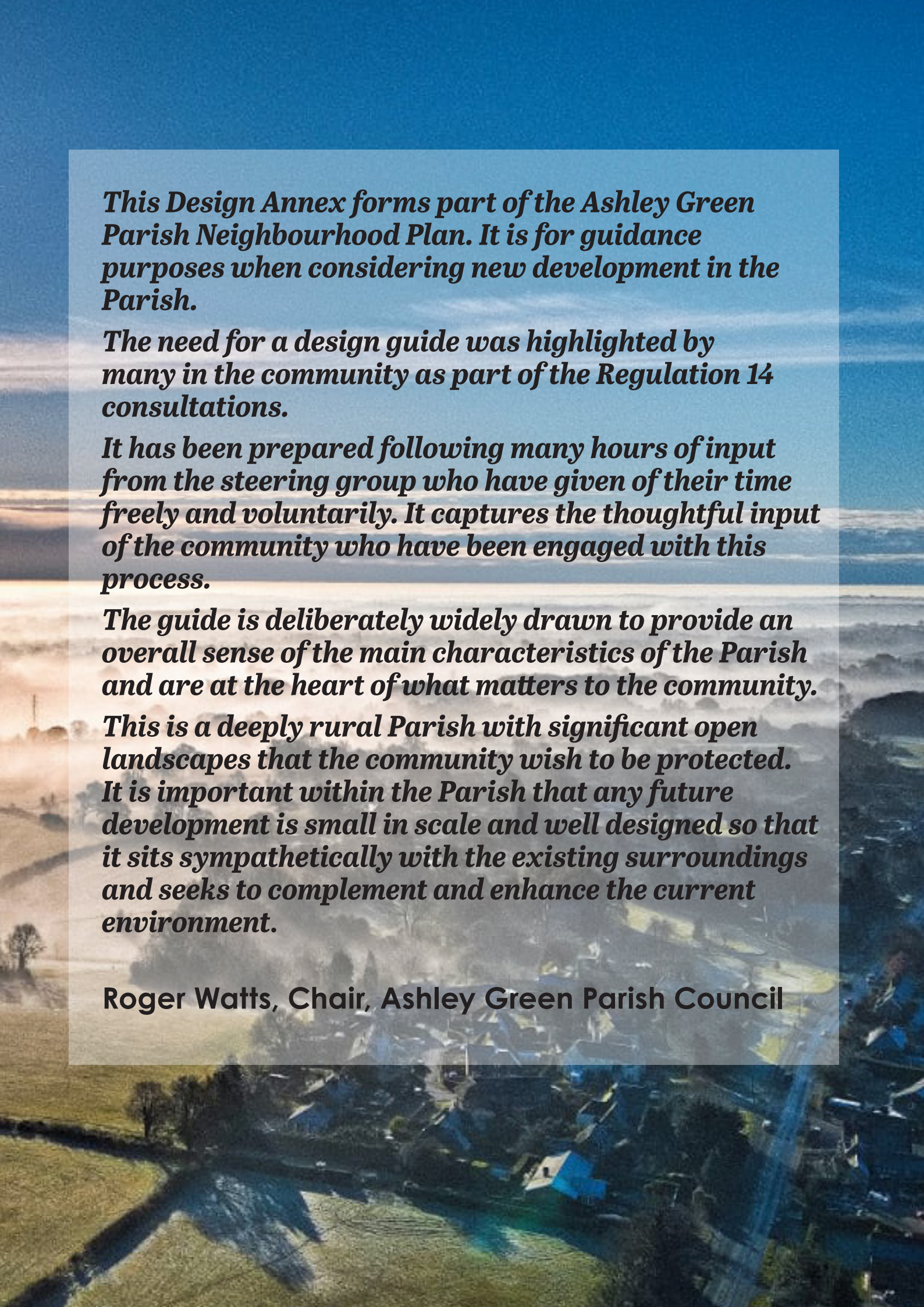




Ashley Green Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2026-2036

Design Annex

May 2026

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A river flows through the center, surrounded by green fields and some trees. In the background, there are some buildings and a distant horizon under a blue sky.

This Design Annex forms part of the Ashley Green Parish Neighbourhood Plan. It is for guidance purposes when considering new development in the Parish.

The need for a design guide was highlighted by many in the community as part of the Regulation 14 consultations.

It has been prepared following many hours of input from the steering group who have given of their time freely and voluntarily. It captures the thoughtful input of the community who have been engaged with this process.

The guide is deliberately widely drawn to provide an overall sense of the main characteristics of the Parish and are at the heart of what matters to the community.

This is a deeply rural Parish with significant open landscapes that the community wish to be protected. It is important within the Parish that any future development is small in scale and well designed so that it sits sympathetically with the existing surroundings and seeks to complement and enhance the current environment.

Roger Watts, Chair, Ashley Green Parish Council

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Ashley Green Parish Boundary

Berkhamsted

Hog Lane Farm

John's Lane Farm

William Hill Farm

Brickies Farm

Flamstead Farm

Ashley Green

Whelpley Hill Farm

Thorne Barton Farm

Hillside Farm

Grove Farm

Whelpley Hill

Chesham Preparatory School

Moors Farm

Lye Green

Orchard Leigh

Chesham

1km

Figure 01: Ashley Green Parish Boundary
Imagery © 2026 Google, Map Data © 2026 Airbus

1. Introduction

The parish of Ashley Green has a special character which comes from its open landscape setting and the relationship of built development to that wider landscape. This document is intended to provide guidance for those seeking to deliver residential development in the parish of Ashley Green. It identifies matters relating to quality of design, character and form which are appropriate to the context of Ashley Green village and the hamlet of Whelpley Hill and their broader landscape setting.

This design annex is not intended to constrain design but is intended, instead, to provide pointers for prospective developers (both domestic and commercial) as to what type of development would complement the existing character of the parish.

There is both local (emerging) and national planning policy which provides the rationale for the Neighbourhood Plan to give direction in respect of design matters.

The emerging Local Plan for Buckinghamshire (LPB), in Local plan Objective 3, states that new housing should be of *'high-quality design...and in keeping with its surroundings'*¹. The importance of design quality is further emphasised in the subsequent section of the plan focusing on Quality of Place which is worth quoting in full. Great places should:

*'Take inspiration from the valued and unique characteristics of Buckinghamshire to deliver high quality design that reinforces Buckinghamshire's distinctiveness, while being innovative in construction and design where appropriate.'*²

This focus on design quality at the local level of planning echoes national planning policy.

ASHLEY GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

ASHLEY GREEN PARISH
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2026 - 2036

SUBMISSION VERSION: APRIL 2026

¹ Draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, Part A Spatial Strategy, Local Plan Objective 3, p.11

² Ibid., Local Plan Objective 4, p.12

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dedicates a whole chapter (Chapter 12) to the aim of achieving well-designed places. In particular, paragraph 135 requires planning policy documents which ensure new development is both ‘*visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and appropriate and effective landscaping*’ and also ‘*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting*’³.

The NPPF also emphasises the need for new development to demonstrate a strong ‘sense of place’ (with a focus on the arrangement of development, building typologies and materials) and the need to ensure that the amount and mix of new development is appropriate.

The design aspirations set out in the NPPF are supported by two key documents issued by Government: the **National Model Design Code** and the **National Design Guide**. These documents identify the key components of good place making and design as well as the means by which designers and developers can apply these principles to create attractive, healthy, accessible and sustainable places.

The National Design Guide identifies ten key characteristics that exemplify well-designed places:

Context - enhances the surroundings

Identity - attractive and distinctive

Built form - a coherent pattern of development

Movement - accessible and easy to move around

Nature - enhanced and optimised

Public spaces - safe, social and inclusive

Uses - mixed and integrated

Homes and buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable

Resources - efficient and resilient

Lifespan - made to last

The NPPF recognises that, while these two key documents provide important reference points, **good place making and design derives from an understanding of the local character of the area where development is proposed**. Consequently, local authorities are required to develop area-wide design codes which reflect the particular circumstances and character within their area. Furthermore, design guidance and coding is envisaged at the local, settlement or even at the site-specific level, depending on the scale of the development proposed. Each level of design guidance should be nested in the levels above, reflecting core principles of good design and place making, with an increasing focus on local context as the site focus becomes much more specific.

As part of its local plan review, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) is preparing a county wide design code, which was issued in consultation draft in April, 2026. The draft **Buckinghamshire Design Code**, both in its structure and content, closely follows the National Model Design Code. From the 10 key coding elements set out in the National Model Design Code, BCC identifies the following as being most important for Buckinghamshire:

- Context
- Identity
- Built Form
- Nature
- Homes and Buildings
- Resources

³ National Planning Policy Framework, MHCLG, December 2024 (revised February 2025), chapter 135, p.39



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework

December 2024

National Design Guide

Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National Model Design Code

Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



Buckinghamshire Design Code Draft 1.2 Consultation Version

Author: Landscape Architecture & Urban Design Team, Buckinghamshire Council

Date: 14th April 2026



Chilterns Buildings Design Guide



an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Other Documents

The Buckinghamshire Design Code, in its draft form, is more concerned with process than the detail of character or specific design solutions which might be relevant in a particular part of the county. There are, however, other documents that can also serve as a point of reference for new development in Ashley Green Parish.

Although the two settlements of Ashley Green village and Whelpley Hill are not located within the Chilterns National Landscape, a significant part of the parish is and there is guidance, prepared by the Chilterns Conservation Board. The **Chilterns Building Design Guide** provides useful detail on a number of matters relevant to this document and the Ashley Green Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, it provides a lot of relevant detail in respect of the type of development which is characteristic of this part of the Chilterns, providing greater detail with respect to materials, urban form and specific architectural details.

The Focus of this Document

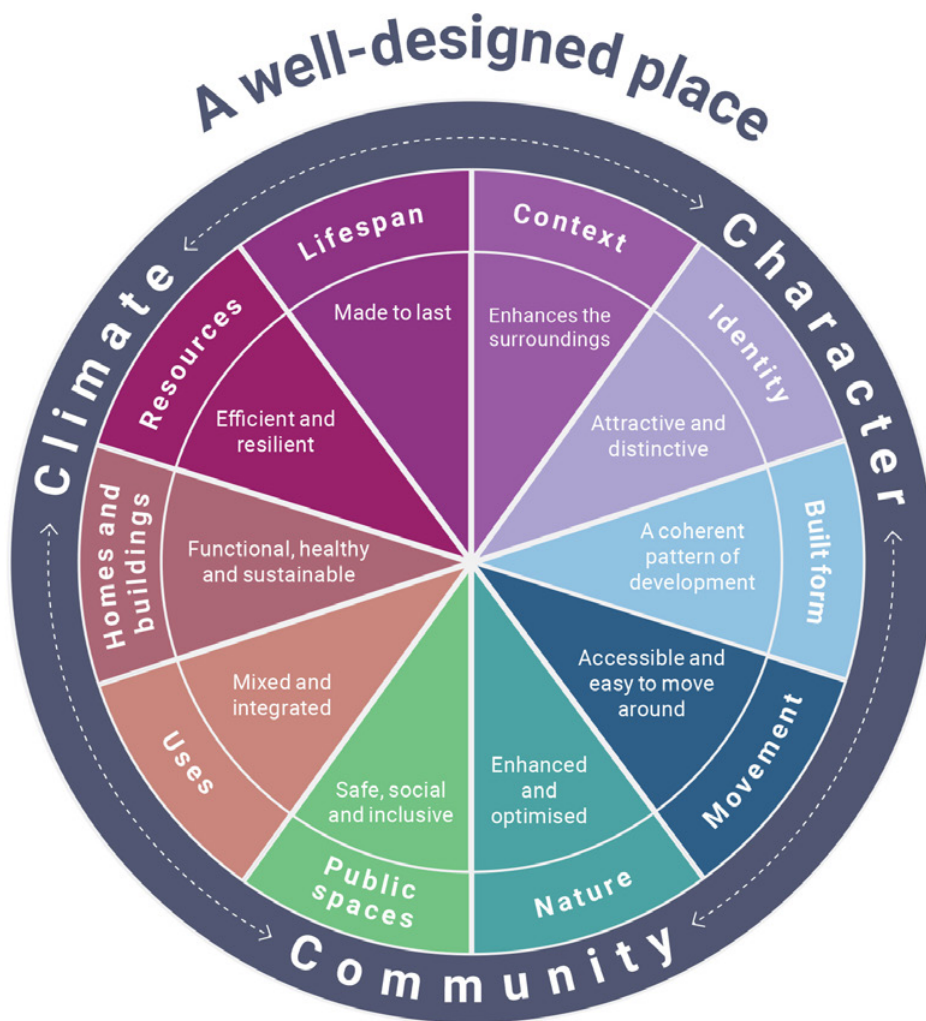
This design annex for Ashley Green Parish sits below the county-wide guidance, providing more detailed guidance with respect to residential development proposals in the parish. Some aspects of the characteristics selected by BCC fall outside of the purview of the Neighbourhood Plan for Ashley Green Parish and, consequently, are not covered by this design guidance. Those matters outside of the Neighbourhood Plan's policy focus are the subject of planning policy set out in the emerging Local Plan and its supporting documents.

This design annex is primarily concerned with matters relating to the context within which residential development in Ashley Green Parish is delivered and the quality of that development. Of the ten characteristics of well-designed places identified in the National Model Design Code, this design annex focuses on the following:

Context - the Neighbourhood Plan envisages new development that complements and reflects the existing context of Ashley Green and Whelpley Hill. **Development proposals which are not in keeping with the context of the Parish will not be acceptable.**

Identify - development which is in keeping with the prevailing character of the two settlements in terms of building typologies, design and materials is acceptable. This does not preclude design proposals in a modern style as long as the development clearly reflects and complements the existing character.

Built Form - the size, shape and layout of development parcels and the arrangement of buildings within those parcels should reflect the prevailing patterns of development in the parish. This includes matters such as the position of the building with its plot, its orientation relative to adjacent roads and the main axes of the development parcel, height and massing details such as number of storeys, roof lines, projections beyond ridge lines, dormer windows and the relative proportions of primary and secondary ranges or massing elements of the building.



The Ten Characteristics of Well-designed Places
(from National Design Guide)

This design guidance is not intended to constrain development proposals. Instead, it is intended to provide direction to prospective developers as to the type of residential development that is considered to be acceptable in terms of its capacity to complement and enhance the existing character and identify of Ashley Green village and the hamlet of Whelpley Hill, the two key settlements in Ashley Green Parish.



Figure 02: View across the open countryside of Ashley Green Parish

2. Context

Ashley Green Parish

Ashley Green is a rural parish situated in Buckinghamshire, close to the border with Hertfordshire. The village of Ashley Green has historic roots dating back to the medieval period, with its name believed to derive from the Old English for “ash tree clearing”. Historically, Ashley Green Parish was part of the estates held by the Duke of Bedford, and has long been characterised by its agricultural landscape and scattered farmsteads.

The parish remained a small farming community for many centuries, with limited development until the 20th century. The arrival of the railway in nearby Chesham and Berkhamsted in the 19th century improved access to the area, but Ashley Green Parish retained its rural character. The two village halls, Memorial Hall in Ashley Green village and Coronation Hall in the hamlet of Whelpley Hill, became a focal point for community life, hosting local events and activities.

During the Second World War, parts of the parish were used for military purposes, including accommodation for troops and storage of equipment. After the war, Ashley Green Parish saw modest residential development, with new homes built to meet local needs while preserving the distinctive character of the two principal settlements, Ashley Green village and the hamlet of Whelpley Hill. The parish today includes several listed buildings, a church and a number of green spaces valued by residents for recreation and wildlife.

Ashley Green Parish remains a close-knit community, with a strong tradition of local involvement and stewardship of

the countryside. The parish sits entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt, which contributes to protecting its rural setting and preventing urban sprawl from nearby towns. The local pubs, village halls and regular community events continue to play an important role in the life of the Parish.

Context

There are two key components to the context of Ashley Green Parish.

Landscape

The parish is predominantly rural, with a mix of arable and pastoral agriculture, interspersed with rough grazing and paddocks close to villages. Within that agricultural landscape there are also numerous blocks of broadleaved woodland (with occasional plantations), connected by a network of hedges which often define fields or groups of fields. It is a rolling landscape that sits within the wider character area of the Chilterns.

Settlement

There are only two settlements within the boundary of the parish, Ashley Green Village and Whelpley Hill (although Orchard Leigh sits along the Chesham Road leading to Bovingdon it is actually outside of the Parish). There is also a number of farmsteads, some of them quite old, together with small clusters of houses developed along main routes or in place for former agricultural steadings. Settlement, overall, is relatively light and concentrated in the two key settlements.

A more detailed analysis of the context of the parish is set out below.

Landscape Setting

The parish of Ashley Green is entirely located within the Chilterns National Character Area (which is not to be confused with the Chilterns National Landscape, formerly Chilterns AONB, which is a planning designation). The Chilterns National Landscape designation confers enhanced planning protections with respect to development, the aim being to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated area. Although the north and west of the parish of Ashley Green sits with the National Landscape area, Ashley Green Village or Whelpley Hill do not, so the additional planning protections do not apply.

The Chilterns National Character Area was designated by Natural England as part of a wider characterisation of the whole of England (the Chilterns is designated NCA 110).

In summary, the Chilterns NCA is characterised as being an extensively wooded and farmed area underlain by chalk bedrock, stretching from the headwaters of the Thames, south of Oxford, up towards Hitchin at its northern and eastern extent. The landscape is a patchwork of mixed agriculture and woodland, often set within hedged boundaries. Small towns and villages are spread across the landscape, typically located along the spring line on the southern scarp of the Chilterns, where the chalk meets the clay, and along historic movement routes and rivers. For a more detailed description of this character area, refer to: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697>

In 2011, BCC and Chiltern District Council (CDC) jointly commissioned a consultant to undertake a landscape assessment which included Ashley Green Parish. Using the national character classifications as a starting point and with reference to other landscape character studies, the consultant developed a set of county-specific character

areas¹. The 2011 landscape characterisation is used by the planning authorities when considering the current character and quality of Buckinghamshire's landscape and the potential impact of development.

Ashley Green Parish has two separate character areas.

CA 16.5 Ashley Green Settled Plateau

This covers about three quarters of the parish. It is an area characterised by relatively large arable fields interspersed with smaller grazing fields and paddocks on village edges. There are numerous small to medium mixed areas of woodland. The villages themselves are spread along main routes. It is considered a relatively simple landscape, rural and peaceful in character.

CA 17.2 Bellingdon Dipslope with Dry Valleys

Dry valleys have cut into the landscape, creating a rolling, undulating topography. Agricultural land use dominates with a mix of arable, rough grazing, paddock and pasture. Blocks of woodland are common typically on upper slopes of valleys and along ridgelines. This area is considered to have a remote, tranquil and rural character

1 The Chilterns Landscape – A landscape assessment (1992) by LUC for the Countryside Commission.

The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire – part 1 landscape character assessment (2000) by Hyder Consulting for Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment (2008) by Jacobs Babbie for Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council.

South Bucks Landscape Character Assessment (2003) by Atkins for South Bucks District Council.

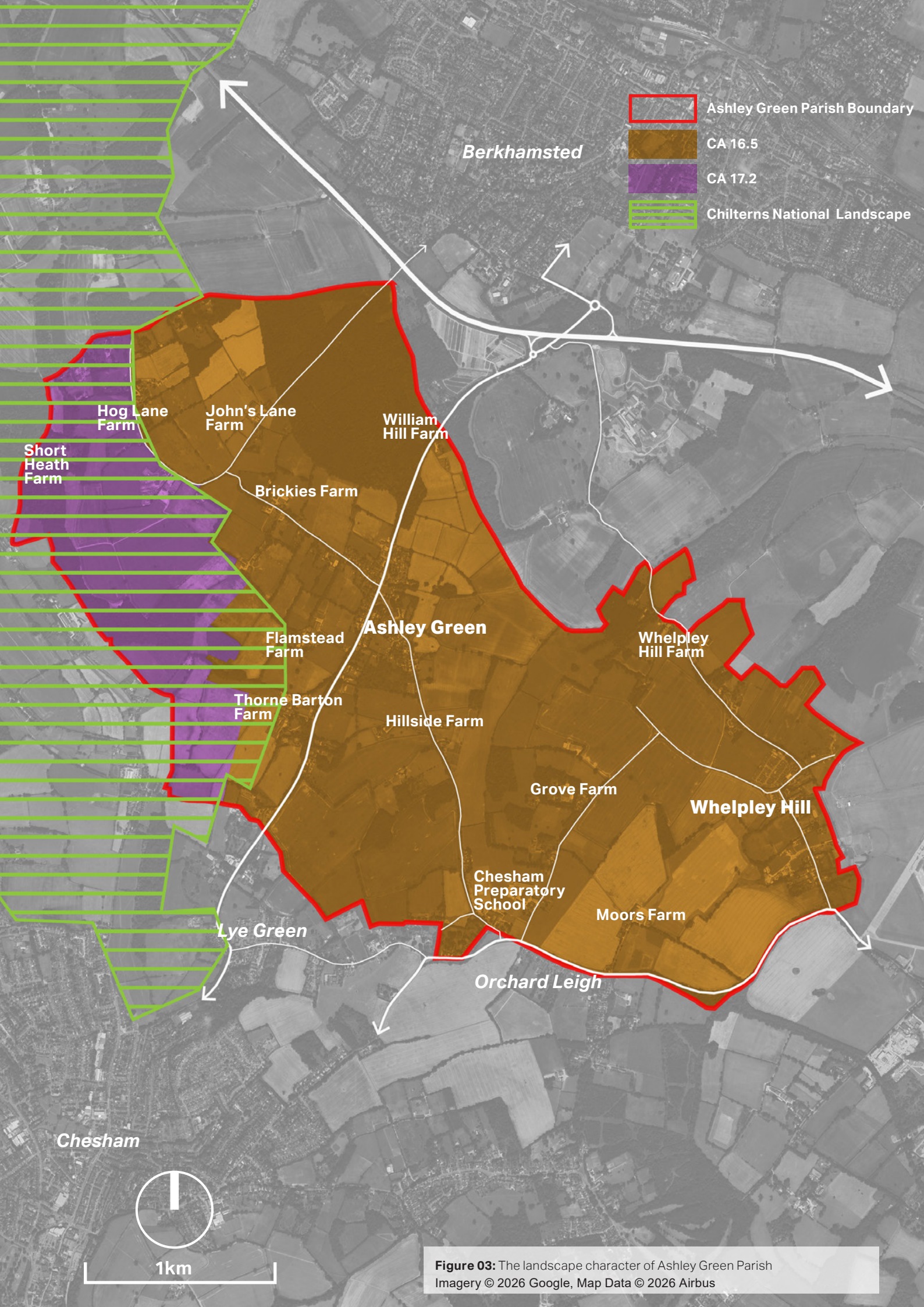


Figure 03: The landscape character of Ashley Green Parish
Imagery © 2026 Google, Map Data © 2026 Airbus



View towards Flamstead Farm from Hog Lane



View towards Whelpley Hill from Two Dells Lane



Rolling landscape to the north west of Ashley Green village



Agricultural land on the outskirts of Ashley Green village



Paddocks to the north of Whelpley Hill



View towards Iron Age site, from Whelpley Hill



Coronation Green, Whelpley Hill



Jubilee Green, Whelpley Hill



Allotments, Ashley Green village



Pancake Woods, near Ashley Green village



Ashley Green village green



The Glebe, Ashley Green village

Settlements

As part of its evidence base in support of its emerging local Plan, BCC undertook a review of settlements within the county. The aim of the Settlement Review was to develop a hierarchy of settlements based on their ability to provide services to meet the needs of their residents. Five tiers of settlement were identified based on population size and provision of a range of services:

Tier 1: Major Urban Areas

Tier 2: Large Market/other Towns

Tier 3: Small Market Town/Other Large Settlements

Tier 4: Large Villages:

Tier 5: Medium/Small Villages (min. 500 population).

Ashley Green village was designated a Tier 5 settlement, while the hamlet of Whelpley Hill was not designated, presumably on the basis of population size.

The two settlements in Ashley Green Parish display similar characteristics in terms of their historical growth and their current form. They have a nucleated form, i.e., they were originally formed as a cluster of homes around a key feature in the landscape, either farmsteads or junctions of major and minor routes connecting to larger settlements, such as Berkhamsted, Chesham or Bovingdon.

Both settlements remained relatively small until the latter part of the 20th century, when a series of small developments greatly increased the urban area of each. In some cases, this expansion involved the adaptation or replacement of existing agricultural steadings, while in others the development was on greenfield land.

Both Ashley Green village and the hamlet of Whelpley Hill have expanded beyond their historic core with the passage of time, typically following the transport routes with development often only one parcel deep.

Although the two settlements have become distended along these routes, they can still be considered to be nucleated, with their historic cores continuing to provide structural and functional integrity.

Both settlements, particularly, in their core areas, retain a number of historic buildings which are important when thinking about the context of the parish. While these heritage assets are recorded and described in greater detail in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is worth noting the importance of these buildings to residents' understanding of the place where they live and their relationship with it.

Buildings such as the Golden Eagle and White Hart public houses, St John's Church and the historic farmsteads and notable residential buildings within the parish are important landmarks and make a significant contribution to the way people see and understand Ashley Green Parish.

Equally important are the public buildings and spaces within the two settlements that are both the setting for adjacent development and important artefacts in their own right, being the places where people take their leisure and communal events happen.

Development in proximity to, or having a visual relationship with, these buildings and spaces should demonstrate a clear understanding of their importance to the local context and respect both their setting and, where relevant, their function.



St John's Church, Ashley Green village



The Golden Eagle, Ashley Green village



The White Hart, Whelpley Hill



Coronation Hall, Whelpley Hill



The Old School, Ashley Green village



Little Grove Priory

Ashley Green Village

The historic core of Ashley Green Village is the cluster of buildings around the junction of Chesham Road and Hogs and Two Dells Lanes. The Golden Eagle pub dates from 17th century, while St John's Church and the school date from the mid to late 19th century. The village was originally surrounded by open farmland with a number of substantial farms close by. Over time, the village has expanded, still in a relatively discrete fashion, albeit with some development extending along primary and secondary roads. The majority of residential development occurring in the late 20th century.

Evolution of built development in Ashley Green village 1883-2026

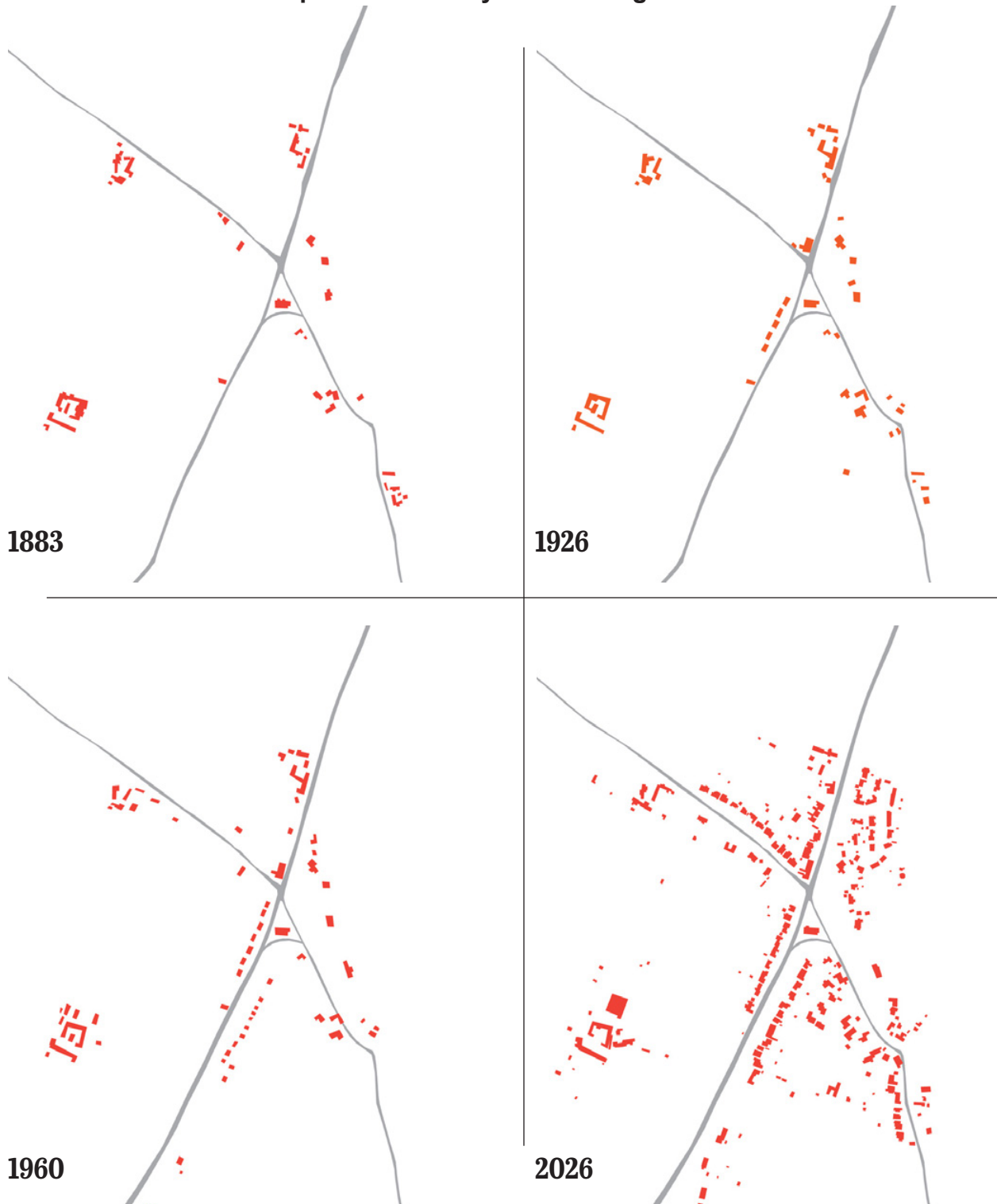


Figure 04: Historic development of Ashley Green village since 1883

Whelpley Hill

Although there is evidence of Iron Age settlement, the current hamlet of Whelpley Hill has its origins in the group of buildings, including a school, clustered around Whelpley Hill Farm. Situated off main routes, Whelpley Hill grew more slowly than nearby Ashley Green Village, with development primarily extending back towards Chesham Road. A second cluster of buildings developed in the vicinity of the White Hart pub, which had been a farmhouse until the late 19th century. Whelpley Hill Park, dating from the late 20th century constitutes a large part of the recent expansion of the village, with c.90 units on a 3ha site in the historic core.

Evolution of built development in the hamlet of Whelpley Hill 1883-2026



Figure 05: Historic development of the hamlet of Whelpley Hill since 1883

Settlement Form

While there has been some development along key routes and around some of the isolated farmsteads (including wholesale conversion to residential), development in Ashley Green Parish has, typically, occurred in an incremental manner, building out from the historic cores of Ashley Green village and Whelpley Hill.

Over time, successive waves of development have spread out from the village cores, sometimes only one plot depth back from the road but also with small, discrete clusters of development gathered around culs de sac. This incremental and relatively tight urban form is particularly evident in the village of Ashley Green. Mid- to late-20th century development, in particular, has occurred in some of the backlands behind parcels facing onto Chesham Road and Two Dells Lane, creating a relatively densely developed core. This clustering of development makes the village more compact and tightly knit than it might otherwise have been if development had simply extended along Chesham Road, Hogs Lane and Two Dells Lane.

Whelpley Hill is slightly different in that development has spread southwards along either side of Whelpley Hill itself, possibly influenced by the presence of the White Hart Pub, which created a second 'centre' within the settlement, beyond the historic development near Old School Cottages and the site that was formerly Whelpley Hill Farm.

Design Considerations

With respect to the context of Ashley Green Parish and the implications for new development proposals, the following should be taken into consideration.

Landscape

1. New development should seek to maintain the existing open character of the landscape within the parish.
2. Development should be sited in such a way as to complement and integrate with landscape elements, such as tree planting and hedgerows, and existing blocks of development; avoid development that intrudes into skylines or open areas of landscape.
3. Development should seek to preserve and, where possible, enhance existing landscape features, such as tree belts/blocks and hedges.
4. Development should seek to respect and preserve the key views and vistas identified in Appendix B of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Settlement

5. Development within the existing settlement boundaries of Ashley Green Village and Whelpley Hill is preferable to development beyond those boundaries; avoid creating new or extending existing ribbon development.
6. Development should seek to maintain the integrity of the two settlements by making them the focus for any new development services to preserve the character of the surrounding landscape, but also the villages themselves.
7. New development should respect the importance of heritage assets and local open spaces, recognising their contribution to the context of Ashley Green Parish and minimising impacts on their setting and, where relevant, their function.



Figure 06: View across Ashley Green village towards the hamlet of Whelpley Hill

3. Identity & Character

Introduction

The identity and character of a place is a product of the way that buildings, streets, places, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them.

The National Design Guide¹ states:

Well-designed places, buildings and spaces:

- have a positive and coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including residents and local communities, so contributing towards health and well-being, inclusion and cohesion;
- have a character that suits the context, its history, how we live today and how we are likely to live in the future; and
- are visually attractive, to delight their occupants and other users.

Identity and character can be best be understood by looking at the buildings in an area. It is the particular combination of architectural details, materials, shapes and colours that are typically seen in the area that make it distinct and recognisable as a place. This suite of details includes, among other things:

- height, scale and massing of buildings (see the section on Built Form)
- the relationship of buildings to their plot and adjacent buildings (see Built Form, below)
- scale and proportion of streets and spaces (see Built Form, below).

- local architectural details, including
 - building materials - colours, textures and shapes/patterns
 - roofscapes (the design of roofs and the materials used)
 - façade design, including the pattern of windows, their size and proportion and the details around them
- hard landscape (surfaces and materials) and street furniture
- soft landscape - trees and planting
- natural habitats

The gross elements relating to the identity of a place, the Built Form, are dealt with below. However, the other, more detailed elements are explored in more detail, in this section.

New development should reflect existing patterns of development, with proposals demonstrating an understanding of what is particular to the character of Ashley Green Parish. The application of design details, materials, forms and solutions that reflect the character of the parish are much more likely to deliver development outcomes that complement and, in some cases, enhance the sense of place that is the measure of identity and character.

This is not to say that only pastiche or exact replication of existing architecture is the only acceptable solution. Modern design is acceptable, but it should reflect and complement the broader character of the parish and, in particular, should respect the shape, form, patterns, colour tones and architectural detailing of existing development in the immediate vicinity.

¹ National Model Design Code, MHCLG (2021),p.14

Building Materials

Brick has, traditionally, been the most commonly used building material for residential properties in that part of the Chilterns within which Ashley Green Parish is located. In this area, specifically, a soft, red mud brick known as a Chiltern Red Multi is very common, although others have been used, especially in recent years, where new development has used greys, browns and yellows, London Stock brick types. The distinctive colour tones of the Chiltern Red Multi (oranges, reds, with purplish tones and occasional greys, from the kiln firing process) in combination with lighter coloured mortar jointing is a typical detail in Ashley Green Parish.

Other materials are used, often being associated with buildings of a particular period. Render, for example, and often painted white, is commonly used on buildings dating from the early 20th century, sometimes in combination with exposed brick.

Timber weather boarding was historically used on agricultural buildings, some of which have been converted to residential properties and retained the external cladding. There are other examples of new build properties using timber weatherboarding to clad the entire house or as a feature material. In either case, the weatherboarding is usually painted black.

Flint is another material that was, historically used as a facing material on properties, often in combination with red brick, which was used to provide greater structural stability around corners, window frames, etc. While it is prevalent across the wider area, on buildings of different ages, its use in Ashley Green Parish is mostly, but not exclusively, limited to new build properties.

There are also a few examples of hanging tiles used as a external wall cladding, usually as a detail or accent on a building façade.



Chesham Red Multi bricks used on a 1930s house façade, in combination with white render



Red bricks with flint infill panels and a mix of different window details



More modern property with a mix of materials, including hanging tiles as an accent on the gable end



Historic property with white painted render



New build with black painted weatherboard façade



More modern build with a mix of materials, including brick, hanging tile and faux half timber gable ends



Mid-20th century property where the facing brick has been painted, so the texture shows through

Design Considerations

With respect to **building materials**, new development should seek to reflect the mix of materials, tones and textures displayed by adjacent properties. Traditional materials, such as brick, flint and render, are preferred, particularly using colours and bond patterns (English bond, for example) that present on older buildings within the parish. Other materials, such as weatherboard, can be used, but their selection should reflect a considered assessment of the immediate and the wider context of development in the Parish.

The intention is that new build development should blend comfortably into the prevailing landscape and townscape of the parish. In terms of **colour tones**, reds tend to dominate and are preferred for new development, reflecting the colours generated when firing building elements made from local clays. Red tones can be used in combination with other, complementary colours, such as the softer lighter colours used for renders..

Typically, the **texture** of building materials used in Ashley Green Parish derives from the use of small units, such as brick, flint and hanging tiles. The flatness of render is often juxtaposed with materials that have more texture, to pleasing effect, regardless of the age of the building.

Roofscapes

Within Ashley Green village and Whelpley Hill, there is a variety of roof types and materials evident across residential buildings of different typology and age.

Historically, buildings in this part of Buckinghamshire had roofs covered with red or orange clay plain tiles. Some Victorian buildings would have been built with slate tile roofs (which they may still retain). Thatch is not common in this part of Buckinghamshire.

Traditional buildings typically display a simpler roof profile, with few projections, variations in ridge lines and gables. This simpler roof geometry, often with a central ridge line along the dominant axis of the building, and a symmetrical pitched roof, is characteristic of more rustic and rural architecture in Ashley Green Parish. Although pitched roofs are more traditional to the area, some buildings do have hipped or half hipped roofs,

Modern buildings tend to display a more eclectic mix of roof both in terms of their forms and the materials used. Multiple roof lines, projections and shapes make for a more complex roof geometry than that found on most older buildings, although there are exceptions to this. Materials are more varied as well, with a mix of new and reclaimed clay tiles, concrete tiles and, concrete tiles.

Colours on new builds are, typically, more varied, as well. On traditional buildings, those not roofed with slate, red is the dominant colour, again reflecting the characteristics of local clay when kiln fired. Newer buildings have a variety of reds as well, but also greys of different hues that reflect the materials used.

Dormer windows are common on both traditional and new build homes. On older buildings they are smaller, more in proportion to the general roof area and often pierce the eaves line. More modern buildings show a tendency towards larger dormers which can dominate the roofscape.



Simple pitched roof, in clay tiles, with dormers low on the roof line and punching through the eaves



Period building with half-hipped roof shape



Simple pitched roof with red clay tiles



Strong central ridge on a heavily pitched roof (45°), with dormers and chimney stacks breaking up the roofscape



Victorian building with slate roof, which is in keeping with the architectural style



Period building with simple pitched roof and wall dormers and a lower eave line to the roof



Period building with red clay tile roof and chimney stack being a key feature in the roofscape

Design Considerations

With respect to **roof shape**, a simpler arrangement, with little in the way of changes in pitch and geometry, is more reflective of local character. Pitched roofs, with a dominant ridge line and minimal secondary projections are preferred. Hipped and half-hipped roof shapes are acceptable. Flat roofs are to be avoided.

Roofing materials should be either red clay tiles (new or reclaimed) or slate. Concrete tiles and pantiles should not be used on new builds, although they can be used on an extension where these materials are already used on the main house.

Dormer windows should be designed so that they do not dominate the roof space, and they should be kept low on the roof, away from the ridge line. Dormers should have a pitched roof in the same materials as the main roof, and flat roof dormers should not be installed. Large, wide dormers design to extend roof space should be avoided, especially on front façades.

Bargeboards (on gable ends) should be designed to be in proportion to the roof.

Solar PV installations should be designed to be in proportion to the roof area, especially on prominent façades.

Boundary Design

The boundary treatment of residential plots is very much a defining feature of the character of Ashley Green Parish.

Typically, residential parcels are defined by a mix of natural and man-made boundary treatments. Parcels are rarely left open to the road onto which they front and this mix of soft and hard elements in the streetscape creates an attractive, varied and characterful scene. Some modern development does open out onto the footway and highway, often with the buildings close to the front of the parcel. While this is a form of development and boundary treatment that is common to many areas, including parts of the Chilterns (especially in more urban areas), it is not typical of development in Ashley Green Parish.

High hedges, often in combination with walls and secure gates, are a typical boundary treatment, especially in those locations where residential development fronts onto busier roads. Even in those locations where houses front onto lower category and, therefore, quieter roads, their boundaries still tend to be defined by substantive boundary treatment. This can often be low walls together with hedge or ornamental planting, but the separation of private space from the public realm is very clear.

Glimpsed views through gaps in the boundary are another common feature of development in Ashley Green Parish. Many houses are set back from their boundary, with driveways or garden space in front. Views across planting and through gateways provide a visual connection between the viewer and the house, while retaining the privacy of residents.



Houses sitting in a matrix of planting along front and secondary boundaries



Glimpsed views through entrances towards buildings behind hedges



High hedges with verges in front and upper floors of houses visible from the footway/highway



Rustic timber gates are a common feature on residential properties in the Parish



Walls, planting and secondary planting in the verge create a layered effect to a boundary



Architectural gates and wall designs are also common, leading onto driveways



Combinations of walls and softer planted elements are also common boundary treatments

Design Considerations

Residential properties in new developments should have a **defined boundary**, particularly with respect where they front onto the footway and highway. Open boundaries, with car parking directly off the highway is not an acceptable design solution.

Front boundaries can have a **soft, planted** character (hedges ornamental planting) or they can be **architectural** (walls, gateways). Boundaries can also be designed as a combination of the two approaches. High, timber fences are not an acceptable boundary treatment along the front of residential parcels. Similarly dwarf walls without a planted element behind and lawns running directly to the back of the footway without a defined boundary treatment, are not considered to be representative of the character of Ashley Green Parish.

Side boundaries are less restricted, with a variety of solutions acceptable, including hedges, walls and timber fences.



Figure 07: View across Ashley Green village

4. Built Form

The National Design Guide defines 'built form' as:

'the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, street, buildings and open spaces. It is the interrelationship between all these elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics. Together they create the built environment and contribute to its character and sense of place'.¹

In the context of this design annex, built form also refers to the three-dimensional shape, scale and character of development, features which directly influence how a building fits with its context.

Key elements of built form include:

- Plot size
- Position and arrangement of buildings in their plot
- Building typology
- Building heights and massing

Other elements of built form which might be considered, such as materials, boundary treatments, rooflines, etc., are considered in more detail in the section on Identity, above.

The scale and proportion of streets is also an important component of built form. It is beyond the scope of this document, however, to provide guidance on this matter. Instead, developers should base their design proposals on relevant BCC guidance and *Manual for Streets*², both of which provide

direction and guidance on the best way to plan, design, deliver and manage residential streets in a way that enhances the character of the place, creates safe spaces for all modes of transport and meets the needs of residents.

The commentary in respect of built form, set out below reflects the prevailing pattern of development within the parish. Clearly, there is variety in the built form, with development from specific periods reflecting design and planning approaches common to that time.

However, the built form identified in this design annex is considered to represent that which is most commonly found in the parish. This vernacular built form is repeated from one period to the next, albeit with variations in terms of detailed design or site planning.

¹ National Design Guide, MHCLG (2021), p.18

² Manual for Streets, DfT (2007) and Manual for Streets 2, DfT (2010)

Plot Size

For the purposes of this discussion, the 'plot' refers to the land upon which an individual house sits. The 'parcel' is a larger area of land which might be subdivided into individual 'plots'.

Plot size is, perhaps, the most subjective of the components of built form. Plot size varies depending on a number of factors:

- Available land
- Broader pattern of adjacent development (context)
- Planning policy in respect of density, efficiency of land use
- Developer sentiment and preference

Notwithstanding, there are patterns to be observed in both Ashley Green village and Whelpley Hill which can provide context for the planning and design of new development within the parish.

Typically, development plots in the parish reflect its rural character and are broader than more urban plots, where the buildings are often aligned with their longest axis perpendicular to the road. In Ashley Green Parish, it is more common to see plots which are broader, with the long axis of the building running parallel to the road (this is addressed in more detail below).

This arrangement of the building makes for development plots which are much broader in relation to their depth. In terms of depth, there are a number of different solutions apparent within the two settlements. It is common for residential development in both Ashley Green village and Whelpley Hill to extend along roads to a depth of one plot, i.e., a single house, with fields or other open space behind. Where this happens, individual plots can be quite deep and, as a consequence, quite large. This form of development is more common on older parcels, although it is not exclusive to them.



Long residential plots along Chesham Road in Ashley Green village
Imagery © 2026 Google, Map Data © 2026 Airbus



Long, wide residential plots along Whelpley Hill
Imagery © 2026 Google, Map Data © 2026 Airbus

NOTE: With respect to plot size, Ashley Green Village is the main example cited in Figure 08, opposite. This is because the Neighbourhood Plan has identified this settlement as being the location with the greatest potential to accommodate development during the plan period.

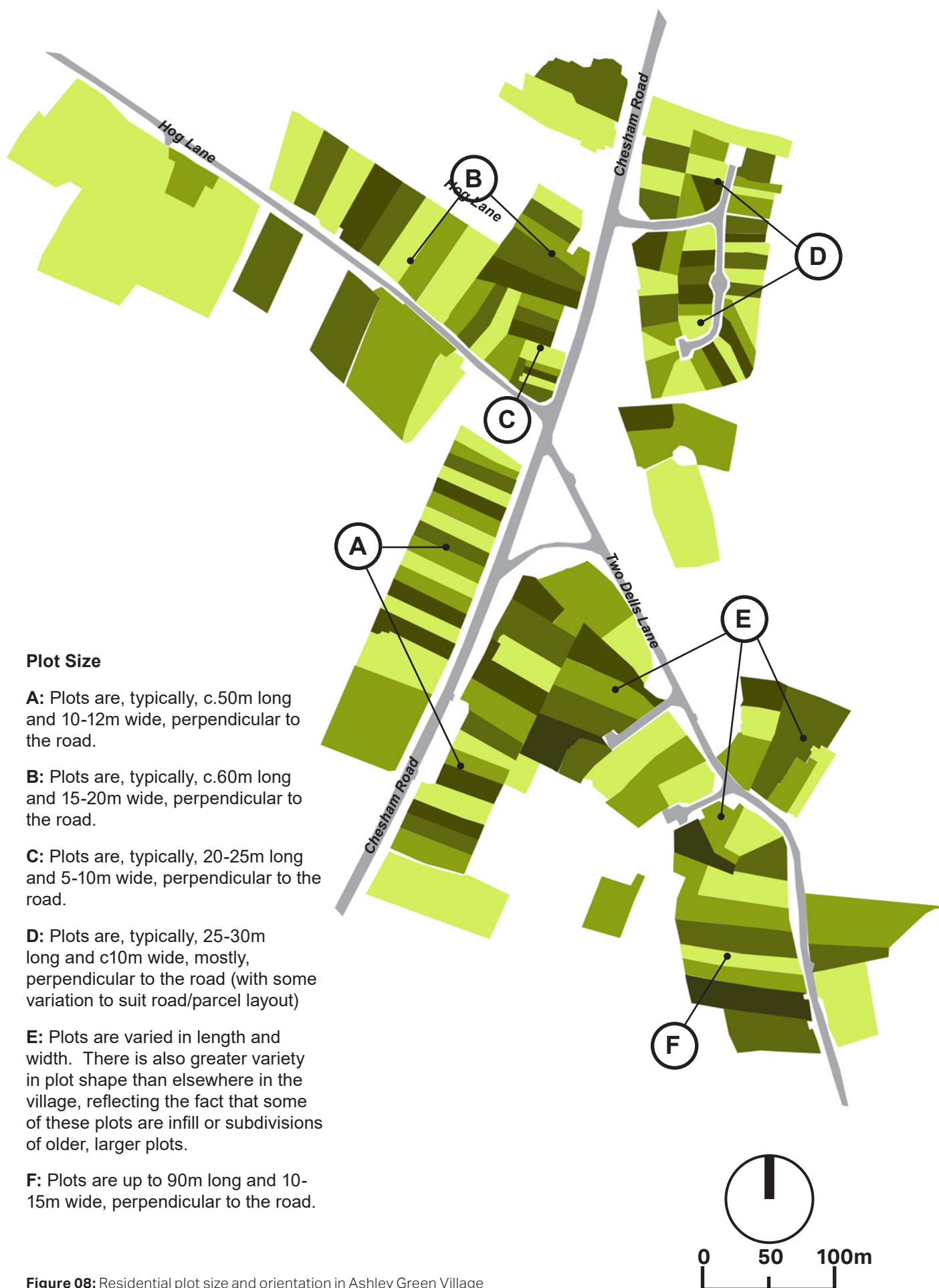
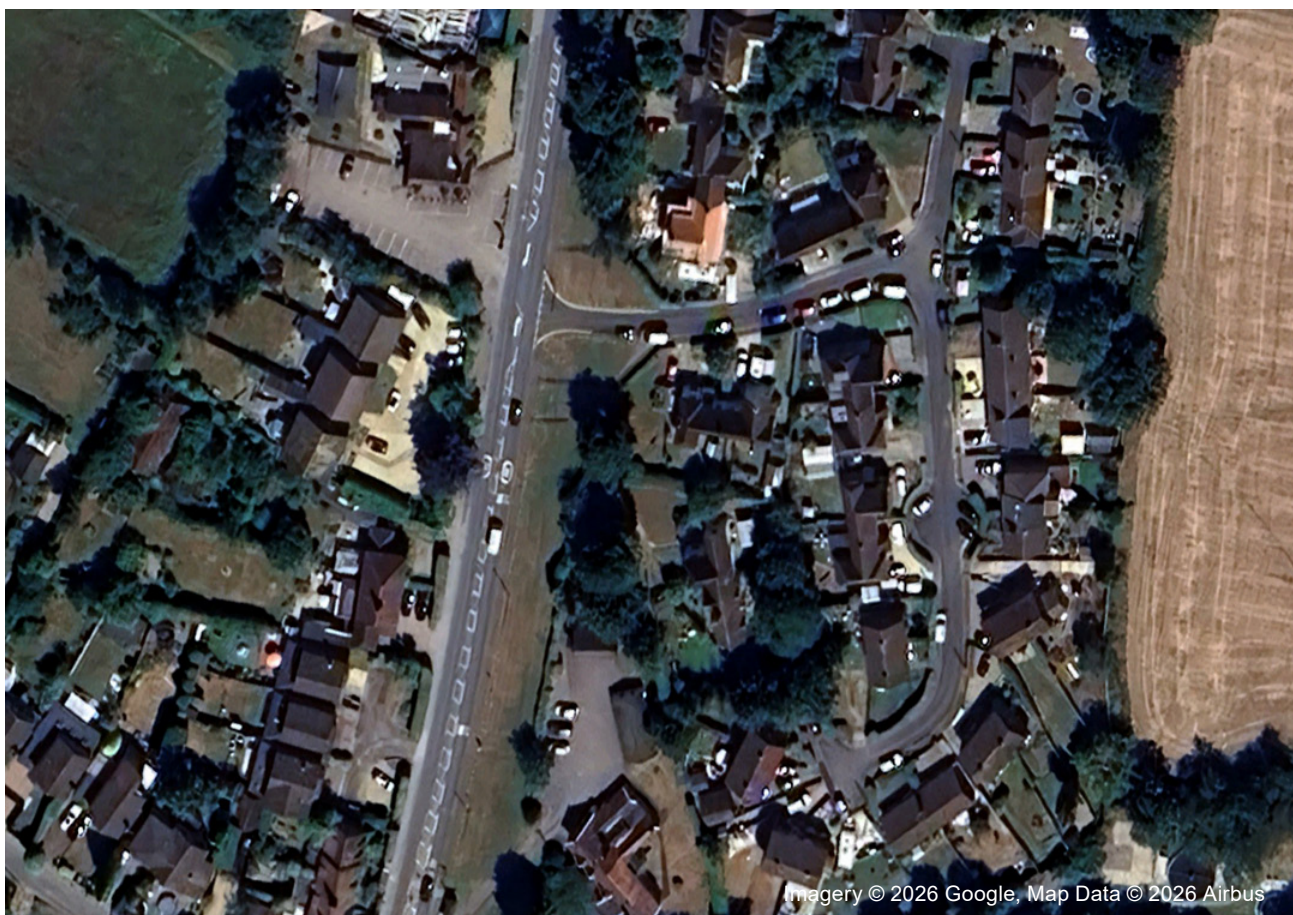


Figure 08: Residential plot size and orientation in Ashley Green Village



Newer, denser development opposite older, less dense residential plots in the centre of Ashley Green Village. Both solutions are part of the existing context and should be referenced by any new development proposals.



Similar patterns of development are evident in Whelpley Hill. Although buildings might vary in age, typically, the longer, wider plots are older.

Elsewhere within the two settlements, typically in respect of more modern development, parcels with small clusters of houses are evident. The individual plots are still broad, because of the alignment of the building relative to the road, but they often have other development to their rear, which results in a shorter and, therefore, smaller building plot.

As before, this type of plot arrangement is not exclusive to more modern development and can also be seen on older parcels of development.

Typically, development parcels closer to the centre of the two settlements tend to have smaller plots, while those further away (and arrayed to either side of the main transport routes) tend to have larger plots.

Plots size has a direct relationship with density of development. While the average density of residential development in both Ashley Green Village and Whelpley Hill is relatively low (as befits its rural character), specific parcels of development can exhibit higher densities which might be entirely appropriate to their context.

As noted above, development plots closer to the centre of the two settlements are smaller, resulting in a higher density of development in that part of the settlement. This is offset by the lower density of development along arterial routes and towards the edges of the settlements. The key to achieving a successful approach to development density is to consider the context within which the development is proposed, the character and form of the adjacent development (if such exists) and the way in which the proposed development complements the broader pattern of development within the settlement. Taking this approach means that the actual density figure of 'X' number of homes per acre or hectares is less important than the quality and character of the development.

Design Considerations

Residential plots in new developments should be arranged so that they are **perpendicular to the road, with their shortest axis being parallel to the carriageway.**

Plot size may vary, but the typical pattern of development in Ashley Green Parish is for **residential plots to be longer than they are wider.** Very often the long axis is significantly longer than the short axis facing onto the road, resulting in single plot-depth development.

While this is the prevailing pattern of development in the Parish, it is recognised that current planning and design standards focus on a more efficient use of land, with smaller plots and a relatively higher density of development. **New development should seek to reflect the context of adjacent residential plots, while meeting current standards in respect of minimum density.**

Position/Arrangement of Buildings on Plot

While plot size and geometry can vary, there is a very clear pattern of development in Ashley Green Parish, across both of the principle settlements and in more isolated, smaller groups of houses.

Residential properties are almost always set back from the front property line, often with a significant garden space, driveway or combination of the two. Older properties tend to have a smaller set back, often as little as a few metres. Properties constructed in the mid-to-late 20th century often have a much larger set back (in some cases 10 metres or more).

There are few, if any, examples of properties having been built on or very close to the property line. Even more modern properties tend to have a relatively large set back, often to provide parking at the front of the plot.

New development should seek to avoid design solutions that do not provide a set back at the front of the property (or provide a very shallow set back of a few metres). Providing a deeper space in front of the property creates a greater sense of openness and also allows the provision of the substantial planted boundary treatments identified above as being common and a key part of the character of the streetscape in Ashley Green Parish.

As noted above, in the section on plot size, current planning and design standards require a more efficient use of land, which results in smaller plots, even where the building itself has a substantial footprint. This requirement will impact on the ability of developers to provide a set back similar to that found on many of the properties in both Ashley Green village and Whelpley Hill.

Building lines can vary across properties, although there is often a discernible line to follow. New development should reflect the adjacent building lines, wherever possible.



Properties in Ashley Green Parish, with the building line set back from the property line

NOTE: With respect to the location of buildings within the plot, Ashley Green Village is the main example cited in Figure 09, opposite. This is because the Neighbourhood Plan has identified this settlement as being the location with the greatest potential to accommodate development during the plan period.



Position/Arrangement of Buildings on Plot

Residential buildings tend to sit back from the front property line, creating a greater sense of openness that is commonly found in more urban areas. That sense of openness is reinforced by reason of the fact that most homes in Ashley Green Parish are either detached or semi detached (with the majority being detached). This allows for gaps in the building frontage which results in a looser, more open character.

Figure 08, focusing on Ashley Green village, provides an illustration of how residential buildings sit within their plot and the almost universal insertion of a broad space in front of the property, between the building line and the front property line/back of footway/carriageway.

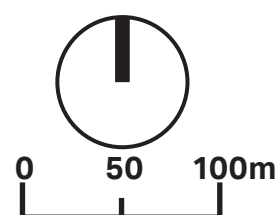


Figure 09: Position of buildings within the plot in Ashley Green Village

In terms of building orientation, as noted elsewhere in this design annex, residential properties in the two settlements of Ashley Green village and the hamlet of Whelpley Hill are often arranged with their long axis running across the plot rather than along its length.

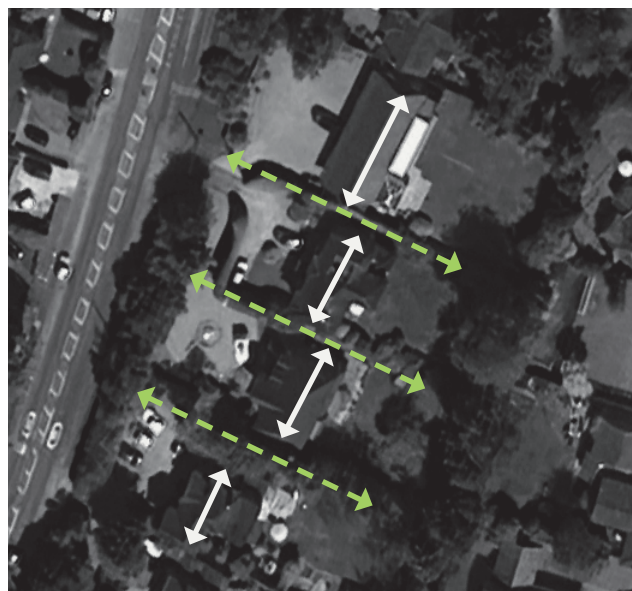
This creates a very particular character that is more rural than urban, especially given that many properties are detached or semi-detached, rather than terraces (although there are a few short ones and these tend to be older properties). Even where houses site relatively close to their neighbours, on one or both sides, the arrangement of the buildings create a sense of space and openness that is very much part of the character of the Parish. This orientation of the properties, allied to the set back in front, is very much part of the rural character of the settlements in Ashley Green Parish.

Design Considerations

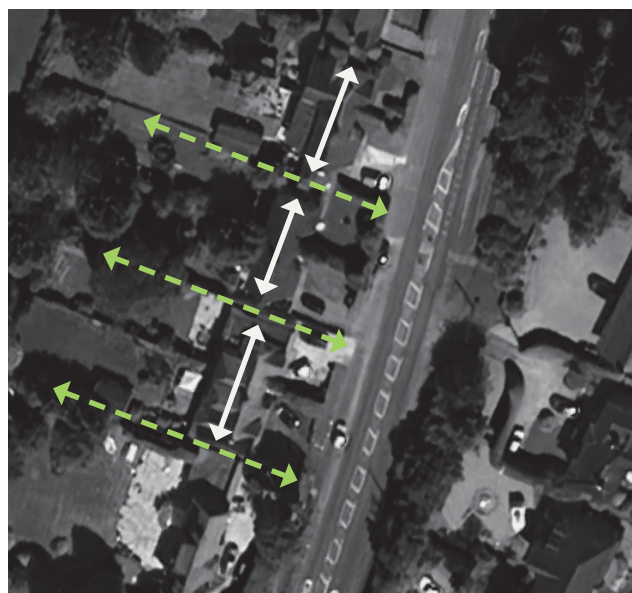
New residential development should seek to reflect the prevailing pattern of development where the building is set back from the front property line, with garden space or driveway occupying the space in front of the house. This arrangement creates a greater sense of openness and allows for the greener, softer boundary treatments identified above.

Residential properties should be orientated on the plot with their longest axis running across the plot.

New development should reflect existing building lines, wherever possible, to avoid impacting on the character and sense of place. It should be noted, however, that some element of variation in the building line is not uncommon and is often a product of when a property was built.



Detached properties with their long axis sitting across the plot and gaps between buildings
Imagery © 2026 Google, Map Data © 2026 Airbus



Semi-detached properties with their long axis sitting across the plot
Imagery © 2026 Google, Map Data © 2026 Airbus

Building Typology and Heights

Within the parish of Ashley Green, the majority of residential buildings are detached, two storey properties, regardless of the age of the property.

Other dwelling types are, of course, evident such as single storey bungalows (often with roof extensions), purpose built 1.5 storey properties, where the first floor is designed into the roof space and a very small number of two and a half/three storey dwellings. Typically, however, the two storey, single family dwelling is the most common residential typology to be found in the parish.

When contemplating building new homes within the parish, developers should seek to understand the prevailing typology, including the building heights and orientation of the adjacent properties. The planned new development should respect the character and form of existing development in terms of its height, massing, general arrangement and location and orientation within the plot.

There may, however, be instances where new development delivers a slightly different form. This might include instances, for example, where backlands are being developed within an area surrounded by two storey homes. In this case, the developer might well consider a less intrusive and more sympathetic built form, perhaps predicated on the use of one to one and a half storey buildings which reduce the visual impact of development and minimise overlooking issues.

While there are a few examples of taller buildings (i.e., anything over 2 storeys), they are not common within the parish and it is not envisaged that new development would be in the form of town-houses, for example, which are typically up to three storeys in height, have a narrow footprint (and plot) and are often arranged in short runs of terraces.



Two storey detached property in Ashley Green village



One and a half storey property, with dormers built into the eaves, Ashley Green village

With respect to typology, as noted above, most of the residential properties in Ashley Green Parish are detached or semi-detached, single family dwelling. This is the form which new development would be expected to take. Terraced housing is not a typology commonly found in Ashley Green Parish, as it is a more urban form that is at odds with the rural character of the parish. There are, however, a couple of notable exceptions in Ashley Green Village.

With respect to the point about single-family dwellings, it is recognised that housing needs within the parish will change over time. Consequently, if it should transpire that apartments are required as part of the broader mix of dwelling types within the parish, they should be constructed in a way that reflects the existing built form. For example, apartments can be developed such that they resemble single dwellings, although their internal arrangement is different. Large, bulky apartment blocks, whose general massing is much greater than adjacent houses will not be acceptable.

Design Considerations

Residential properties in new developments should reflect the prevailing typology and building heights evident in adjacent development. Typically, this will be two storey, single family detached or semi detached dwellings. However, there will be instances where a more nuanced approach will be required, based on the surrounding character and built form or the need to manage and mitigate the impact of new development on existing.

Residential buildings over two storeys are not common within Ashley Green Parish and will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Apartments are also uncommon although they may be required as part of a broader housing mix. **Should apartments be required, they must be constructed in such a way as to complement the prevailing character and built form of adjacent development.**



Single storey property in Whelpley hill, with later extension into the roof space



Modern interpretation of the one and half storey typology.



Two and half/three storey property in Ashley Green village.



Two and a half storey, semi-detached residential properties in Orchard Leigh



One and a half storey residential properties arranged as a short terrace, in Ashley Green village



Modern, two storey residential development in Whelpley Hill

