

# High Weald AONB Design Guide



The High Weald AONB  
An outstandingly beautiful Medieval landscape



- Agreed by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee 25.11.2019
- Local authorities considering whether to adopt as SPD
- Even without this the Guide will be a material planning consideration

## High Weald Housing Design Guide

Building better, building beautiful in the AONB

NOVEMBER 2019

# Why Produce a Design Guide?



- Nationally designated landscape with a legal duty to have regard to conserving and enhancing its natural beauty
- Unprecedented levels of development – increase from 186dpa 2001-2011 to 895dpa 2015-2017
- Many housing developments lack local distinctiveness – could be anywhere.

# A 'landscape-led' approach



Landscape-led design means using landscape as a framework to understand the site and formulate a design response. Applying a landscape-led approach requires analysing the context, character, qualities and socio-ecological functioning of the proposed site within its wider landscape setting, and using this understanding to inform site design, capacity and detailing.

# Understanding the High Weald



## THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE HIGH WEALD COMPRISES

- Five defining components of character that have made the High Weald a recognisably distinct and homogenous area for at least the last 700 years:
  1. **Geology, landform and water systems** – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams
  2. **Settlement** – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries
  3. **Routeways** – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)
  4. **Woodland** – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings
  5. **Field and Heath** – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.
- Land-based economy and related rural life bound up with, and underpinning, the observable character of the landscape with roots extending deep into history. An increasingly broad-based economy but with a significant land-based sector and related community life focused on mixed farming (particularly family farms and smallholdings), woodland management and rural crafts.
- Other qualities and features that are connected to the interaction between the landscape and people and which enrich character components. Such qualities and features enhance health and wellbeing, and foster enjoyment and appreciation of the beauty of nature. These include locally distinctive features which enrich the character components such as historic parks and gardens, orchards, hop gardens, veteran trees, along with their rich and varied biodiversity, and a wide range of appealing and locally distinctive historic buildings including oast houses, farm buildings, Wealden Hall houses and their associated features such as clay-tile catslide roofs. People value the wonderful views and scenic beauty of the High Weald with its relative tranquillity. They appreciate the area's ancientness and sense of history, its intrinsically dark landscape with the opportunity to see our own galaxy – the Milky Way – and the ability to get close to nature through the myriad public rights of way.

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## Management Plan 2019-2024

A statutory plan setting out local authority policies for the management of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)



# Understanding the High Weald



Typical settlement following the ridgeline



14th century market settlement



Characteristic tight-knit settlement in the High Weald

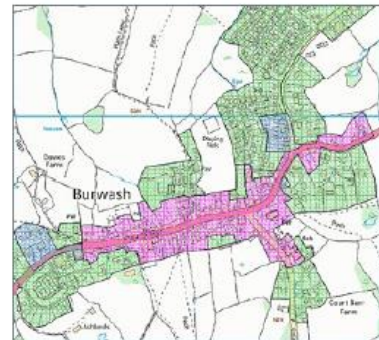
## SETTLEMENTS IN THE HIGH WEALD : BUILT FORM CHARACTERISTICS



### FRANT

Is a village in East Sussex which grew up around the intersection of routeways bounded by greens/commons which were used for trading. Its remaining greens are an integral part of its character.

This type of settlement form is highly characteristic of High Weald villages, with clusters of buildings punctuated by a myriad of routeways, and built form facing onto lanes and greens of varying scale.



### BURWASH

Is a village in East Sussex with the mediaeval core following the line of the main routeway along the Heathfield Ridge.

The core of the village is characterised by tight-knit linear built frontage, common to the many settlements within the High Weald which follow the ridgetops. More modern development tend to 'spill' down the slopes, contrary to this historic settlement pattern within the landscape.



### ARDINGLY

A village in West Sussex with two distinct centres: the older Saxon settlement in the west around the church and the later mediaeval trading settlement around the intersection of two routeways in the east.

In common with other 'dual' centre settlements within the High Weald, the continued separation between these two settlements is an intrinsic part of its character and is crucial to being able to 'read' its historic settlement pattern, and how the settlement relates to its immediate landscape context.

#### Key

- Epoch 1 (1863-1894)
- Epoch 3 (1909-1912)
- OS (modern)

# DG1 Responding to Site and Context

Has the design:

- Analysed the site and wider landscape?
- Identified views in and out of the site?
- Used historic maps to identify feature to retain and reinstate?
- Identified existing site features to incorporate?





# DG2 Connecting beyond the site

Has the design:

- Connected to existing routes in the area, reinstated lost routes and added new routes?
- Avoided dead-end or cul-de-sac street patterns?
- Created soft transitions to the countryside?
- Presented active edges to public spaces?
- Avoided the need for screening?



# DG3 Layout & Structuring the Site

Has the layout and structure:

- Worked with local topography?
- Used a range of street types arranged into a logical hierarchy?
- Designed junctions to be pedestrian friendly?
- Arranged public spaces of good size and shape?





# DG4 Using Buildings to Define Streets & Spaces

Do buildings and plots:

- Have a strong relationship with the street?
- Form a consistent building line?
- Support the street hierarchy and minimise left over space?
- Have clear boundaries between public and private open space?
- Provide active frontages to public open space?



# DG5 The Right Built Form

Does the built form:

- Reflect the local grain and pattern of development?
- Support the street pattern and character?
- Use a mix of building sizes, spacing and form across the site to reflect and reinforce High Weald character?



# DG6 Parking Strategies

Is the parking:

- Adequate and close to the homes it serves?
- Discretely located so that cars and hard-standings do not dominate the character of the street?
- In courts that are easy, attractive and safe to use?





# DG7 Building appearance, local details and sustainable design



Do the materials and details complement and reinforce High Weald character by:

- Incorporating local products of the High Weald such as wood and clay?
- Using a colour palette as recommended in the High Weald Colour Study?
- Referencing local details such as windows and chimneys?
- Referencing local character in roofscapes, including pitch, covering materials and eaves?



**Developed palette**

**How to read this palette**  
 Identify the building materials you are most likely to use and reference to the table along the top of the palette.  
 Select a colour from the first set of three rows (labelled INTEGRATION A, B, C) and use these only. These colours are used to integrate your new extension with the landscape. You may wish to choose from these colours to match a detail of an existing building.  
 To use the rest of the building palette, you must first choose a reference colour. This may be a colour from an existing building, or a colour from the landscape. You may wish to choose from these colours to match a detail of an existing building.  
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	RENDER, PLASTER, PAINT, WEATHER BOARDING	TIMBER, FIBRE CEMENT	STONE	BRICK, TILE	STEEL
<b>INTEGRATION A</b>	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000
<b>INTEGRATION B</b>	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000
<b>INTEGRATION C</b>	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000
<b>NEUTRAL</b>	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000
<b>CONTRAST</b>	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000
<b>ACCENT</b>	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000	1000-1000

High Weald Character Plan - Main Palette 12

# DG8 Ancillary & Storage

Has the design:

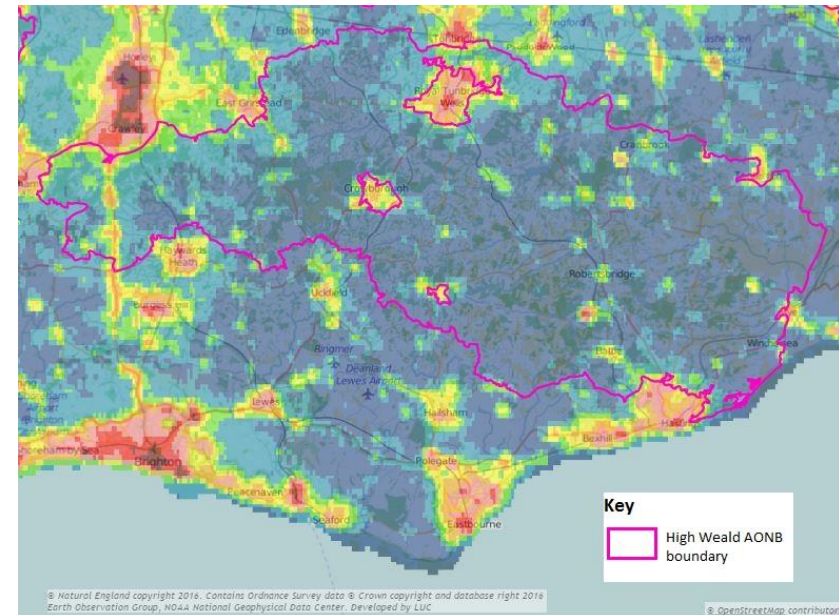
- Understood the storage requirements of each home?
- Created space to store waste and recycling containers in a way that does not detract from the street scene?



# DG9 Detailing the Street

Has the design:

- Referenced local street types rather than used standard approaches to street design in the scheme?
- Used a simple palette of materials and designed the street to be free of clutter?
- Avoided unnecessary light pollution?





# DG10 Reinforcing Local Planting Character & Habitats

Has the design:

- Incorporated attractive, locally-appropriate native planting schemes in the public realm and as boundaries to dwellings?
- Developed management plans for public green spaces that use traditional land-management skills and support local industry?
- Maximised opportunities to support characteristic wildlife and retain/provide habitats?

