

Chilcompton Village Design Statement
Chilcompton Parish Council
Adopted July 2015

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1. Introduction

This Village Design Statement (VDS) has been prepared by Chilcompton Parish Council to inform the planning process for development proposals within the parish. This Design statement has been produced following consultation with local residents to elicit the community's aspirations for design use within the parish. This Village Design Statement thus represents the view of the village.

In 2010, as part of a move towards local determination that culminated in the Localism Act, the government confirmed its intention to encourage local villages to have a much greater part in determining the character and future direction of development within rural areas, with a view to avoiding the spread of the standardised and often poor design of new developments, and thus allowing villages to shape development to fit local needs and identity.

The VDS describes the features of Chilcompton's character that distinguish the village in terms of landscape setting, settlement form, and building character and setting. It describes the assets and qualities that are most valued by its inhabitants, and sets out recommendations representing the views of the community. These policy proposals are to help ensure that new development and change respect the character of the area and make a positive contribution to the local environment as the village evolves over time.

Whilst the Parish Council seeks to preserve the existing character of the village there remains an awareness of the needs of families who currently live or are seeking to live in the village for reasons of employment and local connections: the Parish Council wishes to see community facilities maintained and enhanced so that the resident community can continue to thrive.

A description of Chilcompton and its history is presented in section 2 of this Design Statement.

The Chilcompton Village Design Statement was adopted as a material consideration by the Planning Board of Mendip District Council on 22 July 2015. It is independent of the Mendip Local Plan although it is consistent with it. It is also very much the hope of the Design Team that residents in the village will voluntarily adhere to the guidance set out in the Design Statement when carrying out work that does not require planning consent. The purpose of the VDS is to influence any proposed development in such a way that it is sympathetic and supportive to the existing character of the village.

The village character is described in terms of:

- The landscape setting
- The form of the settlement
- The characteristics and details of the buildings and spaces within the village

The process

The Chilcompton VDS is based on the opinions of village residents expressed at a public meeting and exhibition of photographs and in response to a consultation exercise carried out with local residents via an open day at the Village Hall on 9 April 2011.

The project has been carried through to completion by a small design team made up of local residents and appropriately experienced professionals within the village, which produced the photographic surveys, collected residents inputs and wrote numerous drafts. The Parish Council

appointed consultants Moss Naylor Young to finalise the document: Moss Naylor Young were commissioned to ensure the document is comprehensive and suitable for adoption, the material content and policy aspirations of the Parish Council remaining unaltered.

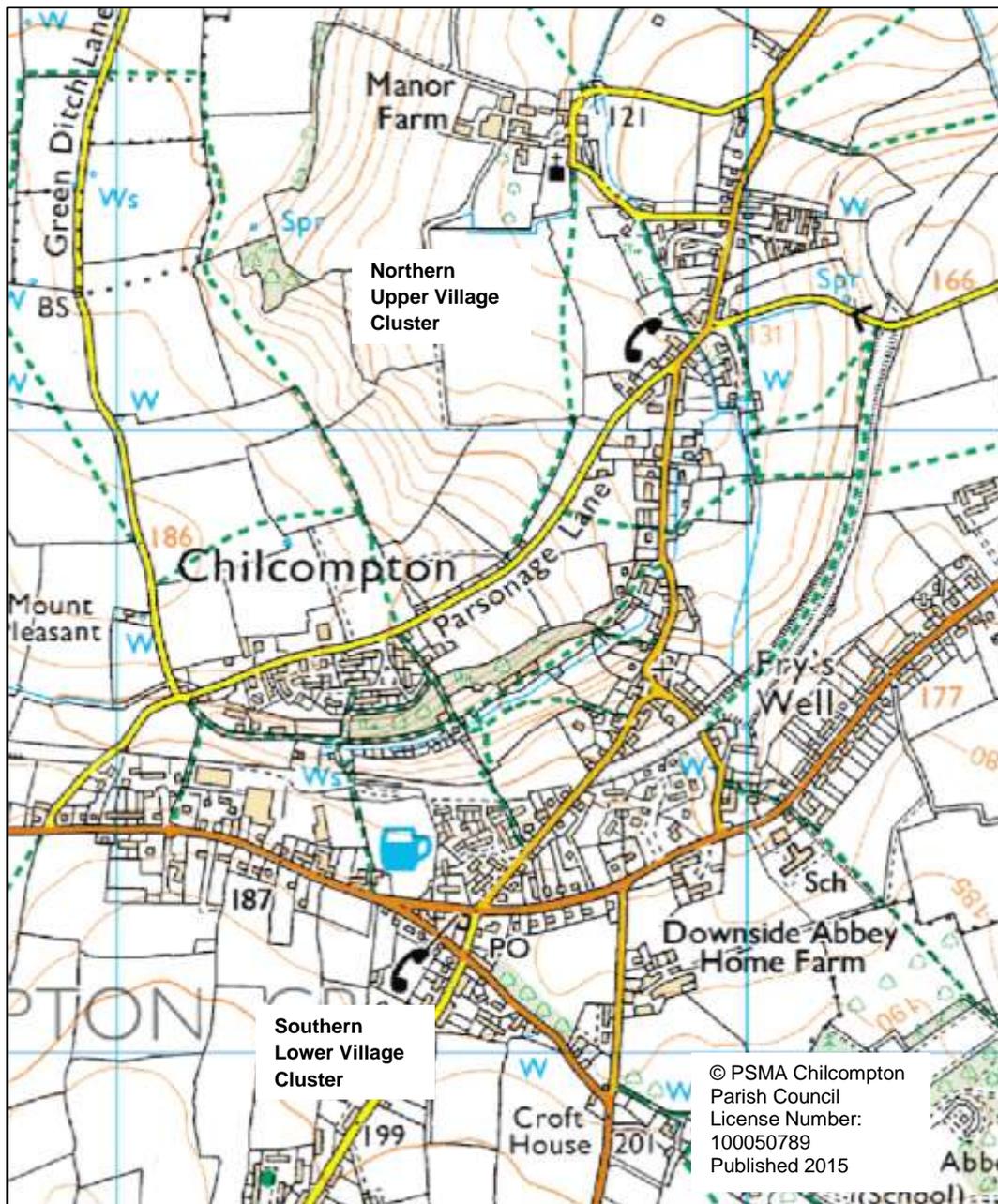
The draft VDS was advertised in local press and by flyer asking for comments from the community. Upon receipt, these comments were considered by the Parish Council prior to formal acceptance. The final document was forwarded to MDC Planning Board for formal adoption.

Although the VDS will be referred to by the Parish Council when responding to planning applications, it is anticipated that its provisions will be referred to prior to developers submitting any application and thus the VDS will play an important role in providing an appreciation of local context and influence the building design process at all stages.

The VDS is intended as a material consideration in support of the Mendip Local Plan and policies within the VDS are not intended to over-rule the underlying principles in the local plan. In particular any policies referring to the acceptability of development within Chilcompton refer only to the area within the settlement boundaries (village envelope) defined in the Local Plan.

2. Chilcompton: Settlement Form and Setting

Chilcompton lies in the Mendip Hills to the South of Midsomer Norton. The village has two distinct clusters; the upper, Southern part straddling the B3139 running from West to East, together with the two semi-central areas of Stockhill Road and Rock Road / Abbey Road (leading to the grounds of Downside Abbey), separated from the lower Northern part of the village by the old Midsomer Norton railway line and the Valley where the River Somer begins: this lower cluster is identified as including The Street, Parsonage Lane, Bowden Hill and Church Lane leading to St. John's church.



Map 1 Chilcompton with upper and lower clusters indicated



Images 1 and 2 : Views of the village setting

Chilcompton's rich and interesting history, dating back to before the Domesday Book (circa 1086) has resulted in the current settlement form, which is influenced by agricultural, industrial, and ecclesiastical activity over the last millennium. Architecturally the village reflects this history and consists of a handful of old impressive manor style houses, various attractive miners cottages, newer detached homes and a collection of smaller properties spanning across the last 100 years or so. It is suggested that for those interested in exploring the history of Chilcompton refer to the excellent publications available particularly those authored by David Strawbridge and the more recent Millennium Domesday Book.

One of the defining features of Chilcompton is that the space enclosed within the built form of the village includes wooded and leafy areas that permeate the whole urban form. This plan hopes to encourage the enhancement and extension of such areas.



Image 3 – woods and leaves define the character of a residential street

In addition the built form of the village and the existing development limits mean that views of the countryside around the village are often visible from within it. Preserving this aspect is one of the key aims of this VDS.



Images 4 and 5 – views beyond the settlement boundary from within the village

3. Characteristics and Building Details

The built environment

Chilcompton generally consists of smaller buildings intended for single households or businesses, drawing on the traditional pattern of development in rural villages. Houses are generally detached or semi-detached. The exception to this is in the more modern developments where small terraces and semi-detached properties can be found, and some businesses are housed in adjoining units.

The overall character is very much that of a rural settlement where the buildings are allowed living space around them rather than any feel of suburbia or estate type development typical of larger, more densely populated urban areas. Where this does exist it is difficult to identify the development with the village from a design perspective. The developments, whilst not necessarily badly designed, do not draw on any local vernacular.

The general theme within the built area is that the buildings and their associated works contain the space: whilst the village is defined by the space around it and through it.



Image 6 – This house is within the village, the green space in front is a space within the village whilst the green area behind is beyond the settlement boundary. This is a characteristic that defines Chilcompton

Older buildings

Much of the village consists of pre 20th century or pre WW1 building stock, which is characterised by the following:

- Mainly two storeys with the occasional single floor dwelling or business units
- Simple roof shape, usually with gable ends and occasional tabled verges (coping edge stones)
- Scale ranges from large farmhouse, Georgian style manor-type houses through to small cottages and more modern housing
- Variety of one-off detached and small estate detached, terraced ‘miners’ cottages
- Front facing gables are a rarity and usually only as a secondary element to the main roof



Image 7 – a particularly attractive example of the older properties within the village

Modern Development

Modern additions to the village post WW1 and generally built within the last fifty years, can be characterised as follows

- Generally detached and semi-detached houses predominantly mostly from the 60's/70's
- Extensions to side and rear of properties of varying degrees of quality
- Roof pitches generally steeper on the older cottages, generally shallower single storey extensions
- Newer business units are generic and functional
- Little reference to existing vernacular



Image 8 – a modern housing development off the B3139: pleasant but with no reference to the village vernacular

Overall

Newer development is not generally mixed within the historic built areas but separate from it, creating two distinct identities, one of which has a distinct local flavour and the other of which does not. Whilst the newer development does not have a particular identity it does at present still have a

degree of uniformity and aesthetic tidiness that adds to the overall image and presentation of the village.

Within the older areas the variety of roof heights and building lines contribute to the general attraction of the street scene. Roof heights are not excessive in relation to road widths, resulting in a feeling of intimacy but not domination from the buildings: combined with planting and the presence of mature trees, bushes and greenery this gives a soft enclosed character to the village.

Materials

Construction materials are fundamental to the vernacular of the built environment in Chilcompton; much use has been made of natural stone, a reflection of historic availability within the locality. In addition some buildings have been rendered. With the odd exception, the use of brick is limited to chimneys and occasional window head / door detailing.

A wide variety of local stone has been used reflecting the particular availability, trends and other demands for the same stone at any given point in time. The local Chilcompton quarried stone features regularly but White Lias with components of Blue Lias, Bath stone and even Harptree Red have also been used in places.

Some of the more modern development schemes incorporate the use of reconstituted stone, the overall effect of which is rather mixed dependent upon the overall aesthetic qualities of the scheme.

Roof coverings reflect a large variety of types and styles but with a general mix of double romans, pantiles and slate. It is likely that thatch was once a significant material within the village but this is now largely absent and does not feature in the local vernacular.

Building Details



Image 9 -stone built Cottage



Image 10 - relatively rare use of Red Brick



Images 11 and 12 - examples of usage of natural stone and different window treatments and surrounds



Images 13 and 14 – detail of roofline and windows

4. Streetscape, Traffic and Parking

In the northern, lower cluster of the village there is a general lack of pedestrian footways on street, which add to the rural character but do present an issue for pedestrian movement within the village. Where pavements do exist some also feature grass verges (between pavement and road), which again contribute to the rural feel and softer character of the built environment.

Throughout the village the streetscape is affected by overhead wires that impinge on the visual character of each individual street and building: these are particularly apparent towards the eastern end of the village, where there are fewer trees and less planting.



Image 15 - overhead wires, lack of footways and high boundary treatment

The main road presents a particular hazard for pedestrians and cyclists seeking to cross it to access village facilities, in particular in the vicinity of the school. This differs from the earlier issues as the problem is not a lack of footway but the speed and volume of traffic that must be negotiated.

5. Design and Appearance

1. All new buildings should respect their immediate surroundings

- a. All residential development should where appropriate, make reference to the village vernacular especially with regard to the building materials, but also in the scale of the development and the size of individual buildings and plots: developers should make reference to these in the design and access statement.
- b. Building details should also make reference to local vernacular; whilst it is accepted that many fittings such as windows and doors will be “off the shelf” the range of commercially available products allows an appropriate choice to be made.
- c. New development should respect existing features such as hedges, historic walls and streams, and incorporate these into the layout and design where possible.
- d. It is accepted that commercial development away from residential areas is likely to be of modern design of a character related to the occupying businesses. Within residential areas however commercial development, where it is permitted, would be expected to follow the criteria for residential development and be sensitive to the residential setting.

2. Extensions should maintain the character of existing buildings

- a. Alterations to and extensions of existing buildings should complement the existing building and its surroundings.
- b. Small alterations may not need planning permission, but should not disfigure the size or proportions of the existing building and its features or fundamentally change its character or appearance.
- c. Roof lines should step down where possible and facades be set in such a way as to retain the scale and proportion of the existing building.
- d. Large scale extensions that overwhelm the character of the existing building should be avoided, as should those that are of a disproportionate size either to the building, or to its boundaries or spacing in relation to neighbouring properties.
- e. The design features that should be considered in respect of extensions are similar to those for new buildings.
- f. There is a Household Extension Design Guide on the Mendip District Council website. mendip.gov.uk/house-extension-guide.

3. With regard to listed buildings the Parish Council will expect any modifications or extensions to these buildings to be authentic with the character and materials of the listed building: new developments (as opposed to extensions) that adversely affect the setting of listed buildings will normally be resisted.

4. All proposed developments, including single dwellings, should make reference to making local journeys on foot as part of a wider consideration of non-car travel.