

Mayfield

(Inset Map No.41 - Mapsheet)

Introduction

19.26.1 Mayfield is an historic village, situated on a ridge-top within steeply undulating and attractive countryside. It is predominantly residential in character and is an important service centre for the village and surrounding area with a range of shops, local services and businesses, which provide a significant amount of local employment. With a present population of around 1750 people, it is one of the larger villages in the District.

19.26.2 The Council's aim is to conserve the historic and residential character of the village and its sensitive landscape setting as well as to maintain its local service function.

Environment

19.26.3 Mayfield has developed along and around the former A267, now bypassed, where it follows the ridgeline on the northern side of the River Rother Valley. Its elevated position affords extensive views of the surrounding countryside, especially to the south towards Heathfield and north towards Argos Hill. The whole of the surrounding countryside lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

19.26.4 The historic and picturesque village core around High Street occupies the ridge crest position. St Dunstan's Church is a focal point in the landscape for miles around. The majority of buildings in the locality are listed as being of special architectural or historic importance, and especially notable is St Leonard's School. The special architectural and historic quality of the central area has been formally recognised by the designation of a Conservation Area.

19.26.5 The expansion of the village has occurred mainly to the east and west where the peripheral development is generally of a lower density. At the eastern end, The Warren has a well-defined coherent quality and similarly, at the western end, areas within the vicinity of Station Road and Knowle Park Road have particularly fine established characters, to which a specific policy applies.

Development Boundary

19.26.6 The development boundary for Mayfield, in taking account of these environmental considerations, encompasses the village in a generally tight manner in order to protect the sensitive rural fringe locations and surrounding open countryside from inappropriate and intrusive development.

19.26.7 Along the western edge of the village, limits to the built-up area are clearly defined by the A267 Mayfield Bypass and part of the former railway line. The development boundary follows this physical demarcation, excluding land further to the west in order to prevent any encroachment of development into the countryside beyond. The Wellbrook area where the three culs-de-sac of Roselands Avenue, Rothermead and Berkley Road are situated is considered to be located beyond the main confines of the village where the prevailing character is more rural; it is thus excluded from the development boundary. Additionally, the land between Rothermead and Berkley Road is an area of open countryside which makes a positive contribution to the landscape of the locality where development would be intrusive.

19.26.8 The Rotherfield Lane area in the north-western part of the village has a very tranquil rural character where any new development would be inappropriate. For this reason, the development boundary excludes the full depth of the long rear curtilages of properties along Victoria Road and other areas of land in order to prevent any intensification of development in this rural fringe location and to protect the sensitive countryside from intrusive development.

19.26.9 Further east, the development boundary follows closely the rear of frontage properties along High Street. Development to the north would be inappropriate in this prominent Conservation Area location, intruding particularly upon the setting of St Dunstan's Church and St Leonard's School, and encroaching into the open and exposed north-facing slope. The development boundary excludes properties along the old A267 where it extends north of the High Street in order to protect the rural fringe character of this locality.

19.26.10 On the eastern side of the village the development boundary follows the well-defined edge to the built-up area but excludes ribbon development extending to the north-east of the village along Coggins Mill Road. These large detached houses, several set above road level, are considered to lie outside the built-up limits of Mayfield in the semi-rural area separating the village and the small settlement of Coggins Mill. Intensification of development along this road, which would prejudice this character and lead to coalescence of the settlements, is to be resisted.

19.26.11 South of East Street, the development boundary includes The Warren which is situated on a south-facing slope below the level of the remainder of the village. However, the full depth of most of the

curtilages, particularly on the western side, which extend into the surrounding countryside and have mature tree cover, are excluded to avoid development which would be intrusive upon the landscape setting of the area.

19.26.12 The development boundary excludes the sloping land to the south of the village in order to protect the openness of the northern valley side. Similarly, the development boundary excludes the properties south of West Street where the gaps in development provide a more open and fringe appearance. The development boundary tightly envelops properties in the Knowle Hill area but excludes land to the south in order to protect both the rural fringe character of the area and the surrounding countryside.

19.26.13 The existing character of development with the defined development boundary only provides opportunities for new housing development by infilling, by redevelopment of existing sites and by conversion of buildings to residential use. An additional development policy applies in The Warren, Station Road and Knowle Park Road areas of the village, and this is discussed below.

The Warren, Station Road and Knowle Park Road Areas

19.26.14 It is considered that the particular character of these areas, largely reflecting their low density nature, should be safeguarded by maintaining the essential characteristic features in new development, such as the size, position and site coverage of buildings, frontage widths, trees, landscaping and boundary treatments. Further consideration of the main features of each area which will be taken into account when considering development proposals within them is given below. It is not considered appropriate to set down specific standards relating to matters such as plot size and building form and height, as individual circumstances should be examined. Development which would be detrimental to their character will be resisted.

The Warren

19.26.15 On the eastern edge of Mayfield, The Warren housing policy area is characterised by large detached properties set in spacious grounds with mature landscaping. The houses are laid out along gently curving roads which lack formal kerbs. Plot sizes vary, although the smallest are concentrated in a group between East Street and Sandy Cottage. Elsewhere the character of the area is formed by large, mainly two-storey properties set well apart in relatively spacious grounds.

19.26.16 Landscaping is the dominant visual element, giving the area an attractive arcadian quality. There are

large numbers of mature trees and most boundaries, including road frontages, are formed by dense hedges such as privet and holly. Accesses to the properties are normally narrow, between high hedges, and do not expose a view of the principal entrance to the dwelling. The well-treed nature of the area is particularly evident when viewed from the adjoining countryside to the south.

Station Road

19.26.17 The Station Road housing policy area comprises frontage properties south of Station Road and properties to the north between Love Lane and Victoria Road. The area north of Station Road is characterised by a very low density of development with a number of large properties set within spacious curtilages in an informal layout with variable plot sizes. There is extensive mature landscaping and tree cover both within the individual gardens and on many boundaries, screening most dwellings.

19.26.18 The more regular frontage development on the south side of Station Road, containing many large detached properties, makes a significant contribution to the character of this principal approach to the historic core. There is a strong group identity with the majority of properties similar in age, size, design and general appearance. Some properties are partially screened behind hedges and walls. It is considered appropriate to resist their loss by redevelopment.

Knowle Park Road

19.26.19 The Knowle Park Road housing policy area contains properties in Knowle Park Road, those on the eastern side of Knowle Hill and some properties to the north of West Street. It is similarly characterised by low density development with mature landscaping and tree cover. The properties east of Knowle Hill are set above the road, emphasising their well landscaped setting. Knowle Park Road is a private cul-de-sac of a consistently spacious layout, the spaces between properties contributing to the high quality residential environment. The dwellings share a similar building line but are individual in design.

VB26 The Council will seek to protect the character of The Warren, Station Road and Knowle Park Road housing policy areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, and proposals which adversely affect their individual characters will not be permitted. Planning applications for new residential development on sites within the policy areas 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 the adjoining buildings and the

spaces around them, existing building lines and characteristic frontage widths;

(2) landscaping should remain the dominant element of any scheme in accordance with the spacious, low density character of the area. The proposed development should not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features which contribute to that character;

(3) the proposed frontage and other boundary treatment should have regard for the arcadian character of the area. This is particularly applicable in The Warren. Hedges will normally be the most appropriate form of enclosure and open plan schemes will not be acceptable in the majority of cases;

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

(5) in relation to the area south of Station Road within the policy area, redevelopment of properties will normally be resisted.