



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

What do the survey results tell us about perceptions of design quality in the parish?

What do you most like about living in the parish?

- Open space, wildlife & countryside
- Rural and open character, farmed landscape
- Dark night skies free from street light pollution
- Semi rural nature of the villages and settlements
- Lower housing density
- Local heritage & vernacular architecture

Are there things you dislike about living in the parish?

- Inappropriate infilling developments within villages
- Lack of individually designed developments
- Too many 'estate style' properties
- Sub-urbanisation of villages into dormitory towns
- Restrictive attitude of WDC to extensions/new replacement dwellings
- WDC's tendency to prevent smaller scale development which should be considered 'ergonomic, natural and progressive'
- No proper heart or centre to the villages which are very spread out and lack pedestrian links.
- Isolation - lack of facilities in relation to older residents and young people/teenagers

What people said about design:

"...don't freeze design and development in the past.... allow for and enable more diverse building designs that blend into the surroundings without looking as though they are designed to reflect a bygone age..."

".....thought must be given to the style of new development - development for housing should have an indigenous style of building and architecture – not soul-less red brick boxes or characterless executive homes...."

"..why do planning/building control/design issues look backwards? We must look forwards!..."

".....development should reflect modern design as well as traditional...."

"..dull and cheap development which maximises developers' profits yet lacks required infrastructure improvements should not go ahead in the Parish....."

Design issues are clearly a priority in our parish. The Design Task Group has been set up to address this by:

- Suggesting how the quality of design in all new developments can be improved above and beyond the existing standards and guidelines.
- Establishing how existing defined settlements can accommodate specific development and if these boundaries can be extended - subject to design standards and GB4 policy.

This presentation shows work in progress. Your ideas and input are welcomed. If you would like to contribute to the work of the Design Task Group let us know!



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

What priorities should our Neighbourhood Plan have in protecting the Built & Natural Environment?

The top priorities were:

- 92% - Protect views of and from the Chilterns AONB from inappropriate development
- 86% - Ensure development is in harmony with the rural character of the Parish and sites well within the landscape
- 83% Use designs that are in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings
- 73% - Define and preserve the boundaries of our settlements



Bledlow Ridge village viewed from Radnage Valley illustrating current minimal impact on AONB – photo by David Howlett

We have reviewed your responses and set out to:

- Establish what the character of the local built environment is and which aspects to preserve, with specific reference to the villages of Bledlow and Bledlow Ridge.
- Illustrate the range of existing buildings that new buildings should be in keeping with, making reference to vernacular features, materials, forms and groupings.
- Promote new buildings in the Chilterns that demonstrate a high quality of design.
- Suggest types of new styles/materials that could be considered complimentary in our rural setting and sit comfortably along side the existing built environment.
- Promote the existing Chiltern Building Design Guide and Chiltern Building Design Awards and suggest how they can be implemented more effectively.



Design Task Group

Raising the quality of design in our Parish

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

What is the character of Bledlow Ridge's built environment? Which aspects should new developments be 'in keeping' with? Are there types we should avoid repeating? Please use the form on the table to show your preference of building styles.

Traditional vernacular dwellings using local materials and forms



Detached two storey houses close to the road



Terraces, cottages and clusters of dwellings fronting onto the road



Detached houses set back from the road behind hedges & gates



Semi-detached houses of a suburban character



Two storey extended detached houses



Developers led infill



'Chalet bungalows'



Modern conversions



Modern new buildings



Due to the number of properties that needed to be photographed it was not possible to ask every owner permission to take photos of their house. All photos have been taken from the road or publicly accessible places. Weather conditions were poor so these photos will be replaced in time as better quality pictures are obtained. Most photographs shown on these posters are taken along Chinnor Road and the lanes leading off it. The intention is to also record the range of house styles along Haw Lane and the side streets off it. Volunteers to help with photography welcome!

Our villages contains a wide range of architectural styles that make up their character.



Design Task Group

Raising the quality of design in our Parish

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

What is the character of Bledlow's built environment? Which aspects should new developments be 'in keeping' with? How could new designs respond to this range?



Due to the number of properties that needed to be photographed it was not possible to ask every owner permission to take photos of their house. All photos have been taken from the road or publicly accessible places. Weather conditions were poor so these photos will be replaced in time as better quality pictures are obtained. Most photographs shown on these posters are in Bledlow Village and outlying clusters of houses. The intention is to also record the range of house styles along other lanes around Bledlow. Volunteers to help with photography welcome!

What can we conclude from this survey?

- There is no consistent style to the buildings.
- The area of settlement is spread over a very wide area, not restricted to Church End and part of West Lane.
- There are many varieties of materials some of which are listed in the Chiltern Design Guide.
- There has been some attempt in modernising to tie in with the style of the existing.
- The absence of consistency of styles/materials suggests it is the diversity of styles that leads to its character.
- Bledlow needs well designed new buildings which use traditional materials in a modern way
- No single style of building should be imitated. Elements of all can influence new design.



Design Task Group

Raising the quality of design in our Parish

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How is the quality of building design in our parish currently controlled?

- Applications concerning listed buildings and those in the Bledlow Conservation Area are assessed by a WDC Conservation Officer. Conditions are applied to any approval requiring samples of materials and specific details to be approved in writing prior to construction.
- All other applications are assessed at the discretion of the WDC Case Officers, with reference to local, national and adopted policy. While planning policy can be assessed objectively, the quality of a design is a very subjective issue and open to differing interpretations.
- The **Chiltern Building Design Guide** is a well researched, carefully written and clearly presented guide that describes the traditional building techniques used in the Chilterns and ways of incorporating this in new design. It examines patterns of settlements, groupings of dwellings and gives many examples of how best to – and not to – design in the Chilterns. Copies of the Guide and the technical supplements are available to read on the display table.
- The **Chiltern Building Design Awards** are held to promote the Chiltern Building Design Guide, as well as good practice and excellence in the design of new buildings in the AONB. It is organised by the Chilterns AONB and The Chiltern Society. Some winning projects are shown below and a wider range on the slide show display next to this poster.



The Design Task Group endorses the Chiltern Building Design Guide (CBDG) and encourages high quality contemporary design. We recommend these policies/actions

- All planning applications concerning new buildings/extensions/renovations in the AONB and Green Belt areas of our parish should include a reference within their Design Statement about how designs acknowledge and respond to the advice in the CBDG.
- WDC should demonstrate use of the CBDG when assessing planning applications in our parish.
- The Parish Council will view planning applications for developing infill sites more favourably where architectural input is demonstrated and recommend that WDC do the same.
- Planning applications should show sufficient detail concerning materials and construction details. If not included at the planning stage, approval should only be given with a condition that detailed drawings and samples of materials must be approved prior to construction.
- It has been suggested by a number of architects consulted that a series of workshops led by design professionals working in the Chilterns is held for WDC Case Officers and Parish Councils to illustrate options for contemporary and complementary styles and encourage modern design.