

## Ashwell Village Design Statement revisions

The 31 August 2018 version of the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan ('ANP') made changes to the Ashwell Village Design Statement 2000 ('AVDS').

For the purposes of the current (June 2020) version of the ANP, the following sections of the AVDS should be ignored:

- 6 Settlement Pattern
- 7 Buildings

These sections should be replaced in their entirety by the text below.

### 1 Design Considerations for New Developments

#### General aspects of the Village Design Statement

- 1.1 The Ashwell Village Design Statement was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the NHDC in 2000. It was intended to act as a guide for the design and appearance of new homes. It would thereby reduce the visual impact of new development, while at the same time ensuring new developments are of a high standard of design, using appropriate materials. Further it would ensure that new buildings make a positive contribution to the setting and appearance of the village.

### 2 Settlement Pattern

- 2.1 Until recently Ashwell was largely a farming community with a number of farms based in the centre of the village. The farmhouses had yards to the side and rear, with outbuildings running along the boundaries behind. Labourers lived in cottages which were usually terraced, either directly fronting the main road or in Back Street and Silver Street. The village has expanded substantially in the twentieth century, with many new houses and ribbon development formed along Claybush Road and Newnham Hill.
- 2.2 The local authority has built houses in Station Road, Ashwell Street and Dixies Close and there have been many residential developments on agricultural land within the village. The two maltings have also been converted to residential use.
- 2.3 The density of building in the village core is high and has become higher as old buildings have been extended and open spaces filled in. Houses in the centre mostly front directly onto the street and this adds to the feeling of closeness. Away from the centre, houses are generally set back from the street and are less densely packed. There is also a tendency for the height of buildings to decrease away from the village core.
- 2.4 Most buildings in the village are of two storeys, although there are some of three storeys in the centre. There are some single storey and dormer bungalows in Lucas

Lane and on the roads leading out of the village. Only the two former maltings, now converted to residential use, exceed three storeys in height.

2.5 Different parts of Ashwell exhibit distinctively different characteristics. New development, and improvements or extensions to existing buildings, should take these differences into account:

- the scale of the new development should be in keeping with existing buildings
- there should be a good balance between buildings and open or green spaces, including gardens
- the density of new development should be carefully considered and should reflect the density of development that surrounds the development area
- the development should respect the characteristics of the area of the village where it is taking place

### Street pattern

2.6 Ashwell is a relatively long, narrow village built either side of a main street running roughly south-west to north-east. The current settlement pattern reflects Ashwell's history. In the Middle Ages it was an important market town and the buildings in the centre of the village are densely packed and fronting the main road:

- new streets should reflect the characteristics of the existing street pattern: basically rectilinear although with a few streets which are rigidly straight
- new developments should be integrated with the village style and form part of a linked pattern
- ribbon development is difficult to integrate with the rest of the village and should be avoided
- large cul-de-sacs should be avoided, but small courtyard developments, or closes of terraced houses, would be acceptable. Separate pedestrian access should be provided for such developments wherever possible
- building density should decrease away from the centre of the village.

## 3 Buildings

3.1 Ashwell is an attractive village with a rich variety of building styles and materials. No single style predominates. The old and the new generally intermingle harmoniously. The variety of shapes and styles in the High Street represents the way the village has developed over time. The buildings are diverse but are comfortable together:

- storey height for new developments should be varied to reflect the historic building form of the particular part of the village where the site is located
- uniformity of design in smaller developments can be acceptable if it reflects a particular feature of the village, such as terraced houses

- houses that front directly onto the road or pavement are a significant feature of the village
- new development should be discreetly sited and should not intrude upon the landscape

## Walls

- 3.2 Within the village there are some good examples of authentic exposed timber framing and other, less convincing, examples of applied timber framing. There is some red brick in the village and a number of nineteenth-century houses were built of Arleseay or Cambridgeshire white bricks. In the twentieth century a wide variety of brick types has been used as availability and fashions have changed.

Some buildings have decorative brickwork below the eaves, or above windows and doorways. Others have decorative details in contrasting colours. Many walls are rendered and painted and there is some pebbledash. There are a few examples of pargetting and other decorative renderings.

Pale colours predominate, including white, cream, beige and pink. There is also some dark-stained weatherboarding. Reclaimed materials have been used successfully in a number of recently built houses. Appropriate finishes for walls include:

- render; painted in pale colours
- brick; pale mixtures, second-hand stocks, hand cut of rustic nature. Where used, red brick should be confined to detail courses. A pale painted finish to common brickwork is acceptable. Wire-cut and engineering bricks should be avoided
- dark-stained feather-edged boarding; this is not a traditional finish for domestic buildings, historically being confined to agricultural and out-buildings, but it has been used successfully in conversions and some new houses and may be used to add variety and 'soften' developments (e.g. cladding to garages)

## Roofs

- 3.3 Roofs are generally finished with either plain clay tiles or natural slates in the historic core of the village. Interlocking tiles have been used on many post-war developments. Some thatching remains.

There is a variety of gables, the pitch varying with the roofing material. There are some hipped roofs but few half hips. Gables with scalloped bargeboards are a feature of the village, particularly at the western end. There are many dormer windows throughout the village. Appropriate finishes for roofs include:

- for steeper pitched roofs; Brown Mixture plain clay tiles (40 degree pitch or steeper) or thatch (50 degree pitch or steeper)
- for shallower pitched roofs; Blue/black (Welsh) slate, yellow or red mixture clay pantiles (30 degree pitch or steeper)
- existing thatched roofs should be retained and, where necessary, repaired. Long straw is the preferred thatching material

- 3.4 Note: Since the preparation of the Village Design Statement the use of solar panels on roofs has become much more widespread. The use of solar panels on new houses is encouraged, but consideration should be given to the visual impact and, where possible, they should be sited on a roof other than the main building.

### Doors and Porches

- 3.5 Domestic buildings generally have doors and porches typical of the period in which they were built. Doors are generally plain, some are partly glazed and others have fanlights over them. Porches, where present, are usually small and simple. Canopies over doors, rather than full porches, are also a feature.

There is a wide range of doors and porches on modern houses, some of them based on traditional forms. Some older properties have had doors made from modern materials fitted to them, with varying degrees of success.

Porches and canopies should be in keeping with the style and construction of the building to which they are fitted. In addition, designers of new property, and those improving existing buildings, should recognise and respect that:

- doors are traditionally panelled, sometimes including glazing
- framed, ledged and braced doors are common on older vernacular buildings, and are also found on some modern developments
- mass-produced doors are often not appropriate, particularly when used to 'improve' older properties. For example, fanlights should be part of the door frame and not included in the door itself

### Windows

- 3.6 In Ashwell both vertical sash and casement windows are in evidence. These windows are generally small-paned and in wooden frames. Panes are generally taller than they are wide.

Most window frames are painted but, in a few older buildings and many new ones, stain finishes are also seen. UPVC windows incorporating sealed double-glazed units are found in many new buildings and used as replacements in some older buildings.

Windows are the 'eyes' of a building and window detailing and proportion is therefore critical to the overall design and appearance of the building. The design of windows for both new buildings and alterations/extensions should take the following into account:

- the proportions of glazing within a window should be vertical, with panes taller than they are wide. Wider windows should therefore be made up of pairs or triptychs of smaller, vertically proportioned casements, rather than a single large pane of plate glass. Privacy for windows directly on the street can be improved by using windows sub-divided into small panes
- on new buildings, the material for the frame is often of less importance than the style of window, although timber windows are preferred in the historic parts of the village. Where frames are made of UPVC, the frame and glazing bars should not be too thick. False glazing bars should be avoided, but where

they are essential, applied or bonded bars are preferable to glazing bars sandwiched within sealed units. Aluminium windows should preferably be powder-coated rather than untreated

- in older buildings, the traditional style and materials of the windows should be retained wherever possible

### Chimneys

- 3.7 Ornamental chimneys are a feature of some older houses. However, chimneys on modern houses, where present, tend to be more utilitarian. Where appropriate, the use of chimneys on new developments will be encouraged. Their design should reflect their context and the building on which they are placed. It is also desirable to retain existing chimneys, especially those visible from the street.