

ELSTEAD VILLAGE

DESIGN STATEMENT

Elstead Village Design Statement has been produced with assistance from

The Countryside Commission,
Elstead Parish Council,
Waverley Borough Council,
B.D.O.R. Ltd Bristol,
The People of Elstead,

The Elstead Village Design Group is grateful to the above for their support and also
for the drawings provided by our artists -

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CONTENTS

ITEM

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Introduction..... | |
| 2. What is a Village Design Statement ?..... | |
| 3. Brief History of the Village..... | |
| 4. Landscape Setting..... | |
| 5. Settlement Pattern..... | |
| 6. Building form..... | |
| 7. Plot Boundaries (walls, hedges, fences)..... | |
| 8. Conservation Areas..... | |
| A Map of Elstead Village..... | |
| 9. Existing Building Detail (roofs, walls, windows, doors, porches)..... | |
| 10. Future Building Development (new houses, extensions, conversions)..... | |
| 11. Roads and Traffic Management..... | |
| 12. Utilities and Street Furniture..... | |
| 13. Public Transport..... | |
| 14. Trees..... | |
| 15. Conclusion..... | |
| A General Map of the Parish Showing the Rights of Way..... | |

The Countryside Commission works to conserve the beauty of rural England and to help people enjoy it.

Elstead Village Design Statement has been produced as one part of a project by the Countryside Commission into the design of rural buildings and their settings.

This document was adopted by Waverley Borough Council on 4th July 1995 as a planning statement to be taken into account as a material consideration when determining development proposals.



Elstead Village Green

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1

The Village Design Statement has been written and compiled by the Elstead Design Group so that local views and ideas can assist in reaching design decisions on all kinds of development and change in the village. The preparation of this document is supported by Waverley Borough Council and Elstead Parish Council.

1.2

The Elstead Village Design Group was formed by local residents following open meetings initiated by the Countryside Commission, as a part of a national experimental programme of pilot projects to explore ways of improving design in rural areas.

2. WHAT IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT ?

2.1

The Design Statement describes Elstead as it is today and highlights the qualities which the residents value. It is intended to be a practical tool capable of influencing the design of development in the village. It is a document linking local views with the Waverley Borough Council's local plan, adopted in June 1993, and control of development carried out by the Council. It will assist Elstead Parish Council when commenting on planning applications and the Borough Council in its consideration and determination of planning applications.

2.2

The aim is to ensure that the design of future development and change in Elstead is based on an understanding of the village's past and present, contributing to the protection and improvement of Elstead's special character, and maintaining the high quality of its environment.

2.3

Change is caused by developments of all types including the smaller extensions and alterations to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths and hedges. The Statement therefore offers everyone considering development in the village simple design advice on:-

the pattern of the settlement and open spaces,

the scale, height and proportion of buildings,

the detailing of buildings and architectural features,

the treatment of boundaries,

materials and finishes,

local highway conditions,

trees and landscaping.

It will be of interest to:-

householders and community groups,

local businesses,

Local Councils,

statutory bodies and utilities,

developers and builders,

architects, planners and engineers.

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

3.1

Elstead village lies in the Surrey Hills area, south of the Hog's Back and north of Hindhead and mainly to the south of the River Wey between two crossing points which were bridged in mediaeval times.

3.2

Elstead, originally called Helstede, was declared a Chapelry in the hundred of Farnham in 976 AD.



3.3

The first part of St. James's Church was built c. AD 1138 and there are domestic buildings in the village dating back to the 15th century which would have been based on agricultural holdings. Their location suggests a linear village related to the two principal roads.



3.4

There was probably little growth until the early 19th century and the pace of development appears to have quickened in its second half. It is during this period that many of the grander "gentry" houses appeared, probably reflecting the new wealth created during the industrial revolution.

3.5

In common with most of Surrey considerable development has taken place in this century, extending beyond the two principal roads to spread along what were originally farm tracks. Some of these tracks remain as unadopted, unmetalled thoroughfares.

3.6

Unlike many villages in Surrey, Elstead is fortunate in having a range of retail and service premises. These are very important to the community and every effort should be made to encourage them to continue in being.

4. LANDSCAPE SETTING

4.1

The village is in the heart of the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB), the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the County designated Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

4.2

The character of the countryside surrounding Elstead has remained largely unchanged for many years and comprises a patchwork of woodland, farmland and open heath on either side of the flood meadows of the river Wey. The overall impression is of woodland and fields, an essential character of the landscape that has been maintained.

4.3

The extensive common land south of Elstead includes a central low-lying area of wet heath with bell heather, crossleaved heath and associated grasses, surrounded by drier heathland communities of heather and gorse. On higher ground pine predominates. There are notable rarities to be found on this land. The great grey shrike and the hobby are regular avian visitors with regional sightings of osprey, Montague's harrier and even the very rare hoopoe. Bog asphodel and marsh orchids are found locally, and Pudmore pond and neighbouring patches of open water are renowned for their population of dragonflies.

4.4

The Elstead, Royal, Ockley, Hankley, Guinea and Thursley commons comprise a contiguous area of heathland which extends towards Milford, Tilford and Frensham. This area, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also designated by English Nature as a "National Nature Reserve" and is thus of national significance in terms of nature conservation.

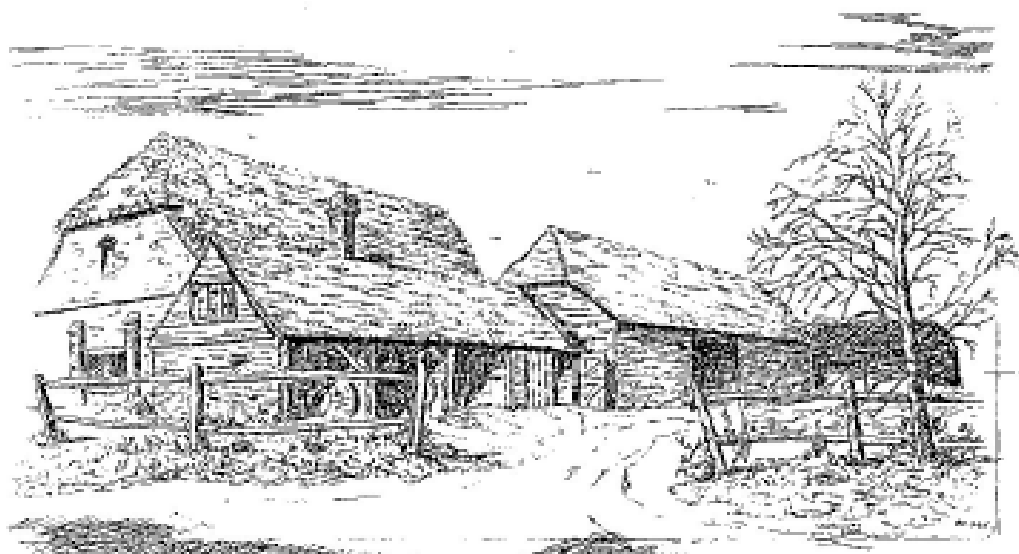
4.5

The Surrey Wildlife Trust owns and manages the Thundry Meadows Nature Reserve - grant aided by English Nature.

New development should:-

be excluded from the green corridor along the river Wey,

preserve the character of the countryside.



5. SETTLEMENT PATTERN

5.1

The original settlement appears to have developed between and around the two greens: the village green at the junction of the Farnham/Milford Road and Thursley Road, and the church green at the junction between Thursley Road and Westbrook Hill. Building has taken place in the main on higher ground above the flood plain and on the lower slopes of Bonfire Hill (also known as West Hill and Spring Hill). This, although a relatively low hill, is an important visual feature of the village and the open space with its footpaths is a valuable local amenity. When the village is viewed from the hill it can be seen that development has taken place in a curve around the hillside and along the roads towards Milford and Thursley. Buildings are well camouflaged by the many trees in the settlement.



5.2

Buildings generally are widely spaced, most have generous plots and with a few exceptions, mainly shops, are set back from the principal roads. Density of development has risen since the last war, including some terraces and groups of attached buildings, but even so space has usually been maintained in front of buildings. The impression created is of a well spaced settlement, its centre being defined informally by the village green itself rather than the grouping of buildings around it.



New development should:-

- * comply with Structure and Local Plan policies,
- * remain within the settlement area of the village,
- * maintain the overall pattern of roofscape and tree cover when viewed from vantage points and footpaths around the village,
- * continue the traditional pattern of roadways and trackways with appropriate highway standards, and avoid the inappropriate use of urbanising features,
- * protect and enhance existing open spaces and greens within the village.

6. BUILDING FORM

6.1

The buildings in the village are almost exclusively one or two storeys, a notable exception to this being Elstead Mill on the Farnham Road. Recent additions include local authority and estate development on former farm and nursery land. During the 1960's a number of single storey developments designed specifically for elderly people were built. Plot sizes are generally large and give an impression of openness and green spaces. In the last few years development in Elstead has been largely infilling and extensions or alterations to existing properties. Many of the larger gardens have been subdivided for new building plots thus closing some of the 'gaps' affording views out to the surrounding countryside.

New development should:-

- * retain the existing pattern of density,
- * be in harmony with the height and massing of neighbouring buildings.

7. PLOT BOUNDARIES

7.1

Ironstone and sandstone have been used to form the front boundaries of properties in the older areas of the village along the Milford Road stretching from Elstead Bridge to Hookley Lane on the north side, and the bridge to the United Reformed Church on

the south side. Traces of a wall can be found from the village green up to the parish church.

7.2

Away from the original area of the village traditional hedging is found. As in the rest of rural Surrey this largely consists of hawthorn, holly, laurel, hazel and beech. In recent times these have been supplanted by the dark green uniformity of Leyland Cypress. The widespread use of hedges, some clipped, some natural gives rise to the partially hidden feeling of properties and views in the village. There are also examples of brickwork and timber fencing.

7.3

Traditional mixed hedging of hawthorn, hazel, holly and beech may be slower growing but are more suitable and more attractive than cypress. Definition of front gardens is important and open plan development is not generally a feature of Elstead.



New development should:-

- * retain, repair or improve existing walls and stonework,
- * include walls or hedging relating to the local materials and form of neighbouring boundaries,
- * use native hedging plants rather than exotic conifers.

8. CONSERVATION AREAS

8.1

Three areas of the village have been designated by the Waverley Planning Authority as conservation areas, the first based on the village green, the next based on the church and church green and a further area encompassing Westbrook Farm, its cottages and barns.

8.2

The village green in particular suffers from density of traffic and parking of vehicles.

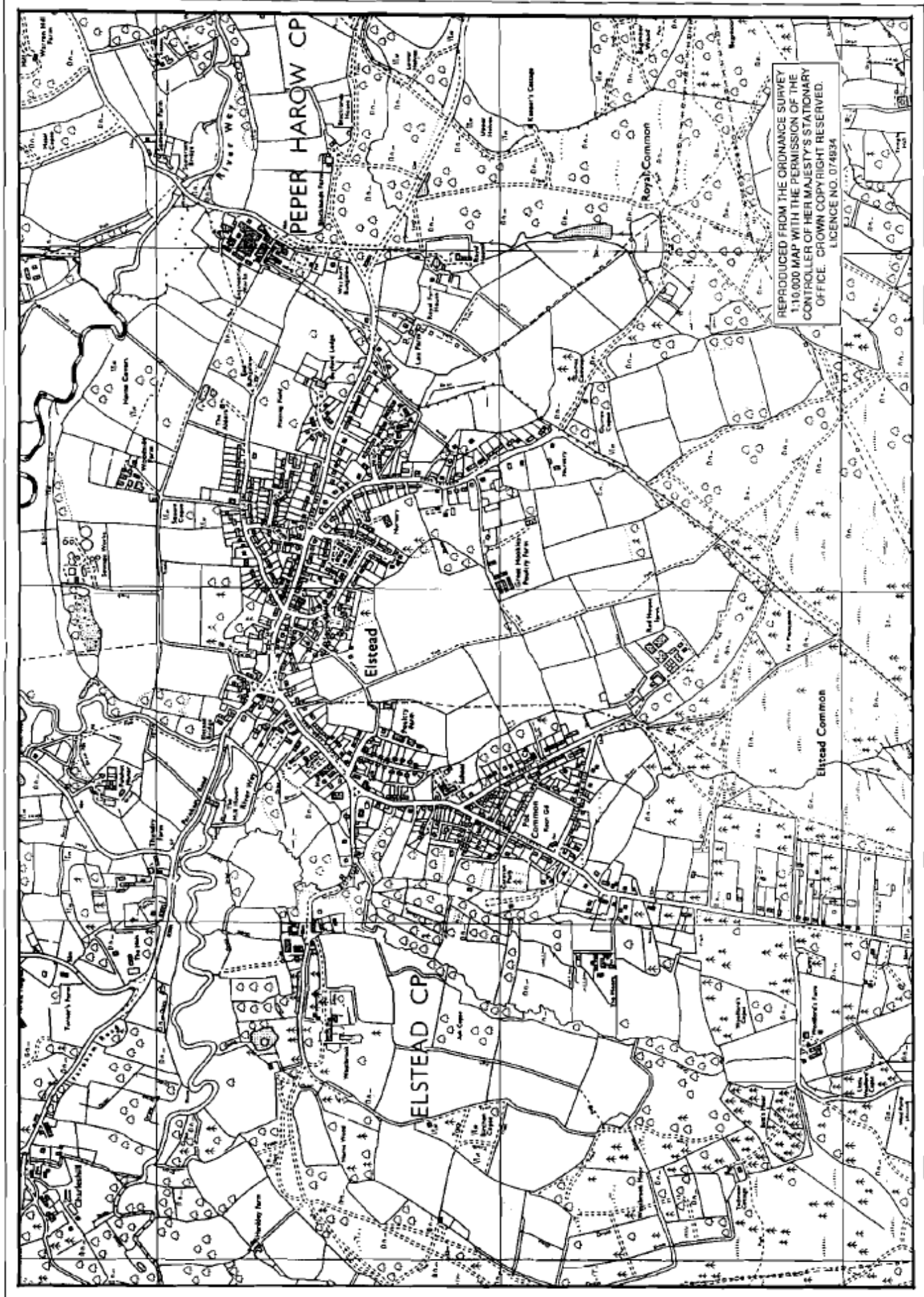
8.3

There is a need to protect these areas from visual intrusion or physical damage and enhance them through sensitive design of signs, servicing and parking provision.

- * **New development should maintain the open spaces and views in these important areas.**

- * **Appropriate measures should be taken to alleviate problems of parking and traffic congestion around the village green.**





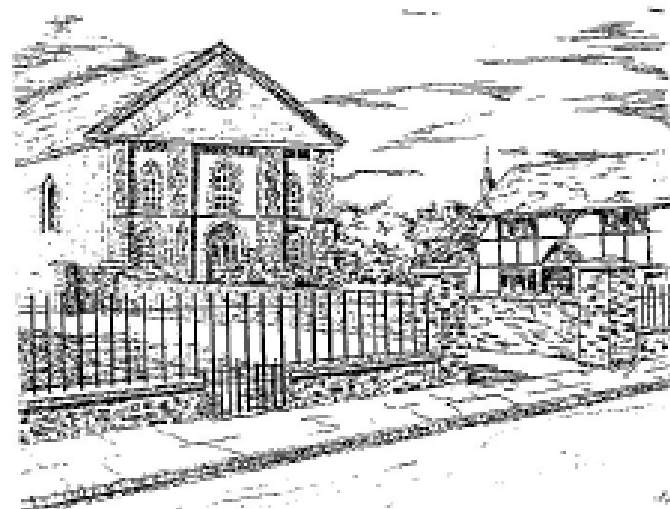
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9. EXISTING BUILDING DETAIL

General

9.1

Unlike settlements in areas where a small range of building materials dominates the scene such as in the Cotswolds, in Elstead there is a great variety of building styles, materials and details.



Roofs

9.2

Generally roofs are finished with plain or interlocking tiles, and some are slated. There is a variety of gables, half gables and hips, the pitches varying with the materials. Eaves can be either open, with exposed rafter ends, or closed, using soffits and fascias. A few gables have decorative bargeboards. Dormer windows in various styles are a feature.

Walls

9.3

Walls range from timber frame construction with

infill panels of stone, facing brick or painted brickwork; some panels are rendered and painted. Other walls are load bearing brick and a variety of stonework including some local ironstone, with quoins frequently in brick. There are a few rendered and painted walls and a small amount of weatherboarding.

9.4

Facing bricks are usually multicoloured red/brown; cream brickwork is not natural to older buildings except occasionally in association with stonework. Tile hanging to upper storeys is a common feature employing both rectangular and decoratively shaped plain tiles.

Windows

9.5

In the older houses of Elstead some have casements fitted with leaded lights; there are also examples of Georgian and Victorian sashes. Casement windows are most common in 20th century buildings. Most windows in older buildings are painted, but in recent buildings protective stain finishes are also found.

9.6

Window types, their glazing patterns and types of finish, together with the treatment of the head of window openings and window-cills are an essential part of the character of a building.

Doors and Porches

9.7

The older domestic buildings usually have doors and porches typical of the period in which they were constructed, with doors ranging from the braced and battened types in early dwellings to the panelled and part glazed doors of 18th century, Victorian and Edwardian houses. There is a very wide variety of doors to more modern houses, particularly those built during the latter half of this century, ranging from fully glazed to solid flush doors, and many designs imitating to a greater or lesser extent traditional forms.

9.8

Porches on older buildings vary in character both in materials and formality, reflecting the style of the buildings which they serve. The variety has widened on buildings constructed in the second half of this century, and with the advent of non-traditional materials such as glass reinforced plastic.

EXISTING BUILDING AND BOUNDARY DETAILS



half hip roof
flat roof dormer



timber frame, painted plaster
diamond leaded window



bargeboards,
banded tile hanging



painted weatherboard



timber casement
red-brown brick



shaped bargeboards
stone, red brick quoins
rectilinear leaded casements



plain tile roof and tile verge
plain tile hanging



slated roof, tile ridge and hips
contrasting brick quoins



interlocking tiles



stone wall



Victorian sash windows
decorated bargeboard



stone wall, evergreen
and deciduous hedging

10. FUTURE BUILDING DEVELOPMENT

10.1

Designers and developers of all types of new building, both small and large, need to be sensitive to the nature of all the surrounding built environment. They should ensure that their development is in harmony with the local context, protects local character, and visually improves areas where local character has been eroded. The range of existing styles need not be restrictive; innovation is to be welcomed where it is a response to the traditions of building and local context.

Individual New Houses

10.2

These are most likely to be on infill plots. They should have regard to the scale and characteristics of adjoining buildings and those in the vicinity, and the "palette" of materials, colours and components, such as doors and windows should make use of at least some of those already present. Sites should be laid out to permit a reasonable level of tree and shrub planting to maintain the rural character of the village.

New housing design should:

- * **demonstrate an awareness of the local context in its use of materials, detailing, layout and form,**
- * **preserve and protect existing trees and, where possible, shrub planting,**
- * **provide landscaping and open space within the development compatible with the surrounding area.**

Alterations and additions to houses.

10.3

Materials to match those used in the existing house should form a feature of alterations and additions, and the building's characteristics should be reflected in the proportion of windows to walls. Some innovations may be acceptable but the aim should be that a few years after completion an extension looks as if it were part of the original design.

Extension, or alterations to houses should:-

- * **use materials and components that match existing construction,**
- * **aim at conforming with existing proportions of window to wall and design of roof.**

Conversion and subdivision of large residential properties

10.4

Conversion and subdivision, with or without associate extensions, require particular care. Access to, and subdivision of sites must be designed so as to preserve features such as trees, boundary walls, hedges and open spaces or replace them so as to match in style what has been lost. Boundaries between individual plots, particularly when readily visible from outside a site should be defined in a way that retains the original character of the site. Building work should reflect the materials and style of the original buildings. Building of new detached houses in the grounds of such properties is discouraged where it would result in overdevelopment: large dwellings even when converted, require curtilages of appropriate size.

Conversion of properties or additional dwellings within plots should:-

- * **retain or replace existing planting,**
- * **retain or replace existing walls and boundaries,**
- * **preserve open spaces and views,**
- * **not increase on-street parking requirements,**
- * **use materials and detailing that complement the adjoining and neighbouring properties.**

Low Cost Housing

10.5

The village may have a need for this type of residential development. Essential characteristics are small plots and closely related units, which tend to be different from the general style of housing in the village. Such developments should therefore be in small numbers on separate sites, so as to be assimilated into the village.

10.6

Layouts should be designed so that the houses cannot be extended on a scale that would result in the loss of the original purpose. Materials should have regard to the characteristics of the surrounding buildings. Where a terrace is proposed it should be designed so as to give an identity to each of the houses that make it up. Continuous lengths of flat fronted building devoid of relieving features are to be avoided.

New low cost housing should:-

- * **be designed in sympathy with the scale, materials and details of surrounding property,**
- * **have a layout that prevents future extensions resulting in the houses losing their original purpose.**

Developments on Larger Sites

10.7

Having regard to the need to prevent the village extending into the surrounding countryside, larger developments are likely to be rare. However, in such cases the prime need is that, whilst relating to the characteristics of the existing stock in the village, the houses should be so varied in materials and style that the effect of uniformity is avoided. The aim should be that after a few years it should not be noticeable that the development was carried out as an "estate".

Domestic Garages

10.8

New garages or extensions to existing garages should use materials which match or relate to existing buildings, particularly where they will be seen from outside the site. Screening with trees or shrubs may be an acceptable alternative.

Non Residential Developments

10.9

Industrial and office developments should be limited in size to preserve the small scale style which gives the village so much of its character. Building materials should be relevant to their surroundings.

10.10

Selection of sites requires careful consideration with regard to the generation of traffic relative to existing roads and to possible nuisance to residential neighbours from noise and fumes created by industrial activities.

11.ROADS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

11.1

The principal roads within the village are the B3001 (Farnham to Milford) and the road to Thursley. These roads have become increasingly used over recent years. The growing volume and speed of traffic, particularly heavy goods traffic is disturbing to a rural community.

On-street parking by residents and visitors to the village is an increasing problem.

Action should be taken:-

- * **to reduce the volume and speed of traffic through the village, and to reduce congestion,**
- * **to deter drivers from parking in positions which cause danger or inconvenience.**



Road and Junction Standards

11.2

Department of Environment guidance on road and junction layouts can conflict with the rural character of the village, do nothing to reduce the speed and volume of traffic, and should be applied with discretion.

- * **The Local Highway Authority should apply DOE guidelines with discretion, incorporating layouts suitable to the rural environment.**
- * **New developments should incorporate layouts and materials suitable to the local rural environment.**

Roads and Verges

11.3

Much of the rural character of the village is shaped by minor roads, lanes and byways, and irregular spaces and areas of verge. These are very desirable features.

In maintenance and repair:-

- * **The Local Highway Authority should ensure the preservation of the character of minor routes, informal spaces and verges and**
- * **avoid urbanisation in appearance resulting from installation of concrete kerbs and other inappropriate elements.**
- * **Appropriate natural materials should be used for resurfacing of unmade and unadopted roads**



Footpaths and Bridleways

11.4

Elstead has a substantial network of footpaths and bridleways which allow access to the commons and country side.

- * **Footpaths and bridleways should be kept open and in good repair.**
- * **Proposals to close any Public Rights of Way should be strongly resisted.**



12. UTILITIES AND STREET FURNITURE

Overhead Lines

12.1

The overhead network of electricity and telephone wires which festoon many of the roads spoil the visual impact of much of the village. Overhead electricity lines are particularly noticeable and should be buried, re-routed or screened by electricity companies as a part of an improvement programme or at least when the lines are due for renewal. A Parish Council project to bury underground all the wires around the village green was most successful in improving the quality of that specific area, but a significant benefit for the rest of the village would result from similar exercises elsewhere. Every effort should be made to identify funds to put in hand these improvements as recommended by the Countryside Commission.

Street Furniture

12.2

The design and siting of street furniture by local authorities, public utility companies and other agents is often uncoordinated, creating an untidy cluttered appearance.

Action should be taken:-

- * to place underground all wires in the village,
- * to ensure consultation and agreement on the provision of all street furniture by Local Authorities, public utilities and other agencies.

13. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

13.1

There is a network of local bus services between Farnham, Godalming, and Guildford which serves Elstead and other villages. Such public transport is an essential part of rural life.

- * Public transport facilities should be encouraged and expanded.

14. TREES

14.1

In this statement there are references to trees in relation to building developments. Trees are an important element in their own right and contribute greatly to the village environment.

14.2

In particular there are individual trees, groups of trees and wooded areas which are visually significant in the village scene.

- * Visually significant trees including groups and wooded areas in public spaces should be cared for and conserved. When such trees reach the end of their lives they should be replaced suitably.
- * Sites should be identified in suitable positions in the village for trees to be planted in order to enhance the environment.
- * Where visually significant trees are on private land, owners should be encouraged to care for them appropriately.
- * A record should be created and maintained of visually significant trees, groups of trees and woodland areas.

15. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this Village Design Statement will play a major part in retaining the essential character of our village as we advance into the 21st Century by providing guidance for everyone who lives in the village and all concerned with its future planning and development.



Elstead Parish

Scale 1:25,000

