

An aerial photograph of the Braishfield village and its surrounding countryside. The landscape is a patchwork of green fields, brown plowed fields, and clusters of trees. A road winds through the center of the village. The sky is blue with some light clouds. A dark green rectangular box is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the title text in white.

Village Design Statement
for the parish of
Braishfield

Introduction

The origin of the name Braishfield gives rise to interesting debate. Some state that the name was first documented in the Middle Ages in 1235 as Braislede, meaning "brow of hill" or "open land or fields". Others believe that the origin of the name is derived from "brassy fields" where "brassy" means soil of poor quality or flinty. Indeed many Braishfield born people still call it Brassfield.



Community vision

Braishfield has its own unique sense of place created by the countryside that surrounds it and the open space within. As residents we value its local distinctiveness and setting. Few of us would wish to see it change in an inappropriate way. Rather, we hope to protect its essential character for the future.

What is a Village Design Statement?

The Village Design Statement aims to record what is special about Braishfield in the view of its residents. It describes the existing look and feel of the village, identifies its specific characteristics and highlights the features of the village that we value.

The Village Design Statement contains recommendations that arise from the description of Braishfield's local distinctiveness. The recommendations are important because they aim to offer guidelines on conserving the particular qualities of the village and to contribute towards the improvement of rural design in general.

Who will use it?

The Village Design Statement is addressed to anyone who is intending to make changes in the village that will affect its look and feel. Such changes include adjustments to existing homes,

gardens, paths, hedges or open spaces, as well as proposals for new building.

It is therefore addressed to:

- Residents, householders and businesses
- Designers, architects and engineers
- Planners, developers and builders
- Statutory bodies, public authorities and utilities.

How did we prepare it?

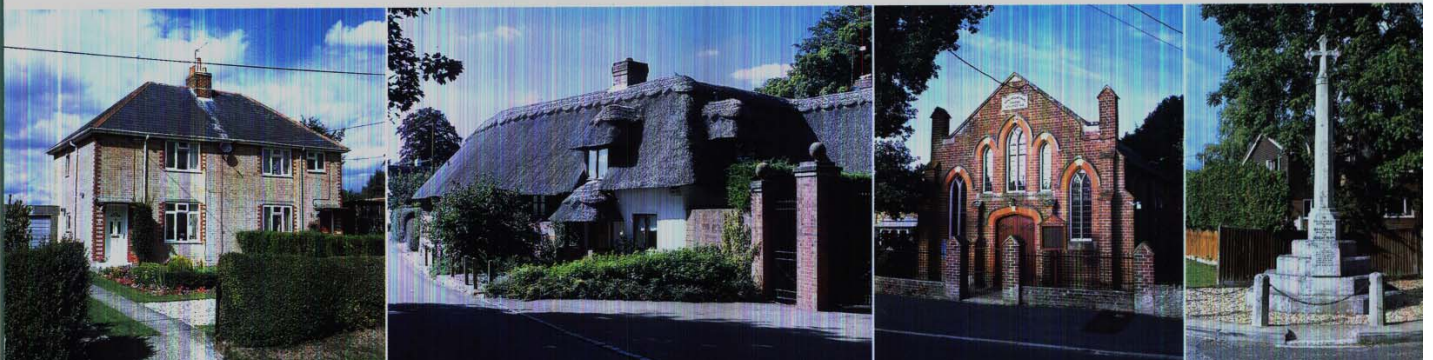
Many residents of the village have participated in drawing up the Village Design Statement. There have been public meetings, photographic displays, walking parties to photograph and describe aspects of the village, a questionnaire, and opportunities to comment on draft versions of the text.

The Village Design Statement represents the collective opinion of the people of Braishfield.

The planning process

The Braishfield Village Design Statement was approved by the Parish Council on 5th March 2002, and adopted by Test Valley Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 3rd April 2002. It will be taken into account when assessing planning applications for the village.

It will also be an important guide for everyone in the village who may be considering making changes to their own homes and gardens.



History

Although the ecclesiastical parish of Braishfield was only formed in 1855 and the civil parish just under a century later, there is evidence of human activity in the area in the Paleolithic era, about 500,000 years ago. At Broom Hill there is evidence of intermittent settlement from the late Paleolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and late Saxon periods. The site is particularly noted for the range and quality of Mesolithic flint tools, and it would have been visited seasonally by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. In later periods of settled agricultural activity, from the Neolithic period onwards, the site would have been inhabited for longer periods.

The Romans settled at Fernhill not far from the Mesolithic site. A late third century bath house was excavated in 1976, part of a much older villa complex consisting of at least six substantial buildings which were occupied long before the construction of the bath house.

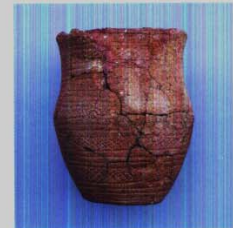
Little is recorded of Braishfield until 1043 when, as part of the manor of Michelmersh, the lands were donated by Queen Emma to the cathedral clergy at Winchester. Much of this holding was later released to secular landowners, including two Oxford Colleges, one of which owned land in the village up to the Second World War.

In the Middle Ages Braishfield consisted of a number of large but scattered farmsteads, some of which survive today, including Pitt Farm, Elm Grove, Sharpes Farm, Fairbournes Farm, Paynes Hay and Hall Place. Fairbournes Farm is believed

to be the oldest of these dating from the tenth century. Archaeological evidence suggests that Hall Place was a major fourteenth century manor site. There were two large commons in the village before the Enclosures in 1794, Casbrook to the west and a 138 acre area covering most of the southern part of the present village from the site of the War Memorial. The oldest buildings with medieval origins are to be found around the periphery of these ancient commons.

The Parish Church of All Saints was built in 1855 designed by prominent Victorian architect William Butterfield. At that time there were already three non-conformist chapels, only one of which remains as the United Reformed Church built in 1818. The Braishfield Public Elementary School was opened in 1877 bringing public education to the village children, although there were two small schools in the village prior to this date.

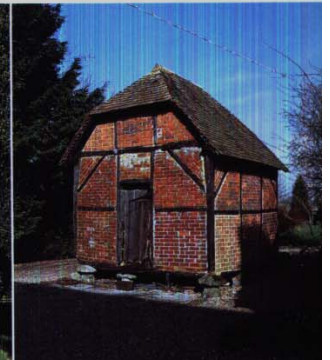
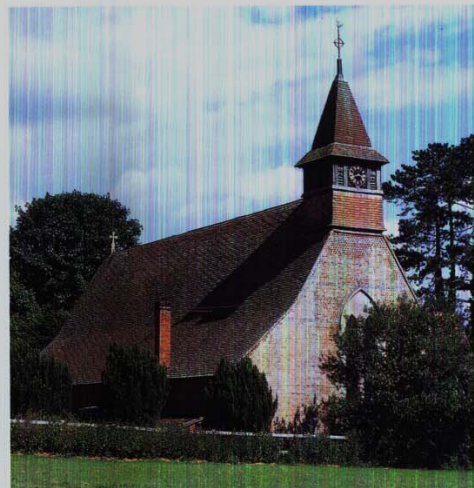
Twentieth century Braishfield experienced gradual development as the areas between the old cottages and farmsteads were filled with new houses. After the Second World War the pace of change increased and, in common with much of rural Britain, there was a transition from a predominantly agricultural community, with the majority of inhabitants living and working within the village, to one which is primarily residential with most people travelling away to work.



Historic Braishfield.

Main pictures on this page. Above, top: a Paleolithic axe (left), a Mesolithic axe (right) and a collection of microliths all found in the area. Bottom: a Bronze Age beaker found at Fernhill. Left: the barn at Hall Place (Eldon Lane). Right: The Parish Church of All Saints.

The frieze along the bottom of pages 2 and 3 shows a selection of characteristic buildings and landmarks in the village. Left to right: 7 and 8 Common Hill Road, Thatched Barn (Paynes Hay Road), The United Reformed Church, The War Memorial, Sharpes Farm (Lower Street), Elm Grove Farm (Dummers Road), the barn on saddle stones at Pucknall Farm (Dores Lane).



Landscape and surroundings

Braishfield is situated 4 miles north of Romsey and covers an area of about 3 square miles. The village setting is beyond the immediate influence of towns, roads, airports, overhead pylons and mining, and thus has the characteristics of an “Area of Tranquillity” as defined by the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Countryside

The countryside surrounding the village is made up of mixed arable and pasture farmland including a vineyard. Over the years farming activity has shaped and preserved the landscape which comprises rolling hills, small fields bordered by well-established hedgerows and generous copses of native trees, particularly oak. Around the village there are a large number of disused chalk pits, reminders of rural activity in the past that now provide havens for wildlife.

Woodland

There are several areas of woodland that give the scenery a pastoral quality and are valued by the village. In a recent survey 23 named tree areas were listed as being important to the residents, with Fernhill Woods and Ampfield Woods being particularly mentioned. In the south the village is bordered by the world famous Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum.

Views

The landscape provides opportunities for enjoying views from all parts of Braishfield, from the roads and lanes within the village looking out, and from the network of footpaths that cross the parish. This abundance of views is a widely appreciated characteristic. In the questionnaire over 50 different views were named as being valued by the residents.

Some of the popular views are listed here as examples, but that does not preclude the value of the others which are equally important.

Note: the numbers in the small grey boxes that are attached to the photographs correspond with the numbered descriptions of the views. There are photographs of just some of the listed views. Some photographs show only parts of a view.



1



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11



12



14

1. There are outstanding panoramic views from footpath 11 next to Braishfield Manor across Hampshire towards the New Forest and the Isle of Wight. Although these views take in Braishfield, the village blends well into the countryside and does not intrude into the general landscape.
2. From the hill south of the manor crossroads views to the north take in Braishfield Manor, the vineyard and the countryside beyond.
3. From the top of Church Lane there are glimpses of parkland to the north and, walking towards the church, the paddock and churchyard provide a perfect rural scene.
4. From Kiln Lane past Fairbournes Farm there is a view towards Sandy Lane characteristic of the countryside surrounding the village.
5. From the junction of Kiln Lane with Newport Lane there are splendid views to north and south of farmland, rolling countryside and woodland.
6. From Newport Lane there is a view to the south showing unspoilt countryside, meadows and woodland as far away as Sandy Lane.
7. From both sides of Braishfield Road, between Kiln Lane and the Wheatsheaf, there are distant views to east and west of open countryside and woodland.
8. From Braishfield Road, between the recreation ground and the war memorial, the views north and east across the allotments towards Elm Grove Farm, and further to Fern Hill Copse, provide a wonderful mix of meadow and woodland with glimpses of the church tower.
9. From Dummers Road the views across the cricket pitch, and beyond to Fern Hill Copse, epitomise the beauty of the countryside surrounding the village with its mix of woodland and pasture.
10. From Dores Lane, particularly past Pucknall, the views north towards Fernhill Farm and south towards Ampfield Woods show a pleasing balance of woodland and meadow.
11. From Lower Street the view across the fields to Sharpes Farm epitomises the rural tranquillity of the area.
12. From Butchers Lane there is a view into the valley of white cottages tucked into the hills.
13. There are numerous fine views from Eldon Lane south west towards Pouncefoot Hill and the New Forest.
14. There are fine 360 degree views from the highest points of footpath 4 which runs from Braishfield Road to Paynes Hay Farm.



Landscape and surroundings (continued)

15. From the Wheatsheaf and Common Hill Road there are good views of Ampfield Woods. The woods provide an attractive backdrop behind open fields.
16. On the Kings Somborne Road, from the corner at Fishponds Farm looking south, is a panoramic view across open countryside with the lane running down into the village, which is concealed in the characteristic dips of the rolling countryside by trees and hedgerows.
17. From Sandy Lane looking north towards Braishfield the views of rolling wooded countryside scarcely betray a village settlement.

All the views listed above are shown on the map in the pocket inside the back cover.

Nature and Wildlife

The countryside around and within the village with its small fields, areas of woodland, old chalk pits and extensive hedgerow has great wildlife value, actual and potential. Where copses of native trees and shrubs have been allowed to grow into thickets they provide excellent havens for wildlife and birds. Hedgerows that are not severely trimmed produce flowers and berries that benefit birds and insects. The verges along the lanes are vibrant with wild flowers during the spring and summer. Eldon Lane in particular has a wonderful variety of wild flowers along its verges. The area north of Hall Place Cottage is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.¹

Several fields near the centre of the village have been left uncultivated and these are generally regarded as valuable open spaces that provide fertile hunting ground for barn owls, kestrels and sparrowhawks, and sanctuary for a very wide variety of birds and butterflies.

The pond is a key feature of the village. It is felt to be an important focal point that has great potential as a wildlife haven, and its preservation and maintenance are worthwhile.

¹ Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are "a non-statutory local wildlife designation"
- Test Valley Borough Council Planning Services.



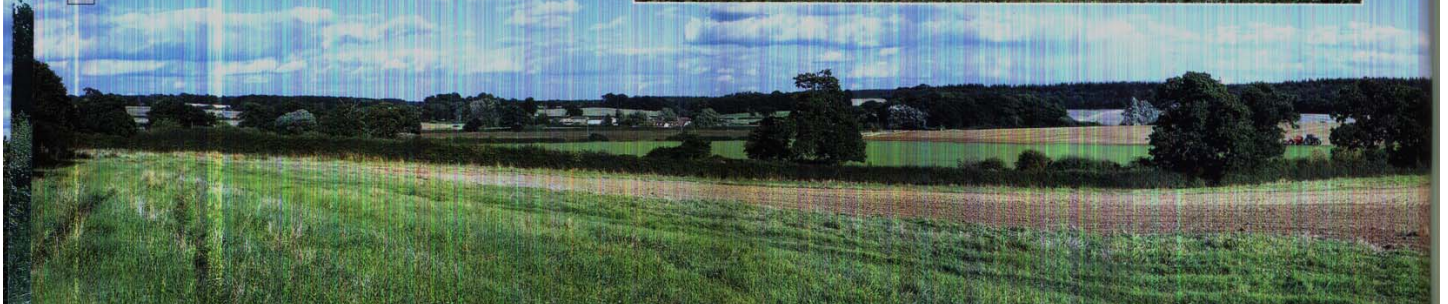
16



17



15





Nature and wildlife at the heart of the village.

Page 6, starting below the photograph of view 17. Top left: a common frog. Top right: the village pond. Centre: meadows next to the allotments on Braishfield Road. Bottom: natural open space behind Newport Lane.

Page 7 above, left column. Top: berries and hips provide food for birds. Centre: a characteristic copse seen from footpath 11. Bottom: a verge in Eldon Lane. Right column. Top: a barn owl. Centre: wildflowers in Eldon Lane. Bottom: a woodmouse.

Page 7, top right: a comma butterfly.



Recommendations

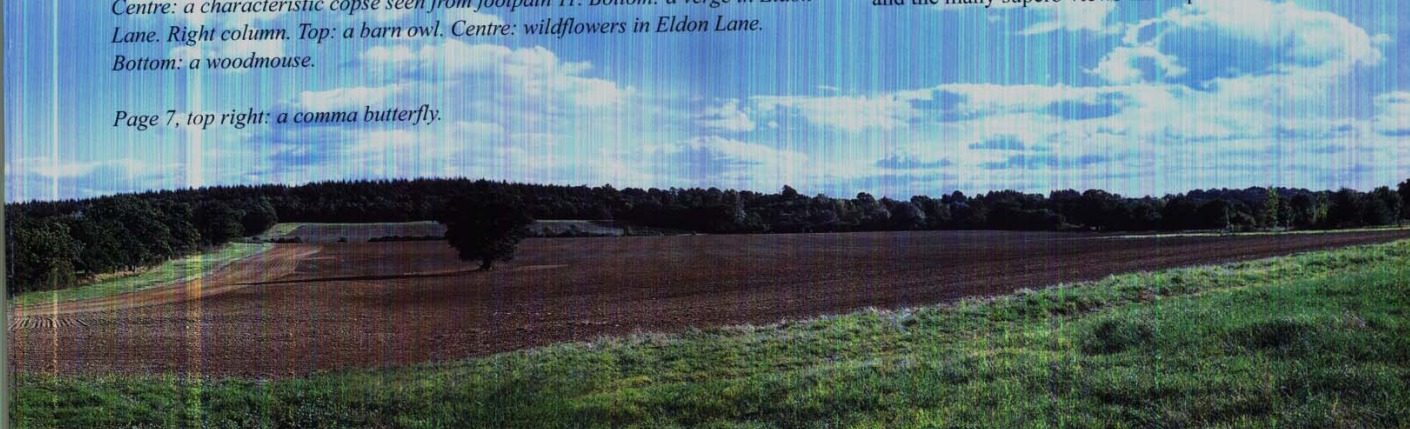
- The characteristic Hampshire landscape of small fields and hedgerows surrounding the village should be protected.
- Existing woodland, trees, hedgerows, flora and fauna of native species should be preserved.
- New planting should be of native species characteristic of the area. For example oak, beech and ash are to be encouraged and cupressus cyprinus discouraged.
- All views throughout the village are very important and should be protected.
- Areas of the countryside that encourage wildlife and birds are valuable and should be preserved. If possible more should be encouraged.
- The tranquillity of the countryside surrounding the village should be preserved.

Tranquillity

A particular feature of Braishfield is its low level of noise and the tranquillity of its surroundings. The peacefulness of the village is one of its most highly valued characteristics. Many villagers appreciate the fact that birdsong is often the loudest sound.

Summary

Braishfield is framed by countryside of remarkable natural beauty. The outstanding landscape around the village, shaped by farming, is highly valued by the residents for its rolling fields, its woods and hedgerows, its wildlife and birds, its tranquillity and the many superb views that it provides.



Settlement pattern

Collection of hamlets

Braishfield is a village made up of a collection of hamlets, and a key feature is that open countryside and farmland are found right at its centre. As a result the settlement pattern could be described as scattered.

Village centre

In line with its settlement pattern Braishfield has no defined central focus, such as a village green. The area between the two churches and the social club is relatively densely developed and contains many of the village amenities: churches, school, village hall, social club, the Wheatsheaf public house, recreation ground, playground, allotments, pond and war memorial, so this is generally referred to as the centre.

Most of the buildings in this area line the roads, and although there has been some backland development, where houses have been built in old gardens, there are no big groupings of houses. There are several important trees here, particularly the Village Oak by the school and the row of lime trees by the recreation ground.

Open space

Even within this central area there is a farm (Elm Grove). Its fields along Braishfield Road and along

both sides of Dummers Road bring farmland into the heart of the village. Other important open spaces near the centre include the paddock by All Saints, the allotments, the recreation ground and the fields next to and opposite the Wheatsheaf. These open spaces and the trees they contain are valued and ensure that the rural nature of the village is retained at its heart.

Clusters of houses around farms

Elsewhere in the parish the settlement pattern consists of numerous small clusters of farms and dwellings, mainly lining the roads and lanes. The buildings are often spaced apart, with occasional small groupings.

North

To the north the parkland surrounding Braishfield House leads on to the hamlet centred around Braishfield Manor and Pitt Farm. The Manor Estate includes a vineyard planted in 1986.

West

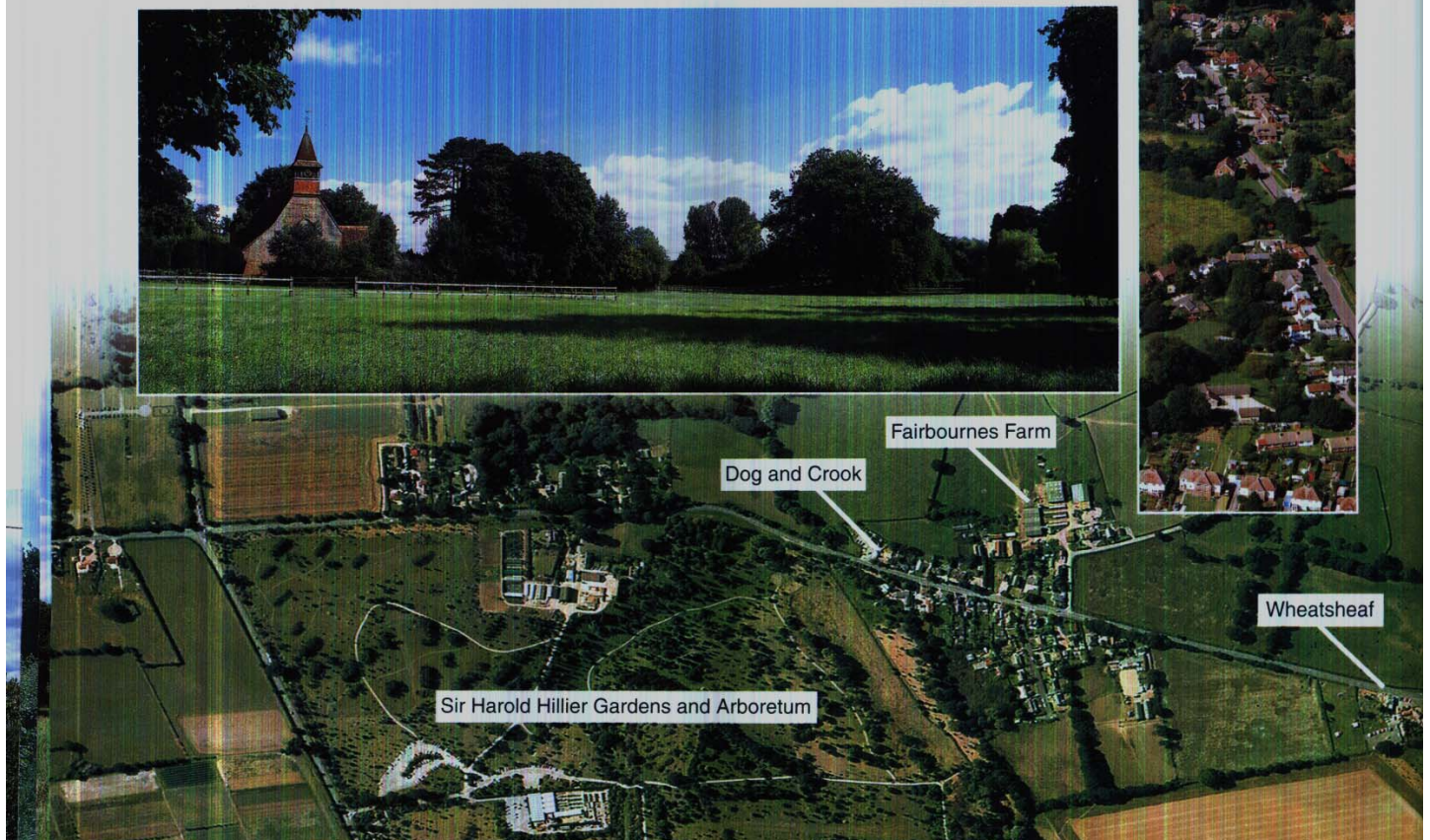
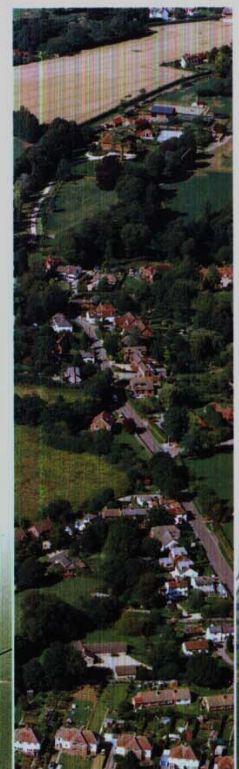
To the west small pockets of settlement are mainly based around three farms, Malthouse, Sharpes and Paynes Hay, with their surrounding fields. This area has a particular air of rural tranquillity. The famous Newport Inn in Newport Lane is popular

Scattered settlement pattern and open space in the village.

Page 8. Left: the paddock next to All Saints. Right: aerial view of the village from the centre looking north.

Page 9. Top: meadow at the corner of Braishfield Road and Dummers Road. Left: open space opposite the Wheatsheaf. Right: the recreation ground looking towards the lime trees.

Bottom: Aerial view showing the settlement pattern with countryside throughout the village.



because it retains the characteristics of a rural pub and has a fine tradition of music and song.

South

To the south there is an area of mixed settlement around Fairbournes Farm. Although there is more building here than in other parts of the parish the houses are established and well spaced. Farmland and open space still predominate. Another of the village's three popular pubs, the Dog and Crook, is to be found here.

East

To the east settlement is again found near farms, Pucknall Farm, Hawkes Farm and Woolley Green Farm. There is some commercial and industrial use at Pucknall and Hawkes Farms.

Summary

Throughout the village open countryside and farmland are present. The settlement pattern is nowhere dense and the surrounding landscape extends right into the heart of the village. The open space nature of the village is one of its defining characteristics and is highly valued by the residents. Many villagers feel very strongly that all existing open spaces should be protected. There is a strong sense that the village is still a collection of hamlets around farms and that this is a characteristic that should be preserved.

Recommendations

- The village structure, which is essentially a collection of hamlets, should be preserved.
- The open space nature of the village, one of its defining characteristics, should be protected.
- Countryside at and near the centre of the village is particularly important and should be preserved.
- To protect the open space nature of the village, backland development - building in space behind houses or in gardens - should be discouraged and strictly controlled.
- To protect the characteristic of the village as a collection of hamlets it is important to avoid linking clusters of houses along the roads and lanes with "infilling".



Buildings



History

The oldest existing building is believed to be at Fairbournes Farm where the granary block formed part of a farmstead from circa 985AD. The site formed one of the boundaries of Michelmersh Manor and was known as "Feora Burnan", from which the present name is derived. Hall Place also has a long history. Archaeological evidence suggests that it is built on the site of a major fourteenth century medieval manor.



Several buildings date from the sixteenth century including Pucknall Farmhouse, Churcher's Barn, Wellbrook, Hall Place, Broom Hill Cottage, Sharpes Farmhouse and Sharpes Cottage.



There are many buildings surviving from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries including Fairbournes Farmhouse, Pitt Farmhouse, Whites Cottage, Cromwell Cottage, Pucknall Cottage, The Red Cottage and Braishfield Manor.

In the nineteenth century the two churches and the school were built. The main part of the United Reformed Church dates from 1818, while All Saints, designed by William Butterfield, was built in 1855. There are also many good examples of Victorian and Edwardian domestic dwellings.

In the twentieth century the village hall and the social club were built, together with a variety of houses of all sizes. Almost two thirds of the buildings in the village were wholly constructed after the 1871 tithe map was published.

There are 28 listed buildings. As some of these are divided there are 39 listed homes or outbuildings.

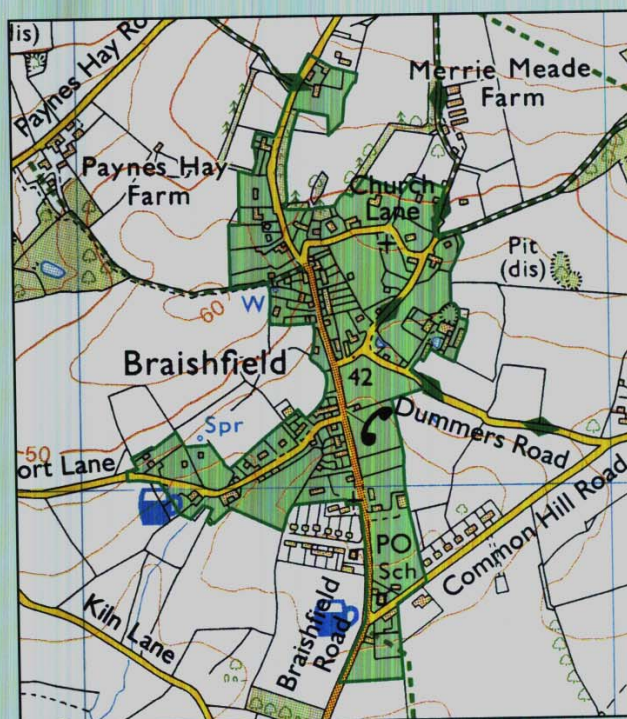




Conservation Area

The central part of the village was designated a Conservation Area in September 1981. The area extends from Braishfield House in the north to the Wheatsheaf in the south and from Newport House in the west to Elm Grove Farm in the east.

Properties situated within the Conservation Area are required to comply with conservation policy, particularly with regard to amendments to existing buildings or trees. Any development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The recommendations contained in this Village Design Statement apply to the whole of the parish, both inside and outside the Conservation Area.

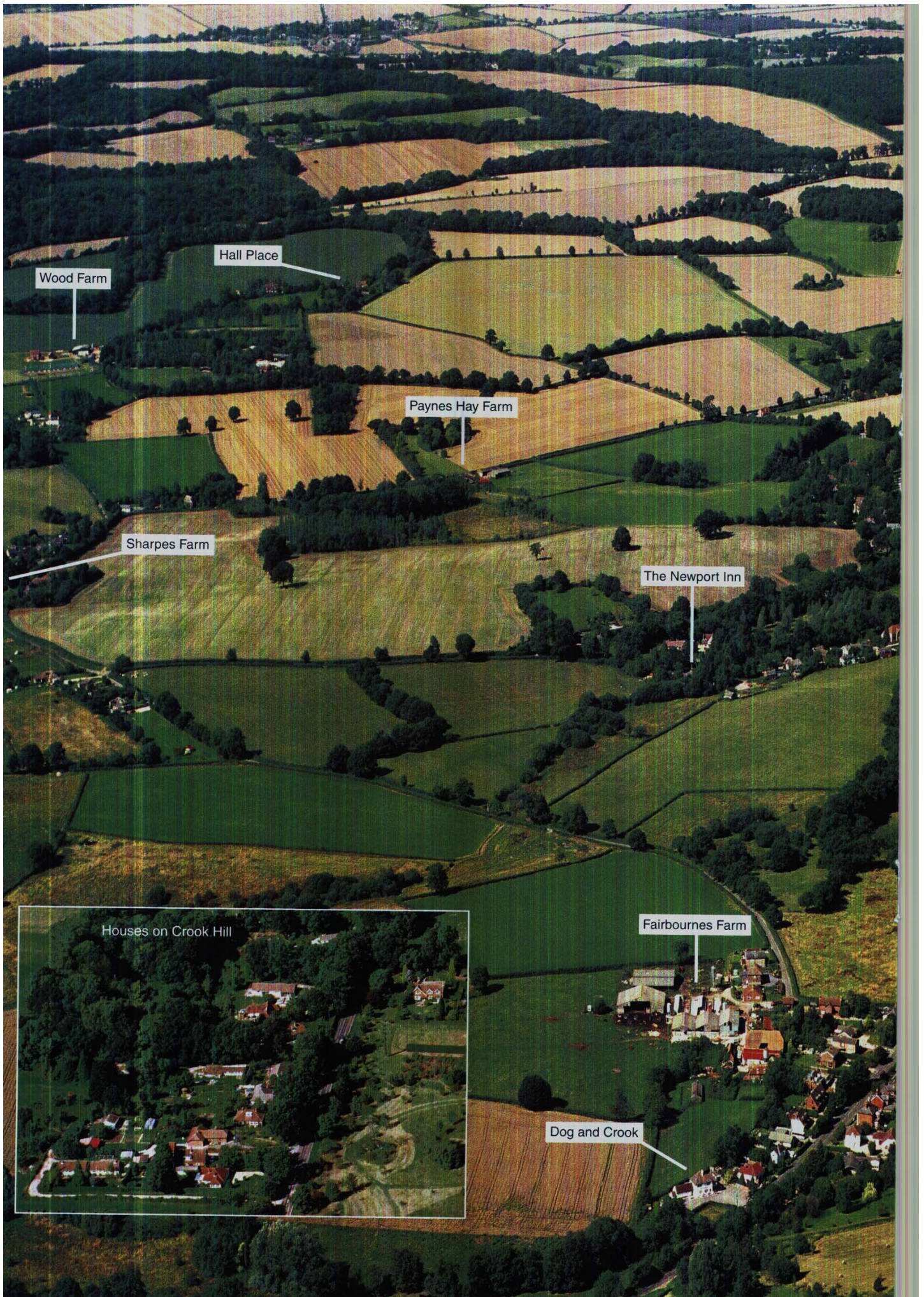


The architectural history of the village. Page 10, left, top to bottom: Broom Hill Cottage (Lower Street), Pucknall Farm (Dores Lane), Fairbourne Cottages (Crook Hill), Braishfield School. Right: Hall Place (Eldon Lane).

Page 11, top to bottom: Churcher's Barn (Dores Lane), Stone Cottage (Newport Lane), Pitt Farm (Kings Somborne Road), Axminster Cottage, Middle Cottage and The Cottage (Lower Street), The Oaks and Fernside (Crook Hill).

Friezes along the bottom of the Buildings pages demonstrate the variety of architecture within Braishfield. Left to right: The Red Cottage (Paynes Hay Road), Heigham (Crook Hill), 1 and 2 Hill View Road, The Newport Inn (Newport Lane), Meadow View (Newport Lane), Yew Tree Cottage (Church Lane), The Cottage (Crook Hill), Seven Pines (Braishfield Road).





Wood Farm

Hall Place

Paynes Hay Farm

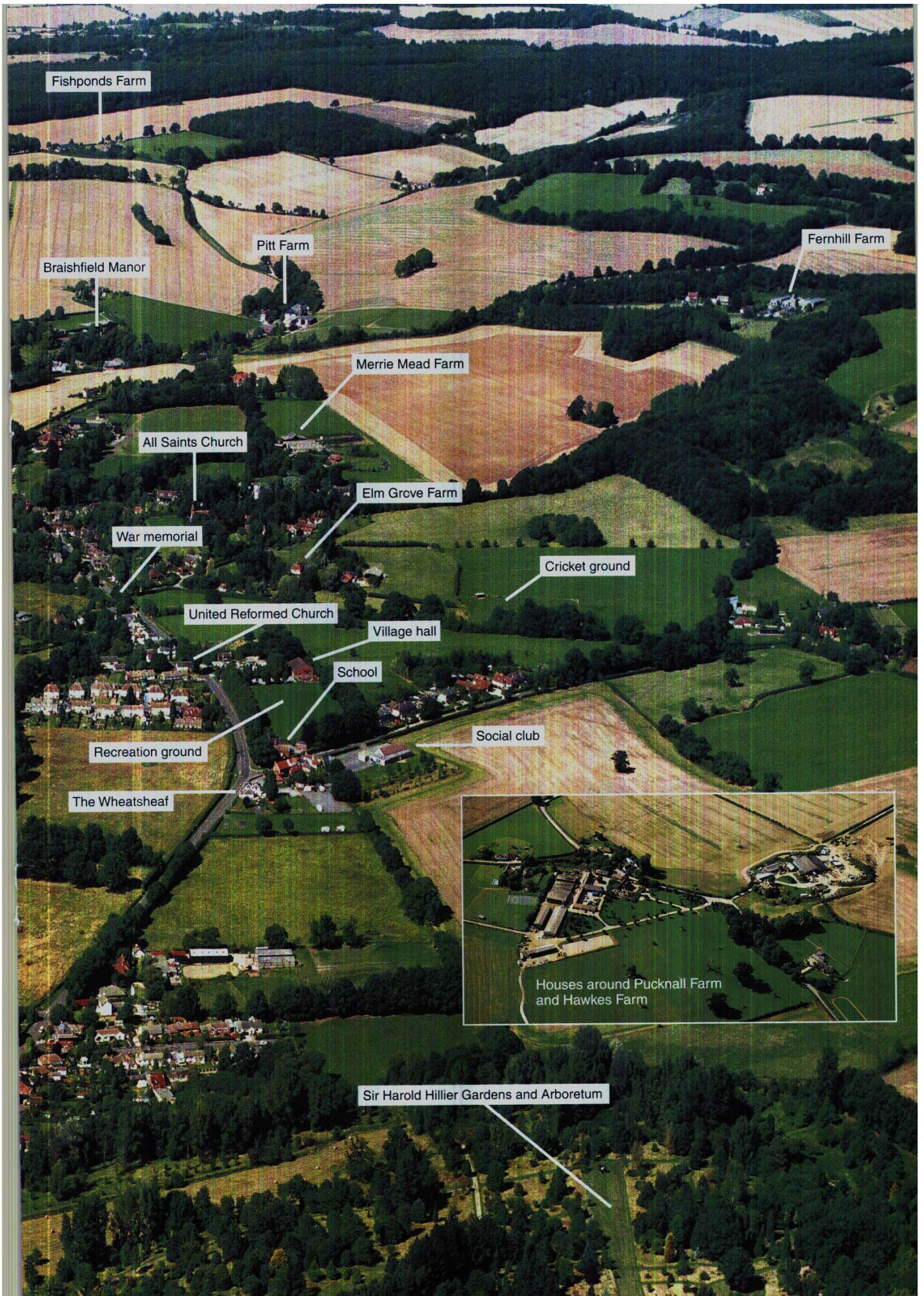
Sharpes Farm

The Newport Inn

Houses on Crook Hill

Fairbournes Farm

Dog and Crook



Fishponds Farm

Braishfield Manor

Pitt Farm

Fernhill Farm

Merrie Mead Farm

All Saints Church

Elm Grove Farm

War memorial

Cricket ground

United Reformed Church

Village hall

School

Recreation ground

Social club

The Wheatsheaf

Houses around Pucknall Farm and Hawkes Farm

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum

Buildings (continued)

Variety

Throughout the village many different buildings co-exist in the same area. In every lane can be found examples of big next to small, old next to new, traditional next to modern. There are a few small groupings of houses all built at the same time, where there are similarities of style. Generally, however, variety is a key feature of Braishfield buildings.

Street scenes and settings

The street scene is determined by the overall look and feel of a building in relation to neighbouring buildings and other surroundings. Where a building has no close neighbours, the way it is set into its plot can still have dramatic impact on the surrounding landscape.

Street scenes and settings are very important to the residents of Braishfield. Despite the great variety of buildings in the village, they strongly prefer houses that have been sympathetically sited in relation to neighbouring properties and other surroundings. It is important to the village that buildings and extensions do not overpower the street scene or the surrounding landscape.

Particular factors that help produce a sympathetic rural street scene include:

- Positioning the building in the plot so that it does not overpower either its neighbours or the surroundings in general.
- Keeping the height of buildings in relation to neighbours, for example preserving low rooflines.
- Keeping the size and shape of the building in relation to its neighbours.
- Keeping the size of the building in relation to its plot, for example not building big houses in small plots.
- Respecting the original architectural style when extending, for example using cottage style windows.
- Preserving space between buildings so that through views are not lost.
- Preserving and providing sufficient trees and hedgerow to soften the impact of buildings.





Domestic outbuildings also impact on the street scene and residents feel they should be sympathetically sited and designed. Pitched clay tile or slate roofs and natural materials such as oak frames and wooden doors are preferred for garages and other outbuildings.

The positioning of commercial and utility buildings in the village is not generally thought to be intrusive, although there are a few exceptions.

Size

The size of domestic dwellings in the village varies widely, ranging from large houses set in extensive grounds to small one-bedroom terraced cottages. There has been a tendency in recent years only to build larger houses. This trend is questioned by many villagers because if it persists it will undermine the character of the village.

Density

Buildings in the village are not densely packed together, as is appropriate in a rural environment. Small houses and large houses, old houses and new houses, all have gardens and space around them. The densest developments are traditional terraced cottages, and the vast majority of these have gardens, both front and back.

Street scenes and settings.

Page 14 top to bottom: The Square (Braishfield Road), cottages in Newport Lane, houses in Common Hill Road, buildings at Malthouse Farm (Eldon Lane). Page 15 top to bottom: April Cottage and 2 The Square (Braishfield Road), Westwood (Crook Hill), Orchard Cottage (Church Lane), Chalk Pit Cottage (Braishfield Road).

Friezes along the bottom of the Buildings pages demonstrate the variety of architecture within Braishfield. Left to right: Clayhill (Braishfield Road), Hillside (Lower Street), The Wheatsheaf (Braishfield Road), Dellwood Cottage and Bryndlewood (Braishfield Road), 1 and 1a Crook Cottages (Crook Hill), 1, 2 and 3 Chapel Close (Braishfield Road), Coombe Willow (Braishfield Road), Swallowfield (Braishfield Road).



Buildings (continued)

Style

There is a very wide range of building styles, influenced by the ages, sizes and types of buildings and subsequent alterations.

About 40% of the domestic buildings are detached houses and 25% are terraced or semi-detached. Bungalows and dormered houses amount to about 30% of the buildings.

The mixture of styles is another important characteristic of the village, and should be preserved.

Architectural details

It is possible to discern local rural features in some of the traditional buildings. Examples include: low rooflines, half hipped gables (Hampshire cropped gables), timber framed porches, small windows in proportion to the size of the building, eyebrow windows, cottage style windows (two pane casement), and windows with segmental arches above.

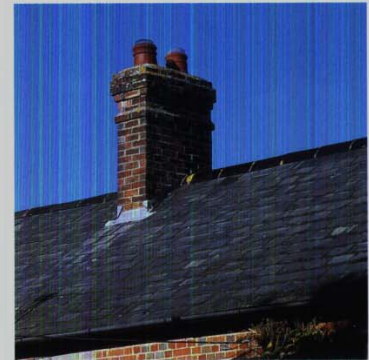
Building materials

The choice of building material strongly influences the overall appearance of a building. In Braishfield many different materials have been used in construction over the years. Generally the residents prefer those where local or natural materials have been used.

Local materials found in existing buildings that are particularly liked by residents include: handmade local brick or rendered chalk walls; thatch, handmade plain clay tile, or slate roofs; timber framed windows and timber doors.

Environmental impact

It is considered important by the residents that all new building within the village should be designed to minimise impact on the wider environment. Taking into account the points made above, buildings should also be designed and sited to be energy-efficient, non-polluting and constructed of sustainable materials wherever possible.



**Architectural detail,
building materials,
gates and outbuildings.**

Page 16, left column,
top to bottom: dormer
window set in a clay tile
roof, eyebrow window
under a thatched roof,
traditional cottage
window with segmental
brick arch, five-barred
wooden gate.

Right column, top to
bottom: cottage porch,
well-proportioned
chimney and slate roof,
half hipped gable, brick
and wood outbuilding
with pitched clay tile
roof.

**Friezes along the
bottom of the Buildings
pages demonstrate the
variety of architecture
within Braishfield.**

Left to right: Berberis
(Braishfield Road), Dog
and Crook (Crook Hill),
Kerreri (Braishfield
Road), Katoomba
(Megana Way), Colsons
Barn (Church Lane),
Hill View (Common Hill
Road), Wengen (Church
Lane), Greenacres
(Eldon Lane).

Recommendations

Note: The following apply to all development, whether residential, commercial or industrial.

- Buildings should be in harmony with the surrounding landscape and should not dominate or overpower their surroundings.
- Extensions, alterations and new building should strictly respect the inherent scale and setting of the settlement.
- New development or building extensions should retain important open spaces and through views.
- Any new development should take into account the rural nature of the surroundings, particularly in respect of noise, pollution, light and traffic.
- New development should minimise its impact on the wider environment by using sustainable, non-polluting materials and energy efficient design.
- The setting of new development should be in line with the existing relationship between buildings and sympathetic to the existing street scene.
- The form and scale of new buildings should be of harmonious design and proportion, in keeping with the immediate surroundings.
- Extensions should be sympathetically designed to enhance the original building.
- Planning applications should be supported by a street scene illustration showing adjacent properties, relative heights, building levels and style.
- The mix of building sizes in particular is very important and should be retained. For example, the existence of some large houses should not provide the sole precedent for future developments.
- The variety of building styles is also important and should be preserved. One style should not be allowed to dominate in any future development.
- New building design should take account of local rural architectural details and either incorporate them or blend in with them.
- Where the original building includes local rural architectural details such as low rooflines, half hipped gables, cottage windows and segmental arches, extensions should respect these features.
- All new buildings and outbuildings should be constructed from appropriate materials. Local, handmade, natural and sustainable materials are preferred. Extensions should be built from the same material as the original building.
- If planning approval is given based on the use of certain materials then their use should be rigorously enforced. If an applicant wishes to change those materials then this should be the subject of a revised planning application.
- Commercial and utility properties should not be allowed to intrude into the landscape.
- Taking into account the above recommendations, future building should demonstrate a new respect for the look and feel of the village.
- Architectural improvements and innovative design should be encouraged as long as they are in sympathy with the village and the rural nature of its surroundings.



Boundaries

Boundaries are made up in a variety of ways.

Native species mixed hedgerow is common and felt to be highly appropriate to the rural setting of the village. There are also good examples of beech hedges, and yew hedges. Examples of non-native species include leylandii and laurel.

Structures vary from old cob and cob and flint walls that blend in well, to picket fences, to brick walls, to long stretches of wood fencing.



Recommendations

- Boundary structures should be in harmony with the building and its environment.
- Native species hedges are preferable to fences, or to hedges of imported species.
- Where walls are necessary they should be of local materials and appropriate construction, in sympathy with the house and its surroundings.

Boundaries.

Top: a hornbeam hedge.

Centre left: a picket fence. Centre right: a beech hedge. Bottom left: a yew hedge.

Bottom right: a cob and flint wall.

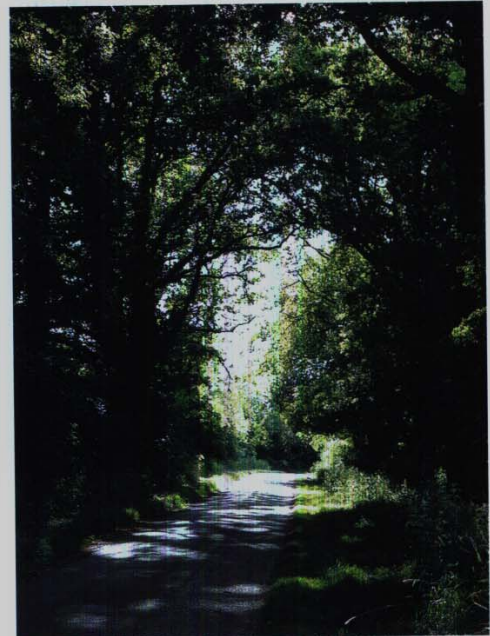
Bottom of the page: a typical mixed hedgerow.

Highways and traffic

Local roads and lanes

Braishfield lies on a network of minor roads. No main roads, railways or canals traverse the parish. Quiet narrow lanes, bounded by hedgerow, ditches or grass verges, are a feature of the village. Many of the verges retain characteristic native wild flowers. The lanes are highly valued and well used by the residents (and others) for walking, riding, cycling and running, as well as for appreciating the beauty of the surroundings.

There is a strong opinion that the roads and lanes are jeopardised by the vehicular traffic they now attract. Heavy vehicles in particular can damage the road surface, edges and verges, and can cause disturbance to the community. Also, speeding motorists endanger all users of the roads and lanes and spoil their quiet enjoyment of the countryside.



Utilities

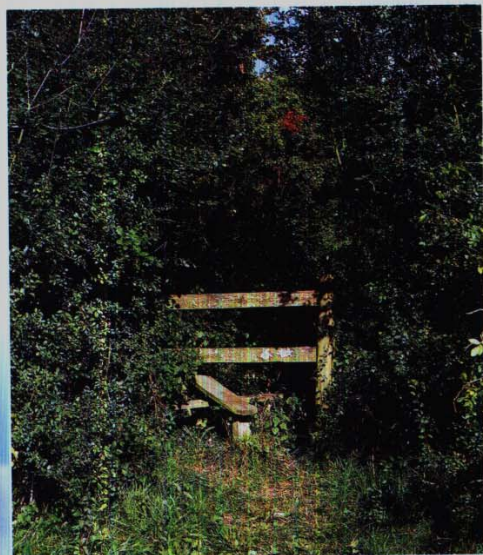
Footpaths

The 14 footpaths establish a wide network of paths around the village. They are a valuable resource for exercise and relaxation. They enable the residents to enjoy the richness of the local landscape and appreciate the full variety of rolling countryside, field, hedgerow and woodland. The majority provide fine views, ever changing but timeless.

The footpaths greatly enhance the charm of the village as they are linked with varying patterns of settlement that extend back into pre-history. The many "ways" which have been used by foot over the years are marked indelibly into the landscape. Some were for local use, others linked hamlets to more serviceable roads and neighbouring parishes. Fernhill Lane (footpath 13) is an old road. Dark Lane (footpath 11) is a bridleway to Eldon Road, part of an ancient route to Michelmersh and beyond, while others (footpaths 4 and 12) are church paths.

The Monarch's Way crosses the parish from west to east and is believed to be based on the route taken by Charles II after his defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

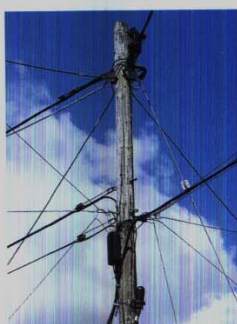
All those living in Braishfield appreciate this heritage. The countryside opened by the footpaths for all to enjoy is treasured and must be preserved.



Overhead cables and lighting

There is a lot of overhead wiring in the village and across the landscape. This is generally considered to be intrusive and it detracts from the enjoyment of the landscape.

There are no street lights, allowing the enjoyment of night skies and the preservation of a rural atmosphere. There are, however, a number of security lights left on overnight and these are increasing. They produce glare and affect the rural character of the night sky.



Local roads and lanes.

Page 18. Top: dappled light in Dummers Road. Bottom: Kiln Lane looking south.

Footpaths.

Page 19. A stile on the Monarch's Way (footpath 8).

Overhead cables.

Page 19. Examples of unsightly power lines and supply boxes that spoil the landscape.

Recommendations

- The quiet narrow lanes and minor roads that traverse the village should be retained and protected. There is no desire for wider roads.
- The verges, hedges and ditches that border the lanes and roads should be preserved and enhanced.
- The use of smaller vehicles for the collection and distribution to farms should be encouraged.
- Speed limits should be enforced.
- The footpaths are important and should be preserved.
- Overhead cabling and junction boxes should be taken underground when opportunities arise. All new services should be underground and, when possible, existing services should be relocated more sympathetically.
- Street and other lighting is not desired and should be provided only where there is a safety need in as unobtrusive way as possible. All lighting should be muted, not produce glare or adversely affect the rural character of the night sky.
- Signage and clutter, such as unnecessary street furniture, should be restricted.

Braishfield Village Design Statement recommendations

All the recommendations are collected here for ease of reference. They should be read in conjunction with the main text and photographs so that their meaning and context can be fully understood.

Landscape and surroundings (pages 4 - 7)

1. The characteristic Hampshire landscape of small fields and hedgerows surrounding the village should be protected.
2. Existing woodland, trees, hedgerows, flora and fauna of native species should be preserved.
3. New planting should be of native species characteristic of the area. For example oak, beech and ash are to be encouraged and cupresso cyparis leylandii discouraged.
4. All views throughout the village are very important and should be protected.
5. Areas of the countryside that encourage wildlife and birds are valuable and should be preserved. If possible more should be encouraged.
6. The tranquillity of the countryside surrounding the village should be preserved.



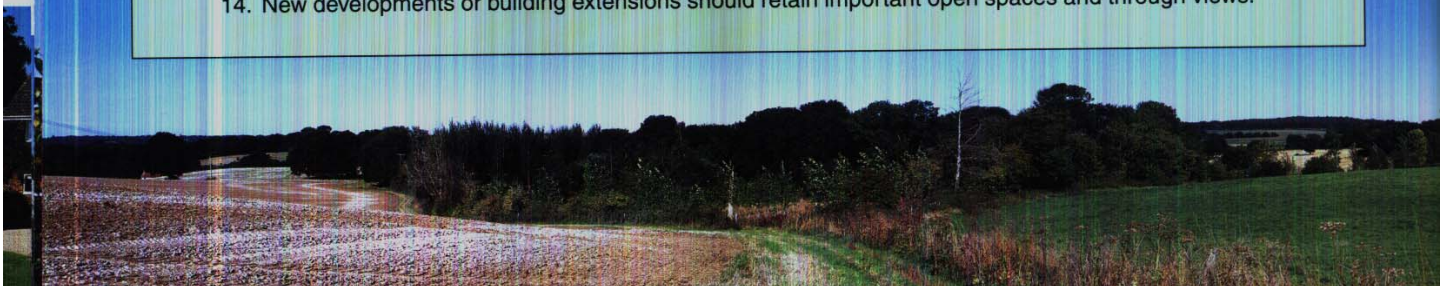
Settlement pattern (pages 8 - 9)

7. The village structure, which is essentially a collection of hamlets, should be preserved.
8. The open space nature of the village, one of its defining characteristics, should be protected.
9. Countryside at and near the centre of the village is particularly important and should be preserved.
10. To protect the open space nature of the village, backland development - building in space behind houses or in gardens - should be discouraged and strictly controlled.
11. To protect the characteristic of the village as a collection of hamlets it is important to avoid linking clusters of houses along the roads and lanes with "infilling".

Buildings (pages 10 - 17)

Note: The following apply to all development, whether residential, commercial or industrial.

12. Buildings should be in harmony with the surrounding landscape and should not dominate or overpower their surroundings.
13. Extensions, alterations and new building should strictly respect the inherent scale and setting of the settlement.
14. New developments or building extensions should retain important open spaces and through views.



15. Any new development should take into account the rural nature of the surroundings, particularly in respect of noise, pollution, light and traffic.
16. New development should minimise its impact on the wider environment by using sustainable, non-polluting materials and energy efficient design.
17. The setting of new development should be in line with the existing relationship between buildings and sympathetic to the existing street scene.



18. The form and scale of new buildings should be of harmonious design and proportion, in keeping with the immediate surroundings.
19. Extensions should be sympathetically designed to enhance the original building.
20. Planning applications should be supported by a street scene illustration showing adjacent properties, relative heights, building levels and style.
21. The mix of building sizes in particular is very important and should be retained. For example, the existence of some large houses should not provide the sole precedent for future developments.
22. The variety of building styles is also important and should be preserved. One style should not be allowed to dominate in any future development.
23. New building design should take account of local rural architectural details and either incorporate them or blend in with them.
24. Where the original building includes local rural architectural details such as low rooflines, half hipped gables, cottage windows and segmental arches, extensions should respect these features.
25. New buildings and outbuildings should be constructed from appropriate materials. Local, handmade, natural and sustainable materials are preferred. Extensions should be built from the same material as the original building.
26. If planning approval is given based on the use of certain materials then their use should be rigorously enforced. If an applicant wishes to change those materials then this should be the subject of a revised planning application.
27. Commercial and utility properties should not be allowed to intrude into the landscape.
28. Taking into account the above recommendations, future building should demonstrate a new respect for the look and feel of the village.
29. Architectural improvements and innovative design should be encouraged as long as they are in sympathy with the village and the rural nature of its surroundings.

Braishfield Village Design Statement recommendations (continued)



Boundaries (page 18)

30. Boundary structures should be in harmony with the building and its environment.
31. Native species hedges are preferable to fences, or to hedges of imported species.
32. Where walls are necessary they should be of local materials and appropriate construction, in sympathy with the house and its surroundings.

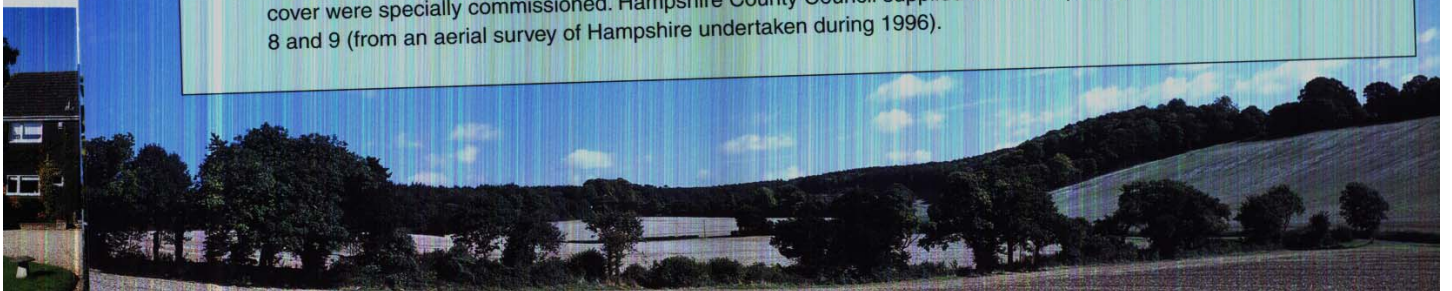


Highways, traffic and utilities (pages 18 - 19)

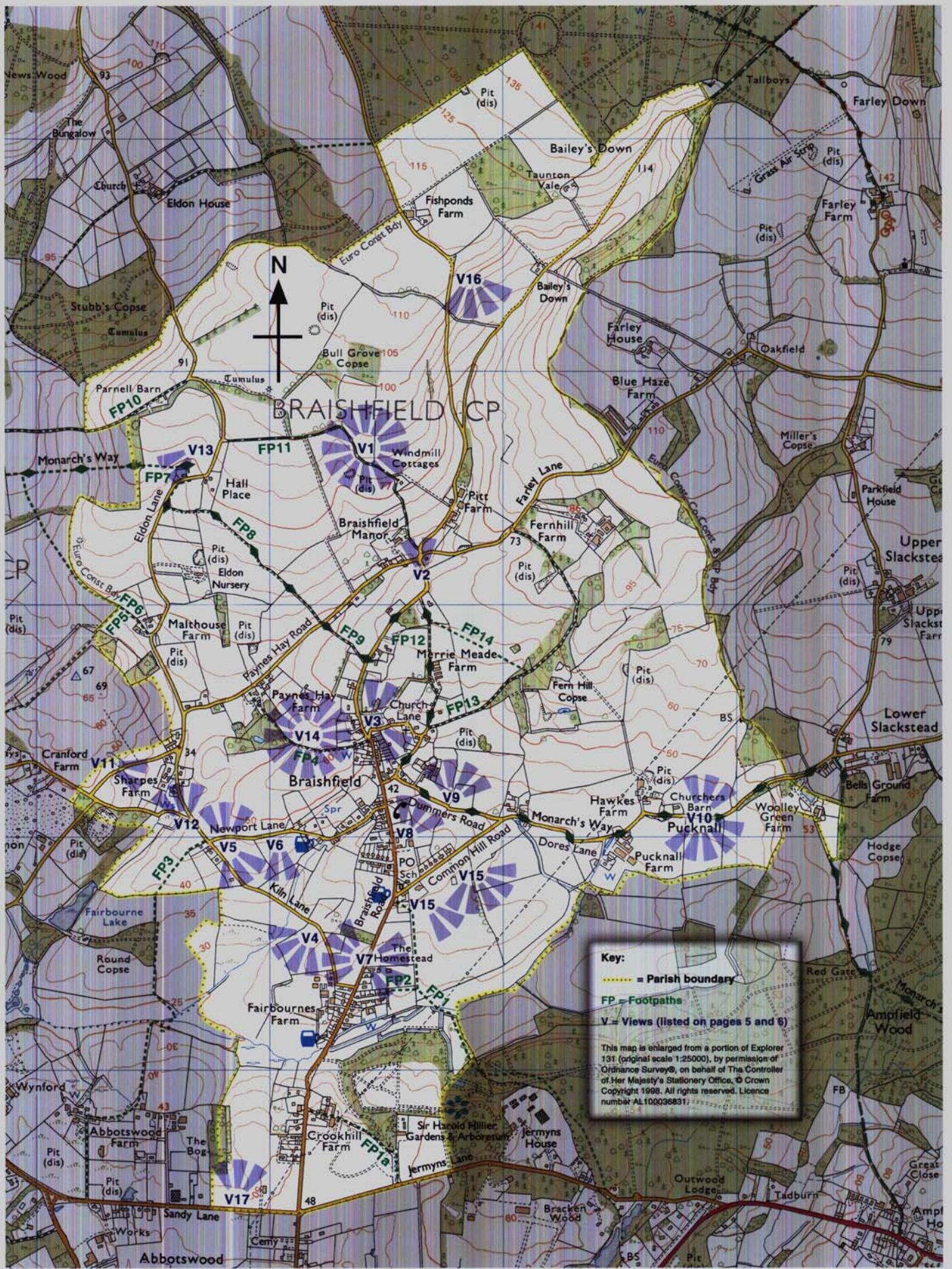
33. The quiet narrow lanes and minor roads that traverse the village should be retained and protected. There is no desire for wider roads.
34. The verges, hedges and ditches that border the lanes and roads should be preserved and enhanced.
35. The use of smaller vehicles for the collection and distribution to farms should be encouraged.
36. Speed limits should be enforced.
37. The footpaths are important and should be preserved.
38. Overhead cabling and junction boxes should be taken underground when opportunities arise. All new services should be underground and, when possible, existing services should be relocated more sympathetically.
39. Street and other lighting is not desired and should be provided only where there is a safety need in as unobtrusive way as possible. All lighting should be muted, not produce glare or adversely affect the rural character of the night sky.
40. Signage and clutter, such as unnecessary street furniture, should be restricted.

Notes about the photographs

The Village Design Statement Committee decided that, in the main, only views and buildings which are easily seen from public rights of way should be included. We did not include photographs of buildings if the current owners requested that they should be omitted. The aerial views on the front cover, centre spread and back cover were specially commissioned. Hampshire County Council supplied the aerial photograph on pages 8 and 9 (from an aerial survey of Hampshire undertaken during 1996).







From the Romsey Advertiser, August 2001, a planning inspector endorses a refusal of planning application...

"...The local plan only allows development if it maintains the overall character of the area, respecting layout, plot widths, open areas, trees and woodland features"
comments the inspector.

"... She feels that the proposed development would be "over dominant and obtrusive and erode the open and spacious qualities of the high quality environment."



This Village Design Statement was approved by Braishfield Parish Council on 5th March 2002.
Adopted by Test Valley Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 3rd April 2002.

Acknowledgements

Braishfield Parish Council gratefully acknowledges the help of the following:
The people and societies of Braishfield.

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Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust for their help with the wildlife photographs. Ordnance Survey for advice about mapping and licences.

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