

Village Design Statement

Donhead St Andrew, Wiltshire

Approved by Wiltshire Council: 2013
Reviewed & revised by Donhead St Andrew Parish Council: August 2023

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1. Introduction Aim

The aim of the Village Design Statement (VDS) is to describe how the people of Donhead St Andrew believe the village should develop. This is done by giving guidance for changes to existing dwellings and for the design of new homes.

How the Statement is to be Used Within the Planning Process

The VDS is for the use of all involved in the development process, including householders, landowners, Parish and District Councillors and Officers, architects, developers and builders. It is to be used in conjunction with any Statutory Development Plan in place at the time. The statement contains a series of descriptions, followed by guidance to be considered during the planning process. The Planning Authority will take account of the Statement when making decisions on planning proposals.

Community Consultation and Involvement

A VDS working draft was produced in 2003, and in early 2004 an outline of the statement was placed in the Village Newsletter, which was distributed to most households in the village inviting comments from residents. A Village Design Forum was then established to broaden discussion of the statement and report to the Parish Council. Officers from Salisbury District Council (preceded by Wiltshire Council) were involved at this and later stages, providing input and giving detailed help for the final format of the statement. The amended statement was then sent to most households in the Parish, together with an explanatory letter and a short questionnaire; some 190 questionnaires were issued, and 31 replies were received. Finally, a presentation was held to which all residents were invited, and at which they could ask questions and make further comment; 35 residents attended this presentation. This finished document was therefore considered to be a reasonable representation of the overall views of the existing and interested residents of Donhead St Andrew.

The VDS was subject to a review in 2012 by officers and considered up to date and relevant, and was subsequently approved at the Southern Area Planning Committee on 24th January 2013 as a material planning consideration.

In 2021 the Parish Council considered that the VDS should be reviewed to ensure that it was still relevant. In consultation with Special Planning at Wiltshire Council it was agreed to make only minor updates that would not affect the fundamental design principals of the existing VDS. The suggested alterations are minor and include:

- Removing references to “Friends of St. Andrew’s church” as it has ceased to exist.

- Removing references to the “Henrietta Barnett Field Centre” as a potential community building as it has been sold.

- Adding references to the area’s inclusion in the Cranborne Chase ANOB recently awarded (Oct 2019) “International Dark Sky Reserve status”.

Wiltshire Council officers made comments (May 2023) to the amended VDS and these have been incorporated. The final draft of the VDS was adopted by the Parish Council at its September 2023 meeting and put out for further public consultation.

Parishioners were notified of the proposed alterations via village noticeboards, the Parish Council website and village newsletter (The Donhead Digest) and invited to comment. Further the community was invited to express their views at the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th January 2024

2. History and Setting of Donhead St Andrew

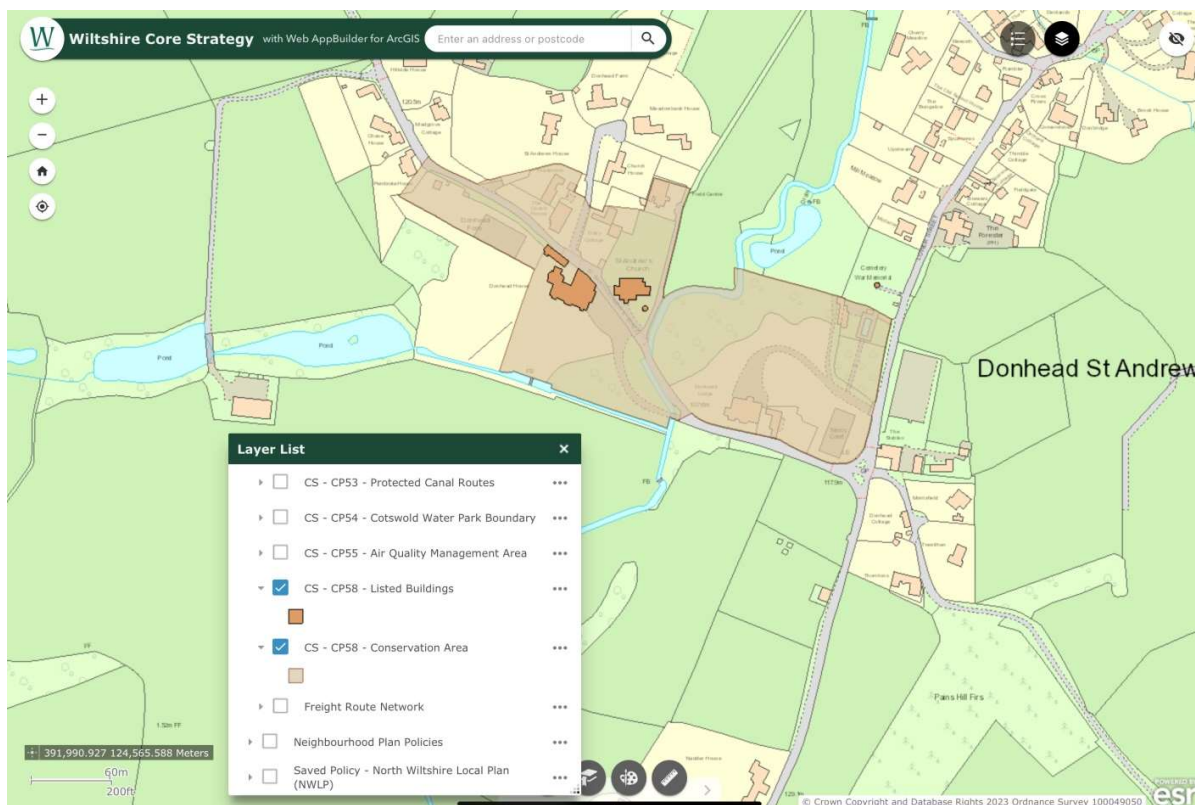
Origin

An ancient settlement was probably formed around the source of the River Nadder to use its fertile valley. The word Nadder could be derived from the Celtic 'nydd' to wind and 'dwr' meaning water, hence 'winding water'. Alternatively, it could come from the Celtic 'neidr' for a snake. Water mills eventually utilised the waterpower; in the Domesday book eight mills and sixty households are mentioned, with a reference to pasture and woodland and refers to the village as Duneheve, in later texts as Donet and then finally as Donhead. The meaning may derive from the Old English for "head" or "end of the down".

The Parish of Donhead St Andrew extends from the downs in the south, Win Green (elevation 277m) and Whitesheet Hill (elevation 247m) into the River Nadder valley to the north (elevation 100m). The river flows south to north through the parish. The parish church is St. Andrew's a grade 2* listed building, situated on the bank of the River Nadder in the northwest of the Parish. The church is thought to have been founded in late Saxon times. The northeast of the parish is within the Vale of Wardour and encompasses Old Wardour Castle built in the 1390s.

Countryside and Landscape

Conservation Area - One area in the village is designated as a Conservation Area, shaded grey in the map beneath. This area is centered on listed buildings of St Andrew's Church and Donhead House, and includes the unlisted Donhead Lodge, Henrietta Barnett Field Centre, Dairy Cottage, the Coach House and Hunterston. This area extends along St Bartholomew Street and the southern end of Lower Street.



In the Conservation Area there are tighter than usual building controls over development, involving more stringent policies, which will be applied to ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the existing area.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - The whole parish lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Cranborne Chase AONB was awarded International Dark Sky Reserve status in 2019 because of its intrinsic natural darkness and is committed to making the skies even darker. As with all AONBs, particular attention should be paid to conserving the character and scenic quality of the landscape with additional special regard to the effects of lighting and this will have implications for building design.

Special Areas of Conservation – The whole parish lies within the Catchment Map of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation, which is a protected area in the UK designated under: the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations. This area has a high ecological value and any development that could result in the loss of the characteristic wildlife habitat thereby damaging the overall nature conservation value of the area, would be resisted.

Historic Park and Garden and Ancient Woodland (PAWS) – The northeastern part of the parish lies within the Wardour Estate almost all of which is designated as Historic Park and Garden and the woodlands are classified as Ancient Woodland. The Forestry Commission leases some 86 hectares and manages this as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).



Forest Track used for Walking and Riding

Here coniferous plantations formed of Douglas Fir 39% (by area) and Norway Spruce 12% dominate, with hanging woodland on the steepest slopes, surrounding manmade lakes and lead through parkland and woodland to the distant remains of Old Wardour Castle. The Castle is within the Vale of Wardour and is a Site of Special Historical Interest (SSHI), made famous during the Civil War. The Castle, which lies on northeastern edge of the Parish boundary, is managed by English Heritage and as well as being open to the public is used for entertainments and weddings.



Harvesting the Forest



Fishing Lake in Wardour Forest



Old Wardour Castle

In the south of the Parish, Below Win Green a country house, Ferne and surrounding park land, was built in the late 20th century on the site of an 18th century mansion demolished in the 1960s; a previous house on this site dated from 1563 and was the home of the Grove family.



Ferne, late 20th Century

Agriculture - Out with Wardour Forest the landscape is largely designated as agricultural, with active and well managed pastoral and arable farming. Farming is the only large scale economic activity in the village. On the pastures there are beef and some milking cattle, and sheep and occasional alpaca. Some horses and ponies are kept for personal use and enjoyment.



Sheep are amongst the animals farmed in the village

On the arable land a variety of rotational crops are grown, mostly cereal crops, with some rape and beans, and animal feed; the remains of some water cress beds can still be seen, although the crop is no longer grown commercially. One farm cottage has had a successful boarding kennels developed on its land. The River Nadder, which with its immediate environment is part of the River Avon Special Area of Conservation and runs through the village from south to north, with greensand hills on either side of the valley. To the north, streams have eroded the land so that adjacent fields, used mostly for grazing, are irregularly shaped and are often divided by ditches, or banked hedgerows.

To the south the greensand forms terraces with large geometric fields which have a good agricultural value for arable products. Further south, the terraces give way to some mixed woodland on clay, at the base of a chalk escarpment that forms beautiful rolling downland, including the impressive Win Green (National Trust and designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI]). These open chalk downlands are on the edge of the renowned Cranborne Chase and have coniferous shelter belts which run at right angles to the contours.

Where development is acceptable in principle, emphasis will be placed on its scale, location and siting together with its ecological impact, a particularly high standard of design and landscaping will be encouraged.

Communications

The road from Tisbury has developed to run parallel to the River Nadder; it crosses the village boundary at Hook Manor and continues parallel with the river to meet the A30 at Brookwater; this road and the A30 itself have the only scheduled bus routes serving the village. Within the village boundaries are a number of interlinking lanes, many of which are deeply cut into the landscape giving a truly rural feel to the village; these ancient sunken lanes

(hollows), enclosed by high banks and shaded by trees make it easy to become disorientated. In many places the lanes are only one vehicle wide, there are no pavements, and where houses are absent, they are lined mostly by hedges and/or trees; a good many of these hedgerows are of ancient native species. There are link lanes to the higher village of Donhead St. Mary.



A Typical Narrow Lane

There is an extensive and well-used network of footpaths in the village, including part of the Wessex Ridgeway which leads into Wardour Forest (Forestry Commission) and onwards to Old Wardour Castle. Forestry tracks in Wardour Forest may be used for walking and riding (the latter on purchase of a permit). There is also a Green Lane that links the A30 to the junction of Bartholomew's Street, Lower Street and West End.

Guidance

2 H 1 It is important to retain the existing landscape setting of the village, especially the way in which the farmland is intricately linked with the built environment.

2 H 2 The pedestrian and road network's character should be retained by ensuring the maintenance of footpaths and bridleways, and careful consideration of any major road alterations.

2 H 3 Future developments should be viewed in terms of the impact of the additional traffic generated in the narrow lanes. Access for any new developments should be carefully considered in relation to safety.

2 H 4 Our International Dark Sky Reserve status requires us to ensure that light pollution (light escaping sideways and upwards) is reduced to a minimum. This will necessitate mitigation measures to glazing and design to prevent light pollution having a significant adverse effect on other residents and the locality. Please refer to [Cranborne Chase AONB website for lighting advice](#)

3 Form of Settlement

Like the Tisbury road, the village has developed along the Nadder Valley and remains intrinsically linked with the course of the river. Most houses are in a number of linear clusters on either side of the road from Hook Manor through the village to Brookwater, and also on the access roads leading north-west from the A30; particular clusters are found around the Church, the Forester public house, and the village's 3 remaining mills on the River Nadder, and there are very few backland developments. Houses in the parkland and on and south of the A30 are more scattered, and most are current or previous farm or estate dwellings.



A Fine Modernised House, previously a Gamekeeper's Cottage and Kennels

Away from the clusters and between the more scattered houses is farmland, both arable and pastoral, paddocks, copses, woodland, lakes, downland and other areas without any houses. In total there are about 210 houses in the village, with a population of some 500 souls; a number of houses are second homes whose owners spend most of their time away and are on electoral rolls elsewhere. A mains sewage system runs south to north through the village and serves a number of the properties.

Houses vary in age and size; some are very substantial such as Ferne, Donhead House and Donhead Lodge. There are also a variety of intermediate sizes, right down to a few small cottages. There are two small developments of Council Houses, both of which have splendid valley views; many of these are now privately owned. Most houses in the village are detached with average to large sized plots, and these plots contribute to the spacious feel of the village. A fair proportion of the newer residences are bungalows. Development over the years using materials and designs of the time have meant that there is no overall village vernacular design. The lack of streetlights and pavements contributes to a distinctive rural atmosphere, even where houses are clustered together.

Guidance

3 S 1 Any new development should conform with the present linear settlement pattern, by following the lines of existing roads and buildings.

3 S 2 Conversions, extensions and alterations should be compatible in terms of scale, design and character with the existing and adjoining properties and use quality complimentary/matching materials and components.

3 S 3 All new houses, extensions and outbuildings should respect the existing scale and setting within the village, the architectural characteristics, and the type and colour of adjoining buildings and the immediate locality.

3 S 4 Future development should protect important open views and spaces in the village.

3 S 5 Infilling should not be allowed to detract from such views and spaces, nor create a crowded feeling in that part of the village.

3 S 6 Tandem, or inappropriate backland developments is discouraged.

3 S 7 Sustainable development is encouraged, as will the use of modern contemporary building materials and methods, so long as they are designed to complement the existing materials and are in proportion with surrounding buildings.

3 S 8 Ideally redundant rural buildings should be used for community use, employment or diversification and use as residential accommodation is the least desirable.

3 S 9 When detached outbuildings or garages are rebuilt, higher rooflines than the original are discouraged.

3 S 10 Please refer to our International Dark Sky Reserve status in Guidance 2 H 4 and to [Cranborne Chase AONB website for lighting advice](#). Urban style lighting e.g. incorrectly positioned security lights or those not set properly are to be discouraged. The absence of street lighting contributes significantly to the rural atmosphere; street lighting is therefore discouraged, but if required it should be of an appropriate design.

3 S 11 In considering plot size, due consideration should be given to the density of housing in the immediate locality.

4 Construction Details

General

Throughout the village, construction details generally reflect the period and purpose of the building and it is not the intention of this VDS to comment on the sympathetic or otherwise nature of the designs and materials used. New and replacement houses cannot be expected to have slavishly followed what went before, but rather reflect the style and materials of the time, and in future will also take account of the need for sustainability in materials and use, although large glass areas and underground construction were found to be unpopular during public consultation. The buildings pictured in this section are all considered to be worthy of the village, containing details which would be acceptable in future developments.



An Old-Style Thatched Cottage. Note the Wooden Casement Windows, the Thatched Porch, Brick Chimney Stacks and Stout Hedge. Straw for thatching has been grown and harvested in the village for some time and is a very acceptable if expensive material.



A Modern House with Traditional Features. Note the Open Porch and White-Painted Front Door and Dormer Windows. The use of White- Painted wood is attractive and sustainable. Use of stone, including for the dwarf garden wall, gives this house a very acceptable village appearance.



A Modern House with Rendered Walls, Stone Quoins and Porch, and Stained Windows. More modern in appearance than the previous houses, this is nevertheless a very pleasing building.



**A Modern House. Note the Leaded Windows and Velux-Type Roof Window.
Old and new ideas sit well together here.**

House Walls

Although the local building stone is greensand, and most houses over 100 years old are constructed in this stone, there is now no single village vernacular material for house walls. Rather, the considerable variety of building materials contributes to the diverse character of the village. Newer properties have walls of reconstituted stone or brick, and a few are rendered or tile-hung.

Windows and Doors

Window materials and design generally reflect the period of their installation; there are casement and sash designs, stone mullioned and leaded glass windows, and even some with metal frames, although those in newer houses and replacements are more often timber, both painted and stained. Doors are mainly of timber, some of solid construction and some with glass fanlights or panes, both clear and obscure. Some doors and windows are of either original or replacement uPVC.

Porches

Once again, porches include the whole diversity of materials, including stone, brick, thatch, tiles, timber and uPVC.

Drives and Yards

Drives and yards include concrete, blockwork, gravel and tarmac.

House Roofs and Chimneys

Quite a few houses have thatched roofing, using both wheat and reed straw; others use brown concrete or clay double Roman tiles; some have concrete pantiles, whilst a few have plain tiles or slates. Chimneys are mainly of stone or brick, with a variety of stack designs and types of pots.

Other Buildings

Farm buildings and outbuildings such as stables, garages, kennels and workshops reflect the variety of house materials described above, and also include timber framed and clad buildings, some with proprietary wall and/or roof sheeting.



A Well-Built and Attractive Modern Timber Framed and Clad Garage and Car Port.

Boundaries

On the roadsides there are a number of boundary styles; in the open countryside these are largely hedges of native species, including holly, hawthorn, blackthorn, beech, hazel and white beam, although there are stretches of barbed wire and a few lengths of post and rail. Hedges are used along some garden frontages, but here there are also brick, stone and reconstituted stone walls, wood panel and paling fences and small lengths of other types of boundary.

Guidance

4 C 1 The strongly preferred materials are natural stone for walls and clay tiles or thatch for roofs. Some innovative designs of high architectural quality may be acceptable. Underground construction and the use of large glass areas are not thought suitable in the village.

4 C 2 When painting, cladding, rendering, or otherwise covering the original stone or brickwork is necessary, consideration should be given to the potential impact on the local street scene and/or landscape by using neutral colours.

4 C 3 Timber is preferred to uPVC for aesthetic and sustainability reasons.

4 C 4 Where tiles are used, some form of clay tile is preferred to concrete pantiles. Slate is undesirable unless used to blend with existing roofs.

4 C 5 Boundary treatments should use traditional materials appropriate to the locality such as stone walls, low paling fencing or hedges; hedges of native species are preferred. The construction of new garden walls/fences should be in keeping with neighbouring properties.

5 Community Facilities

St. Andrew's Church

The Church is a functioning place of worship. The community assisted in raising funds to dramatically modernise and extend the church which was finalised in 2019. The changes were made with the intention that St Andrew's Church would become a major Centre of village life for all villagers, as a place of worship and a place where the community could gather for a wide variety of village activities in a building which is more inspiring, welcoming, accessible, and well-resourced.



The Parish Church

The Village Pub – The Forester

In 2000/01 the village fought to retain the pub, which is now flourishing under new ownership, with bar, restaurant and a new room available for functions and meetings.



The Village Pub

Guidance

5 F 1 The church and public house form foci for village life and events. They should be retained, as their loss would greatly diminish aspects of village life and the work of essential groups. Encouragement is to be given to the owners of these facilities to maintain and develop them for the benefit of the community.