

Lower Dicker

(Inset Map No.37)

Introduction

19.22.1 Lower Dicker is a very dispersed settlement, strung along the busy A22 two miles north-west of Hailsham. It comprises a mix of residential, commercial and agricultural properties.

19.22.2 The Council aims to protect and enhance local amenities in the settlement, in particular highway safety, whilst recognising and maintaining its local employment role.

Environment

19.22.3 Lower Dicker lies within the gently undulating countryside of the Low Weald. It has no identifiable centre, being characterised by sporadic, primarily frontage development extending for several miles either side of the A22, with additional properties scattered along the network of lanes to the north and south. This development is interspersed with wide tracts of farmland or other open spaces which afford views into the attractive surrounding countryside.

19.22.4 Incremental growth of industrial and commercial development has taken place in Lower Dicker, sometimes utilising former agricultural buildings. At Hackhurst Lane, to the north of the A22, a collection of commercial uses has evolved over the years into a significant industrial estate.

19.22.5 In the interests of protecting the rural character and residential amenities of the area, any further expansion or significant intensification of employment uses is not considered appropriate. Equally, in view of the dispersed nature of Lower Dicker, it is not considered appropriate to allow any consolidation or extension of the scattered development along the A22 or roads leading from it.

19.22.6 For these reasons, a development boundary has not been defined for Lower Dicker, and it is therefore subject to the more restrictive development policies applicable to areas outside of development boundaries. However, whilst in principle these policies do not exclude certain categories of development from the countryside (e.g. the conversion of existing farm buildings to alternative uses), further such development in the settlement would be likely to exacerbate hazardous traffic conditions on the A22, and is considered further below.

Traffic

19.22.7 The A22 is part of the primary road network linking London with Eastbourne and carries a large

volume of traffic, particularly in the holiday season. The high number of traffic accidents along the Lower Dicker section of the A22 has been of concern for some years, and is much higher than the national average for this type of road. Despite recent safety measures, including the provision of right-turn lane facilities at major junctions, the situation remains unsatisfactory.

19.22.8 In its consideration of individual planning applications, the County Council, as Local Highway Authority, has consistently sought to resist any development that would increase traffic movements at individual accesses along this stretch of the A22. It considers that the slowing, stopping and turning movements of the additional vehicles generated by such developments would further impair the safety and convenience of traffic using the A22. For the same reason, it believes that access points along the road should be kept to a minimum. These concerns are shared by the local Parish Councils.

19.22.9 It is therefore considered appropriate to protect this stretch of road from developments which would be prejudicial to the safety of traffic travelling along it.

VB22.1 Proposals for development which may be acceptable under other policies in the Plan, but which would increase traffic movements at individual accesses on the Lower Dicker section of the A22, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted.

Hackhurst Lane Business Area

19.22.10 Hackhurst Lane Business Area is a long established concentration of industrial/commercial activities to the north of the A22, with a significant employment role in relation to Hailsham. Vehicular access is currently gained via Hackhurst Lane, a private road fronted by residential properties at its southern end. This road is of substandard width and construction, with no footpaths and insufficient sight lines at its junction with the A22.

19.22.11 The earlier South Wealden Local Plan proposed a westerly extension to the existing industrial area in order to facilitate the provision of a new access road set apart from the residential properties, and the closure of the estate access road onto Hackhurst Lane to industrial traffic. To achieve the significant highway and environmental improvements that would result from the new access road, it was considered appropriate to carry forward the business allocations,

although full planning permission has now been granted for the site following the completion of the necessary Planning Obligation in 1996.

19.22.12 The site of the proposed extension benefits from mature tree lines along its boundaries and is set back some distance from the A22, so its development would not result in a consolidation of the existing scattered development along the Lower Dicker section of the road. However, further enlargement of the industrial allocation would project beyond these established tree screens, and would therefore not be considered appropriate in view of the visual impact on the surrounding countryside.

VB22.2 3.3 hectares of land adjacent to the Hackhurst Lane Business Area, Lower Dicker, as defined on the Proposals Map, are allocated for business purposes. Proposals for any new industrial development will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

(1) prior to the commencement of any industrial development, a new vehicular road in the position defined on the Proposals Map shall be constructed and completed subject to the satisfaction of the Local Planning and Highway Authorities;

(2) the prior completion of a legal agreement to prevent industrial traffic using the existing Hackhurst Lane and to prevent other access from being taken from the new road except for agricultural use;

(3) the retention and improvement of the trees on the southern, western and northern boundaries of the site.

19.22.13 Until such time as this proposal is implemented, planning applications for development within the Hackhurst Lane Business Area will be considered against Policy VB22.1

Coldharbour Mill

19.22.14 This site was allocated for housing purposes in the earlier South Wealden Local Plan in order to facilitate the removal of the disused animal feed mill from the southern part of the site and the clearance of caravans, non-residential buildings and other stored material from the remaining area. The dominant appearance of the derelict mill and unattractive, ill-kept state of the land to the north has been of concern for some years. The development of part of the site for employment purposes was also examined as a possible option, but it was considered at the time that residential development would have less impact, both environmentally and in terms of traffic generation, than business development. It would be a condition of any

permission for residential development that the land not allocated for housing purposes be returned to agricultural or forestry use.

19.22.15 Whilst the storage of caravans on the site has now ceased, the land remains unsightly and a source of nuisance to adjacent dwellings. The dismantling of motor vehicles causes concern to local residents. In view of the environmental gain that could be achieved by the development of the mill site and the frontage land to the north, it is considered appropriate to carry forward this housing allocation, with the condition that any vehicles or other material be removed from all the site and that the area of land not allocated for housing be returned to agricultural or forestry use.

VB22.3 Land at Coldharbour Road, Lower Dicker, comprising the Coldharbour Mill site and frontage land between the Mill and the property, Wellwyn, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for housing purposes. Proposals for new housing development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:-

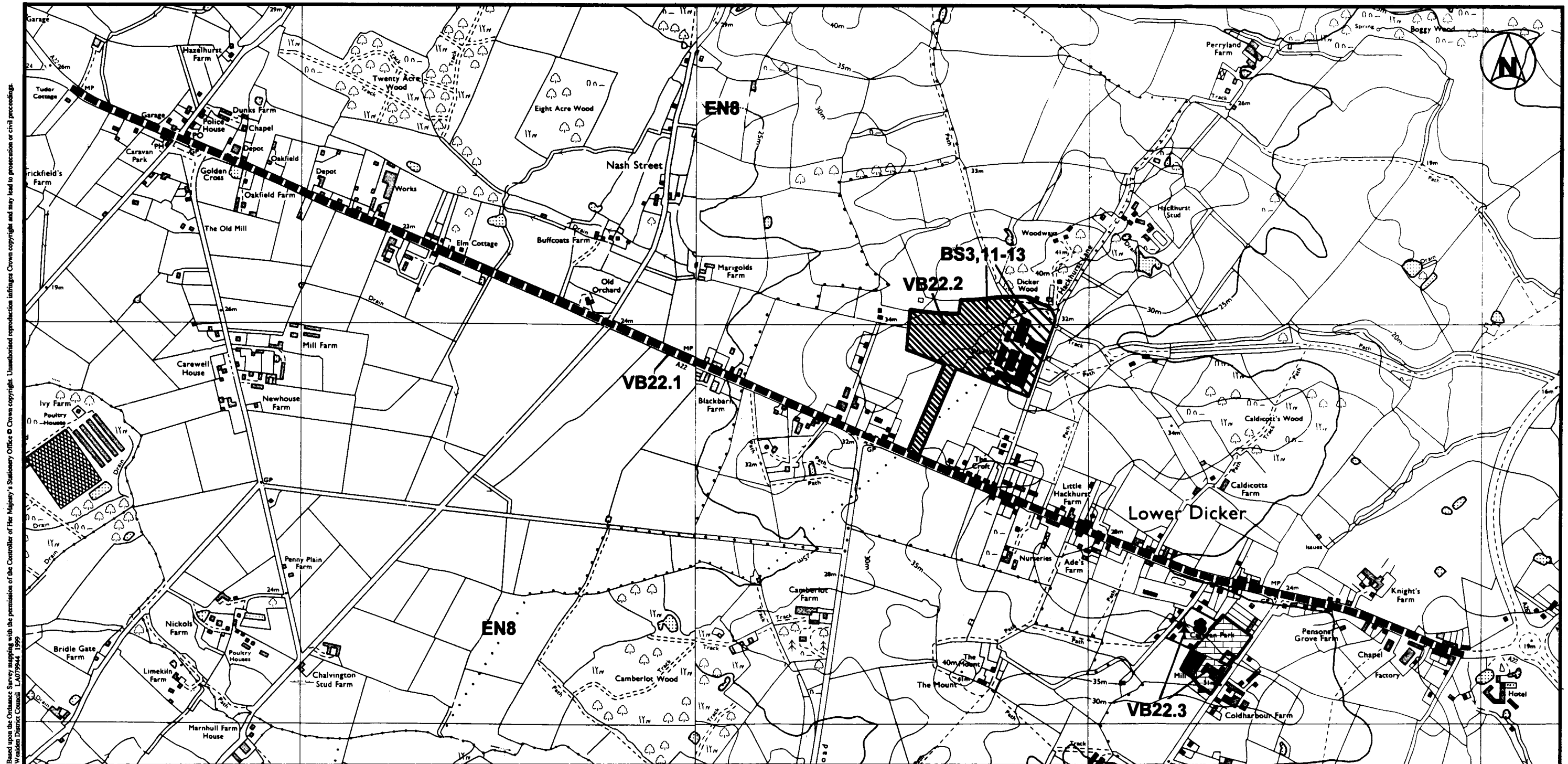
(1) prior to the commencement of development, all vehicles, non-residential buildings and other stored material on all the land to the north of the Mill shall be removed and the existing use rights discontinued, and the land not allocated for housing purposes, as defined on the Proposals Map, returned to agricultural or forestry use. This will be secured through appropriate Planning Agreements;

(2) vehicular access shall be taken from Coldharbour Road. All highway works shall be constructed to Local Planning and Highway Authority standards;

(3) existing hedgerows and trees within the site and at the boundaries shall be retained and improved where possible. New landscaping shall be provided in the housing area with tree and shrub screens to the boundaries of the site;

(4) a low density housing layout, respecting the rural character of the locality.

Inset Map No. 37 Lower Dicker

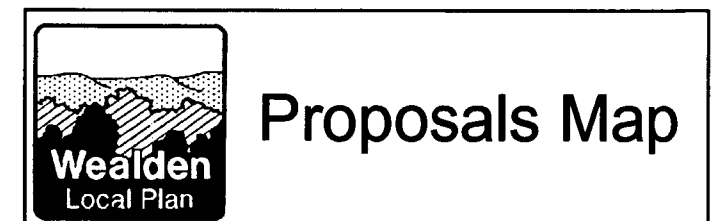


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Wealden District Council LA079944 1999

KEY

- Inset Map boundary
- Development boundary
- ▨ Hackhurst Lane business area
- ▨ Business allocation
- ▨ Housing allocation
- ▨ Agricultural / Forestry use
- A22 development policy

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.



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