Dorset, of sixteenth or seventeenth century origin, are concentrated in this zone. There was an abundance of local materials: oak for the timber-frames; hazel and clay for the wattle and daub panels, whilst locally-grown straw was used on roofs, supported by pole rafters of sweet chestnut or larch.

Square panels and straight braces characterise East Dorset timber frame buildings. Vicarage Farm, Holt.

2.46 Few timber-framed buildings survive today, so their conservation is vital. Examples of wattle and daub are rare, as panels have over time been infilled with brick nogging.

2.47 Outside Pamphill, timber-framed buildings often stand as isolated structures, especially as farm houses. They vary in size and status; some are two-storey houses, whilst others are single-storey-with-attics cottages.

Hart's Farm, Horton, a single storey with attics timber frame 17th Century house, part re-faced in brickwork in the 18th Century.

2.48 More representative of the area are cob and thatched buildings, mostly but not exclusively, of the eighteenth-century and early nineteenth. They share many characteristics of Chalk area cottages, but the walls are composed of clay-mud cob having a lower chalk content

and higher fibre content, such as horse hair or heather.

2.49 Cob buildings are most commonly found as single-storey-with-attics cottages, having spans of around 5 metres and a height to ridge of approximately 6 metres. Because cob requires a critical mass to achieve structural stability, the material was seldom used in the construction of gables. Instead, thatched roofs tended to be half-hipped or hipped. Chimney stacks often occur at one end of the ridge, built in brick and incorporated within the gable. Roof pitches fall between 35 and 40 degrees; steeper pitches are less common.

Many country cottages have been lost this century as a result of demolition orders. Invariably they have been replaced with modern houses or bungalows. Beekeeeper's Cottage, Manswood, is one of the few remaining that retains its original identity.

2.50 Local brickworks provided readily available materials for new cottages and houses in the nineteenth-century and for re-facing earlier cob buildings. Welsh slate was used to replace thatched roofs, perhaps following a fire. It was not unusual to use this opportunity to raise the height of the building. Victorian details, such as exposed purlins at gable-ends, may be seen superimposed on older structures.

2.51 Nineteenth-century extensions to dwellings were normally at the rear, at right-angles to the main range and built of brick and tile or slate. The pitch of the extension roof coincides with that of the main roof.

2.52 Traditional buildings within the dispersed villages are most commonly detached and set in generous plots, their orientation responding to local site conditions rather than conforming with historic boundaries.

2.53 Small clusters of Estate Houses are associated with the Gaunt's and Kingston Lacy Estates.

Owners have a responsibility to preserve the character of interesting old buildings: retaining timber windows, decorative barge boards, tiled roofs and tall stacks. Estate houses near the Grange, Furzehill.

2.54 Elsewhere houses (normally tied to particular farms) tend to be isolated and lacking in architectural ornamentation. Despite their plain appearance, these traditional houses are nevertheless well proportioned and robustly built.

Farm Buildings in the Clay Zone

2.55 Small farms are densely scattered throughout the area, more often than not located outside the villages. Many farm buildings were constructed in the 1840's, when the rural economy enjoyed a prosperous period. Consequently, the buildings are most commonly of brick construction under tile or slate roofs and grouped around the traditional farm-yard. Most are associated with an adjacent farm-house.

Brick granary with implement shed at Higher Honeybrook Farm, now used as a blacksmith's forge.

Churches

2.56 The only church of historical significance that lies within the Eocene area is at Chalbury. Dating from the 13th Century, this tiny church

(suggesting that Chalbury was never much larger than at present) is built of flint and rubble with ashlar dressings.

2.57 Small churches and chapels of the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries stand at Pamphill, Holt, Holt Wood and Woodlands.

All Saints Church, Chalbury, partly refaced in brick, is now mostly rendered. Note the plain bell-cote on the west gable, and the stone eaves courses on the chancel roof.

Boundaries

2.58 Rural hedges represent the predominant form of enclosure around building curtilages, many containing large oaks. Boundary walls are comparatively rare.

C) HEATHS, CONIFER PLANTATIONS AND OAK WOODS

Landscape Setting

Avon Heath Country Park.

2.59 Sands and gravels of the Bagshot and Bracklesham Beds cover the south-eastern half of the District, giving rise to extensive areas of heathland. The generally inhospitable conditions and poor communications on the heathland areas meant that, apart from the occasional exercise of squatter's rights, the area remained un-populated until the nineteenth-century.

2.60 Since the First World War, the area of heath has declined as substantial conifer plantations were established by the newly formed Forestry Commission. Significant areas of heathland have also disappeared as a result of agricultural improvement and rapid urbanisation, especially since the 1960's. This area now contains the main centres of population within the District, gravitating towards the south and separated from the Bournemouth-Poole conurbation by the Stour valley.

Settlement Pattern

2.61 A few individual examples of indigenous buildings remain within the zone, mostly confined to rural areas and within the township of Verwood. However the most complete and unspoilt grouping of cob and thatch buildings within this area occurs on the north slopes of Colehill. This intimate landscape of small fields, high hedges and great oaks is accessed by an irregular network of deeply-cut lanes, tracks and footpaths. The cottages too form important features, their siting, form and materials in harmony with the landscape. A number of cob and thatch cottages are sited close to the lane edge; others are set back within large plots. Several cottages, often those which retain most of their original identity, remain part of the Kingston Lacy Estate. One of the smallest is a single storey cob and thatch cottage, complete with pole rafter roof structure, located in Merrifield.

Above, cob and thatched cottages in Merrifield, a tranquil backwater on the north slopes of Colehill.

2.62 The traditional well-proportioned Victorian or Edwardian villa, constructed of mass-produced brick and Welsh slate, forms the nucleus of the now urban settlements. One of the largest concentrations of nineteenth-century housing (outside Wimborne) is at West Moors. Along straight, residential streets off Station Road, individually-crafted villas were built on large plots, giving the occupants the opportunity to plant native and newly-introduced exotic trees and surround their gardens with high laurel hedges.

2.63 Modern development has overwhelmed earlier building to such an extent that 'local distinctiveness' in this zone, in the context of traditional building pattern and form, becomes irrelevant in all but a few areas. Within the urban areas, 'sense of place' is achieved by familiar landmark buildings (new or old), buildings of a particular style or form, well-defined urban spaces, mature trees, interesting paving materials and other townscape elements. These areas lie outside the scope of this study. (see Supplementary Planning Guidance No.15 Visual Analysis of Wimborne Conservation Area).

D) PASTORAL RIVER VALLEY

Landscape Setting

2.64 This zone comprises the wide alluvial valley of the Stour which cuts across the Chalk, Reading Beds and Bagshot Sands at or near the southern edge of the District. The riverine landscape is quite distinct from the adjacent geological areas.

2.65 The wide meanders of the Stour lie within an irregular band of alluvium, to the north and south of which are intermittent deposits of valley gravel. The string of settlements that occupy the valley are all confined to the slightly higher, better-drained valley gravel areas.

2.66 Within the Chalk section of the river, the flat-bottomed valley is enclosed by gently rising ground, focusing on Badbury Rings to the north and Charborough Park in the south. Within the narrow Reading Beds section, the slopes are much steeper, especially at Pamphill. The steep, southern slopes of Colehill and Dudsbury form notable wooded backdrops to the river as it flows through the otherwise flay Bagshot Beds zone.

Rough grazing land on the slopes below Little Pamphill,

2.67 This is a predominantly open, flat landscape of large fields -mostly for pasture- bounded by hedges and hedgerow trees. Generally, trees fringing the river to the west of Wimborne tend to be sparsely distributed, but eastwards the river banks are more treed.

2.68 Dairying remains important on the flood-plain, with arable crops (traditionally corn) grown on the gentle slopes of the drier Chalk. To the east of Wimborne, market gardening has grown in importance in response to demands

from the expanding population of Bournemouth and Poole.

2.69 To the west of Wimborne, the sense of history is all-pervasive. The settlement names are Saxon in origin and present-day farmers still refer to meadows first recorded in the fourteenth century.

2.70 The river flows through a pinch-point between the urban areas of Wimborne and Merley near Canford Bridge. The residential suburbs on the slopes on the southern side of the river at this point appear obtrusive but elsewhere the valley landscape is essentially agricultural and remains an effective buffer between the conurbation and East Dorset settlements. The attractive group of old buildings at Canford School form an important focal point to the surrounding valley and Colehill to the north. Other, more recent developments, such as the Wimborne by-pass, sewage treatment plant at Leigh, Wimborne and golf courses at Dudsbury and Sturminster Marshall, are less serene. At Longham, the landscape buffer is pierced by various recent developments that line the main Ringwood Road.

2.71 The settlements and mill sites are spaced about 2 miles apart along the valley separated by agricultural land. Those to the east of Wimborne are influenced to an extent by the proximity of Bournemouth and Ferndown suburbs. The villages of Cowgrove and Shapwick, however, are very rural and belie their proximity to larger centres. Both settlements maintain their close historic associations with the surrounding land.

2.72 The Stour meanders close to the Parish Churches of Shapwick and Sturminster Marshall: their ancient stone towers further contributing to the pastoral landscape. However, the diminutive Church of All Saints at West Parley, with its timber bell turret, makes much less impact.

St. Bartholomew's Church, Shapwick, the nave and tower are mostly 14th Century, built onto an earlier structure. The walls are of flint and rubble with ashlar dressings. A mixture of Purbeck and heathstone is used, with Purbeck stone tiles on the roof eaves.

2.73 Around Sturminster Marshall, agricultural land- mostly pasture- in large, hedge-lined fields extends to the rear boundaries of village properties. Often these boundaries are kept low by residents to preserve views of the valley. Large, (mostly) arable fields with low hedges surround and penetrate Shapwick, whilst smaller fields of arable and pasture bounded by higher hedges and hedgerow trees, are more characteristic of Cowgrove. Medieval enclosures close to the farmsteads are still in evidence. In contrast, the open valley landscape surrounding Hampreston is influenced by market gardening.

Communications

2.74 Roads follow the outer margins of the river valley on both sides of the river, including the A.31 Trunk road (former Wimborne-Dorchester Turnpike) which, since 1982, by-passes Wimborne to the south. This crosses the river near the industrial estate at Leigh. In contrast, the quiet lanes on the north side link the villages of Pamphill, Cowgrove, Sturminster Marshall and Shapwick. To the east of Wimborne, roads are more heavily trafficked, as at Longham, but Hampreston and West Parley villages remain quiet on account of their off-road location.

2.75 Other bridging points are more ancient, some dating from pre-history. The Roman roads radiating south from Badbury Rings crossed the river at two places, at Shapwick and near Pamphill, but little evidence of these remains today. The settlements within the zone coincide

with the bridging points, past or present, though Sturminster Marshall lies a kilometre to the south-west of Whitemill Bridge.

2.76 Fine road bridges, Julian's Bridge (15th Century), White Mill Bridge (16th Century), Longham Bridge (18th Century), and Canford Bridge dating from 1813 are all Listed. Apart fro m affording good views of the river, the bridges themselves provide focal points and enrich the valley scene.

Settlement Pattern

2.77 Historically, most settlements within this zone are small, nucleated villages. One of the smallest is West Parley. The size of its Church indicates that it was never large, but Domesday suggests that the settlement at this time was larger than at present. The Church, the former Rectory and nearby farm buildings represent the core of the settlement. The importance of the farm in the rural community is also exemplified at Hampreston village. The 18th Century Manor Farm stands importantly opposite the Church across the village green.

Brick represents the most common building material in the Stour valley, east of Wimborne. Manor Farmhouse, Hampreston.

2.78 Shapwick and Sturminster were originally compact nucleated settlements, their early development restricted by the surrounding open fields which remained unenclosed until 1813. The Church/Farm relationship is maintained in both villages, although the farm buildings at Shapwick have now disappeared. The main focal points of both villages are the Market Places. At Sturminster, this comprises two linked triangular greens; at Shapwick stands a market cross. Cottages cluster around both spaces.

2.79 Cottages remain the dominant building type in Shapwick, but many in Sturminster have been redeveloped. Development of gardens and paddocks has also impacted on the character of the village. The siting, form, design and materials of most modern dwellings have little in common with the earlier buildings.

2.80 Single, paired or rows of cottages face directly onto the village road, normally without any front garden. 'Pinch-points' in the streets occur where individual or groups of buildings face each other. The cottages were traditionally associated with large plots, including allotments shared by rows of cottages.

The mixture of building forms and materials create variety in this village street scene. The scale and proportions of the buildings and the spaces between them, together with hedges and trees ensure harmony. Public spaces provide valuable sites for big trees. Back Lane, Sturminster Marshall.

2.81 At Sturminster, the railway halt and Cheese Factory (reputed to be the largest in the world in 1939) consolidated development to the south of the village and considerable infill development in the form of planned estates in this area has occurred since.

The design of many houses of this period followed one of a number of published pattern books. Though clearly contrasting from the earlier vernacular buildings, such houses are traditional in terms of their proportions and

materials. In most instances only two or three were built in any single locality, in keeping with the area's slow organic growth. High Street, Shapwick.

2.82 Cowgrove differs from other settlements in this zone, having a linear form but with no parish church. The settlement comprises a series of farmsteads and cottages on either side of the village road, many dating from the sixteenth-century. The form of the village has changed little since medieval times, although modern portal-frame barns are becoming increasingly evident.

Farmsteads line the village road in Cowgrove.

Building Form and Materials

2.83 To the east of Wimborne, buildings of the 18th Century or earlier are scarce. Small pockets of 18th Century buildings occur at Longham and Little Canford, constructed of brick with plain tiled roofs. Even rarer, the original core of the Fox and Hounds public house at Little Canford has walls of cob under a thatched roof; the 16th Century Old Manor Farm house, nearer Wimborne at Leigh Common, represents one of the earliest examples of brickwork in the area.

2.84 Vernacular buildings are more common to the west of Wimborne. Groups of timber-framed buildings occur at Sturminster Marshall and Shapwick, with the largest concentration at Cowgrove, where supplies of oak were abundant. Cob buildings, with thatched roofs, are typical of this area. Water reed has been used on some buildings, but combed wheat is more prevalent. The traditional thatching style for East Dorset, having smooth, rounded shapes with flush wrap-over ridges, are increasingly evident. Roof pitches are typically 40 degrees, but can be steeper where layers of thatch have built up over a long period of time.

Court House, Cowgrove, an early 17th Century timber framed house, with wattle and daub panels, all treated with lime wash.

2.85 Rendered cob walls are a feature of many cottages, although some are faced in 18th or 19th Century brickwork. Plinths of stone, flint or brick are traditionally tarred or painted black, a local tradition.

Thatch was still used in East Dorset as late as the 19th Century. For example, Trafalgar Cottage, Back Lane, Sturminster Marshall, has rendered walls, which are of rubble, above a brick plinth, perhaps recycling materials from an earlier building.

2.86 The 'Small Houses' category of buildings are also well represented in the area. Some are 18th Century farm-houses, but the majority date from the 19th Century. Walls are of brick, or occasionally render, under plain tile or slate roofs. Typically, spans are 6m with ridge heights of 6.5 to 7.5m and eaves height of 5m.

2.87 Traditional buildings are simple in both form and elevation treatment. Gable ends are common, whilst half- or quarter-hips are common on thatched buildings. Mostly, small, square windows with twin opening casements are pierced symmetrically into predominantly solid walls. Dormer windows are rare.

2.88 Typically, front doors are centrally-placed, except where subsequent extensions have elongated the building. Stacks are traditionally located at one or both ends of the ridge and incorporated within the walls.

Smooth textures of render and slate enhance strong tonal contrast between walls and roof. Priory Dairy House, Shapwick, has Georgian sliding sash windows, perhaps reflecting the status of the building. Note the tall chimney stacks which give poise to the building.

Farm-buildings

2.89 Traditional farm-buildings to the west of Wimborne reflect styles and materials as found on the adjacent Chalk, whilst to the east of Wimborne, brick and tile or slate are prevalent.

Boundaries

2.90 Hedges represent the most common boundary treatment throughout the area. They are essentially rural hedge species of hawthorn and hazel with few hedgerow trees. The roadside hedges in particular make an important contribution to the character of each settlement. The hedges link buildings within each settlement and link these with the surrounding countryside. Combined with grass verges and ditches, they provide an informal, green edging to the rural lanes. And in places where modern development impinges on the village scene, the hedges often provide an element of screening.

Trees

2.91 Trees are locally important features, especially within churchyards and close to some of the larger houses. Individual specimen trees, in particular, make a significant contribution to the character of several Conservation Areas located within this zone. Generally, however, the Stour villages of Cowgrove, Shapwick and Sturminster Marshall have relatively few trees, which accounts for their open character

3. Conclusions

Preserving Local Distinctiveness

3.1 Large areas of countryside and an appreciable number of rural settlements of East Dorset District still retain their local identities. This is particularly so within the Chalk landscape and the northern sector of the Eocene area, north of Edmondsham. The distinctive character of many of these settlements and rural areas have not been compromised by inappropriate modern development. This is because very little new development has occurred in these areas.

3.2 This is not the case in other rural areas to the east and south of the District. It is not only the quantity of new dwellings that has occurred since the War (they replace many old cottages which were pulled down beforehand); but the nature of these houses and bungalows which are often more appropriate in suburban situations. Furthermore, these are still being built, with the result that local distinctiveness continues to be diluted.

Wheelwrights Close, Sixpenny Handley, development completed in 1999.

3.3 This does not imply that modern developments should be pastiche representations of earlier periods. New buildings ought as a general rule, be of the present age and thereby contribute to our building heritage. But it is vitally important that such development should respect and relate to its neighbours and to its landscape setting.

3.4 If the issue of local identity is to be effectively addressed, little less than a fundamental change in our approach to rural housing design is needed, especially involving new approaches to site layout and housing form whilst ensuring more consistency in the use of appropriate building materials.

3.5 In all rural development proposals, a site survey plan showing existing features such as slopes, trees, hedges, water courses, old walls and the materials used in nearby buildings should form part of the planning application. Integrating these features into the new development will foster harmony with the surrounding landscape. Using existing features in this way, each development will possess its own distinctive sense of place and clear identity.

3.6 In order to preserve and strengthen the distinctive qualities of the rural areas of East Dorset District, in addition to existing planning policies, the following **Code of Practice** should be observed.

Wheelwrights Close, Sixpenny Handley.

CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Ensure that the distinctive character of existing buildings is preserved.

a) Ensuring that the character of Listed Buildings is not compromised by alterations or extensions. Many historic cottages have, over a period of time, been incrementally enlarged. The essential character of a cottage, however, depends upon its size and scale. Each successive extension, although modest in itself, may undermine this character. Space standards and room arrangements which we take for granted in modern dwellings cannot be strictly applied in historic properties. Where the 'character threshold' has been reached in respect to a particular cottage, any further extensions may be prohibited.

Similarly, it is possible to 'lose' the identity of the original structure when a number of extensions are attached. Sensitivity and skill are demanded whenever small cottages are extended in order to preserve the identity of the building.
Any extension must be in scale with the existing dwelling and always be subservient in size and height. Its form, elevation treatment and detailing must be in sympathy with the original structure. The materials used must be appropriate and where necessary match exactly those used on the existing building. This may involve the use of whole or knapped flint-work, cob or thatch.

Tiny Cottages such as Tudor Cottage, Woodyates, are increasingly rare.

b) Preserving the setting of Listed Buildings by ensuring that important curtilage buildings, structures and boundary walls are not damaged or spoilt by the erection of inappropriate buildings.

c) Encouraging the repair of traditional buildings using appropriate materials, especially flint, cob and weather-boarding and thatch.

d) Encouraging the use of combed wheat when re-thatching existing roofs and, where appropriate, the construction of new buildings. Encourage East Dorset thatching traditions ensuring smooth, rounded profiles without block ridges.

e) Identifying other buildings of architectural or historic interest that are not included on the Statutory List; establish a List of Buildings of Local Interest.

f) Publishing an advisory leaflet which explains why traditional buildings are important and how they should be looked after.

g) Requiring a clear justification as part of any application for Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission for any alterations to Listed or other traditional buildings. Such statements should include how the proposals will improve the appearance of the building without compromising its historic structure.

2. Within villages and hamlets the historical street pattern should be preserved and reflected in new developments.

In Castle Street, Cranborne, new dwellings are arranged as close to the road as the Highway Authority would permit. The low front walls strengthen the sense of enclosure.

This can be achieved by:

a) Avoiding development on sites, such as gardens and former orchards, which

currently make a positive contribution to the character of the settlement.

b) Avoiding development which compromises the clarity of the existing street pattern and street-scape. Cul de sacs which access small groups of houses or bungalows are essentially suburban in character and in consequence appear out of place with the traditional village form.

c) Following historical building lines.

d) Preserving historical boundaries.

e) Reflecting the density of the pre-1919 settlement, in terms of spaces between buildings, especially where such spatial relationships form an important aspect of village character; densities might be relatively high or low, depending on the settlement.

f) Ensuring that the accommodation of vehicles is unobtrusive, in terms of access to the site, circulation within it and how the storage of vehicles is treated (this may require relaxation of standard highway criteria); in developments of more than two dwellings, it is important to vary the position of the garages, one from another.

A recent Housing Association development, using standardised house types which draw reference to rural styles. Its character, however, is strongly influenced by the suburban road layout. The use of front boundary walls is also inappropriate in a village dominated by hedges. Holt.

The road layout of the recently completed Friday's Heron development echoes the shape of the Square in the centre of Cranborne. But this space is larger and the buildings are lower.

3. Within any particular village or hamlet the characteristic traditional building form should be strengthened.

This may be achieved by:

a) Ensuring that the scale of new development is consistent with local traditional buildings; building spans, ridge and eaves heights should relate to the norm for Small Houses (as defined in the Introduction) within the settlement; single-storey units (i.e. bungalows) should relate to the norm for 'Cottages'. In no part of the rural District should spans exceed 7m.

b) Ensuring that the siting of buildings, relative to the highway, plot curtilage and adjacent traditional buildings, reflects the particular historic settlement pattern.

Village housing, recently constructed at Cranborne, comprising short terraces which follow the alignment of the street. Good solid/void relationship between wall area and irregularly-placed. Colour and textural contrasts achieved by roof materials.

c) Ensuring appropriate orientation of new buildings, following any recognisable pattern that may exist in a particular locality.

d) Avoiding narrow, deep house-types which are contrary to traditional forms.

e) Ensuring a simple, elongated-rectangular form for the main body of the house, enlarged if necessary by means of small-scale, well-articulated 'extensions' at the side or rear.

f) Ensuring that roof pitches relate to other traditional buildings in the locality.

g) Avoiding flat-roofed extensions, garages or other buildings.

A recent house in Gussage St. Michael having low eaves height, a narrow building span and 45° roof pitch. The size and disposition of windows ensure that solid areas, both walls and roof, remain dominant.

4. Ensure the use of appropriate building materials.

a) The use of reclaimed materials from the same locality, especially brick will be encouraged.

b) The use of lime putty mortar in new brickwork, for aesthetic, practical and sustainability reasons will be encouraged.

c) The Local Planning Authority will ensure that, where new bricks are proposed, their colour and texture blend with the brickwork of traditional buildings in the locality. Sample panels of brickwork constructed on site are particularly useful in selecting the right brick, bonding pattern, mortar mix and pointing. In most cases, stock bricks should be used in conjunction with a natural lime mortar. Wire cut bricks and bricks with an applied finish should be avoided.

A row of rendered and thatched cottages, constructed in 1988 at the northern end of Sturminster Marshall, relate in form and materials to a similar row adjacent to the church. These cottages, which replaced a single inter-war bungalow, make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The gentle curves in the cottage walls belie their concrete block construction.

d) Rendered block-work may be appropriate in settlements where cob buildings are located, but not in villages which are predominantly brick. Rendered walls should have plinths of brickwork and the render should be smooth; part-rendered, part-brick walls should be avoided. Rendered buildings should normally have slate or thatched roofs -such buildings should be smaller in scale than brick buildings.

e) Whilst unbaked earth (cob) will seldom be used in the construction of new buildings, it is entirely appropriate for repairs and in the construction of minor alterations, in order to avoid potential problems of joining disparate materials. The cob may be applied as blocks or laid in situ. For the same reason, when altering cottages having pole-rafter roofs, like materials should be used in order to integrate new work into the old roof structure.

f) Flint-work is encouraged in the Chalk stream villages and may be a planning requirement in the northern Chalk settlements around Sixpenny Handley. Sample panels of flint-work are essential to ensure correct techniques of laying and to determine whether whole or knapped flints are appropriate for a particular location. Pre-formed panels of flint facilitate cavity wall construction.

g) On the Chalk, a pattern of alternating flint and brick bands represents the most

common use of this material and will be encouraged.

h) The use of natural stone in modern building will be extremely rare, but should not be discouraged, provided the type of stone and its application follow local traditions. Applied stone-work, as cladding on brick or rendered walls, on the other hand, represents perhaps the worst possible fate for any wall.

i) The use of weather-boarding to clad garages and out-buildings is encouraged. It is also an appropriate material for small, single-storey extensions, especially in Chalk areas. Wide, square-edged boards, normally of oak, chestnut or elm, should be laid horizontally, but vertical boards with cover-strips over the joints, may be equally appropriate. Ship-lap boarding is not a local tradition and will be discouraged.

j) Tile-hanging may be acceptable in localities where this nineteenth century tradition is evident.

k) Salvaged peg-tiles and plain tiles are appropriate anywhere within the District on roof-pitches of 40 degrees or greater; new machine-made clay plain are smoother and flatter and create a more uniform roof covering. Hand-made tiles, still manufactured by Keymer in Sussex; Tudor Roof Tile, Kent; Solopark, Cambridgeshire, Sandtoft, South Yorkshire and Michelmersh Co, Hampshire, best reproduce the character of old peg-tile roofs. Half round tiles are a traditional hip detail and should be used in favour of bonnet tiles.

l) Single- or double-pantiles or interlocking tiles should be confined mainly to buildings or localities where these materials exist already and on larger garages.

m) New or salvaged Welsh slate is appropriate throughout the District, especially in certain areas, such as Sixpenny Handley, where such roofs are prevalent. Slate need not be confined to shallow pitched roofs on account of its past traditional use as a replacement for thatch. Slate roofs may be used in conjunction with tiled roofs to help articulate larger buildings.

n) Slate substitutes should only be applied in certain circumstances, for example, on small roofs of out-buildings and some agricultural buildings. Slates, which are reconstituted from slate dust (60% or more) are preferable to synthetic 'slates', which should be discouraged. If local distinctiveness is to be maintained, the use of natural slate should be vigorously upheld.

o) The potential of thatch as an economic and desirable roofing material on new buildings is beginning to be realised, and a number of modern examples can now be found within the County, including East Dorset. As thatch represents one of the most distinctive traditional features of the area, encouragement should be given to preserve existing roofs by way of local authority grants and loans. The use of thatch should also be encouraged on new dwellings in locations where thatch is common.

p) The type of thatching material and the style in which it is laid are also important, as the thatching traditions of other regions, if applied in East Dorset, can weaken the area's distinctive style. Combed wheat is universally suitable throughout the District and should be encouraged wherever possible in order to achieve the soft, rounded profiles characteristic of the area's cottages; the Norfolk tradition of deep block ridges, often with ornate patterns, should be discouraged. Similarly, 'points' at each end of the ridge and other ornamentation should be discouraged in favour of simple, smooth lines.

q) In certain instances, it may be appropriate to express the form of new extensions by the use of a contrasting roofing material. Many thatched cottages have old outshuts in slate or plain tiles, and this tradition may be equally applicable today.

r) Corrugated sheets are a traditional low cost roofing material that is particularly appropriate for outbuildings and barns in rural situations. Traditional 'corrugated iron', painted black, gives a good, rustic effect, but modern profiles and most plastic-coated sheeting should be avoided.

s) Concrete tiles, cedar shingles, metal sheeting (other than corrugated iron), fibre-cement and plastic products do not coincide with any local building tradition and their use on residential buildings

should be discouraged. Corrugated fibre-cement sheeting, commonly used on agricultural buildings, may be appropriate for single garages, especially if lichen growth can be encouraged.

Simple house types are cheaper to build, allowing more to be invested in good quality materials. These recent houses having plain clay tiles and stock bricks, harmonise with other buildings in Cranborne, but might look out of place in, say, Shapwick.

5. New dwellings should reflect the proportions of traditional buildings.

The following factors need to be considered:

a) The relationship between solid walls and window/door openings. A solid:void relationship of 5:1 is common and should be used as an approximate measure for new dwellings (a typical suburban house is 2:1).

b) Traditional buildings may include box sash windows or casements, or a combination of both. The casements may be single, double or triple, resulting in a vertical rectangle, square or horizontal rectangle shape respectively. However, as with box sash windows, the visual emphasis should always be vertical.

c) If dormer windows are proposed, these should normally be small in size and remain an incidental feature of the roof.

d) Geometric ratios which underpin the design of Georgian buildings ('Golden Section') still represent sound principles for the design of modern dwellings.

6. Local identity should be preserved by appropriate design.

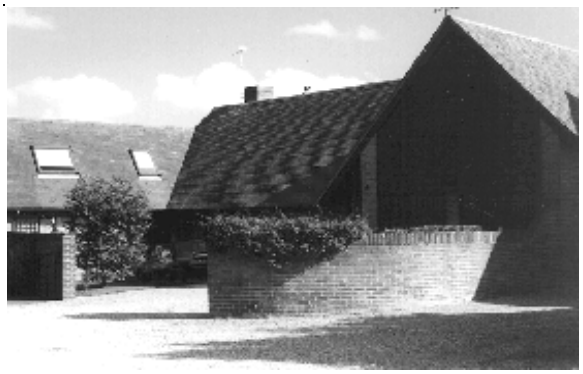
It is not the intention of the Planning Authority to impose particular design requirements, as style involves a degree of subjectivity. However, the quality of design, in terms of the form of buildings, their basic proportions, materials and attention to detail, can be measured and will be subject to planning control. These qualities characterise traditional buildings and are equally relevant today. The quality of buildings can also be measured in terms of the soundness of construction, heat insulation and adequate natural ventilation.

Two pairs of Housing Association houses pictured here and above,recently constructed in Wimborne St. Giles. The buildings fit well into the village, partly on account of their siting and form, and partly due to their design. Architectural references to other Estate houses are instantly recognisable.

a) Present day building regulations impose standards which were absent when pre-1919 buildings were constructed. Moreover technological advances in the industry also affect the methods of construction. This Design Code needs to be applied to the building industry of today. Similarly, the building industry should accept that elements of traditional design are still relevant and, indeed, are particularly appropriate in rural situations. Narrow house-types, for example, potentially allow better natural ventilation and daylight.

b) The installation of window vents, roof vents, and vents for flues of various sorts can adversely affect the appearance of new country dwellings if insufficient consideration is given to them beforehand at the design stage. Chimneys form vitally important architectural features on traditional houses. They can still perform useful functions in modern buildings, to accommodate central heating flues and bathroom vents, or for their more conventional uses. Studying the size and form of stacks and their position in relation to gables and ridges, provides valuable references to successful chimney design.

c) Another characteristic of many traditional buildings is their simplicity, in terms of their form and elevation treatment. Many older houses are very plain, with straight eaves lines and simple roofs. The simplest building shapes harmonise best with the adjacent landscape.



Manor Farm, in the centre of Hinton Martell, has been partly reconstructed and converted into five dwellings. A modern architectural treatment has been adopted but its traditional form and materials were retained.

d) Dormer windows are not common features and where they do occur, are normally very small: just enough to allow light into the roof-space. Where dormer windows are considered appropriate, careful detailing is required to ensure that their design retains the finesse of traditional dormers.

e) New dormers should be as narrow as possible, little wider than the window itself, with a projecting fascia or barge-boards adjacent to the window head. The barge-boards should be plain without fillets. Side walls should be dressed in lead to minimise the overall width of the dormer.

f) Large modern roof-lights tend to draw attention to, and disrupt the appearance of otherwise simple expanses of roof. Their reflective surface can often be seen from a considerable distance. Only the smallest available roof-lights should be used, and their number minimised. Traditional designs should be used that lie flush with the roof plane and which adopt a narrow module. Large, modern roof-lights will normally not be permitted.

g) The windows of many late 18th Century and 19th Century dwellings are set back from the face of the brickwork by about 100mm, the effect of which is to create shadow lines and enhance the modelling effect of each elevation. They have a practical benefit too, in terms of protecting the timber frame from the elements. Associated with these deep reveals are masonry window cills, often of stone or rendered brickwork. These features are equally relevant today.

h) Windows constructed of upvc do not possess the character or detail of traditional timber windows and their use should be discouraged. Well made windows, using seasoned timber that are properly maintained will outlast plastic alternatives. Microporous paints applied to bare timber dramatically reduce the level of maintenance required.

i) Good, modern design will continue to be encouraged, provided it is appropriate for the particular locality and provided that the designer is able to demonstrate an ability for quality detailing. Proper attention to detail is a prerequisite of all good buildings, and contemporary buildings are no exception. Designers should examine the traditional building features of the locality -especially those which contribute to local distinctiveness - and interpret these in a modern idiom. To be successful, this requires a high degree of sensitivity and architectural ingenuity with corresponding less dependency on standardised building components. Irrespective of the proposed style of building, modern or traditional, the basic form, proportions and materials should follow the guidance contained in this Code of Practice.

7. Local distinctiveness should be reinforced by the appearance and treatment of spaces between and around buildings

a) Landscape design should be considered as an integral part of the building design process and is equally relevant at the initial site planning stage when determining the basic form of the development.

b) Existing boundary walls and hedges should be preserved wherever possible, but especially where these form important features within the village or outside.

c) New boundaries should perpetuate the prevalent boundary material in the particular area, in terms of their materials and height. For example, boundary walls of brick, alternating with flint, should be promoted throughout the Chalk area, but especially in the Chalk-stream villages and the Inner Chase area.

d) New hedges should always be indigenous to the local area, thus harmonising the development with the landscape as well as encouraging wildlife.

e) Most fencing types are more appropriate to suburban situations, but wattle hurdles are a traditional boundary treatment and are made in the local area. Horizontal metal bar fencing remains a classic parkland boundary.

f) Existing trees should be preserved wherever possible and similar species planted at the time of the development in order to ensure long-term succession. Indigenous trees should be encouraged in order to help integrate the development with the surrounding landscape. Sufficient space should be allowed to enable new trees to develop to their full potential. Smaller cultivars of native trees may be appropriate where space is limited.

g) In the past, orchards were a common village feature and should be encouraged today, either as self-contained plantings, or within gardens.

h) Driveways should be surfaced in materials which are appropriate to rural situations, such as hoggin, gravel, or dressed tarmacadam, with treated timber, granite setts or concrete footpath edgings.

8. Rural character should be reinforced by highway design.

The finger-post is a distinctive feature of the English Countryside.

a) Too many rural housing developments are arranged around a road pattern based on set rules. Such standards, when rigidly applied, result in suburban roads of uniform character. These developments appear alien in a countryside that is characterised by informality. Great sensitivity and skill are required to apply highway standards in such a way that will maintain the rural feel, without compromising safety.

b) This will require a new approach to housing design that considers spatial relationships between buildings first before working out how they are to be accessed.

c) An informal 'lane' appearance, consistent with the character of the surrounding area, should be achieved that still meets the requirements of the Highway Authority. Highway design need not, and should not, be set out by template. A relaxed kerb alignment that introduces restrictions in the width of the road-space

will encourage slower vehicle speeds. To prevent such alignment changes being arbitrary and contrived, they should be related to the arrangement of buildings, existing trees or other site features.

d) Cul de sacs are a feature of suburban housing estates and if possible, should be avoided in new village developments. Instead, new roads should connect with existing highways or other public rights of way. Where turning heads need to be provided, their critical highway dimensions should be incorporated within a surfaced area appropriate to the locality, such as a courtyard.

e) In order to achieve sight-lines at road junctions, existing hedges may be lifted and repositioned further back.

f) The choice of materials has a profound effect on the appearance of the highway. Most important is the edging treatment. Standard smooth concrete kerb-stones should never be used in rural areas. Small-unit blocks having a rough texture are an acceptable substitute for traditional granite setts.

g) Within housing areas, 'Rumble Strips' of granite setts help to reduce traffic speed, and the contrast in surface texture breaks up expanses of smooth tarmac.

h) Private drives and other off-road surfaces should also be formed in a contrasting material, such as rolled hoggin or washed gravel.

i) Soft verges are a feature of many villages. Their width, and the manner in which they are maintained, together with any ditches or streams that might exist, all influence village character. It is important that such features should not be spoilt by new developments. Similar features may be incorporated in the new housing area.

j) The level of street lighting should be appropriate to the locality. If the surrounding area is unlit, it may not be appropriate to install any public lighting within the new development. Isolated lamps may be appropriate to illuminate critical highway features, but comprehensive street lighting is out of place in most rural localities.

Cottages at Little Pamphill face directly onto a communal grassy area without paths or driveways. Their charm is enhanced by the very simple landscape treatment.

Appendix 1

Reference Maps:

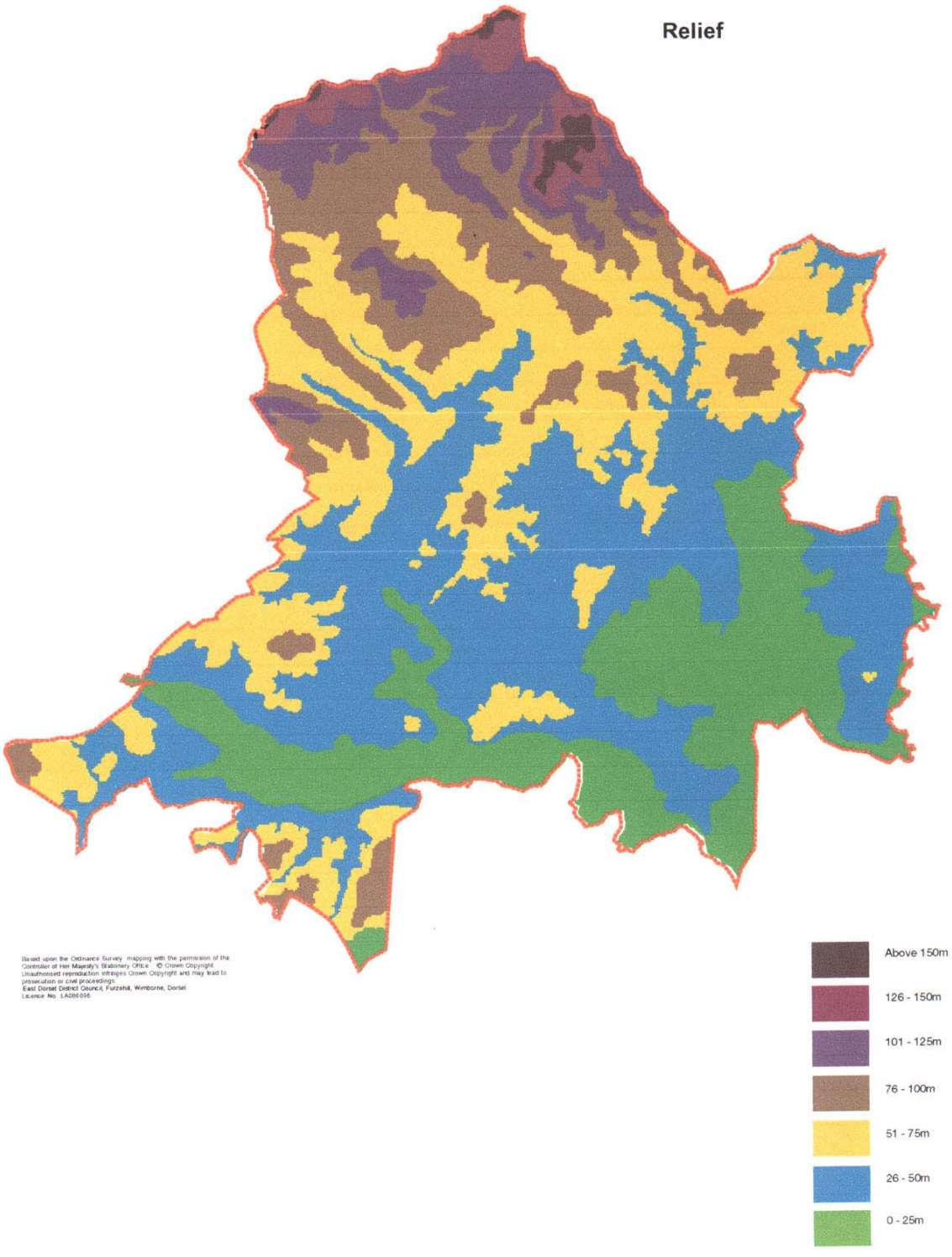
Relief

Geology

Landscape Designations

Countryside Design Summary

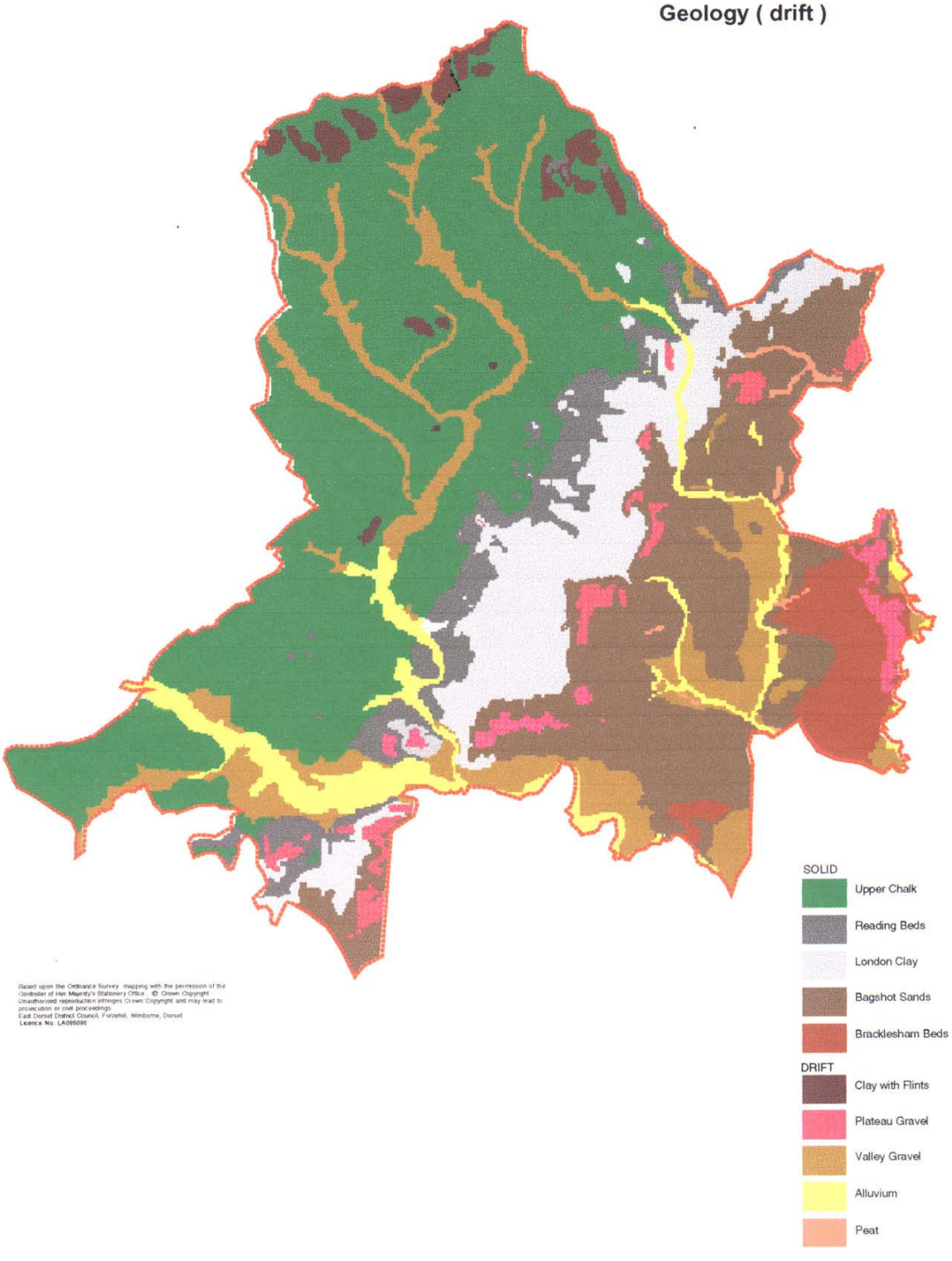
Relief



East Dorset District Council Planning Department, Supplementary Planning Guidance No.21 (August 1999)

Countryside Design Summary

Geology (drift)



East Dorset District Council Planning Department, Supplementary Planning Guidance No.21 (August 1999)

Countryside Design Summary

Landscape Designations

East Dorset District Council Planning Department, Supplementary Planning Guidance No.21 (August 1999)

Appendix 2

Glossary

ASHLAR hewn blocks of masonry, with a dressed, even finish, carefully laid to courses. Often used to form sharp edges around windows and corners of rubble-stone buildings

BROACHED SPIRE a church spire, the profile of which has a distinctive 'kink', formed when the pyramidal base connects into an octagonal spire.

CATSLIDE usually on a thatched building where the main roof extends seamlessly in the same, or slightly shallower, plane to cover a single storey extension to the side or rear of the main building

COLOUR WASH traditionally a tinted limewash applied to masonry or plaster, but today this term is more often used to describe a painted external wall finish.

DIAPER a geometric pattern in brickwork made by intermixing bricks of different colour, often blue-flared headers.

KNAPPED FLINT a flint-stone split in two and the exposed black surface laid to face outwards

LISTED BUILDING a building included in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The List is compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Details of Listings can be obtained from the District Council.

MONO PITCH a roof with a single pitch, often over lean-to extensions

NOGGING brickwork used as infill between a timber frame

OUTSHUT an extension at the side or rear of the main dwelling, often in the form of a lean-to

PANTILE roof tile having a curved s-shape section

PASTICHE a term applied when a new building is deliberately designed to copy an historic architectural style in order to create a deception or falsehood.

PEG-TILE a small, plain clay tile, formed with two holes close to one edge; hand-hewn wooden pegs attach it to the roof batten.

PLAIN TILE a small, clay or concrete roof-tile fixed to timber battens by a lip on one edge, formed during the manufacturing process.

POLITE an architectural term, used to describe a non-vernacular building, i.e., one having a particular architectural style based on recognised aesthetic principles; associated, for example, with many Georgian buildings

PORTAL FRAME a concrete or steel prefabricated frame to support the walls and roof used as a series of ribs, usually for large span industrial or agricultural structures

QUOINS dressed stones used at the external corners of brick or rubble-stone buildings, often laid alternately long and short.

ROMAN TILE a tapered, half-round clay tile, each course is laid with the convex and concave surfaces laid upwards alternately. A similar visual effect can be achieved using proprietary 'Bridgewater' tiles.

SHIP-LAP regular, narrow, horizontal planking laid so that the lower edge overlaps the board below, normally painted.

SILO a large storage container for cereals

STOCK BRICK the ordinary brick of any particular locality, manufactured by traditional methods in moulds

TILE-HANGING overlapping vertical tiles fixed on horizontal timber battens to a wall or the upper section of a wall.

TRADITIONAL a loose term used to describe buildings that were built prior to the widespread use of standardised building materials and components. May be applied to polite or vernacular styles.

VERNACULAR an historic building style applied to rural buildings prior to the widespread use of mass-produced materials, uniform building practices and standardised house designs. Vernacular buildings are a direct response to the availability of local materials,

such as cob, brick, tiles, straw and timber, and their associated building craft traditions. Consequently, their appearance harmonise with the local landscape and reinforce its distinctive character.

WATTLE & DAUB a wall constructed of interwoven branches or thin timber strips (wattles) filled with clay or mud (daub), often used to infill between timber framing

WANEY EDGE timber planking, normally of elm or oak with a naturally uneven edge, used as external cladding. It is often stained black or left untreated

Appendix 3

The paragraph numbers in bold refer to photographs.

CP refers to the Code Of Practice in Section 3

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Gaunt's Estate	2.53	Holt Wood	1.63
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	2.4	Horton	1.41
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Gussage St Michael	2.4		2.15
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	2.41	2.2
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(Document reformatted in Microsoft Word 2007)