

Maresfield

(Inset Map No.39 - Mapsheet)

Introduction

19.24.1 Maresfield is a relatively large village located about a mile to the north-west of Uckfield and is primarily residential in character. The village, now bypassed, has developed from an historic core to the north and west of the former A272 and A22 routes. There is a range of local services and recreational facilities. The current population is estimated at around 1150 people.

19.24.2 It is the Council's aim to maintain the residential character of the village whilst protecting its historic core and rural setting.

Environment

19.24.3 The village is bounded to the south and east by open countryside of the Low Weald while to the north and west, areas of open land, mature tree cover and scattered dwellings display a strong rural character. This setting provides a clear constraint to outward growth.

19.24.4 The historic core of the village is located around the junction of London Road and Batts Bridge Road where several of the fine old buildings date from the 17th and 18th Centuries. The special architectural and historic character of the centre of the village has been recognised by its designation as a Conservation Area. Within this area the Council proposes to provide environmental improvements, in association with traffic calming measures already installed by the County Council.

19.24.5 Maresfield Park is an extensive area of low density housing to the north-west of the village centre where large detached properties in extensive curtilages, together with mature tree cover and landscaping, create a high quality parkland environment. In contrast, development to the north of Batts Bridge Road has been in the form of an in-depth estate, originally of local authority housing, whereas to the south of the road, more limited cul-de-sac development has taken place.

19.24.6 To the south-west of the village land within the former Maresfield Army Camp is allocated as a high quality major business park within a low density, parkland setting, as set out in Chapter 7.

19.24.7 In the light of these environmental considerations, the development boundary seeks to prevent outward growth of new development into the sensitive surrounding countryside, ribbon development along the main roads and any intensification of development in peripheral areas in order to protect their more rural and sometimes 'parkland' character.

19.24.8 The development boundary excludes land to the east of Straight Half Mile which is largely open countryside where new development would be intrusive on the landscape, and a number of small scale commercial uses where a significant intensification of new development is considered inappropriate.

19.24.9 Along the northern edge of the village the development boundary excludes open land, woodland and scattered dwellings north of existing and proposed development on Middle Drive and the frontage to Straight Half Mile in view of its more rural character.

19.24.10 To the west of The Drive, several properties are set in large curtilages with extensive areas of mature tree cover, which creates a sensitive parkland environment where any intensification of new development would be detrimental to its character. For this reason, the area is excluded from the development boundary. Similarly, the Manor House has been excluded from the development boundary in view of its historic character and landscape setting, together with the woodland to the west which is a prominent feature in the landscape on the rural fringe of the village.

19.24.11 The development boundary includes a tract of land to the west of the Parklands Estate which has consent for housing development. Along Batts Bridge Road, the development boundary excludes several properties fronting the road where the spacious setting of the houses and the mature tree cover create a more rural character which would be eroded by new development. In line with the Council's policy to retain and enhance recreational facilities, the development boundary excludes the leisure centre.

19.24.12 Along the southern edge of the village the development boundary closely follows the built-up area where it is considered essential to prevent new development encroaching onto the recreation ground and into the sensitive open countryside areas around Park Farm and Mill Farm. The Underhill area has a number of historic buildings and is more rural in character, and has been excluded from the development boundary as any new development would be detrimental to its character.

Development Boundary

19.24.13 The development boundary excludes a number of properties along London Road, in order to prevent an intensification of ribbon development. Further south, planning permission has been granted for a petrol filling station and restaurant to the north of the Uckfield and Maresfield Bypass junction, but the Council has resisted further proposals for development in this open countryside area. In order to protect the landscape and prevent the coalescence of Uckfield and Maresfield, as recognised in the County Structure Plan, a specific policy is contained in Chapter 4.

19.24.14 The diverse character of development within the defined development boundary provides opportunities for housing development on undeveloped land, by infilling, by redevelopment of existing sites and by conversion of buildings to residential use

Maresfield Park

19.24.15 Maresfield Park is an extensive area of low density housing development where detached properties are set within large curtilages, a number of which are several acres in size, particularly to the south of The Drive. The established character has been created by the spacious setting of development, together with mature tree cover, hedgerows and other planting which has resulted in a high quality parkland environment.

19.24.16 Although a number of fringe areas have been excluded from the development boundary, it is considered essential that special regard is had to the impact of new development on the character of this area within the development boundary. Maresfield Park is subject to a low density housing policy with emphasis given to the preservation of the character of the area and, in particular, the impact of development on the immediate locality.

VB24 Within the Maresfield Park housing policy area, as defined on the Proposals Map, the low density parkland character will be protected and proposals which adversely affect its character will not be permitted. Planning applications for new residential development within the policy area will be determined with reference to the following criteria:-

(1) the form, scale, site coverage and siting of the proposed development should reflect the character of adjoining buildings and the spaces around them and, where appropriate, existing building lines and characteristic frontage widths;

(2) the proposed development should not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other

features which contribute to the special character of the area;

(3) landscaping should remain a dominant element of any scheme in accordance with the character of the area;

(4) the proposed development should not have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding countryside.