

WINTERBORNE HOUGHTON

Village Design Statement



Supplementary Planning Guidance

May 2002

The Research Model

In the production of this document the Village Design Team sought consultation with villagers throughout the project. Initially, every house in the parish received an invitation for interested parties to join a Village Design Team. From the replies a volunteer group was formed, and it has worked on this document over the last year.

In order to seek villagers' views about the area in which they live an open – ended questionnaire was formulated and distributed to every house in the village. The open questions made the form more taxing than a multiple-choice questionnaire, but it was felt that more pertinent answers and opinions would be received in this format. The questionnaire replies were collated to record the core and shared opinions of the villagers; other, more individual opinions, were also recorded.

In October 2000 a Village Workshop Day was organised in the Parish Rooms. Again, every house in the Parish was leafleted for this day. At the workshop the individual questionnaires and the collated recording of these were available for study. The group attending were divided into three sub groups whose task was to identify the characteristics of the village. The discussion was focussed on the following areas:

- Walks around the parish to show off its best features
- Different zones in the parish.
- Historic, geographical and special features throughout the parish.

The results in each section were then plotted on a map.

After this discussion the participants then went into the parish and took photographs as evidence of their perceptions and discussion. At the end of the day all the information was shared, and opinions clarified and recorded. An album containing photographic evidence of this document is lodged with the Clerk to the parish council.

The information from the questionnaires and the Work Shop Day was referred to closely and continually by the Design Team so that this document should be a true reflection of the opinions voiced to the Design Team.

At an early draft stage the Parish and Parochial Church Councils and the Conservation Officer for the area were consulted. The valuable comments made to us at this stage resulted in some re drafting in preparation for the presentation of this document to the villagers during the month of June 2001. This presentation and consultation resulted in more amendments being made. The document has reached a final satisfactory state and has been submitted to North Dorset District Council and approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Acknowledgements:

Design Team: Sue Bates, Siobhan Broomfield, John Close, Ann Halahan, John Martin, Mary Norman and Ian Provis
Dorset Community Action
North Dorset Planning Office
Parish and Parochial Church Councils
Photo Mall Photographics

Cover photo: View from the Church tower

Introduction:

The village of Winterborne Houghton has changed, within living memory, from a farming hamlet to a rural residential village. Many of the original families are lost to the community, but in their place have come newcomers who value the peaceful country environment.

The purpose of this statement is to reflect the opinions of the residents of Winterborne Houghton about their village and surrounding countryside. The statement identifies, through a process of consultation with fellow villagers, the essential characteristics of the locality, and lays down guidance for planning for at least the next nine years. During the careful research for this document villagers have expressed their concerns over development, whilst showing a realistic attitude to some inevitable change. In the event of any further building it is hoped that this document will ensure a more sensitive approach to our rural setting.

The retention of the village settlement boundary until 2011 will underpin what is possible in the future of the village. It is also hoped that with the adoption of this statement as supplementary planning guidance, thoughtful and sympathetic changes will be seen throughout the parish. Present and future householders,

utility companies, builders and developers all need to be aware that if new buildings occupy green spaces, they must blend harmoniously with the surroundings.



View of Winterborne Houghton looking North West

The Village Setting:

The village is just five miles from Blandford, and lies in a deep valley at the source of Dorset's eastern Winterborne River, on the southern side of the Bulbarrow escarpment.

The river rises as a small stream from the chalk in a very beautiful amphitheatre of wooded slopes and unspoilt downland at the head of the valley. The parish is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and is part of the Wessex Environmentally Sensitive Area. The ancient woodland and downland is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for exceptional flora and fauna.



*Winterborne Houghton
from Whiteway*

The countryside that surrounds the village is of prime importance to its character and appeal both from the aesthetic and historical perspectives.

In the past the village lay on the routes of several important long distance highways. This has led to an extensive network of bridleways and footpaths, which is a prized amenity much enjoyed by villagers and a wider public.

Special appreciation of the views of unspoilt countryside from these rights of way were keenly noted in the answers to

the research, and any development that would intrude on these views would be strongly opposed.

Whiteway, at the western end of the village, is part of a very ancient long distance route. Centuries of constant use of this track have carved out a hollow way, still double-hedged in part, which climbs to Houghton South Down. On this down are a number of Bronze Age round barrows. A second, later track, branched off to Milton Abbey, passing the modern water board reservoir and prominent group of firs, Houghton Clump. This landmark was once used as a navigational aid to ships in the English Channel.



Celtic Fields

On Meriden Down, above Higher Houghton, there are remains of a Romano - British village, said to be the best example of its kind in the south of England. The well-preserved bank and ditch of a mediaeval deer park pale cuts right through the still discernible house platforms and track ways of the settlement. The park pale can be traced across to and along part of the parish boundary road. A short distance to the south of Meriden are the well-defined traces of another Romano-British settlement on the down known as "Celtic Fields". The lynchets of the associated Iron Age field systems can still be seen on either side of the valley. After the Second World War, the northern and southern slopes immediately above the village were extensively ploughed during the relentless drive for increased production. The historic features were lost, together with hedges, spinneys, double-hedged old lanes and much of the associated wild life.

The old drovers' pond at Dunbury and the tumulus known as the "Soldiers Tump" survive along an old drovers' road, now the Bridleway BR2. This route was double-hedged until quite recently, coming from the south and continuing to markets and fairs in the vale. It is here that six soldiers are said to have been ambushed on their way to join the Clubman's Rebellion on Hambledon Hill in 1645. Another droveway, now Bridleway BR3, passes

through Heath Bottom, north of Higher Houghton and on to Ibberton. It passes through woodland, some of which is very old, that once stretched to the parish boundary. For hundreds of years the villagers worked and earned their living in these woods, which supplied all their needs for fuel and building materials. The woods are still worked, with removal of mature timber and replanting as necessary.

The terrain underlying most of the village is the lower chalk layer giving way to alluvial deposits at the eastern end. Away from the valley bottom, soil cover is typical of a chalk area, being relatively thin with large numbers of flints. Due to the valley bottom location the water table during the winter months is at or near the surface resulting in water seepage over the road. In wetter winters the Winterborne may occupy the full width of the road. In 2000/01 the levels regularly experienced fifty or so years ago have returned on occasions. At some time in the year the road at the western end of the village has always been covered or partially covered.

The ditch which runs along the south side of the road, plays an integral role in village life and is a defining part of the character of the village. Judicious clearing of the ditch helps to keep the banks intact and preserves the

chalk stream flora and fauna. In the manner of a true winterborne, springs erupt throughout the village, occasionally forcing their way under and through floors of dwellings. For generations these springs fed the many wells that were the chief water supply for the villagers before mains water was piped in. Even today the area at the west end of the village and Higher Houghton both rely on a private water supply drawn from a borehole. Any possible future developer should be aware of the implications of this and, be advised that, in times of drought, the level in the aquifer supplying the borehole can fall low.

A trout farm marks the eastern boundary, where once there were watercress beds. It is from here, that the Winterborne, fed by artesian wells, flows all the year round to Winterborne Stickland. The streamside approach



Single track road beside the Winterborne

road from Winterborne Stickland is single track which naturally limits the flow of traffic, and adds to the feeling of remoteness. This lane, referred to by some as Watery Lane, is regarded as a

valued amenity. It is a place for walking and enjoyment of the rich wildlife that abounds on the banks. Water voles, grass snakes, moorhens, herons, kingfishers and buzzards can be seen; badgers, owls and bats are also common throughout the parish.

The only other approach to the village for vehicles is a steep narrow lane, known as The Hollow, from Bulbarrow Ridge. This is part of the ancient route that continued south into the next valley. Many rights of way are part of, or connect up with routes such as the Wessex Ridge. The village offers a good environment for walkers and riders.

The Village:

At the western end, Whiteway merges into the village street. From this point most buildings follow the line of the road and at an established setback distance. Although referred to as a ribbon development, the road meanders following the old riverbed, with a green banked ditch to one side. Villagers are keen to preserve the linear ‘envelope’, and are opposed to backland development.



Michaelmas Cottage with Cobblers Cottage in the background

The character of the central core of the village is influenced by the gentle curve at Michaelmas Cottage. The views to and from this point give a sense of

enclosure framed by mature trees and hedges. Looking up at the hills, the agricultural boundaries can be seen, and fingers of greenery divide the properties. This forms part of the conservation area where the valley widens slightly. A number of the older thatched properties here have featured in several published articles on rural Dorset.

Our farming heritage is in the care of Glebe Farm, Knife Hill Farm and Higher Houghton Farm. The fields and downland around the village belong, with the exception of a few fields, to these farms. The downland farming landscape is full of mature trees and ancient hedgerows. Where the agricultural land meets the village curtilage the junction is typically marked by hedgerows of native trees and bushes. This is a defining characteristic of the

greenness throughout the valley and softens the visual effect of the buildings. There are few walls or fences abutting the farmland. Sheep, horses, cattle, alpaca and trout make up the main farming activity in the parish.

From the research, village residents are particularly keen to preserve the views of the village from the surrounding hills. The metalled road is barely visible from most viewpoints, adding to the feeling of remoteness and tranquillity mentioned by many residents. Similarly, it is felt that the views of the hills from the village are also unique and worth preserving. At night the rural nature of the village is enhanced by the complete absence of street lighting. Residents or new householders should therefore take particular care when erecting security lights so that they neither impinge on neighbours, nor shine too brightly.

Within the parish there are 85 households and the current demographic profile is biased towards middle age and retirement. Private cars are the common mode of transport as there are only two shoppers' buses per week. Potential employment within the village might well be served by rural crafts, and some existing buildings have permission to be converted for this purpose. For example, Whiteways Farm has a small acreage and has recently been developed

as an equestrian centre. Persons wishing to explore these possibilities should be aware that North Dorset District Council planning places strict controls on vehicle access, parking and noise levels.

Particular Buildings and Features:

Winterborne Houghton has a rich and diverse mixture of buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of the village.

Listed Buildings:

The Church
Middle Farmhouse
Michaelmas Cottage (formerly Downview Farm)
Cobbler's Cottage
Well Cottage (formerly Pienook)
Peaceful Cottage
The Dower House (formerly Higher Houghton Farmhouse)

The Church of St Andrew's, one of five within the benefice, stands back from the road at the junction of Bulbarrow Lane at the centre of the Conservation Area. A 13th century church stood here before, and in the 19th century some of the original materials were used to build

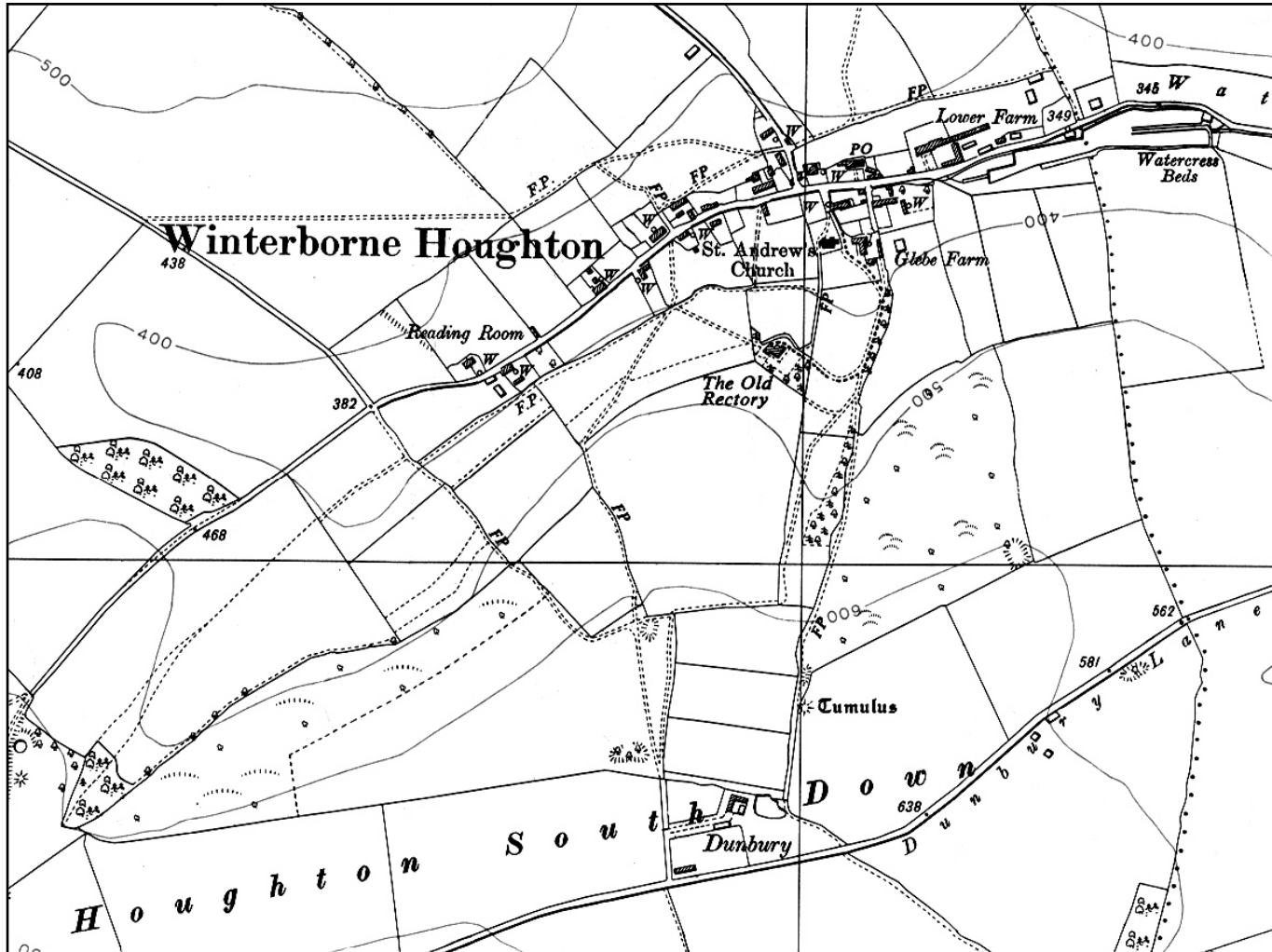
the present church. With a backdrop of wooded hills and fields it is the epitome of an English country church and churchyard.

The building is a mixture of flint with random rubble, and banded brick, with some parts rendered. The square tower is castellated and can be best seen framed by trees on the descent from Bulbarrow. From our research, villagers want the area around the church to be preserved at all costs, and



St. Andrew's Church

it is designated as an important open green space. Inside the church there is a 15th century font from the older church, and a handmade modern carved altar. Two small



Ordnance Survey 1962

Houghton Owls are carved into the alter decoration and this motif can be seen elsewhere in the village. Villagers from Winterborne Houghton are known locally as “Houghton Owls”.

Although there are relatively few listed buildings in Winterborne Houghton and Higher Houghton it is possible to trace the older dwellings on either side of the valley floor. These buildings are visually prominent and give the original framework of the village.

Every effort should be made to maintain their contribution to the character and appearance of the village.

The oldest buildings are built with either brick banding and coursed flintwork with thatch, or white cob with thatch, dating from the late 17th century or early 18th century. Hipped or half-hipped roof lines feature in four of these thatched properties. At The Dower House, believed once to have been thatched, a tiled roof with end copings gives a very pleasing line to the house set amongst wood and downland.

Although not listed, other older buildings are significant to the appearance and historic settlement pattern of the village. The Old School House, although altered, is in brick and flint, with a slate roof and lead flashing. This house was built at the same time as the present church, and The Old Rectory, which is perched above the church. The Old Pound Cottage, Manor Cottage and The Old Post House cluster around the junction of Bulbarrow Lane. Here a sensitively restored and developed animal pound has been given a hipped tiled roof that does not detract from this quiet corner.

The Conservation Area was fought for over a number of years, and parishioners have expressed a wish to preserve this area. Any building or change within this area is subject to The Planning (Listed Buildings and

Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the adopted local plan from North Dorset District Council.

The Old Reading Room, now The Old Hall, shows that there was a social and cultural life lively enough to warrant a meeting place. The houses on the Knapp are the only remaining terraced houses in the village.

Evidence of an agricultural heritage is still visible with some buildings of note adjacent to the farmhouses. Any development of these would be scrutinised for the positive effect it would bring to the community. Some buildings still carry the name of 'farmhouse', Middle Farm being one example. Welcombe House was the farmhouse to Lower Farm and the cottage next door still bears this name, whilst its barns are known as Flintstones.

As expected in a winter borne village, many houses have retained private wells. One beside the church displays a tiled roof, while the well at Well Cottage can clearly be seen with pump in place. Those wishing to build in the village should take particular note of the positioning of all local wells and the risk of polluting the natural springs.



The village centre

The villagers are proud to retain the red K6 Gilbert Scott telephone box, the George V1 post box and the

circular finial finger posts.

The addition of benches, church and parish noticeboards, carefully chosen in oak and crafted by local men bear a reminder of “The Houghton Owls”. Particular features of the village are the absence of pavements and street signs.

The Millennium Pond was built and paid for by villagers and local interested parties. There was careful negotiation with the Environment Agency before the project could go ahead, underlining the difficulties encountered when building in a winterborne village. The pond area has been planted with native flora, trees and bushes. A local group tends it, and as the planting matures, the area will be a haven for wildlife. The carved bench at the western end is for anyone wishing to spend time enjoying the peaceful view.

Future Developments and Building:

General

There is little scope within the village settlement for any future building. The linear pattern of the settlement is well marked; all the older properties follow the bed of the Winterborne. Any new building should reflect the established setback distances from the lane and plot boundaries. Spaces around and between buildings are often an important part of the character and appearance of an area, and the setting of principal contributory buildings. Where buildings are characterised by wooded, hedged or green enclosure, the introduction of additional substantial buildings may not be appropriate. Attention must be paid to the articulation of buildings and the arrangement of fenestration. In particular, effort should be made to reflect the scale and form of existing and adjacent buildings. Regard must be paid to Winterborne Houghton’s unique surroundings whether development is for residential, agricultural or commercial purposes. In addition, there is a natural limit to vehicular access, as the principal access to the village is by a single-track carriageway.

Building types

There is a spectrum of different building types from the traditional thatched cottage to the modern family house. Many houses in this village are cottages either in name or style. New developments should have due regard to scale, avoiding visual massing which is out of character with the established principles in the village. Villagers see the re-establishment of a local vernacular as desirable through both form and materials. Repetition should be avoided and development which involves the creation of more than one or two buildings should reflect the organic development of the village.

Materials

Building materials have changed over the years from cob, chalk or rubble walling and thatch, to the current standard components of brick, flint and timber weatherboarding. Local materials are preferred by the residents, and the use of flint and brick style has proved very successful and should be encouraged. The choice of colour in bricks, tiles and rendering should reflect the rural surroundings.

Windows and doors

Any window designs, as well as being balanced, need to reflect the age and design of the host building. Insensitive replacement doors and windows can seriously detract

from the character of a building. Large picture windows and/or artificial double glazing bars are inappropriate in an older building.

Extensions and porches

Any extension or addition should reflect the forms, materials, textures, age and character of the host building. The extension should not impose on the host building and should generally appear subservient. The siting of conservatories, greenhouses, sheds and free standing garages can greatly affect the external appearance and setting of buildings. Care should be taken when choosing porches or rainhoods, so that the style is appropriate to the main structure. Their construction must have due regard to the character of the main dwelling and the village.

Height of buildings

Concern over the height of buildings was the most frequently mentioned issue in the research. The village does not lend itself to residential dwellings of more than two storeys, and where possible the ground floor level should be kept close to the natural ground level. Reduction in height can be achieved by using the roof space with dormer windows, giving a more cottage style.



Little Glebe

Roofs

Roofs are often one of the most prominent features of the building, and affect the perceived mass of the building. As with bricks, clay tile and slate, colour and shape must be chosen to fit in with the adjoining buildings. Hipped or half-hipped barn roofs can enhance the general appearance of a building, and are often seen throughout Dorset. Chimneystacks make an aesthetic contribution to a particular building and locality and therefore removal should be resisted. New chimneystacks should not be excessively tall, but should be well proportioned and reflect the style and size of the host building.

Boundaries

Hedges, fences and walls, should be chosen to blend into the general aspect of any development in the village. Where gaps exist, re-instatement of hedgerows is desirable in order to reinforce the sense of enclosure. Native trees and bushes are preferred for hedges, and careful landscaping makes a marked difference to any site. Open fronted gardens are not suitable.

Commercial Activity

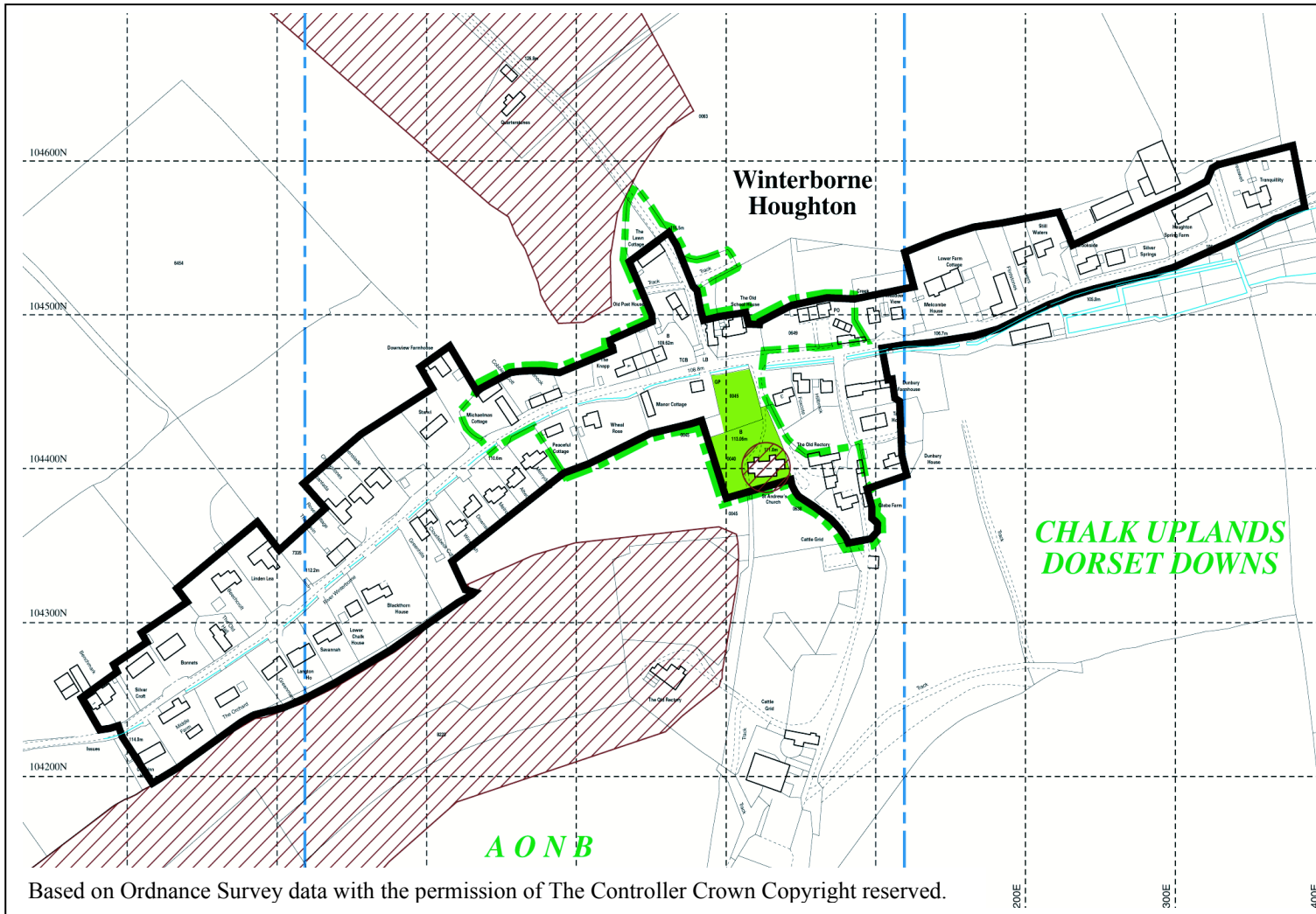
Nowadays, few villagers work on the land, but with the coming of the technological age, several residents work from home. It is accepted that there will be changes in commercial activity over time. Some older buildings have already received approval for change of use. These conversions are far preferable to purpose-built units, an opinion voiced in the research. Buildings such as barns should remain recognisable so that their contribution to the village character is retained. Any change in materials or new development, needs to take the local environment into account together with issues of access, parking and noise levels.

Summary:

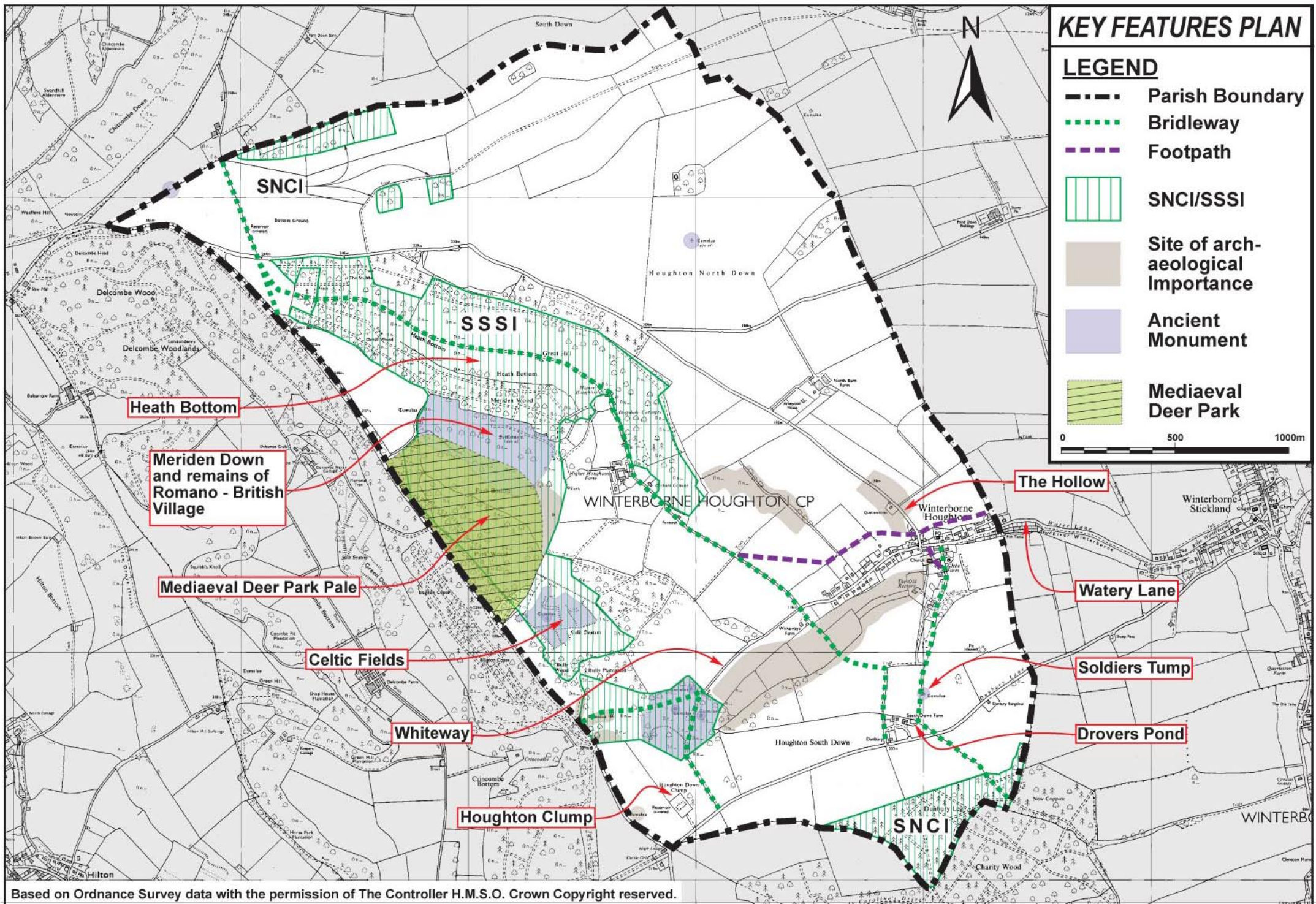
- The whole parish is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and further designated areas lie within the AONB. Special flora and fauna have a natural habitat in the area.
 - There are significant historical sites and settlements within the parish.
 - The present siting of the buildings has been influenced by the historic, geographic and geological location.
 - The characteristics most noted by residents are the rolling hills of the Dorset landscape, the mature woodlands, the greenness of the deep valley, the greenery throughout the linear street, the sense of remoteness and tranquillity and the influence of the Winterborne.
 - The approach roads to the village are unsuitable for any significant increase in traffic.
 - The views to and from the hills are prized amenities to be safeguarded.
 - Any future building development will be carefully scrutinised at parish council level to ensure that it enhances the appearance of the village and benefits the village as a whole.
- Any new development should respect the established linear pattern of the village.
 - Special attention will be given to the height of buildings.
 - Special attention will be given to the general design and layout of any building to ensure it complements the village and valley surroundings.
 - Special attention will be given to the amount of green space around the buildings to ensure that the greenness of the verges and hedges throughout the village is not endangered.

This is a working document written with the overall aim to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the village. There will be opportunities for improvement in the future, and the opportunities should reinforce a sense of the local identity and the distinctiveness of a rural village set within a steep green valley.





Winterborne Houghton local plan showing settlement boundary - September 1995



KEY FEATURES PLAN

LEGEND

- Parish Boundary
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- SNCI/SSSI
- Site of archaeological Importance
- Ancient Monument
- Mediaeval Deer Park

0 500 1000m

Heath Bottom

Meriden Down and remains of Romano - British Village

Mediaeval Deer Park Pale

Celtic Fields

Whiteway

Houghton Clump

WINTERBORNE HOUGHTON CP

The Hollow

Watery Lane

Soldiers Tump

Drovers Pond

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WINTERBORNE HOUGHTON

List of Policies

Policy 1.5	---	Allows modest growth within the Settlement Boundary
Policy 1.7	---	Restricts development outside of the Settlement Boundary
Policy 1.9	---	Standard Assessment Criteria used to assess applications
Policy 1.10	---	Prevents development on areas shown on the Plan as Important Open or Wooded Areas
Policy 1.11	---	Covers the re-use and adaptation of buildings in the countryside, i.e outside the Settlement Boundary
Policy 1.13	---	On development in River Valleys
Policies 1.19 – 1.25	---	Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
Policy 1.27	---	Sites of Archaeological Importance
Policy 1.30	---	Restricts development in the AONB
Policy 1.31	---	Ensures integration of development with the landscape character area
Policy 2.4	---	Allows infilling within settlement boundaries, subject to scale and character and other policies
Policy 2.7	---	Density of new development
Policy 2.10	---	Allows for the development of affordable housing within or adjacent to the settlement boundary
Policy 2.12	---	Replacement dwellings in the countryside are allowed, subject to certain criteria
Policy 2.13	---	Dwellings for agricultural or forestry workers in the countryside, will be permitted, subject to criteria
Policies 3.5, 3.6 & 3.8	---	These relate to employment development in villages or the rural area

Other Policies of the plan may also apply.

WINTERBORNE HOUGHTON

Village Design Statement

26th January 2002 .

To whom it may concern:

This Village Design Statement has been endorsed by the people of Winterborne Houghton; and the project has had the full and active support from The Parish Council and North Dorset District Council.

A total of 102 parishioners (from an electoral roll of 159) has, through a process of public meetings, exhibitions and consultations, seen, read and approved this document. The Village Design Team consulted widely, circulating several drafts to householders, relevant local groups and our local North Dorset Planning Officers. Comments from the community have been taken into account concerning information, pertinent existing planning regulations and illustrations that are included.

This document is an on-going project that the parishioners envisage revising according to local and national conditions.

The Village Design Team

Sue Bates, Siobhan Broomfield, John Close, Ann Halahan John Martin, Mary Norman and Ian Provis. Village Design Statement

Appendix 2

WINTERBORNE HOUGHTON Village Design Statement

1. Number of questionnaires circulated : 84 to 84 houses in the Parish.
2. Number of completed questionnaires returned: 26. (31%).
3. Number attending all day workshop:19.
4. Total number attending following workshop exhibition : 42.
5. Total number present at public presentation of the draft statement: 27.
6. Total number who have read, commented and approved the draft statement : 102 (64% of electoral roll).