

Churt  
Village  
Design  
Statement



2011

# Churt

## Village Design Statement

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This document was subjected to robust consultation in August, September and October 2010 prior to being submitted to Waverley Borough Council for adoption as a material planning consideration by the Full Council on 15th December, 2011.

The overwhelming support of the people of Churt, shown by the written comments at the public exhibitions on the draft of this document, clearly demonstrates their pride and affection for the village.

Public opinion heavily reinforces the principles and values established by the design team, carefully described and recorded in this design statement.

There can be no better validation of local sentiment and local preference.

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## Glossary

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- AGLV** Area of Great Landscape Value
- AONB** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DBRG** Domestic Buildings Research Group
- EA** Environment Agency
- SNCI** Site of Nature Conservation Importance





## Introduction

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This Design Statement is an attempt to record what is distinctive about Churt, indicating what is particularly valued and should be conserved, with the aim of providing guidance for future development and design. The document can then be used as a reference to guide developers, planning officers, residents and others before a development is planned and subsequently when a planning application is under consideration.



# Background and History

Churt is an ancient rural community characterised by:

- a sense of time - the oldest house in Churt<sup>1</sup> bears the date 1365\* on one of the roof beams and the village contains fine examples of our built heritage:
- a sense of community – there are at least 20 clubs, societies and social organisations active in the village;
- a sense of place – within living memory there were fourteen farms<sup>2</sup>, all working, with a local infrastructure to support their requirements and those of the people who worked them.

\* DBRG (Surrey), Nos. 1 & 2 Moorside.







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## Settlement Pattern Character

The centre of the village<sup>3,4</sup> lies astride the A287 (1922-25) at Crossways, a crossroads formed by minor roads, Hale House Lane running east and Barford Lane to the west. Within the settlement area the old lanes have developed frontages and give access to several no-through roads serving post war infilling. The village green is a classic focal point with the village church and period houses, yet almost all of that which can be seen in the centre did not exist 150 years ago:

- St. John's Church (1838)<sup>5</sup>, St. John's Infants' School (1871)<sup>6</sup>, the village hall (1928)<sup>7</sup>, Churt Club (1880s)<sup>8</sup>, a recreation ground (1922)<sup>9</sup> and Crossways Inn (pre-1839)<sup>10</sup>.

There is a small village store, a car showroom and workshop and a small number of shops and offices (1920s and 1930s)<sup>11</sup>.

Beyond the settlement boundary [\(see map\)](#) the Parish extends mainly northwards and eastwards containing scattered rural communities approached by narrow, steep sided and tree topped winding lanes. As can be seen from the map, it is limited to the west against the county boundary with Hampshire. On its northern edge it abuts the National Trust common and lake - Frensham Great Pond - managed by Waverley Borough Council. Fields and woodland cut in close to the settlement boundary providing a distinctly rural feel all around. The network of footpaths<sup>13,14</sup> linking village centre with countryside is a feature of the village.

At the time of the 2001 Census the village comprised 1098 persons occupying 458 households. There were 476 dwellings: 313 detached, 99 semi-detached, 24 terraced houses and 38 flats. 12 dwellings were empty. 392 persons travelled to work and 103 worked at home.



## Design Guidelines

The reason for the settlement at Churt – agriculture – has long passed and since that time, pre –1914, the population has slowly increased. There is no reason why Churt could not grow slightly within the settlement but any development should recognise and respect:





- the essential character of the community which rests upon its present cohesive community structure, itself a function of size, and which should be maintained.
- the country setting of the village , emphasised by fields and woodland adjacent to the settlement boundary, in particular by not eroding the built/unbuilt transition at

- the settlement edge or where it would cause harm to the existing character and threaten the tranquillity of the countryside outside of the settlement boundary.
- employment locally and the necessary retail and service businesses to support the population increase.
- the existing infrastructure, especially roads and parking.

## Environment, Countryside and Open Spaces

Churt Parish lies wholly within the Green Belt and the Surrey Hills AONB and is also wholly within a designated AGLV. There are also four Sites of Nature Conservation Importance within or adjacent to the parish boundary:

- Jumps Road Copse SNCI, entirely within the parish boundary
- Beacon Hill SNCI, a small area lies within the parish boundary
- The Flashes Local Nature Reserve; three areas of the reserve are within the parish boundary
- Hindhead Golf Club SNCI immediately adjacent to the parish.

Much of the Parish is wooded with pine and birch and oak predominating, and with gorse and heather in some open spaces and on the heathland to the North. A fertile strip, mostly pasture-land, runs east-west astride Hale House Lane in which the numerous farms, mostly no longer working, are found. The special status of the designated areas together with the tight settlement boundary has protected Churt from indiscriminate development and is one of the factors which maintains the integrity and visual character of the community.

The Parish is criss-crossed with footpaths and bridleways<sup>15</sup>, many of them ancient, and still in use by many local people, walkers and riders, as well as visitors.

Apart from the A287 and Jumps Road all local roads<sup>16</sup> are unclassified, narrow, winding and mostly steep banked, suitable only for local traffic.

Outside the settlement boundary space is important and its loss would be harmful to the rural setting, tranquillity and ambience. Extension to existing property is often a practical and acceptable alternative to the invasion of open countryside.



## Design Guidelines

Within the settlement boundary the scale of any residential development should be responsive to the character of the settlement and its surrounds. Both within the settlement boundary and, where policy permits, outside it, extensions should be designed to harmonise with the scale, character and location of the existing building and its neighbours.





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By way of sympathetic conversion of barns or other buildings, business or commercial developments could, where policy permits, also be considered subject to infrastructure limitations e.g. narrow lane access. The development of the countryside outside the settlement boundary should be resisted unless it complies with the prevailing development plan.

It is important that appropriate landscaping should always be an important feature of new design. Tree planting should comprise mainly native, broadleaf varieties in order to maintain the essential atmosphere of the settlement.

Development should not damage or adversely affect our natural wildlife heritage.

# Housing and Architectural Styles

Churt has five general categories of housing:

- original farmhouses<sup>17</sup> and cottages. There are some thirty-four 15th to 18th century properties which have been recorded by the DBRG, seven listed with a further five having a local listing
- large houses, many with landed estates, built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as country retreats for the wealthy
- smaller houses, many from the 1920s and 1930s, sometimes set within several acres and often forming scattered rural communities with the farmhouses and cottages
- within the settlement boundary much dates from the 1920s and 1930s with post-war infilling, all largely to a low density
- housing developments that consolidated the developed area within the settlement boundary built in the latter half of the last century.

Until 1914 there were at least fourteen working farms in Churt. Now only one remains, though the land of the others is used for either livestock or equestrian grazing, largely on a non-commercial basis. The farmhouses and associated cottages as well as other cottages not part of a farm, are largely still in place and occupied.

Churt's large country houses, and many smaller houses with their own acreage, almost without exception were built of brick<sup>18</sup>, some tile hung in the Surrey style<sup>19</sup>, with tiled roofs<sup>20</sup> and often with dormer windows.<sup>21</sup> Many of these were originally surrounded by many acres – and some still are – and with the growth of trees following the demise of farming are mostly not visible from the road. There is a broad mix of periods and styles across the village including a number of fine period houses ranging from timber framed<sup>22</sup> 14th to 18th centuries through to the 19th and 20th with much in Surrey vernacular style<sup>23</sup> dating from the late 1800s to 1930s. Houses are largely detached and two-storey ranging from the landed, substantial and often architecturally significant country houses<sup>24</sup> and smaller houses with land, through to countrymen's cottages.<sup>25</sup> Within the settlement boundary the density is low, predominantly three to five bedrooms in size with a harmonious mix of period through to post war infilling.

There are six housing developments in Churt, four of them post-war:

- Green Lane Cottages (1930s)<sup>26</sup> consists of fourteen semi-detached properties, some extended. In addition there are two new houses, garden developments, constructed in sympathy with existing properties.
- Greenhanger (1950s)<sup>27</sup> twenty-two semi-detached, part Council part owner-occupied housing, built around a pleasant grassy crescent on the edge of the settlement area.
- Parkhurst Cottages (1920/21)<sup>28</sup> ten cottages, the first council housing to be built in Churt, five now privately owned.

## Design Guidelines

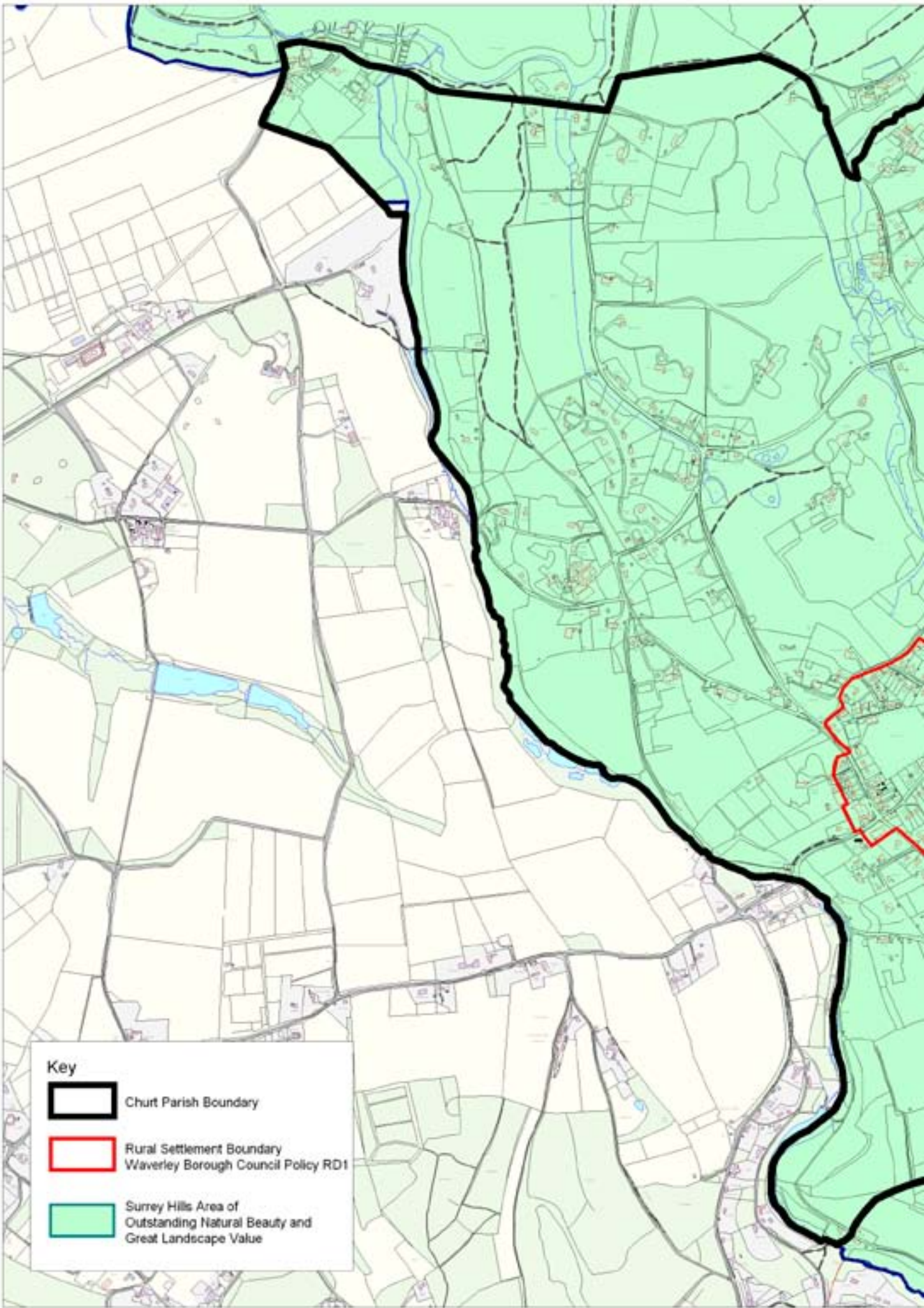
Please see page 14



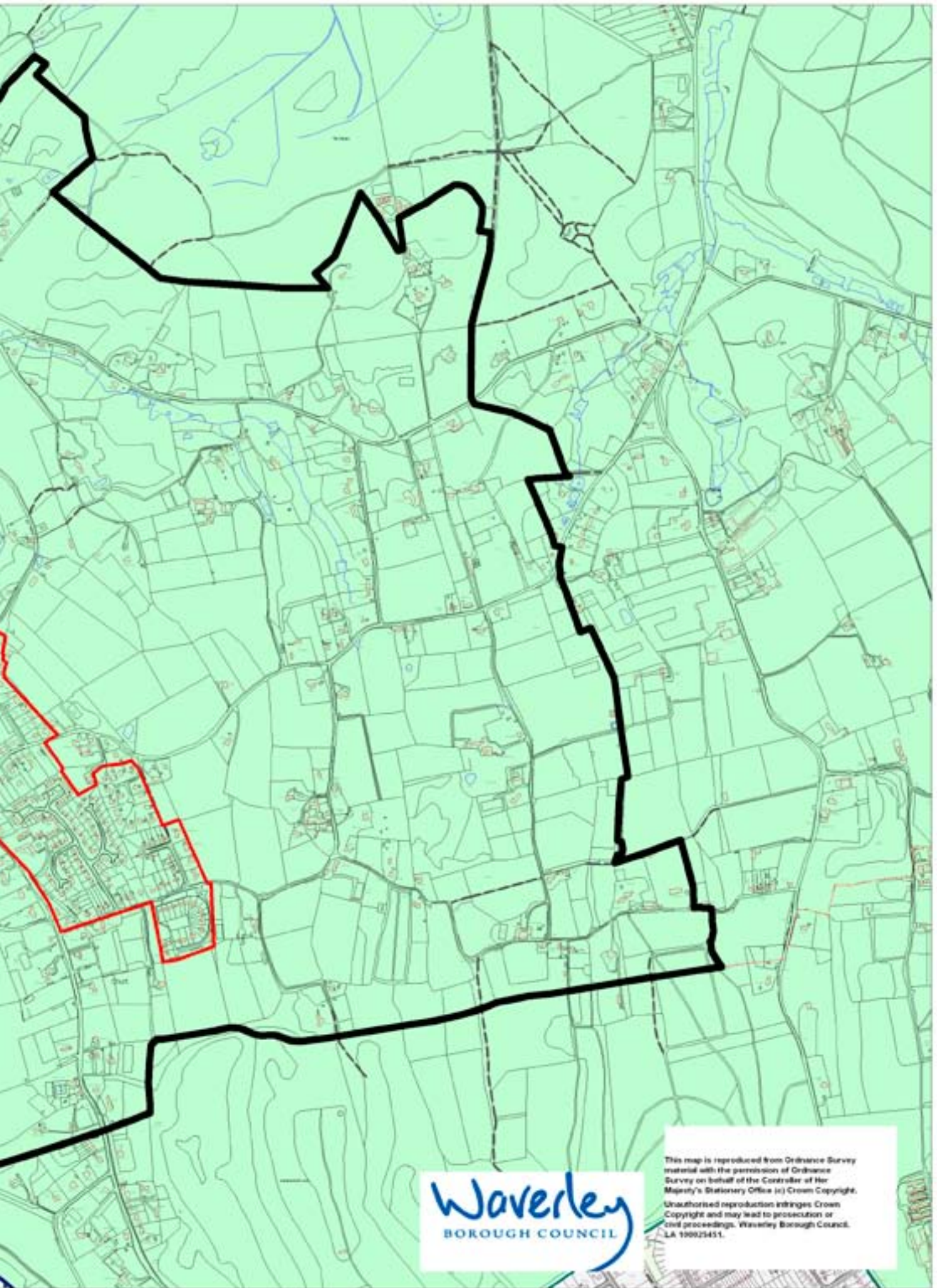












**Waverley**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Housing and Architectural Styles Continued

- Parkhurst Fields (early 1970s)<sup>29</sup> is the largest of the developments consisting of forty-four four-bedroomed detached houses, some now extended, and eleven semi-detached houses, all privately owned. There are twenty-six one-bedroomed bungalows and a community centre with a flat above all belonging to the Local Authority. The road has been adopted.
- Star Hill Drive (1968)<sup>30</sup> comprises fifteen well-spaced detached houses, originally four-bedroomed. Most have been extended, sometimes more than once, over the years. The road is private.
- The Meadows (1978)<sup>31</sup> is a small development of fifteen bungalows surrounded by communal landscaping. This is a private road.

Modern extensions are generally in keeping<sup>32</sup> with the style of the original building though more modern brickwork shows itself through distinctive colouring, bond and pointing. In some cases original brickwork has been painted over. The recent (2009) extension to the east elevation of St. John's School<sup>33</sup> is an excellent example of sympathetic extension, unlike the 1960s flat roof extension to its north elevation. However, replacement windows on some properties are not in keeping with the original style and there are some porches constructed in inappropriate materials.<sup>34</sup>

Most larger properties have detached double garages, brick or timber, some open-fronted. Smaller houses have single garages or none; the more modern being integral to the property.

Quarried over many centuries from small opencast pits in bluffs and hills in the village, Bargate Stone is a distinctive feature in the village and a major local building material, appearing in the elevations<sup>35</sup> of farms, houses, buildings and boundary walls.<sup>36</sup> The elevations of some older buildings, modified over time, are a harmonious mix of materials<sup>37</sup> available at the time. A few properties feature galleting – small pieces of ironstone set within the mortar joints - in their elevations.<sup>38</sup> As part of the built heritage such unplanned mixes of materials are undeniably attractive. Elevations are frequently mixed with plain clay tile hanging and roofs that often embody long hips, tiled dormers, gables large and small, including gablets. In the buildings of the 1900s - 1930s the stone was often blended with brick,<sup>40</sup> tile hanging and render. Windows are often small in size with square-paned timber<sup>39</sup> or leaded lights.<sup>41</sup>

Any opportunity within the settlement boundary to provide affordable housing should be encouraged in order to ensure that local people can stay in their community whatever their age or circumstance.

Sustainability is now an important consideration required and supported by central government policy. This should be encouraged by the use of high levels of insulation, low carbon construction and renewable, low and sustainable energy applications. However, such measures should bear in mind the character and environment in which they are to be introduced and their visual impact within a rural community. Reference should also be made to the EA for advice on flood risk, biodiversity and conservation, protection and enhancement of river corridors, groundwater protection, surface water management, management of sewage effluent and water resource management.

## Design Guidelines

Note should be taken of the traditional building styles and materials to be found in the Parish as well as the scale and density of existing housing. There is enough variety of both for developments not to be unduly constrained by this requirement which is simply that new build must be sympathetic to the







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old. Extensions should be designed to harmonise with the scale, character and location of the existing building and its neighbours.

Development within the settlement boundary should respect the character of the area, making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and to the street scene.

Affordable housing opportunities should be vigorously pursued.

The bulk, scale and density of proposed developments should be appropriate.

# Education, Social and Recreational Amenities

St. John's Church of England Infants' School provides education for about 90 five to seven year-olds from the village and the area immediately surrounding. The school has constantly expanded since its founding in 1870, has an excellent record in every respect and, together with St. John's Church, forms an integral part of the village. There is no secondary education provision in the village.

Churt is very well provided for by way of community facilities:

- Churt Village Hall was given to the village in 1928 by Frank Mason, a local businessman, who built it on land bought by villagers as a memorial to the dead of the First World War. It is the hub of many local activities and is a valued asset in the local community.
- The Community Centre,<sup>42</sup> a Waverley Borough Council property, is available to rent for any community purpose. It is principally used for the twice-weekly provision by volunteers of an inexpensive, two-course lunch, ostensibly for those over 60.
- Quinnettes Barn,<sup>43</sup> 17th century and part of the property owned by Eddystone Housing Association, can also be hired, as it frequently is for family celebrations, weddings and musical events.
- Churt Club dates from 1908 replacing an earlier Institute built in the 1880s. It is a social centre for all, well supported by about 150 members, for whom it provides a meeting place as well as organising a programme of events throughout the year.
- The Church Rooms are also used for smaller community activities, meetings and discussion groups.
- The Scout Hut, re-located to Hale House Lane in the early 1960s.

The Recreation Ground in Churt came into being in 1922 as a memorial to those from the village who fell in the First World War. It is an attractive and vital amenity space in the centre of the village with some fine trees providing a home for cricket, football and tennis clubs and for the annual village fete as well as its use for general recreation. There is a children's playground<sup>44</sup> and an excellent new pavilion (2005),<sup>45</sup> a major asset to the village and used not only by the various sports clubs but also by other organisations both from the village and beyond.



## Design Guidelines

Redevelopment of existing community facilities should not be permitted unless the need no longer exists or readily accessible alternatives are provided.





## Roads, Transport and Parking

Lying astride the A287, the village has good communications to north and south. Lateral roads to east and west have barely changed over the centuries, other than being paved. They are too narrow for large commercial and public service vehicles and are winding with blind corners and steep banks.<sup>16</sup>

Their construction is wholly inadequate for heavy vehicles. As a consequence the only public transport runs along the A287, a bus service at hourly intervals to Farnham or Haslemere, so significant residential development along the lanes could not be supported by public transport; nor could commercial development be such as would require anything but small commercial vehicles.

The main road carries much traffic and speeding through the centre of the village is a constant source of local complaint. The lateral axis through the village from Headley to Thursley provides a link from Bordon in the

west to the A3. "Rat running" along Barford Lane and Hale House Lane at the daily commuting times is a continuing hazard. In view of the road hazards any developments should take account of increased traffic volumes and safe access on to the lanes.

The lives of a rural community in which almost all roads are narrow and winding are easily blighted by adverse traffic conditions and it is in the nature of things that road traffic intensifies.

There is some parking provision and space at the Recreation Ground – sufficient for casual users and tennis players – but insufficient for some of the well-attended cricket matches when overflow parking at the church can be used. There is also limited on-street parking at Crossways, essential to the small businesses there and just enough to meet demand outside school drop-off and collection times. On-street parking here helps to limit traffic speeds in the village centre. Any further developments should always require adequate off-street parking, preferably not visible from the road, and with safe road access.

## Design Guidelines

Due to the physical limitations of the narrow and twisting lanes, often with blind corners, it is essential that careful consideration is given to the impact that a higher volume of vehicular traffic, in particular lorries and vans, will have on the rural community of Churt.

All new development should make adequate allowance for off-street parking in accordance with current guidelines.

Developments should consider the need for accessibility for an ageing population and those with disabilities.

## Business and Employment

Churt shares the experience of other rural communities: a decline in village shops. Between the wars a number of small shops and businesses provided all that the village needed. Since then, the number of shops has fallen but a current estimate suggests that the number of small

businesses within the parish is around twenty. The most recent business to open in 2007 is an antiques shop operated by the owner and which is open only part-time. In the interests of sustainability, especially in reducing travel, the development of small business opportunities providing local employment would be welcomed in Churt.

## Design Guidelines

There may be little opportunity for new commercial development in Churt but it is desirable that when an opportunity does arise, it should be encouraged in the interests of the local economy and sustainability providing it is compliant with the relevant Local Plan policies.



## Walls, Hedges, Banks and Gates

Outside the settlement area, boundaries are mostly hedging with either stock or post and rail fencing, tree topped banks, frequently holly, and some Bargate Stone walling. Inside, a traditional mix of planted, hedged or fenced boundaries separates gardens, which are often large.

In some places lanes run between walls rather than hedges or banks. The stone is mostly Bargate and some walls are very old. There are a few close-boarded fences but these look out of place in this environment. More traditional rural fencing should be encouraged. Most gates are field gates,<sup>46</sup> wooden or galvanised metal, but many property entrances are ungated. A few properties have installed high, overbearing wooden gates.<sup>47</sup> These are alien to the traditional open gates in the Parish and suggest an unwelcome isolation from the community. Wrought iron gates or traditional field gates, which preserve the open aspect, are much more appropriate.

Many of the lane banks are hedged with invasive feral holly, usually untrimmed and rather straggly, and never a stock proof barrier. Others are of hazel and these are very old - 700-800 years has been suggested - originally maintained as field and farm boundaries or to contain stock and for coppicing. These are no longer maintained for either purpose and tend to overhang the already narrow lanes.



## Design Guidelines

Development should seek to conserve the character of the area so that accesses are acceptable but in keeping. The traditional

banks, walls and hedges, where they consist of native species characteristic of the local area, flanking lanes and providing boundaries should be preserved. Close-boarded fences and tall, overbearing gates should be discouraged as they are considered to be out of keeping with the existing character of Churt.

## Street Furniture and Urbanisation

There is limited street lighting in Churt village centre at the pedestrian crossing and there was some local resistance when it was installed. The period style of the lamp standards<sup>48</sup> and the concentrated downlighting were chosen both to harmonise with the area and to minimise the impact of light spill as far as possible. Otherwise, only Parkurst Fields and Star Hill Drive have street lighting. However, there is no appetite for further lighting anywhere else. The tennis club, popular in the village and very conscious of local sentiment, did not pursue a plan to install floodlighting to extend playing hours which, had it gone ahead, would certainly have faced local opposition.

Whilst not normally within planning control, there is concern about light pollution in this rural setting. In view of the incidence of burglary, garden theft and vehicle crime it is not surprising that property owners install security lighting. However, such lighting should always be downlighting and low level and should come on for a fixed, short period only when activated by sensors. The growing installation of garden and feature floodlighting and associated light spill, so alien to the rural environment and ambience, should be appropriate in design and location to prevent pollution.

In the rural setting of Churt almost all street furniture, especially traffic signs, look out of place. Some are essential in the interests of road safety: many are not and require rationalisation.

Commercial signage<sup>49</sup> can also be intrusive and exaggerated. New signage should be carefully considered and appropriate in size, scale, colour and location. The impact of recent signage in the village centre is considered by many to be excessive and inappropriate in this location.



## Design Guidelines

Outside lighting, public or private, should be sympathetic to the environment and designed to minimise light pollution.

Street furniture is not desirable, apart from that which:

- is necessary for safety and sanitation,
- assists pedestrians, e.g. seats, bus shelters,
- assists travellers, e.g. information signs,

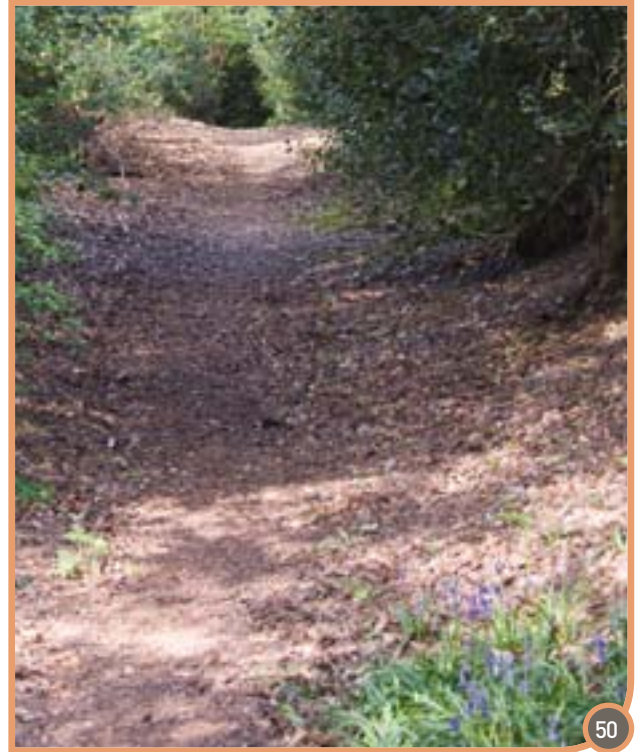
Excessive surface markings should be avoided. Signage at all business premises should be limited in its extent, appropriate in its form and consistent with Local Plan policy.



## Rights of Way and Footpaths

Pavements exist in Hale House Lane - about 70m from Crossways along one side; on Hatch Hill - about 220m along one side; and intermittently on both sides of Churt Road to the north to just beyond Jumps Road. Pavements could be usefully extended in all side roads in the village. There is also an unofficial footpath along the north side of Barford Lane which serves as a pavement.

Elsewhere, there are many historic footpaths<sup>50</sup> and bridleways<sup>51</sup> following natural features and contours, all well used by local people and others. The footpaths are now used for children to get to school and to bus stops as well as for recreation. They connect open rural spaces and the recreational pleasure of using them derives from their original practical choice of route and the uninterrupted views across the surrounding countryside which they offer.



## Design Guidelines

Existing Rights of Way should be preserved.

Attempts to divert or re-align footpaths must be carefully examined.

Footpath boundaries should not detract from the walker's enjoyment of the countryside.

## The Future - Heritage versus Development

The overwhelming support of the people of Churt, shown by the written comments at the public exhibitions on the draft of this document, clearly demonstrates their pride and affection for the village.

Public opinion heavily reinforces the principles and values established by the Design Team, carefully described and recorded in this design statement.

There can be no better validation of local sentiment and local preference.

Really there should be no conflict between heritage and development, since past development is present heritage. Change should not be resisted as long as it is in keeping with policy and not damaging to the environment. Development within the settlement boundary should be encouraged where it is of such quality that it can, in time, itself become heritage.







## Acknowledgements

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