

THE PARISH OF BEECH

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

Overall Objective

This Village Design Statement is a document produced to influence the future appearance and development pattern of the Village and Parish of Beech. The intention is to represent the views of the residents, as expressed in the Village Appraisal Report, and, by working with both the Beech Parish Council and the East Hampshire District Council planning authority, to ensure that the wishes of the community, on design and appearance matters for the village, are respected. Inevitably, there will be some development and change within the parish. We must ensure that they are managed in the best interests of the community.

One question always asked is whether a Village Design Statement has any real influence. Whilst a Design Statement is not a statutory document, its adoption as supplementary planning guidance can influence the way in which development and improvement proposals are carried out, and can also introduce design criteria against which individual planning applications can be considered.

Background to the Village Design Statement

Following the creation of the Beech Parish Council three years ago, it was felt by the Council that the views of the residents of the village about the facilities, the maintenance and care of the village and the way in which the village is developing, was generally not adequately known. Accordingly, in line with many other villages in the country, it was proposed that the community should carry out a Village Appraisal followed by the production of a Village Design Statement to ensure that the views of the residents of Beech were properly represented at both parish and district council level.

Throughout the country, the title "Village Design Statement" is almost invariably used for any such document that is produced. Accordingly, the principles of reports with that title are well understood by the local and planning authorities. In some cases, including that of Beech, the document covers the entire parish and not just the village. This Design Statement is written for all the residents of the Parish of Beech.

The Village Appraisal Report

A Village Appraisal was instigated by the Parish Council in June 2000. The results were published in July 2001 and have been used as the basis for this Design Statement. The strength of feeling within Beech as to its future development was underlined by the response to the Village Appraisal, with some 85% of households returning completed questionnaires. Very definite views were expressed on a number of aspects, including preservation of the parish's rural character, restriction on future development of the village and the provision of improved community facilities. The Design Statement takes these views into consideration.

One of the factors that emerged was that a relatively small percentage of the population was born in the village. Most of the residents moved to Beech from choice. This is further supported by the intention of the majority (almost 75%) to remain living in the village for at least 6 years more and 42% who plan to stay for longer than 15 more years. The existing character of the village is identified as one of the main reasons for living here and "too much development" is given as the main reason (by over 43% of those responding) why present residents would move away.

The Village Design Statement Committee and Work

Instigated by the Parish Council and using the information from the Village Appraisal Report, the "Village Design Statement" has been prepared by a committee consisting of members of the Village Appraisal Report Committee, which represented all parts of the community, and four councillors from Beech Parish Council. The councillors have been able to provide invaluable guidance on planning and other relevant matters.

The "Village Design Statement Committee" started work in September 2001. Further on-going guidance and advice has been sought from East Hampshire District Council Planning Officers to help ensure that this final document is acceptable by the Planning Authority as supplementary planning guidance. Before final submission, the full draft document was presented to the residents of Beech in a series of exhibitions that had been advertised in advance on notice boards and by leaflets delivered to every home in the parish. These exhibitions were held on the evening of a Parish Council meeting, the day of the Beech Village Fete and two additional evenings in the village hall so that residents could review the draft Design Statement at their leisure. On each occasion, members of the Village Design Statement Committee were present to respond to questions and comments. In addition, specially printed forms were available to further encourage residents to make comments and to provide their feedback.

The Beech Parish Council has undertaken to ensure that, in future, the Design Statement will be regularly reviewed by the residents of Beech so that it continues to reflect the views of the residents. The Parish Council will also ensure that it is reviewed in line with any changes in the planning policies that effect Beech.

The Village in the Future

In order to produce a comprehensive Design Statement, the committee has looked at the wider issues raised in the Village Appraisal Report and tried to think ahead as to how Beech might appear 20 years from now. In this way, the committee was able to develop the Design Statement while considering how the future design and appearance issues might be implemented.

PARISH OF BEECH

Location

The Parish of Beech is located in the north-eastern area of Hampshire approximately eleven miles south of Basingstoke, fifteen miles east of Winchester and two miles from the centre of the market town of Alton. Beech is close to,



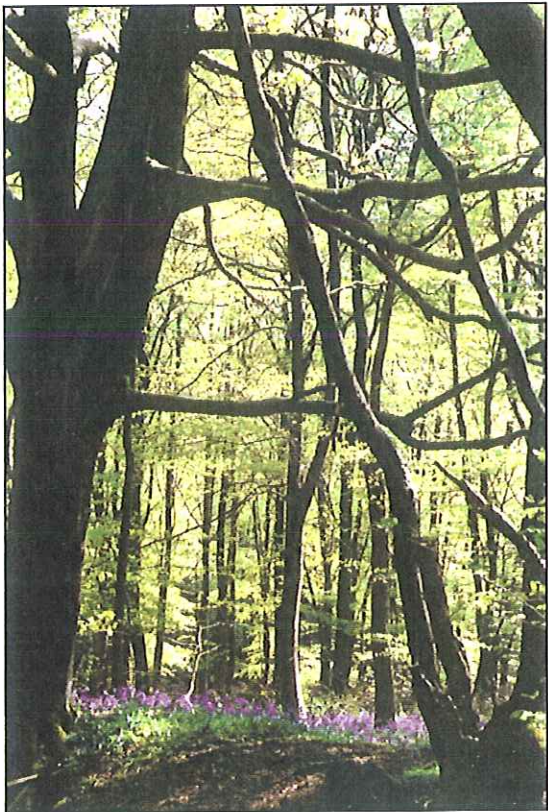
Wyards Farm

but outside the northern boundary of, the proposed South Downs National Park. The parish extends east to include part of the A339 Alton to Basingstoke road. It includes Wyards Farm, Ackender Wood and Bushey Leaze Wood to the south, Alton Abbey and Thedden Grange to the west and the woods of Thedden Copse and North Woods extending to Warren Farm to the north. Neighbouring districts include the parishes of Chawton, Medstead, Bentworth and Shalden, and the town of Alton.

Character

The area in which Beech is situated is primarily rural. The Parish of Beech totals 526 hectares (1262 acres) and is a broad mix of woodland, farmland and, in the village area, residential developments. In the past, the area has had an agriculturally based economy, although this influence has declined with modern farming practices. These factors have set the historic character of the village.

The history of the village coupled with the development pattern has resulted in the overall feel of the parish as a relatively rural community but one which, due to the topography and coupled with its comparatively modern and unplanned expansion, has lacked any real community cohesion.



Bluebells in Bushy Leaze Woods

Population and Statistics

By 1999, (the latest year for which published information was available when the design statement was written) the number of people on the electoral role in the parish had increased to 493, and the total population in 2002, including children, is in excess of 600. The number of houses in the parish has increased to over 200.

Village Economy



Jardinique Antiques Garden Centre

The parish is primarily a residential area, serving surrounding business centres with little commercial activity within the village boundary. Other than residents working at home, the only trading enterprises in the parish are the antique garden centre, Jardinique, the wood fencing yard on Kings Hill and Hillside Nursery on the Basingstoke Road. Employment within the parish is otherwise limited to those working at home plus farming and the Forestry Commission. In the latter case, with the broad area covered by their regional office at Alice Holt, the commission does not employ specifically from the village, and with the majority of farmland within the parish boundary being managed by farms outside the parish, this too offers little local employment. Consequently, the village serves largely as a residential dormitory for Alton, Basingstoke and London.



Harvest Time



Thedden Grange



St Peter's Church in Wellhouse Road



Hillside Nurseries



Alton Abbey



Entering the Parish from the East



Entering the Parish from the West



Logging in Bushy Leaze Wood



The Village Hall



The Village Centre

VILLAGE HISTORY

Sources

The history of many villages, which do not have good church records, can now be hard to trace. Beech has been a little more fortunate. The Wyard family, who lived in the area, have produced regular family newsletters in which they have researched the family's ancestors and, in doing so, have probably revealed the earliest origins of a settlement in the village. We also have some detailed history of the Thedden Estate, including information about early leases and, more interestingly, who took them. In addition, John Wathen, who lived in the village from 1923 until his death in 2001, spent many years tracing the history of Beech, culminating in his fascinating book "Beech and Beyond".



Thedden Grange

Early History

The earliest known reference to Beech as a separate entity is in records dated as long ago as 1190 at which time records refer to land at 'La Beche'. The name Thedden was first documented a few years earlier in 1168 and derives from the Anglo-Saxon name "Tedena" meaning water pipe or conduit in the valley. In 1308, John de Thedden appears in The Selborne Priory Charter with an application for a licence for an oratory in his manor at Thedden.

In the area now called Beech, the earliest known building of which anything remains, is Wyards Farm. Some of the interior of the house, notably the staircase, is thought to have been part of the original house built by Nicholas Wyard around 1100 to 1150. Members of the Wyard family were very active in the area and appeared in legal and court records well into the fifteenth century. In 1483, Wyards Farm passed to the ownership of Winchester College, which retained it until 1956. The present façade of the house is dated 1691, so that the house would have looked much as it does today (although more chimneys) when its most famous known visitor, Jane Austen, came to see her niece, Anna Lefoy. Miss Lefoy was an aspiring novelist and often sought the advice of her talented relative.

In 1233, King John granted land, including the area around

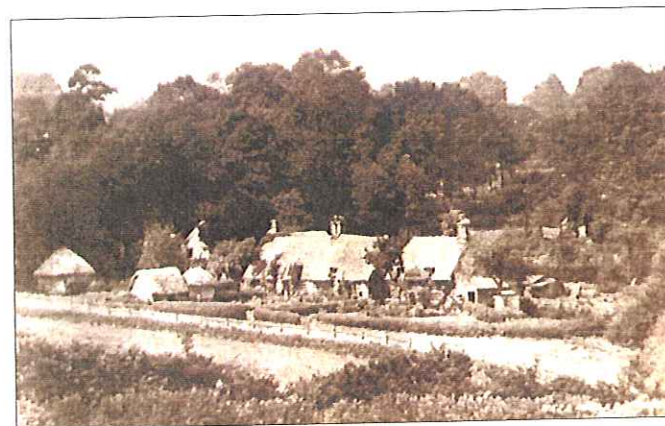


Wyards Farm at the time of Jane Austen

Beech, which came within the domain of Selborne Priory, to the Bishop of Winchester. In 1484, on the closure of the Priory, its property, including land at Beech, was transferred to Magdalene College, Oxford. This does not appear to include Thedden as the present land at Thedden is shown as being a separate freehold in a map covering Beech dated 1676.

A court roll for the manor of Beche, dated 1467, indicates that the land was divided and farmed by neighbouring farmers. By 1503, records suggest that a John Carpenter had built an early farmhouse, and a register of goods and chattels taken in 1579 showed the existence of Beech Place Farm. Now known as The Old Farm, this is the oldest surviving complete house in the village.

Throughout the period until 1892, the land remained within the ownership of Magdalene College. It was during this time, between 1655 and 1695, that Wellhouse Cottages were built. They are still standing today. These were presumably included in the 1841 census, which showed that agricultural cottages within the village were then in occupation.



Wellhouse Cottages

Recent Development of the Village

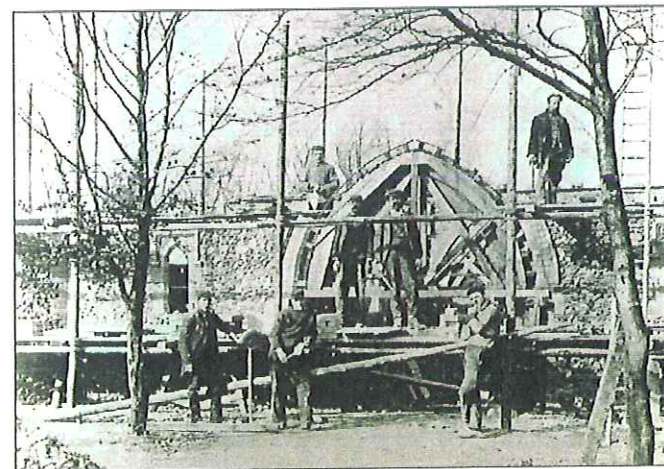
In 1892, the land was sold by Magdalene College to one William Carter who, within the next few years, proceeded to sell off small parcels of land. Houses sprang up on these new plots; many of them designed in colonial style.

During the period prior to the First World War, the village grew considerably, not only in respect of housing, but also with the establishment of community facilities including an off licence that opened in 1899 and a post office that started business in the following year. Other new buildings also followed, including a church, dedicated to St Peter, which is still thriving today, and a nursery garden on Wellhouse Road.



St. Peters Church in Wellhouse Road

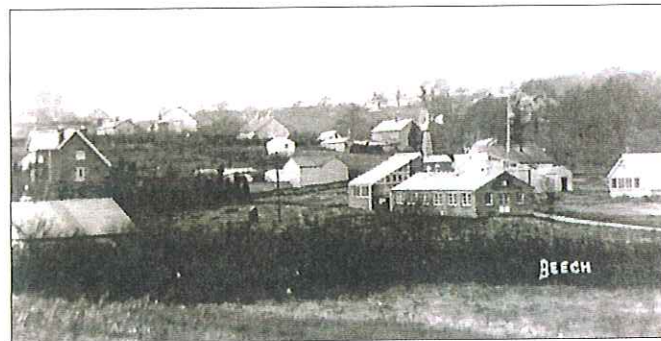
This period also saw the founding of Alton Abbey, one of the parish's major landmarks. In 1894, Father Charles Hopkins was given one hundred acres to found a community home for the Benedictine Order. Initially, he built a wattle hut and church. The abbey offered a home for retired sailors and provided food and shelter to travellers. In 1903, the flint gatehouse and chapel replaced the wattle huts and, in 1904, the foundation stone for the abbey church was laid. Father



Building the Abbey Gatehouse 1902

Hopkins died in 1922 and is buried at the abbey. Today, Alton Abbey has beautiful buildings, based on those at Tintern.

During the inter war period, growth continued. Early on, a recreation ground committee was established as well as a cricket club. In 1931, two years after the establishment of a village hall committee, a suitable building (that was previously part of the print works) was acquired, resulting in the formation of a number of new clubs to take advantage of the facility. At about the same time, local bus services were introduced, although the road left much to be desired – some things never change – and, in 1936, electricity was laid to the village.



View of the Print Works – part is now the Village Hall

Since World War 2, Beech has seen steady population growth. The development of the roads, the laying of the water main in 1952, mains sewage in 1975 and mains gas in 1994 have all improved the general facilities. However, from the mid 60s onwards, with the changing pattern of social trends, Beech has suffered a decline in its amenities, losing its off licence, shop and post office. Today, only the village hall, recreation ground, church and abbey remain and, in addition, the character of the village has further changed with the continuing replacement of the colonial style properties with modern, larger housing.



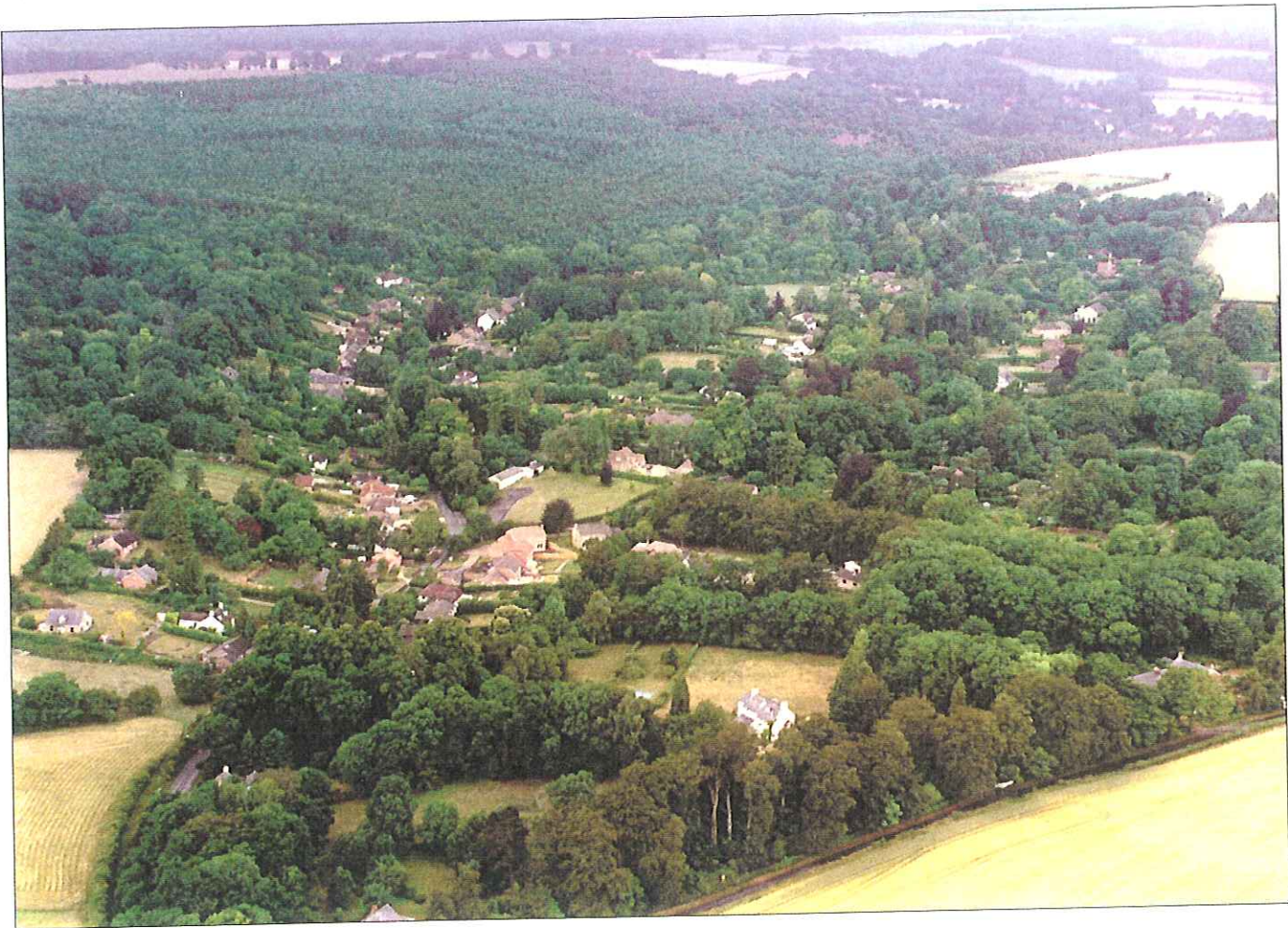
The old Village Off-Licence

In 1985, as part of a countywide review, the Rural Dispensing Committee adjudicated that Beech was a distinct community and should not be considered as urban along with Alton. An application for independent status had been turned down as early as 1978. However, the desire for independent parish status remained and resulted in the formation of the Beech Steering Committee in May 1996 and the ultimate creation of Beech Parish Council in 1999.

LANDSCAPE AND SETTING

The landscape and setting of the Parish of Beech is defined by the three valleys in which the parish is set and by the

The woodland areas, with their abundance of wild flowers and wildlife, are a dominant feature of the village. Never-



wooded countryside that is now characteristic of the area. The development pattern of the parish has been influenced by this geographic environment rather than by any particular historical event, architectural style or even any community focal point such as a village green.

theless, evolution of this feature is surprisingly recent. Maps as recently as the early 1900's show the wooded area to be much less than it is today. However, Bushey Leaze and Ackender Wood, which are part of the principal original woodlands, date back to at least 1791 and 1808 respec-



King's Hill in Winter



Spring comes to the Parish

tively. The woodland is now one of the most valued features of the village. This is wonderfully demonstrated by the occasion in 1992 when a group of about 120, mainly residents, fortified by hot soup and bacon 'butties', planted four acres of field with around 1,000 native British, broad-

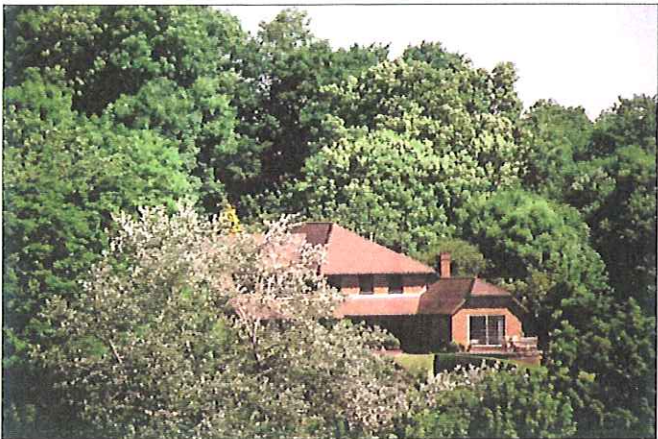
leaf trees in one hectic but hugely successful day; thereby creating a new area of woodland in the village. To the north and west of the village the higher plateau land is mainly arable. This includes Park Farm, some of the land belonging to each of Thedden Farm and Wivelrod Farm and the attractive parkland that surrounds Thedden Grange.



Park Pale – Ancient Deer Ditch



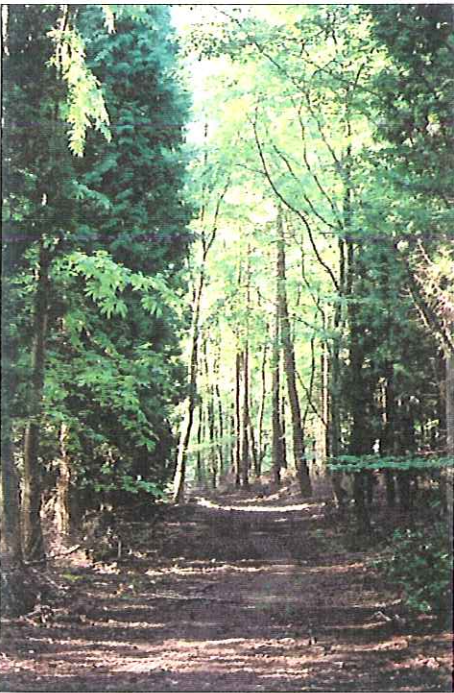
Sheep Farming



A Modern House set well in the Trees



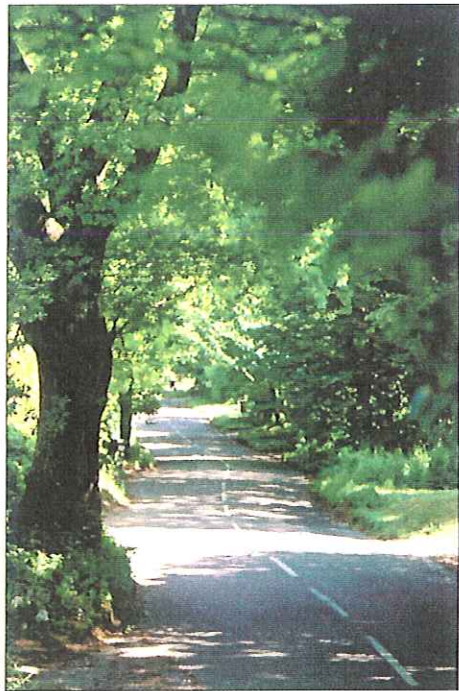
Deer (a Local Resident)



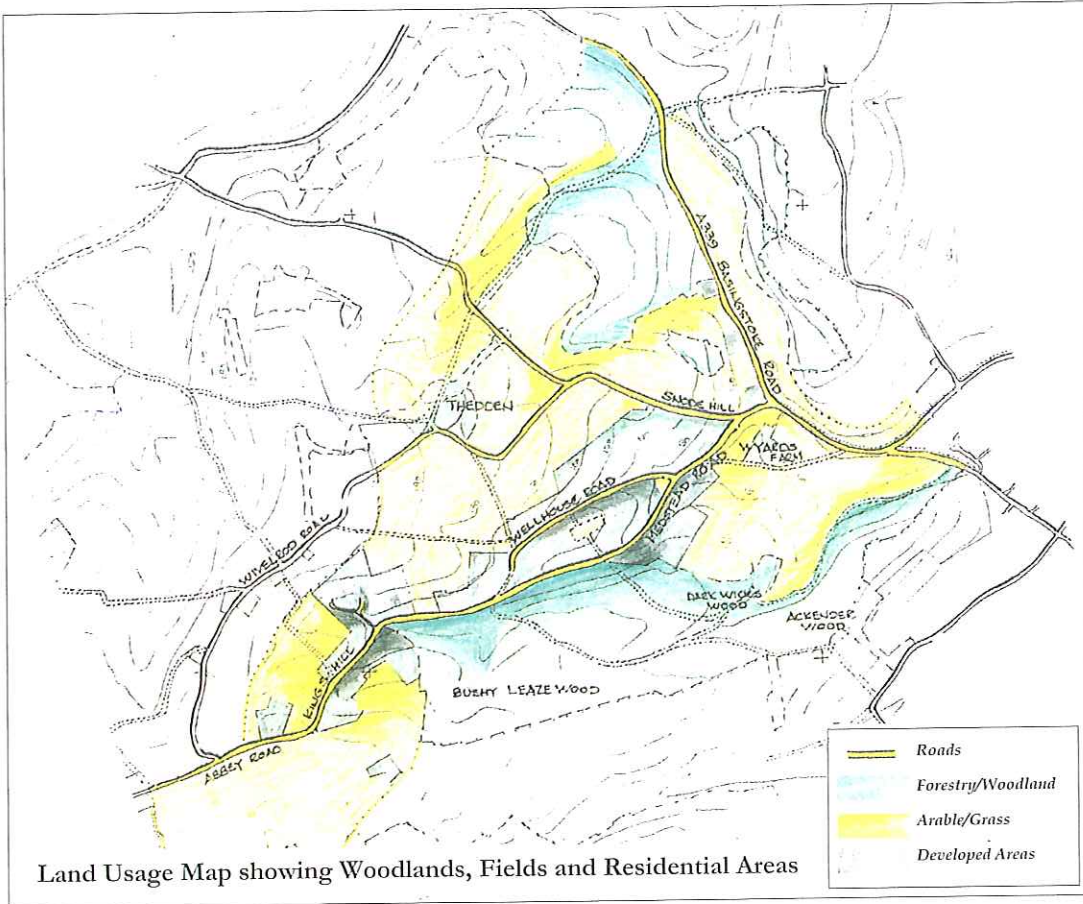
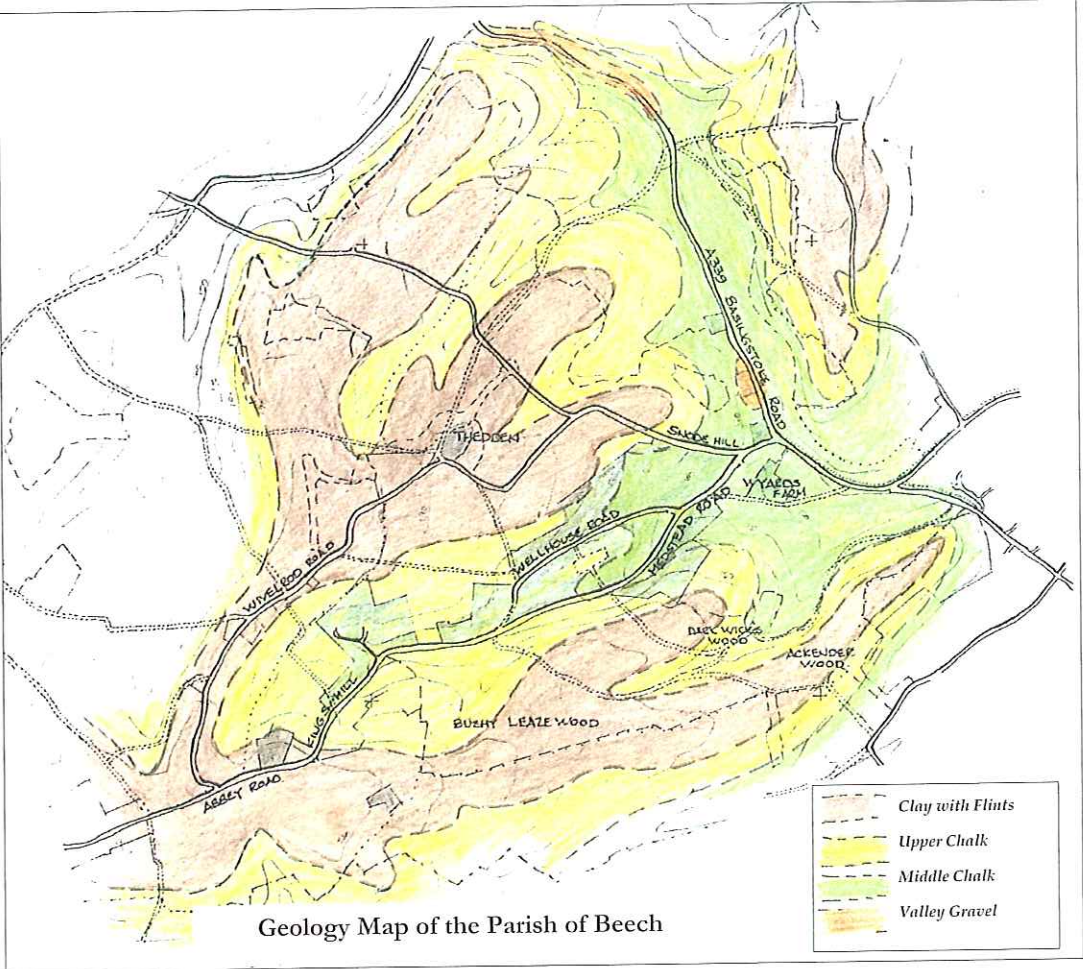
A Path in Bushy Leaze



A Foxglove in the Woods



King's Hill in Summer





A View from Thedden Grange looking towards Alton

Design Guidelines - Landscape and Setting

1. In determining planning applications, consideration shall be given to the protection of the landscape, setting and built environment of the parish. Where appropriate, preservation orders shall be applied to trees.
2. Applicants should consider the retention or the inclusion of new landscaping features when submitting planning applications for development.
3. If any "backland" development is proposed, it should be restricted to those cases where the rural nature of the area can be protected, thereby minimising the impact on the rural character of the area.
4. Woodland, hedgerows and open areas adjacent to roads should be retained wherever possible in order to maintain the special character of the village.

Any new developments or alterations should :-

5. respect the country lane character of the roads, footpaths and bridle paths in the parish. Road frontages should incorporate trees and/or hedges.
6. not obstruct public views into or out of the settlements or over the rural countryside that is such an important feature of the parish.
7. not be sited in such a way as to have a significant impact by being overbearing to existing properties through, for example, design or height, notably as a result of the varying contours of the land.
8. be encouraged to maintain or to plant native trees, shrubs and hedges on plot frontages consistent with the countryside environment.
9. manage existing mature trees, hedges and shrubs and, where appropriate, replace any such vegetation lost through property development so as to maintain the rural character of the parish.
10. be required, where appropriate, to exercise sensitive consideration in the design and location of any conservatories and garages in order to preserve the rural character on plot frontages.

Other Proposed Village Actions

1. In future development, the developer shall be encouraged to ensure that all cabling and/or associated equipment for all utilities be placed underground.
Action : Beech Parish Council
2. Consideration should be given to a programme to encourage the re-siting of existing overhead cables underground.
Action : Beech Parish Council
3. Encourage residents to provide sympathetic planting, from the road and neighbouring plots, for any caravans, boats or similar items parked regularly on their own plots.
Action : The Residents
4. Large percentages (quoted below) of respondents to the Village Appraisal questions considered that the local wild life was at least "important". Action should be encouraged to initiate a village wildlife project to protect and enjoy the local wild animals (81%), birds (84%), trees (72-76%) and flowers (82%).
Action : The Residents

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Due to the topography of the area, the village has developed along largely linear lines, following the pattern of three valleys. The longest of these, Kings Hill / Medstead Road, descends for almost 2 miles from Alton Abbey, which at 217 metres (712 ft) is one of the highest points in Hampshire, to the junction with the A339 at the bottom, which is at a considerably lower level of 106 metres (348 feet).



Aerial view of Lower Beech from the East

As a result of this configuration there has been no natural focal point in the village that could have led to the creation of a village centre. This, coupled with the close proximity of Alton, has meant that many of the normal facilities that could be expected to be present in a village of this size, such as a village shop and public house, do not exist. The main activity centre is probably at the junction of Medstead and Wellhouse Roads, where the village hall is to be found, with the other public building, St. Peter's Church, quite close by. Another significant public amenity is the recreation ground, which is located further up the hill between Medstead and Wellhouse Roads.

Development over the years has, generally, matched the rural feel of the setting. Many of the houses are set back from the roads into wooded plots and, although there is a wide range of ages and types of property, the dominant styles are the medium to larger sized detached house, bun-

galow and chalet bungalow. Over the last thirty to forty years, these have replaced the turn of the century colonial style bungalows, which had previously been prevalent in the village and elsewhere in the area.

A number of factors have, however, remained reasonably constant and this has been fundamental in giving the parish much of its character. For the most part the plot sizes have remained large, the houses have been set back from the road and are generally secluded, often using the natural lines of the trees and hedgerows. Accordingly, it was no surprise that, in the Village Appraisal, an overwhelming majority of residents agreed the importance of the woodlands, trees and hedges. A greatly appreciated characteristic is the setting of the village's roads and lanes. Even the main thoroughfare, Kings Hill and Medstead Road with their tunnels of trees, retains a deceptive 'country lane' feel.

The resulting lack of rigidity has contributed to giving today's Parish of Beech its character and environment, and it is worthy of note that over 97% of residents, responding to this issue in

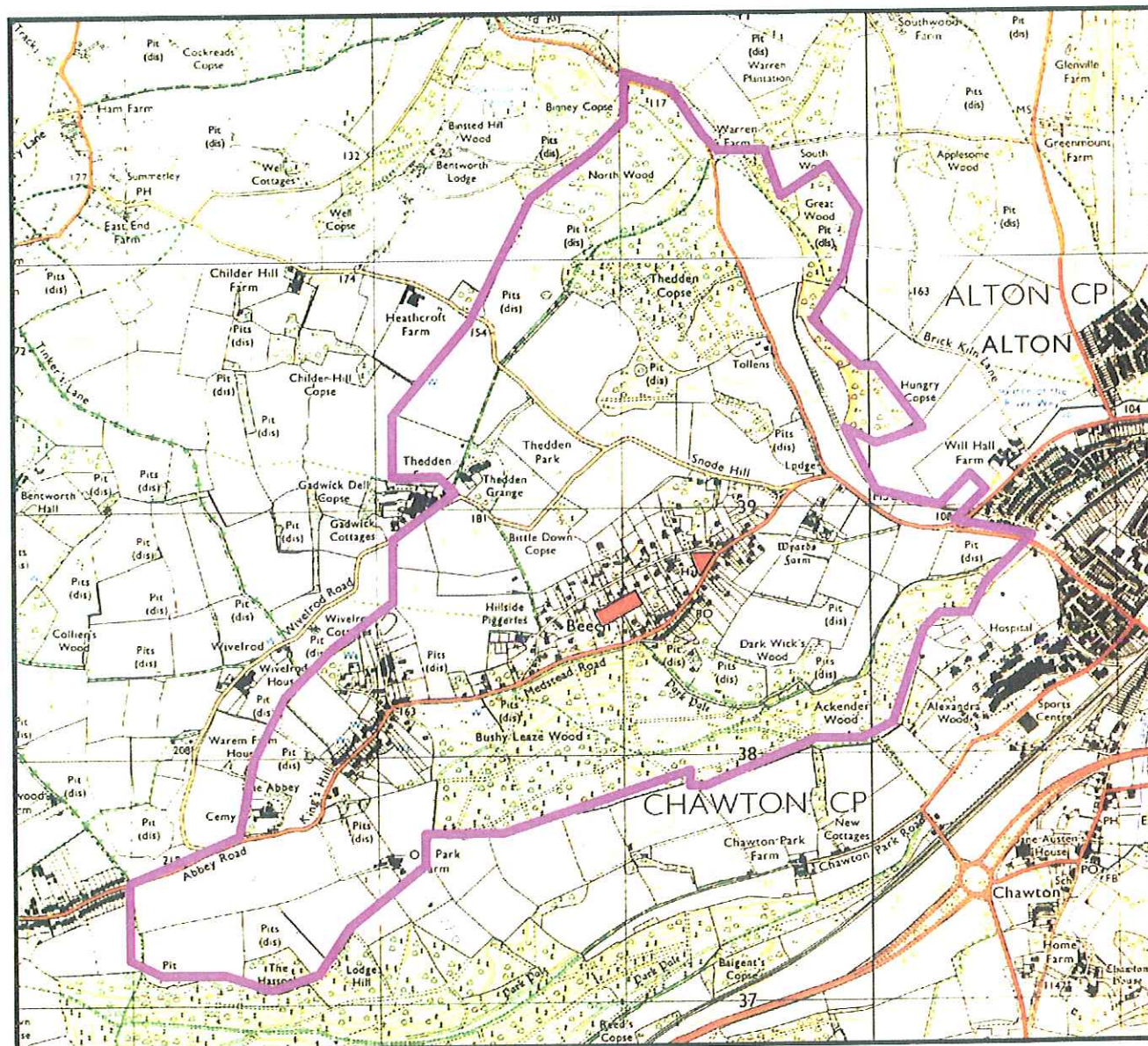
the Village Appraisal, thought that the environment of the village was important or very important.

Planning Policy

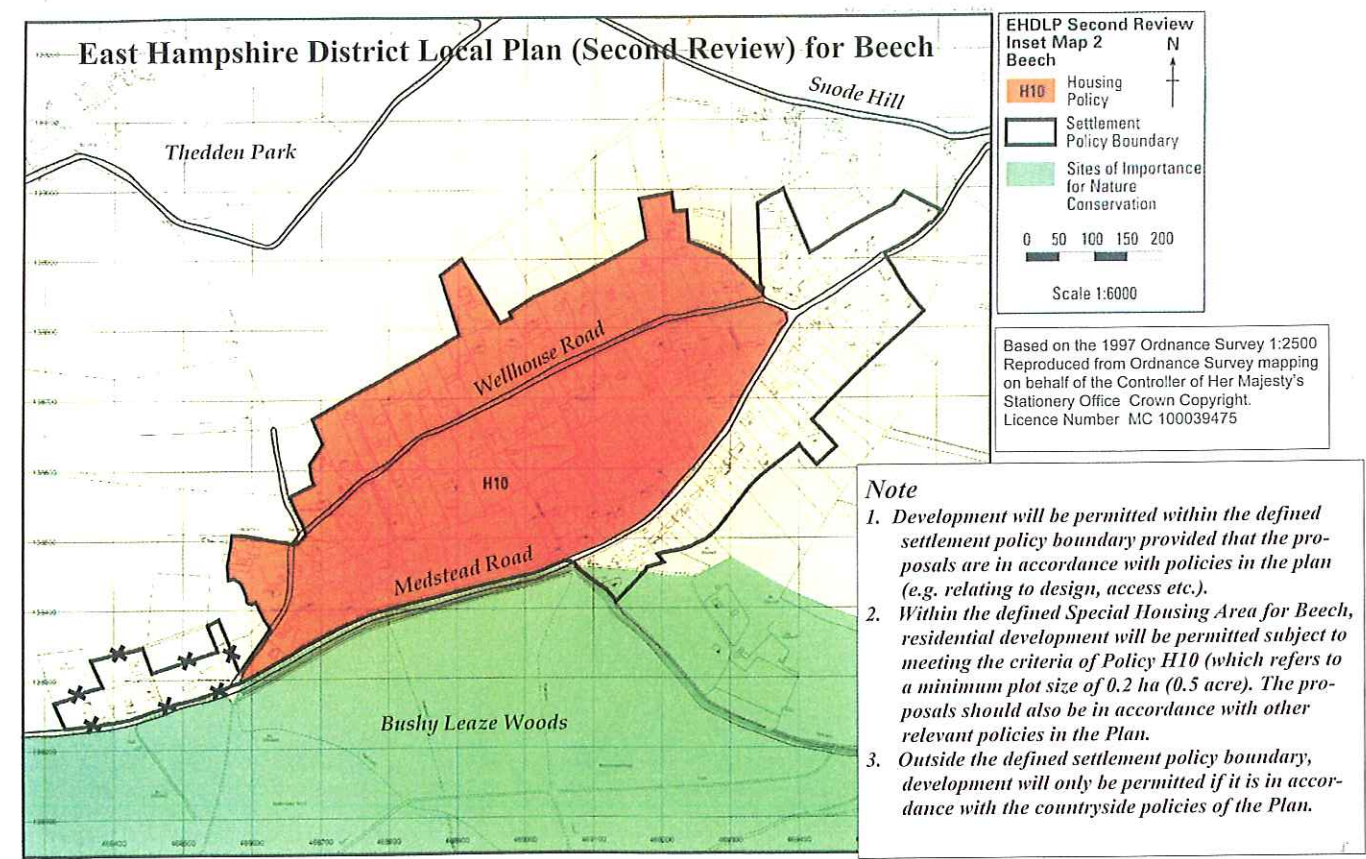
Planning policy for the village of Beech is defined by the East Hampshire District Local Plan: First Review. At the time of the preparation of this Design Statement, the Local Plan: Second Review had reached its second deposit stage. This Review outlines a number of items specific to Beech. The attached map of the parish, on page 14, demonstrates the different policies that will be applied in different and defined areas of the parish.



Kings Hill showing Linear Development Pattern (by permission of "skylibrary.co.uk")



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Design Guidelines - Settlement Pattern

1. Due consideration should be given to the East Hampshire District Local Plan policies and the policy boundaries which define the limitations to development.
2. New residential development within the settlement policy boundary will be confined to redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings, conversion, subdivision or change of use of buildings and infilling.
3. New development should be designed in a way that respects the quality and character of the local environment.
4. The predominantly linear form of the settlements should be maintained rather than building any new estates or other developments that change the shape of the village or result in the creation of new public roads.
5. The open countryside between the larger part of the village and the settlement at Thedden Grange together with all neighbouring settlements should be preserved and protected from inappropriate development.
6. The gap between the existing settlements in Beech and the present settlement of Alton should be maintained.
7. No industrial or commercial development that could lead to significant adverse impact on the rural character of the parish should be permitted.

Other Proposed Village Actions

1. Ensure that any developers (residents or non residents, on projects large and small) are given a copy of the Village Design Statement and are asked to work with the Parish Council to produce a development outcome that is considered as the best possible for all interested parties.
Action : Beech Parish Council
2. The area around the village hall and the area known as the recreation ground should be properly maintained and made available for use and, where appropriate, sympathetic development, in the best interests (recreationally and otherwise) of the residents of the village.
Action : Village Hall Committee

BUILDING FORM AND MATERIALS

(a) Housing Development

Predominantly over the last 25 years, by means of the replacement of colonial style properties and / or the subdivision of existing plots, there has been a wide range of sizes and styles of property developed in Beech.



A Good Example of an Early Colonial Style Property

Most residential properties in the parish are detached; many being set back and well screened from the road, thus preserving the rural feel to the village. Plot sizes, as much as anything, have determined the size of property, with the majority veering towards the larger end of the scale - four or more bedrooms. Nevertheless there are some smaller and semi-detached properties in the village. Indeed, some of the oldest houses are terraced thatched cottages.



The Church of Alton Abbey

(b) Non Residential Development

There has been a reduction in the amount of commercial property in the parish. Recently, this has become restricted almost entirely to service industries for the rural and residential community and is now limited to an antique garden

centre, a wood fencing yard and a horticultural nursery. However, commercial development of an acceptable kind should be encouraged when potentially beneficial to the economic life of the village. This could include such commercial properties as a shop or public house, and also other developments sympathetic to the rural environment.

(c) Buildings of Special Interest

Two buildings in Beech that represent special landmarks in building form and materials are Alton Abbey and St. Peter's Church. Entirely different in style and design, both are



The Church of St Peter in the Early Colonial Style

remarkable in their own ways. The abbey, which developed over a number of years, evolved into a number of buildings of great beauty in a style similar to that of Tintern. St. Peter's Church was built in the colonial style and has become an increasingly rare example of a style that was once so prevalent in the area, but has so often been swept aside by the advance of later developments.



The Village Hall
Adapted from part of the old Print Works

The parish is notable for its diversity of style. The following four pages show examples, mainly of houses, that have been built over the years using designs that were appropri-

ate to the period. In most cases, the settings have been further enhanced by the use of trees and shrubs, thereby ensuring that the valued rural feel of the parish is retained.



Wyards Farm – originally built in the 12th century, although the current façade dates from 1691



The Old Farm – built in the 16th century as a simple “two up – two down” farm cottage and extended since



Timber Workings of the Old Donkey-Wheel Well at the top of Wellhouse Road



Thedden Grange
The Estate dates back to the 13th century



Wellhouse Cottages from the 17th century



A 21st century development, designed to blend with its 17th century neighbours



A 19th century Property sympathetically extended



Substantial Victorian Residence



Victorian semi-detached Cottages – Wellhouse Road



Victorian semi-detached Cottages – Snode Hill



Sympathetically updated Colonial Property



An Older Property made attractive by its rural setting



Canadian Cottage – 60's style appropriately extended



60's Property – enhanced by its extension



70's Patio Design – blending with the environment



Attractive use of Slate and Brick



21st century extension matching the original Wyards Cottages



Substantial Modern Property using Dormer Windows to minimise the impact on the rural surroundings



Recent Development
terraced to use the natural contours



Work in progress bringing an innovative
style to a hillside location



Contemporary House set amongst the trees

House in construction
featuring interesting
use of traditional
materials



Design Guidelines - Building Form and Materials

1. All types of housing (large, medium and "affordable") should be integrated, with every effort being made to avoid estate developments and to retain diversity of style and materials.
2. Future housing, of whatever size, should be built to a high standard that maintains the quality and diversity of design that is prevalent within the parish.
3. New developments or extensions should be encouraged to show innovation and to be "of their time". New buildings should be constructed using up to date design and materials. Extensions or alterations should usually be in keeping with the existing building although innovative design should be encouraged.
4. Energy efficiency shall always be encouraged when designed sympathetically with the surroundings. For example, solar panels would be encouraged where these can be incorporated without being excessively obtrusive.
5. All forms of light pollution should be limited to the minimum required to maintain safety and security.

New buildings or developments should :-

6. generally be no higher than two-storey and not significantly higher than the surrounding buildings unless, for example, the contours of the land allow for a higher, but appropriately proportioned, building.
7. reflect and respect the wide range of neighbouring colours, textures, materials, shapes and styles.
8. include adequate car parking spaces within the site boundary ideally screening parking facilities with suitable foliage.
9. take account of designing in safety and designing out crime for the protection of the residents and all the community.

Other Proposed Village Actions

1. Ensure that applicants (and, ideally, potential applicants) for planning permission on any building, extension or alteration are aware of the Village Design Statement and are encouraged to work with the Parish Council to produce an outcome that is considered as the best possible for all interested parties. **Action : Beech Parish Council**
2. Security lighting should be limited to that required to maintain safety and security. **Action : The Residents**

TRAFFIC AND ROAD SAFETY

The village has a number of problems relating to traffic and road safety. This has become particularly apparent with the recent increase in through traffic, including larger commercial vehicles using the village as a cut through to and from Medstead and villages beyond. There have been a number of accidents in recent years. The perceived changes are particularly important to Beech, as the location of the village, and its very limited local facilities, make the residents very dependent on their own transport. Over 84% of respondents to the question in the Village Appraisal had daytime access to a vehicle and over 90% believed that speeding traffic was a problem on Medstead Road.

Existing traffic control has included a range of 30 mph and 40 mph speed restriction zones, coupled with some



Speed Restrictions at the Entrance to the Village

'width reducing' white lining. At the time of writing, these measures, although initially considered rather ineffective, were still being implemented and were yet to be fully assessed.

Pedestrian accessibility, particularly at the top end of Kings Hill and on Medstead Road, is severely impaired by the lack of points of refuge. This makes these sections diffi-



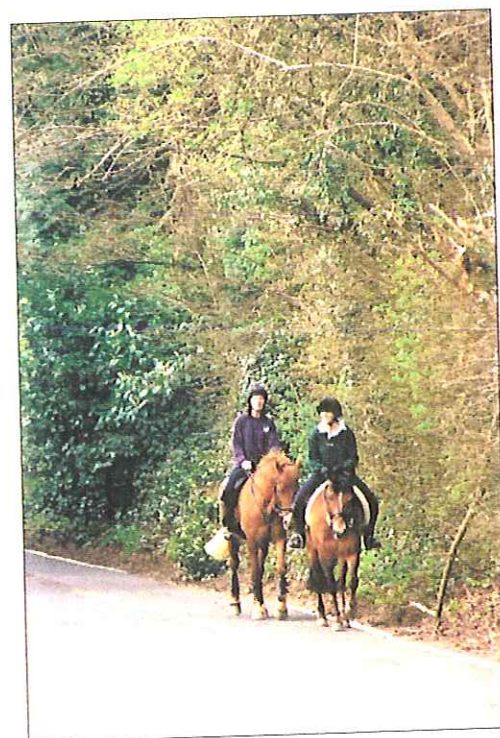
Difficulties for Pedestrians

cult to traverse on foot, horseback or indeed by bicycle, as cyclists are often forced by the gradient to dismount. In addition, the safe use of public footpaths is hindered by the need to cross Kings Hill and / or Medstead Road that often bisect the footpaths.

On street parking: Although the majority of houses are built so as to provide sufficient off street parking for normal daily use, there are areas in the village where visibility is poor and on street parking is considered hazardous by the residents.



Potential Dangers of Street Parking



Drivers need to be aware of other Road Users



Signs Warning of Some of the Hazards in the Village



Deer Leaping
(Beware other Road Users!)

Design Guidelines - Traffic and Road Safety

1. When submitting planning applications, developers should consider the implications of the layout and design of their proposal on traffic movement.
2. In the interests of road safety, the vehicular turning area within each plot on the through roads such as Medstead Road, Kings Hill and Snod Hill, should be sufficient to enable vehicles to enter and to leave in a forward gear. The same should be encouraged on non-through roads such as Wellhouse Road.
3. Speed limit and road safety signs should be erected in consultation with the Parish Council and, wherever possible, should be of a consistent style and in a design sympathetic with the rural character of the parish.

Other Proposed Village Actions

1. Review methods of improving pedestrian safety, including the possible provision of footpaths (but not kerbed pavements) at "danger spots", whilst preserving, in every way possible, the rural character of the roads and area.
Action : Beech Parish Council
2. Encourage residents to minimise street parking in the village.
Action : The Residents
3. Review and monitor further and effective traffic calming measures.
Action : Beech Parish Council

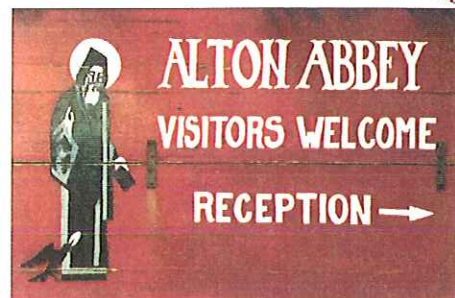
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

The existing roads in the parish have a "country lane" image. As part of the character of the village, the roads have few pavements and kerbs. In addition, the majority of residents do not wish to see an increase in street lighting. Large sections of the roads are tree lined and, in places, the trees extend right to the edge of the road. Although part of the rural aspect, this leaves no space for verges and can create conflict between the requirements of pedestrians and vehicles.

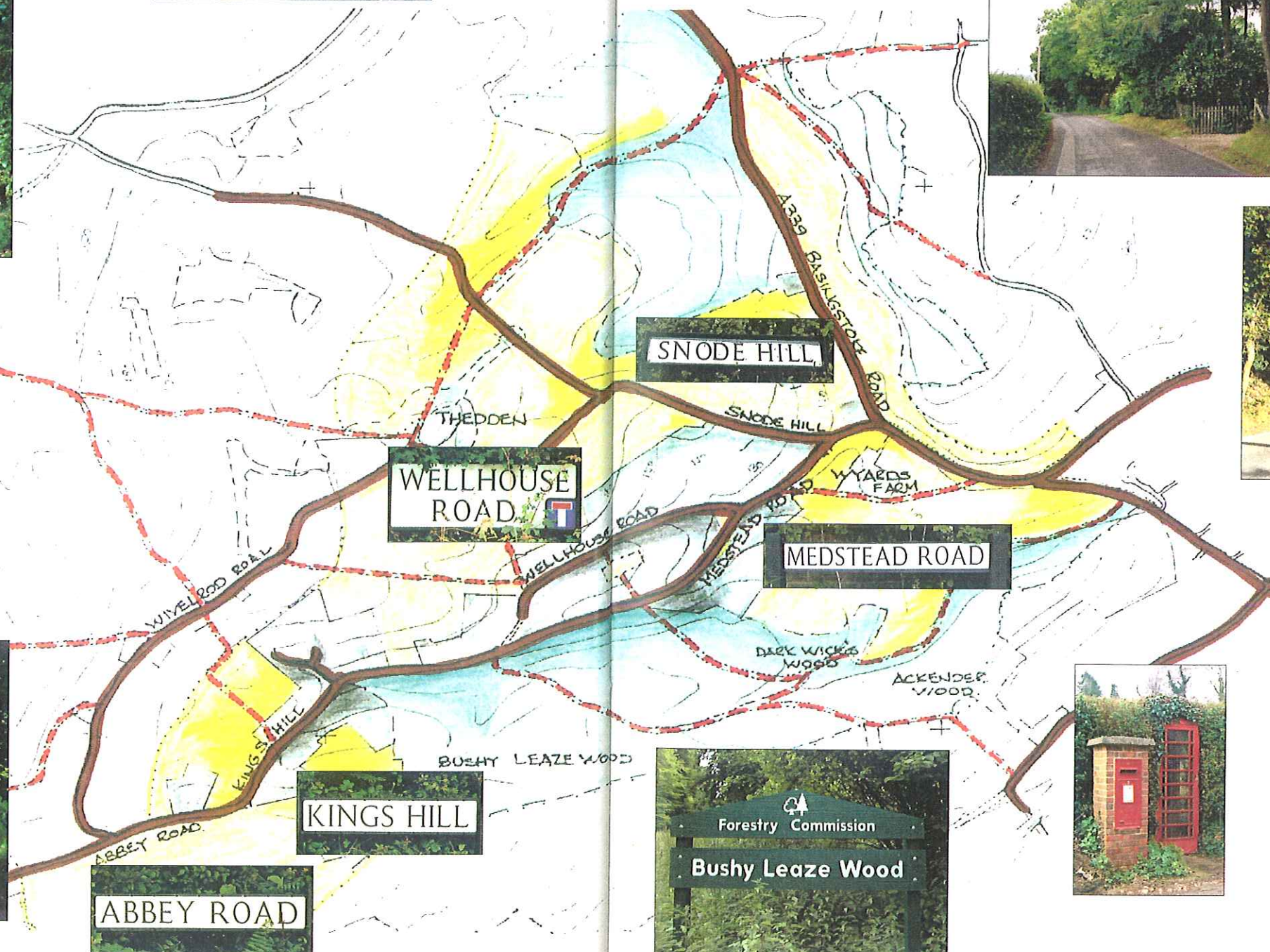
The parish is criss-crossed by a quite frequently used network of footpaths, giving reasonable access to both the woodland and farmland areas.



Looking up Wellhouse Road



Looking down Kings Hill



Signage and Furnishing: Road signage is generally standard, as provided by the Department of Transport, although some footpaths and the recreation ground have inadequate or no signposts. Other roadside furniture such as the bus shelter and notice boards are considered to be quite appropriately designed.

Maintenance: Kings Hill and part of Medstead Road were resurfaced in the mid nineties. However, surface water drainage has historically been a problem, which has led to

abnormally fast deterioration of the road edges and this necessitates a regular requirement for repair. There are no surface water sewers. Road drainage is generally by gulleys to soakaways, and both lack regular maintenance. Nearly 84% of residents responding on the issue in the Village Appraisal wanted to see improvements in road drainage.

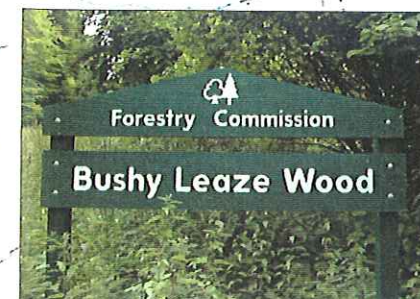
Some footpaths would benefit from increased maintenance. However, they are generally well used and the network has remained in fairly reasonable condition.



Looking down Snode Hill

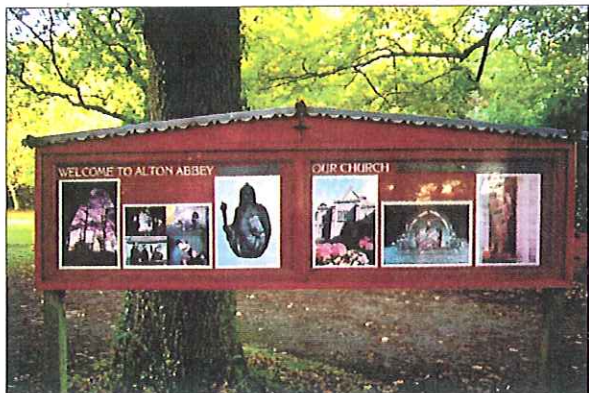


Medstead Road





Bus Stop and Notice Board in Village Centre



The Abbey Notice Board



Unsightly Electricity Pole

Design Guidelines - Highways and Byways

1. Vehicular access to proposed developments should be designed to be sympathetic to the rural character of the roads in the parish.
2. Any repair or development of the roads should protect the rural nature of the parish and avoid urbanisation resulting from the installation of inappropriate kerbs and street lighting.
3. Unmade lanes should be protected where necessary to preserve the countryside environment and character.
4. Any changes to street lighting should only be undertaken in consultation with Beech Parish Council.
5. Street furniture and signs should only be erected where absolutely necessary and in consultation with Beech Parish Council. Agreed items should be of a consistent style and in a design sympathetic with a rural parish.
6. The number and design of any roadside footpaths, pavements and streetlights should be sympathetic with the character of the area.
7. Developers should be encouraged to incorporate soakaways within plot boundaries specifically designed to minimise water runoff onto the roads.

Other Proposed Village Actions

1. Landowners should be encouraged to manage their land in a way that prevents water run off onto the roads.
Action : The Residents
2. Where possible, street furniture and signage should be chosen to reflect the rural character of the parish rather than be merely functional.
Action : Beech Parish Council
3. Where street furniture and/or signs are provided, the relevant authority should be encouraged to ensure that they are properly maintained and kept clean.
Action : Hampshire C.C,
East Hampshire D.C
Beech Parish Council
4. Except on collection days, wheel bins and any other dustbins should be stored away from plot frontages, and appropriately screened, so that they are not obviously visible from the road.
Action : The Residents

Design Guidelines Summary for the Parish of Beech — November 2002

The Beech Village Design Statement has been produced to help influence the future appearance and development pattern of the parish. The Design Guidelines contain the views expressed by the residents in the earlier Village Appraisal Report and will be used by the planning authorities to help ensure that the wishes of the community are respected.

The Design Guidelines are an ongoing process and it is anticipated that new summary sheets will be produced from time to time to update the Village Design Statement.

Design Guidelines - Landscape and Setting

1. In determining planning applications, consideration shall be given to the protection of the landscape, setting and built environment of the parish. Where appropriate, preservation orders shall be applied to trees.
2. Applicants should consider the retention or the inclusion of new landscaping features when submitting planning applications for development.
3. If any "backland" development is proposed, it should be restricted to those cases where the rural nature of the area can be protected, thereby minimising the impact on the rural character of the area.
4. Woodland, hedgerows and open areas adjacent to roads should be retained wherever possible in order to maintain the special character of the village.

Any new developments or alterations should :-

5. respect the country lane character of the roads, footpaths and bridle paths in the parish. Road frontages should incorporate trees and/or hedges.
6. not obstruct public views into or out of the settlements or over the rural countryside that is such an important feature of the parish.
7. not be sited in such a way as to have a significant impact by being overbearing to existing properties through, for example, design or height, notably as a result of the varying contours of the land.
8. be encouraged to maintain or to plant native trees, shrubs and hedges on plot frontages consistent with the countryside environment.
9. manage existing mature trees, hedges and shrubs and, where appropriate, replace any such vegetation lost through property development so as to maintain the rural character of the parish.
10. be required, where appropriate, to exercise sensitive consideration in the design and location of any conservatories and garages in order to preserve the rural character on plot frontages.

Design Guidelines - Settlement Pattern

1. Due consideration should be given to the East Hampshire District Local Plan policies and the policy boundaries which define the limitations to development.
2. New residential development within the settlement policy boundary will be confined to redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings, conversion, subdivision or change of use of buildings and infilling.
3. New development should be designed in a way that respects the quality and character of the local environment.
4. The predominantly linear form of the settlements should be maintained rather than building any new estates or other developments that change the shape of the village or result in the creation of new public roads.
5. The open countryside between the larger part of the village and the settlement at Thedden Grange together with all neighbouring settlements should be preserved and protected from inappropriate development.
6. The gap between the existing settlements in Beech and the present settlement of Alton should be maintained.
7. No industrial or commercial development that could lead to significant adverse impact on the rural character of the parish should be permitted.

Design Guidelines - Building Form and Materials

1. All types of housing (large, medium and “affordable”) should be integrated, with every effort being made to avoid estate developments and to retain diversity of style and materials.
2. Future housing, of whatever size, should be built to a high standard that maintains the quality and diversity of design that is prevalent within the parish.
3. New developments or extensions should be encouraged to show innovation and to be “of their time”. New buildings should be constructed using up to date design and materials. Extensions or alterations should usually be in keeping with the existing building although innovative design should be encouraged.
4. Energy efficiency shall always be encouraged when designed sympathetically with the surroundings. For example, solar panels would be encouraged where these can be incorporated without being excessively obtrusive.
5. All forms of light pollution should be limited to the minimum required to maintain safety and security.

New buildings or developments should :-

6. generally be no higher than two-storey and not significantly higher than the surrounding buildings unless, for example, the contours of the land allow for a higher, but appropriately proportioned, building.
7. reflect and respect the wide range of neighbouring colours, textures, materials, shapes and styles.
8. include adequate car parking spaces within the site boundary ideally screening parking facilities with suitable foliage.
9. take account of designing in safety and designing out crime for the protection of the residents and all the community.

Design Guidelines - Traffic and Road Safety

1. When submitting planning applications, developers should consider the implications of the layout and design of their proposal on traffic movement.
2. In the interests of road safety, the vehicular turning area within each plot on the through roads such as Medstead Road, Kings Hill and Snod Hill, should be sufficient to enable vehicles to enter and to leave in a forward gear. The same should be encouraged on non-through roads such as Wellhouse Road.
3. Speed limit and road safety signs should be erected in consultation with the Parish Council and, wherever possible, should be of a consistent style and in a design sympathetic with the rural character of the parish.

Design Guidelines - Highways and Byways

1. Vehicular access to proposed developments should be designed to be sympathetic to the rural character of the roads in the parish.
2. Any repair or development of the roads should protect the rural nature of the parish and avoid urbanisation resulting from the installation of inappropriate kerbs and street lighting.
3. Unmade lanes should be protected where necessary to preserve the countryside environment and character.
4. Any changes to street lighting should only be undertaken in consultation with Beech Parish Council.
5. Street furniture and signs should only be erected where absolutely necessary and in consultation with Beech Parish Council. Agreed items should be of a consistent style and in a design sympathetic with a rural parish.
6. The number and design of any roadside footpaths, pavements and streetlights should be sympathetic with the character of the area.
7. Developers should be encouraged to incorporate soakaways within plot boundaries specifically designed to minimise water runoff onto the roads.