

1. Settlement Character & History

1.1 Pitch Hill (257m) is part of the Greensand Escarpment, but most of the parish lies on the heavy clay of the Low Weald, which in ancient times was a great forest and one of the last areas in the country to become permanently settled. The more established communities of the Tillingbourne Valley would have used the Weald as a source for timber, hunting and grazing stock. The earliest settlers would have been herdsmen who brought their animals over the hills to graze for the summer months but returned to their parent settlements, of Shere and Gomshall, in the winter. Gradually they would have made little encampments in clearings in the forest and, as these became more established, they would have built more substantial dwellings and eventually inhabited them all the year round. This pattern of small, isolated farmsteads and hamlets is known as dispersed settlement and the inhabitants would have enjoyed a greater degree of independence than their counterparts in more established, closely nucleated, villages. Once settlement was established it became necessary for the area to have its own church. The church was founded in the 12th century and the village of Ewhurst then started to grow around it.

1.2 The name 'hurst' means 'wood' or, more specifically, 'wooded hill' and is a common ending found in local names – Ewhurst, Coneyhurst, Bramblehurst, Slythehurst, Brookhurst, etc. The name Ewhurst is first recorded in 1179. For the 'Ew' part of the name, the English Place Name Society suggest 'Yew Wood', as in the tree. At that time a vast quantity of Yew trees abounded in the area. The village sign (1953) shows a ewe (sheep) because of the importance of the medieval wool trade although pasture would not have been a common feature of the area at that time.

1.3 The oldest surviving houses in Ewhurst date from the early 1400s, including White Hart House, Coverwood and Oak Cottage at Ellens Green. About a dozen of these early 'hall' houses have been identified in the Parish, dating up to the mid 16th century.

1.4 The importance of agriculture in the area has not been a consistence feature with the clay soil being heavy to work. Timber was a valuable managed resource, being used for construction, fencing, barrels and fuel.

1.5 The heavy clay and poor roads contributed to the isolated of the Parish. An attempt to construct a turnpike road, in 1818, from Bramley to Rudgwick, passing through Cranleigh and Ellens Green was not a success.

1.6 The Victorian and Edwardian periods saw Ewhurst grow into a thriving community with a range of shops and businesses. From the late 19th century, the south facing slopes of the Surrey Hills with their far-reaching views became highly sought-after sites for new houses. The area attracted a broad mix of artistic intellectual and business people who could afford to commission some of the top architects of the day. In the village, Hazelbank developed with a new grocery store and bakery. In the 1920's ribbon development started to spread along the Ockley and Cranleigh Roads.

1.7 After the First World War, 'plotlands' sprang up in the rural areas to the south of the village. These were small plots sold cheaply to working class town dwellers who wanted to make a new life in the country. These homesteads developed in Horsham Lane and Somersbury Lane and comprised old army huts and little ramshackle bungalows, most of which have been redeveloped.

1.8 Sayers Croft is the country's most importance surviving example of a camp established for evacuated urban children as part of the government's 1938 National Camps programme. The programme envisaged that the camps would continue into peacetime use as a means to provide rural health and education to deprived city children and at Sayers Croft that proud tradition continues to this day. The design principles of the huts on the site were an importance precursor to

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prefabrication techniques which served to provide post-war housing.

1.9 Since the War, many large houses have been subdivided or taken over by institutions, such as Woolpits, now the Duke of Kent School, Malquoits, become a training centre for Cornhill Insurance and is now a boarding house for Hurtwood House School. Holmbury House is now the Mullard Space Science Laboratory.

1.10 Many former shops have been converted to private homes, including Dobin's Green (stores), Milk Hill (dairy & butchers), Mount Cottage (sweet shop), Church Gate Cottage (chemists). Three former public houses are now in residential use and the post office has closed.

1.11 Buildings of Historic Interest in the Parish have been recorded and a programme to formally schedule Buildings of Local Merit is being sponsored by the Parish Council.

2. The local vernacular, Local Distinctiveness and the built environment today

2.1 The Parish has a large number of timber framed buildings, with many from the 16th century and some dating back to the 15th century. Many are very small houses built with the abundant supply of local timber using green oakframes. The oldest house is White Hart House (circa 1400, grade II* listed). There are some high-status timber framed houses e.g. Somersbury Manor, together with small 2 bay hall houses, such as Bildens, and small smoke bay houses, such as Mascalls.

2.2 Local sandstone (Hurtwood stone from the quarry at Pitch Hill) is also seen in local buildings. It is a relatively soft material and the corners of the buildings are often detailed in brickwork 'quoins', as are window and door openings. The stone does not lend itself to being finely dressed but is usually of a more rustic appearance. Coxland (C17) is a substantial stone house; Rumbeams (C18) has walls of random rubble. There are examples of a decorative feature, galletting, where iron stone chips are pressed into the mortar joints. This can be seen at Ivy Cottage, Wykehurst Lane.

2.3 Horsham stone can be easily split and was used for roofing, albeit a heavy material with some pieces being four feet in length and requiring a relatively massive supporting structure. Examples of houses in Ewhurst using Horsham Stone can be seen at Bramblehurst, Lower Breache, Mascalls and Old Farm. Stone was also used for flooring.

2.4 There is a long tradition of brick and tile making locally with no shortage of raw materials and kiln fuel. In the C17 brick was used mainly for chimneys with framed construction for the main superstructure. However, by C18 brick was the principal building material in the area, including its use to infill timber frames, partly rebuild framed houses or to re-skin them. Brick and tile making sites at 'Norman Marshalls' and Swallow Tiles (just beyond the Parish) are no longer in production but the Wienerberger site in Horsham Lane is a modern brick manufacturer with mechanised production and good reserves of clay.

2.5 From the C19, tile hanging was used to weather proof walls and during the Victorian era it was often highly decorative with a range of special shaped tiles used to create elaborate patterns. The tile hung cottage, such as Little Woolpit is the epitome of the Surrey style.

2.6 During the C15 the area declined because of agricultural recession and consequently the Parish has very few fine Georgian buildings.

2.7 The Arts & Crafts style is used in a number of fine country houses on the southern slopes of Pitch Hill. Alfred Powell's 'Long Copse' is in the simple cottage style. Phillip Webb's 'Coneyhurst' is a leading

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example of English Arts & Crafts style but the mix is eclectic with Oliver Hill's exotic Moorish influenced 'Marylands' and Christopher Tunor's 'Copse Hill' in the Mediterranean style.

2.8 Post-war housing has had a significant impact upon the architectural character of the village. There is a significant stock of single-storey residential units. Modern developments at Lilyfields and Larkfields have integrated with the village fabric thanks, in the main, to a mature landscaping regime. The latter represents the highest density of housing in the village, a product of specific planning policy density requirements, in place at the time.

2.9 Despite these modern interventions, there remains a strong local rural identity and a sense of place in the landscape. Housing density is characteristically low, buildings are low-rise (three storey buildings are rare) and any sense of urbanisation has been successfully resisted.

3. Conservation Areas

3.1 The Parish has two Conservation Areas. Ewhurst Conservation Area was designated in 1970. The settlement as it appears today comprises 3 distinct areas of development. Over time they have become connected but they retain different characters. Ewhurst Conservation Area comprises two of these areas, the church which is sited on a hill and a small green to the north which announces arrival to the Village from the direction.

3.2 The second Conservation Area is Ewhurst Green, designated in 1974. It lies to the south of the Village centre and developed as a separate entity. It is identified by an expanse of common land and an open scatter of buildings. It has a cricket pitch but no other significant amenities.

3.3 Neither of the Conservation Areas benefited from a formal Conservation Area Appraisal until 2016. These appraisals are comprehensive, setting out the methodology behind the designation, defining the Special Interest and assessing the features. Management plans are included.

3.4 Conservation Area designation gives a degree of planning protection to these areas. Demolition of buildings and walls is controlled. Works to, or felling of, trees is subject to application for planning approval. Householder permitted development rights are reduced. The designation enables the Local Planning Authority to ensure that the historic character or special interest remains intact and that future development is of high architectural quality that preserves or enhances the Area.

3.5 The appraisals are endorsed and referenced by the Village Design Statement and development within these areas should be planned with a sound understanding of the special architectural and historic interest defined within their text.

4. Design Guidance for new development

4.1 Planning Policy

4.1.1 Upon adoption, the Village Design Statement will become a material planning consideration when the Borough Council considers a planning application in the Area.

4.1.2 Local Plan Policies which will be strongly influential in controlling new development with the Parish include:

- Policy RE1 – Countryside beyond the Greenbelt.
- This policy calls for the intrinsic beauty of the Countryside to be recognised and safeguarded in accordance with the NPPF.

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- Policy TD1 – Townscape & Design.
- Policy HA1 – Protection of Heritage Assets.
- Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
- Policy RE2 – Green Belt.
- It should be noted that a relatively small proportion of the Parish falls within Green Belt designation.
- Policy RE3 – Landscape Character.
- This policy covers the AONB, again only a limited area of the Parish is covered and AGLV designation.
- Policy AHN1 – Affordable housing on development sites.
- It should be noted that in designated rural areas developments providing a net increase of 6 dwellings or more will require a minimum provision of 30% affordable housing.
- Policy AHN3 – Housing Types & Sizes.
- New housing will be required to make provision for an appropriate range of different types and sizes of housing to meet the needs of the community, reflecting the most up to date evidence in the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- Policy HA1 – Protection of Heritage Assets. The Parish includes over 60 listed buildings, an unusually high number for a rural Parish of its size. A number are of particular value, listed Grade I/II* or of national significance. When considering new development it will be necessary to consider proximity to listed buildings or heritage assets. The impact of development should be assessed in accordance with Historic England guidance: The Setting of Heritage Assets, March 2015 (HEAG038).

4.5 Impact upon neighbouring properties

New development within the parish may be sited upon, or near to the settlement boundary. In such circumstances it is likely that existing residents will have enjoyed a high level of private amenity, some degree of tranquillity and a boundary with the Countryside. In order to assimilate new development with the existing community, these qualities should be respected.

Whilst the right to a view is not a material planning consideration, the impact of a large and visually dominating new building can undermine the amenity of neighbouring properties.

New buildings should be sited at a generous distance from existing boundaries, rather than seeking to maximise housing numbers on development sites, thereby compromising amenity and creating an urbanised environment. The minimum distance from the rear elevation of a new property to an existing one is generally accepted to be 21m in the case of modern estate layout or for extensions in existing residential settings (Residential Extensions SPD, Waverley Borough Council). For extensions to rural settlements such as Ewhurst there will be a higher expectation of privacy. 21m should therefore be considered inadequate and a minimum of 26m should be provided.

Levels of private amenity can also be enhanced through well thought-out landscape buffers. Suburban types of fencing are considered a crude and inappropriate means of protection and are no substitute for physical separation.

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Where new development abuts the side of an existing property, such as an infill site, care should be taken to provide separation which is in character with the locality and reflects the prevailing condition. The low density character of the village usually exhibits generous plot sizes with wide gaps between buildings affording countryside views or landscaped backdrops.

Proposed development should not cause problems by blocking daylight or sunlight to existing property, either to habitable rooms or to outdoor amenity space in close proximity to the existing home. Standard tests can be carried out at the design stage to highlight overshadowing, particularly in seasons when sun angles are low.

Balconies, raised terraces or Juliette balconies can create opportunities for overlooking. These should be avoided or carefully sited to protect neighbour amenity and opportunities for neighbour dispute.

Siting car parking adjacent to established boundaries should be avoided, where noise and light pollution can cause disturbance particularly in the early morning/late evening.

Careful consideration should be given to the design of internal and external lighting. There are relatively few streetlights within the village and outside the settlement they are rare. Low-level or bollard lighting for pedestrian safety is more appropriate in the rural setting. Similarly, external garden lighting should be low-level. Roof lanterns can result in intrusive light pollution to neighbouring properties.

4.5 Visual Impacts

The visual impact of new development requires thorough investigation to ensure that buildings sit comfortably within the rural environment, providing a seamless extension to the Village with the aim of becoming indiscernable from the established fabric albeit with the passing of reasonable time to allow materials to weather and landscaping to mature.

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Public views of new development should be protected or enhanced. The Village enjoys a wide network of public footpaths whose character should be unaffected by new development.

Developers are encouraged to carry out formal Visual Impact Assessments, in accordance with guidance published by the Landscape Institute. Such assessments should be used to inform the design process and ensure that no harm is caused to the rural environment or it is otherwise adequately mitigated.