

WEST HILL



Village Design Statement

Acknowledgements

This Village Design Statement was produced by West Hill Residents Association on behalf of all residents of the village. It could not have been produced without the support of many people. We would particularly like to offer sincere thanks to:

All residents who completed a questionnaire, contributed comments and attended our public meetings/workshops and exhibition.

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Foreword

The purpose of a Village Design Statement (VDS) is to manage change, whether the proposed change is the building or alteration of a single dwelling or a more extensive new development. It is not about whether development should take place; that is the job of the Local Plan. It is about how planned development should be carried out so that it is in harmony with its setting and contributes to the conservation, and where possible, the enhancement of the local environment.

The production and adoption of a Village Design Statement are integral parts of the formal planning process, encouraged by both national and local government. Once adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the local planning authority the Statement assists the authority in determining planning applications. Importantly, it also gives designers and developers positive guidance on the preparation of proposals which will be more acceptable to the local community.

This Village Design Statement for West Hill has been produced by the Residents Association on behalf of the whole village and follows the guidelines issued by the Countryside Agency. There has been extensive consultation with the whole community.

The consultation process began in October 2004 with a workshop open to all which explained the background, what was being proposed and why, invited people to identify the most important characteristics of the village, and sought the involvement of as many volunteers as possible. In July 2005, every house received a wide-ranging questionnaire about the village. Of the 840 questionnaires delivered, 530 (63%) were completed. The results of the questionnaire provided valuable input to this Statement and will also be used in the preparation of a Village Plan.

In October 2005, the first chapters of this Statement (which are known collectively as the Village Character Statement) were delivered to every house in the village and comments invited. A second public workshop followed to present a summary of the results of the questionnaire, to receive further comments on the Character Statement and to explain the process for producing the Design Principles.

The draft Design Principles were delivered to every house in February 2006 and comments invited. The consultation process was completed with "Tea and Consultation" at which all members of the community were invited to drop in to meet members of the Association over a cup of tea, and to discuss and comment on the Design Principles. Further details of the consultation process are given in the Appendix.

This document falls into two broad parts: the first chapters describe the village and the features that make up its special character; the final chapter sets out the Design Principles to be applied to all new development in the village so that it is in harmony with the rural setting and helps to conserve and enhance the local environment.

The production of this document has been supported by generous funding from Awards for All, which is gratefully acknowledged.

The West Hill Village Design Statement was adopted by East Devon District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 14 March 2006. It has been distributed to every house in the village and is available to developers and all who are interested in the village.

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INTRODUCTION

to the village

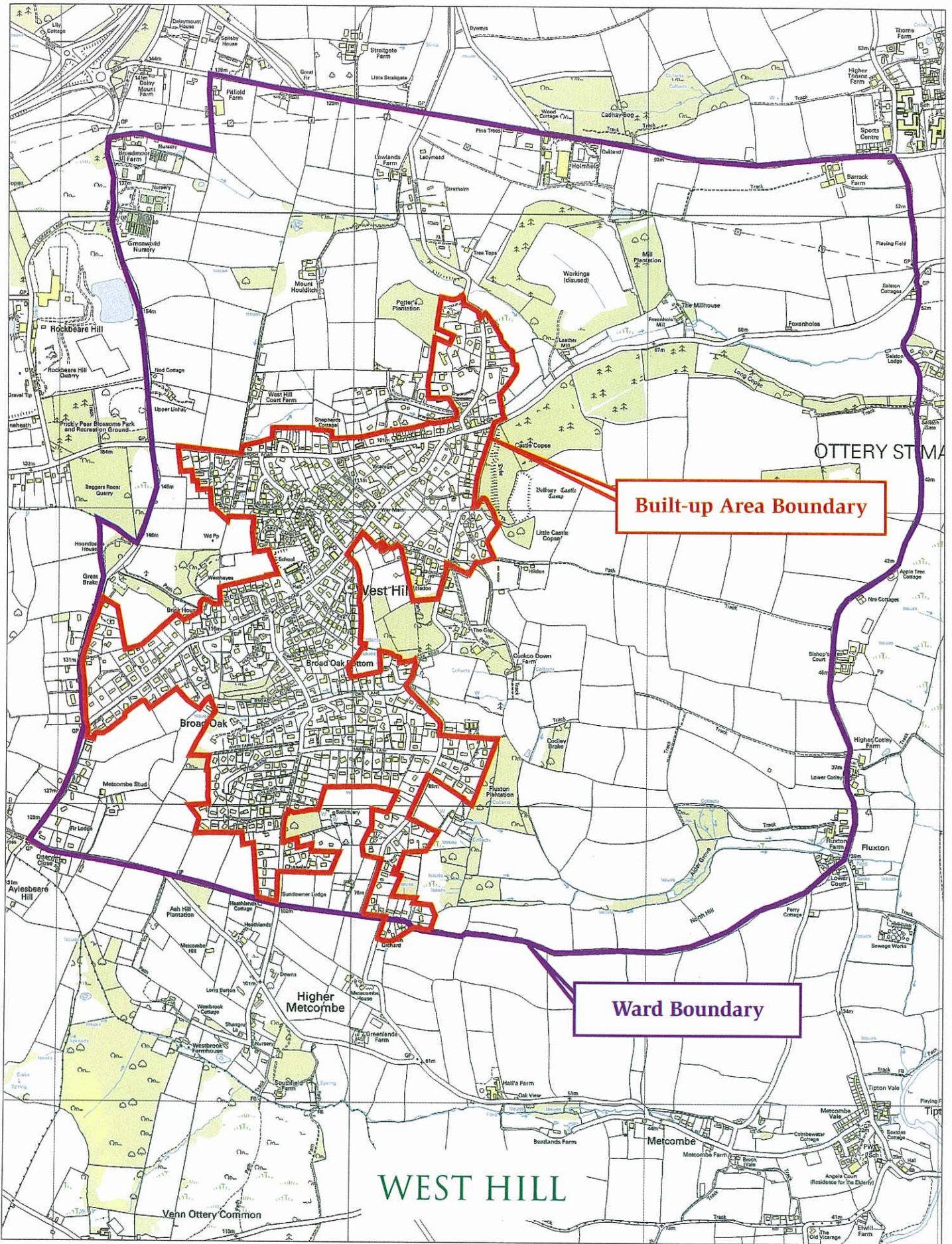
West Hill is a woodland village of about 800 houses and 2000 people occupying some 10 square kilometres of land on the wooded western slopes of the beautiful Otter Valley. It is, and nearly always has been, a dormitory village with its residents working in the surrounding countryside and towns. Today they also commute further afield.

It is a mixed community of all ages who enjoy the rural environment and who value the quality of life.

West Hill is for the most part a low density woodland village that has had the good fortune to have been allowed to grow within a framework of beautiful beech, oak, silver birch and pine woodland on the east side of a long ridge, intersected by a number of small valleys. The rural quality of its verges and Devon banks, the glimpses of wonderful tree-framed views at every turn, and the maturity of these trees, is what makes West Hill special.

Both the electoral and built-up area boundaries are shown on the map overleaf and in greater detail on Insert 53 in the Local Plan.





Built-up Area Boundary

Ward Boundary

WEST HILL

THE LANDSCAPE

The River Otter is neither long nor wide but in its short journey to the sea it has carved out a magnificent and beautiful valley. The drama of the valley is enhanced by the unusual geology: the Greensand of the Cretaceous era lies directly on the sandstones of the Triassic creating the very distinctive dark, steeply sloping wooded caps to the hills, particularly on the eastern slopes of the valley. The village of West Hill lies on the west side of the Otter valley. It stretches from the B3180 Exmouth Road, which runs along the top of the ridge at around 140m to 150m above sea level, for about a mile down to Lower Broad Oak Road which runs parallel to the ridge at between 75m to 100m above sea level.

The views from West Hill take in some of the most beautiful landscape in the country. Looking to the east, one catches glimpses of the tree capped slopes of East Hill, and views up and down the valley crop up here and there on the north and south sides of the village. And to the south west, there is the distinctive heath land of the Budleigh Salterton Pebble Beds (part of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

As the built-up area of the village occupies around a square mile of the upper slopes of the valley, one might expect that it would be clearly visible from all around. But the reverse is true: even from the heights of East Hill looking back directly towards the village it is almost invisible, even in winter.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly the trees, both throughout the village and along the eastern boundary, provide effective screening on all sides.

Secondly, whilst the valley sides slope uniformly down from west to east, the smooth slopes are interrupted by large mounds of Valley Gravels particularly on the eastern boundary which shield the view of the village from within the valley. The largest of these mounds is surmounted by Belbury Castle.

The smooth slopes of the valley are also interrupted by two smaller valleys running west to east. The stream to the north leaves the village along the road to Ottery St Mary, running through water meadows and Foxenholes Mill, creating a beautiful gateway to the village from the east. A second valley runs through the centre of the village, partly along Ford Lane. Although the stream is very small the valley is quite dramatic with steeply sloping sides.

West Hill has recently acquired the description on its signs of "Woodland Village" and it is this that best sums up its relation with the landscape. Despite extensive development, the village appears simply as a wooded area set within the beautiful landscape of the Otter Valley. On a more detailed level the tree-lined roads, the lanes with verges and hedge banks, fine examples of both broad-leaved and coniferous trees – many subject to Tree Preservation Orders – all contribute to making West Hill an area of special character.

WEST HILL *from* EAST HILL



THE DEVELOPMENT *of West Hill*

HISTORY

The village has a relatively short history when compared with most Devon villages, many of which date back to the Domesday Book. The village has at least one ancient root: on the eastern boundary there is the Iron Age hill fort Belbury Castle and its associated earthworks still identifiable in Castle Copse, but this does not appear to have had any marked effect on the pattern of development.

The 1843 Tithe Map of the area shows West Hill as part of the Fluxton Tithing and as a rural district of Ottery St Mary. At this time there was no church, school or inn. In 1843, most of the land at West Hill was owned by Sir John Kennaway and the houses and cottages were invariably leasehold.

Change came to Victorian West Hill with the completion of St Michael's Church in 1846 and the opening of West Hill School in 1876. The railway arrived in Ottery St Mary in 1874.

From 1851 to 1901 the number of households was steady at just over 70 and the population varied little (between 332 and 358) during this period. In 1851, 80% of the heads of families worked on the land and the most frequently listed occupation was "agricultural labourer" followed by "farmer".



The 1889 Ordnance Survey Map shows about 60 dwellings in the village. There were seven named houses and four named farms at this time. There were also seven or eight unnamed smaller farms and a few dozen farm cottages, many of cob construction. The Smithy (on the site now occupied by Potter's Country Market), the mill (Foxenhales) and the Congregational chapel (now part of a house in Lower Broad Oak Road) complete the list of buildings in 1889.

By 1901 the number of heads of families working on the land had fallen below 40% and there was a significant increase in the number of heads of families who were recorded as self-employed or professional. Between 1851 and 1901 the number of heads of families who were retired had quadrupled from about 4% to about 16%.

The 1905 Ordnance Survey Map of Ottery St Mary District shows West Hill village growing with new houses such as Elsdon and West Lodge (demolished and rebuilt in 2004). But the map also shows clearly that the area remained an area of woodland with dwellings dotted about, almost at random, over the whole of it.



The situation had not changed radically by the start of the Second World War – much of the woodland remained and development was still very limited.

Following the war, in common with the rest of the country, development accelerated but, even in the early 60's the population was only about 600 and there were still no group developments, apart from the two local authority developments in Bendarroch Road. However, the loss of significant woodland had begun with the disappearance of Broad Oak plantation, which occupied an area between Higher and Lower Broad Oak Roads to the south of Hawkins Lane.

All this changed in 1966 when Devon County Council and Ottery St Mary UDC began planning a major expansion of the village. This envisaged growth to accommodate 3000 people and extension of the built-up area to the south requiring significant investment in new infrastructure and by the 1970s West Hill was served for the first time with mains water and drainage.

The infilling process then began in earnest and in the 1972 map we can see the first group developments at Castle Farm and Warren Close, and more intensive building in the Hawkins Lane/Higher Broad Oak Road area particularly and generally throughout the developed area.

By 1994, the map shows West Hill very much as it is today. The density of development had increased significantly with the construction of group developments at:

- Moorlands (70's) on Bendarroch Road
- Beech Park (70's), Potter's Close and Perry's Gardens (70's/80's), Ashley Brake (70's), Warren Park (70's), Eastfield (70's), Needlewood Close, and Eymore Drive (70's) on West Hill Road
- Broadoak Close (70's), Birch Grove, White Farm Lane, High Bank (80's), and Brackendown (90's) on Higher Broad Oak Road

together with the development of the northern end of Lower Broad Oak Road (70's), the Vicarage Field (80's), previously used as a football field in West Hill Road, and of Ford Lane (80's/90's).



More recently there has been further general infill and new small estates at Heather Grange and the extension of Eastfield, bringing the population to around two thousand at the end of the century.

In the Local Plan, EDDC have drawn the Built-up Area Boundary more tightly than the 1971 boundary. As a result less building land is available and, more recently, development has slowed.





DEVELOPMENT DRIVERS

Almost every settlement in the country can trace its development from some clear focus – a river crossing, a crossroads, a railway halt or junction, or perhaps a church – with subsequent development radiating from it. But not West Hill. West Hill has simply grown, not in area but in density.

With the exception of the ridge road (B3180) forming the western boundary and perhaps West Hill Road linking with Ottery, none of the roads within the village has any strategic value. Originally they simply connected up the various farms and cottages and linked with neighbouring settlements.

The driving forces behind the development from Victorian times appear to have been:

- Declining viability of small farms
- Profit to be made from selling land for building
- Demand for sizeable building plots in a quiet, beautiful, unspoilt area with good access to Exeter, the railway, and the coast.

Thus, although it might have been expected that from the middle of the nineteenth century development would radiate out from the centre provided by the new church and school, this did not happen. Indeed, the opposite occurred as the new home owners sought separation and seclusion.

Following the second world war when pressure for new homes increased, the boundary of the village (for planning purposes) was fixed and so the density of infill had to increase but it was still spread fairly evenly over the whole area as new land became available. As the availability of farmland decreased, the owners of the large Victorian and Edwardian homes with extensive grounds found it profitable to sell off part of their estates for housing. Owners of other large houses also sold off parts of their gardens and this is reflected in the extent and the patterns of back-land development which is such a feature of West Hill today.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The development which has taken place in the village can be divided into three broad categories:

A. Buildings along the main roads

Many of the older buildings come into this category. The village at the beginning of the First World War comprised rural dwellings and farms together with rather grand houses for the prosperous middle classes. These were spread out fairly evenly across the whole area of the present-day village. The rural dwellings were generally fairly close to the road whilst the grander houses were set well back in their own extensive grounds.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the frontages of the roads were gradually filled in, initially with bungalows and later with a mixture of bungalows and houses.

B. Development of small estates

From 1950 a number of small estates were developed, the vast majority on cul-de-sacs leading off the main roads. As would be expected, the style of buildings in these estates is more uniform than elsewhere but is still well mixed between single and double storey houses. Many of the more modern estates include buildings of high quality.

What is most noticeable about these developments is the street scene. From the early 1970s roads had to be designed to adoptable standards and there are paved footpaths and street lighting in accordance with the unsympathetic and inflexible standards of the period. Some of them are open plan and others have well defined boundaries at the road frontage, mostly soft hedgerows, bushes and trees, but in a few cases walls.

C. Back-land development

A feature of West Hill is the back-land development where clusters of dwellings have been built along or around a private (unadopted) access off the main road.

Some of these privately maintained access roads are bridleways and public rights of way. These developments run the whole range of styles from modest thirties bungalows to large, high quality houses. In many cases development has taken place in gardens of 1930s houses as well as larger Victorian/Edwardian properties.

The overall effect of the pattern of development is to hide many of the houses from the passer-by on the main roads: the houses which are on the main roads often being set back from the boundary and/or hidden by trees, shrubs, and hedgerows; the estates and back-land development only being visible when entered.

Over the last ten years, the visible parts of front gardens of a number of dwellings have become more suburbanised; whilst the gardens themselves are unchanged, the appearance is modified by the increasing use of tarmac or pavers for the driveways, wooden fences, and the construction of brick gateposts and wing walls, sometimes accompanied by large solid gates. The latter features do, to some extent, follow the pattern of some of the Victorian and Edwardian buildings but the effect is to change the generally rural nature of the street scene.



Views from
WEST HILL



OPEN SPACES

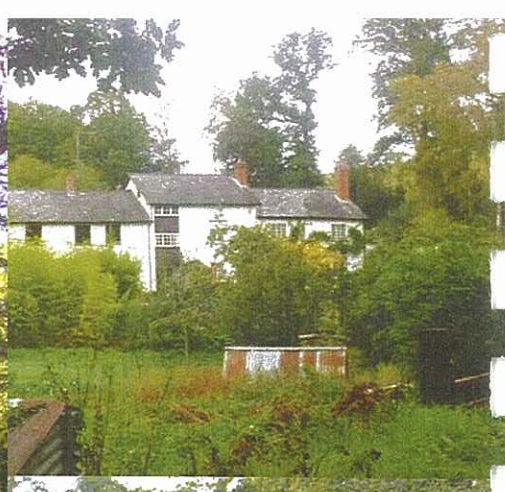
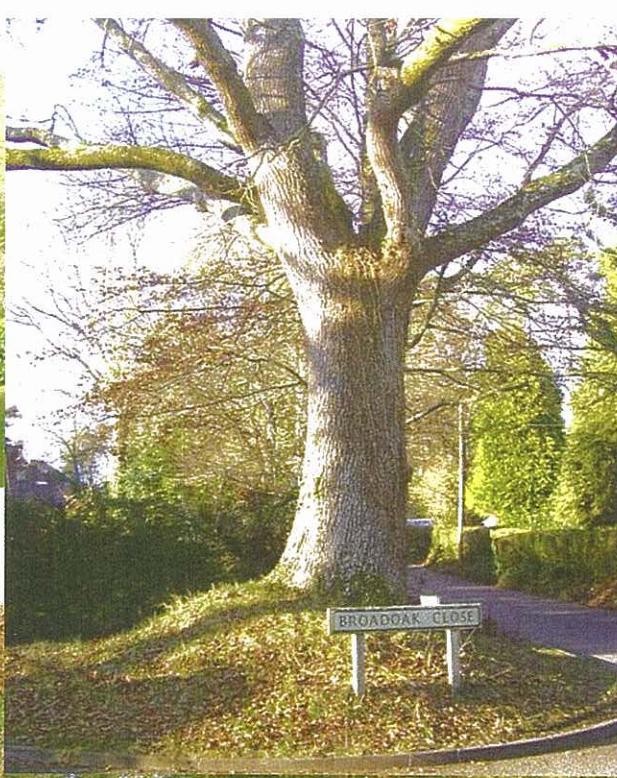
West Hill has been christened “Woodland Village” and the proliferation of trees and greenery is undoubtedly a major feature. The trees are largely confined to gardens and hedgerows but this still gives the overall impression of a generally wooded area. In addition there remain a number of wooded spaces within and adjacent to the developed area which help to preserve its character. The principal ones are:

- Castle Copse (at the north end of Lower Broad Oak Road) – a mature wood of deciduous trees with magnificent sweet chestnuts bordering the road which provides a home for numerous badgers, foxes, deer, woodpeckers and, in some years, a large rookery
- The land between West Hill Road (approximately opposite Potter’s Country Market) and Lower Broad Oak Road which, at its western end, is a meadow surrounded by deciduous trees, but to the east is a plantation of coniferous trees, home to foxes, deer, badgers, dormice, bats and owls. This woodland continues to the east of Lower Broad Oak Road down to Cuckoo Down Farm
- The Woodland Trust land between Higher and Lower Broad Oak Roads. This is mixed deciduous wood with birch predominating which is home to foxes and badgers, and provides a sanctuary for deer.

There are several other areas of woodland surrounding the built-up area helping to create the feeling of a woodland village, the most notable being Ash Hill, Prickly Pear, and Fluxton Plantation.

Apart from these wooded areas other ‘green’ areas within the heart of the village between West Hill Road and Bendarroch Road, which are used for grazing, add to the rural nature of the village.





THE BUILDINGS

HOUSES IN THE BUILT-UP AREA

The residential buildings of West Hill are a complete mixture with no dominant style or type. There are, however, a number of easily-identified general characteristics. The majority of dwellings are:

- Post-war
- Detached
- Bungalows, chalet bungalows, or two storey houses
- Of brick or rendered brickwork, the rendering usually white or light-coloured
- Tiled with tiles of light to dark brown
- Sited in their own fair-sized plots
- Demarcated with trees, shrubs, Devon banks, and hedges rather than walls or fences.



There are, of course, many exceptions to these general characteristics, the most notable being:

- The new development at Heather Grange where many of the large brick dwellings have brick wall boundaries with metal railings
- The two groups of semi-detached properties in Bendarroch Road constructed by the local authority
- The many imposing Victorian and Edwardian dwellings; worth mentioning are the old school (now converted to a dwelling) and the adjacent school house which are prominently sited at the junction of Bendarroch Road and School Lane, both built in 1876 in red brick in the distinctive style of Victorian schools



- The scattering of older individual agricultural cottages
- Westhayes cottages in West Hill Road
- The terraced cottages in West Hill Road close to the war memorial
- 1930s bungalows.

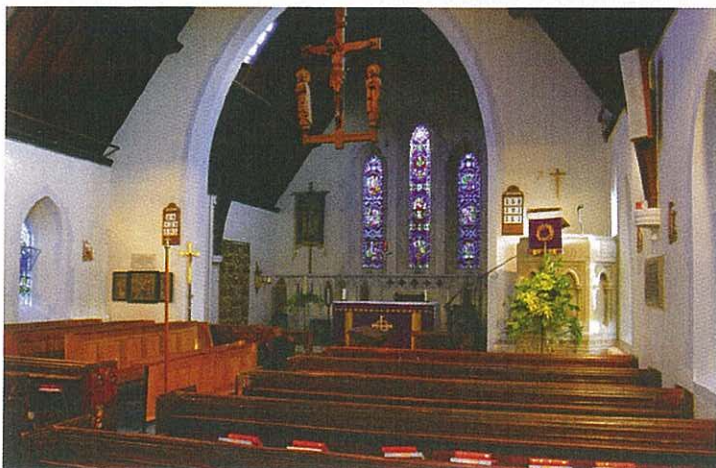
In summary, the dwellings of West Hill are mainly one and two storey brick and rendered buildings with tiled roofs, representing a wide mixture of styles and types. The most consistent and obvious features are that almost invariably the dwellings are detached and the plots, which are larger than normal and are noticeable for the extent of the trees and shrubs within and marking the boundaries, helping to maintain the special character of West Hill despite the essentially suburban nature of the development.



NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE BUILT-UP AREA

There are very few non-residential buildings in the village, so few that they can all be listed:

- The church of St Michael built in 1846 in the style of a much older country church rather than Victorian gothic. It has a fine modern extension used for both worship and community purposes. The interior is particularly attractive.



- Potters Country Market – a modern complex with car parking incorporating a Post Office, butchers, bakers, and off-licence, with an estate agency, and financial adviser occupying the same premises. The two-storey brick clad building itself is architecturally undistinguished.
- The Primary School built in 1991. An attractive single storey building of brick. It is next to...
- The Village Hall built in 1986. A two storey brick building which is well-equipped as a centre for village activities.





- The British Legion hall – a single storey building with adjacent car park, opposite the original Victorian school
- The garage – a utilitarian industrial building with a small forecourt, which is next to...
- The old Village Hall which has recently been converted into three shop units, which is next to...
- The Women's Institute meeting room – a small wooden building which marks the entrance to the village from Ottery St Mary.



OTHER BUILDINGS

Outside this central area there are a number of scattered farmhouses and cottages with associated barns. On Barrack/Exeter Road there is a substantial catering foods complex; while in the north-west corner there are a number of nurseries and associated poly tunnels.



ROADS & TRAFFIC

PRINCIPAL ROADS

Access to West Hill is better than for many surrounding towns and villages. It was improved further by the dualling of the A30 in 1999. Roads throughout the village are tree-lined and add to the wooded character whilst giving a sense of space and privacy to the adjoining houses. Each of the significant roads is dealt with in more detail in the following paragraphs.

West Hill Road - the direct route from Ottery St Mary to Woodbury Common, Exmouth and Clyst St Mary. It meanders through the heart of the village which makes the village vulnerable to speeding traffic and heavy goods vehicles travelling between Ottery and Exmouth. School Buses use the road but there are no designated bus stops, the buses stop where convenient for dropping off a



B3180 Exmouth Road - the main approach to the village from either the A30 at Daisymount or the A3052 at Halfway House and takes heavy traffic to Exmouth or Budleigh Salterton and some of the quarries and transport depots adjacent to the B3180. A 40mph limit is due to be implemented from Daisymount to Prickly Pear in 2006. There is a 40mph limit from Prickly Pear to Great Brake and a 30mph limit from Great Brake to Tipton Cross. Within this 30mph zone there are generally houses on both sides of the road. There are no pavements but reasonably wide grass verges. These verges are tended as extensions to the adjacent gardens. Halfway along the 30mph zone is the junction with West Hill Road.

Bendarroch Road - running from the B3180 at Prickly Pear to join West Hill Road at the Vee the road is, unusually for West Hill, wide and straight down to School Lane but then narrows as it gets towards West Hill Road. A 20mph limit exists from just west of School Lane to the junction with West Hill Road. Although subject to speed limits for most of its length there are only sporadic stretches of pavement.

number of children at a time. Flashing school signs were introduced in 2005 on West Hill Road close to the school, operating at the beginning and end of the school day.

A 20 mph limit has recently been introduced for the length of the road from the Garage to Higher Broad Oak Road. The road is generally narrow with pavements only between School Lane and Higher Broad Oak Road (the missing length opposite Ashley Brake is included in Devon County Council's programme). As part of the development at Heather Grange double roundabouts were installed at the junction with Higher Broad Oak Road and a roundabout installed at Potters Country Market.

School Lane - connects Bendarroch Road to West Hill Road and although straight and reasonably wide has no pavements. A 20mph limit has recently been introduced over the whole length.

Higher Broad Oak Road & Lower Broad Oak Road - both roads are much more rural in nature than those described previously - tree-lined country lanes with narrow, sharp bends and steep hills and for a large part of their lengths effectively single track. Both vary from having wide verges allowing room for walkers to having hedge banks directly on the side of the road.

TRAFFIC

The roads described above were built many years ago and have gradients, widths and corners which are well below today's standards. Pavements are few and far between. By contrast estate roads built off these roads were built to adoptable standards with good sight lines and pavements on both sides. These older roads which are, in the main, through roads subject to commercial traffic require caution, particularly by pedestrians. The introduction of the mini-roundabouts on West Hill Road was intended to be an improvement in traffic management but they are heavily criticised in returns from the questionnaire. Other problems highlighted in the questionnaire were speed of traffic on narrow roads and congestion caused by parking in Bendarroch Road and on West Hill Road, both by the garage and outside Potters. Generally, however, most properties have ample parking off-road and there is little on-road parking.

Horse riding is an important part of the life of West Hill. The number of riders using the roads and lanes around the village make a pleasant sight which adds to the rural charm, but does emphasise the importance of reducing traffic volumes and speeds.

SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF

As a result of the piecemeal development of the through roads there is inadequate drainage in places & many of these roads suffer from surface water problems. The steep length of West Hill Road down to the junction with Bendarroch Road is to be the subject of drainage work in the near future.

FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

There are a number of footpaths, rights of way and bridleways in and around the village, encouraging residents and visitors to wind their way through the village and

the surrounding countryside. The Woodland Trust land between Higher Broad Oak Road and Lower Broad Oak Road is in constant use by villagers to exercise their dogs and the woodland adjacent to Elsdon has a public right of way through the middle of it from Lower Broad Oak Road to Elsdon Lane. There are a number of narrow lanes with Devon banking or hedge-banks throughout the village and these are valuable habitats for wildlife, wild flowers, trees, blackberry bushes and bracken.

STREET SCENE

The gateway signs proclaim West Hill as a "Woodland Village". These contribute not only to the distinctive character of the village but increase the awareness of drivers of the need for care. There are more ramblers' footpaths than there are pavements, and pedestrians, horse riders and vehicles have to take care, as in any country village. Most of the small estates within the village have pavements and street lighting but elsewhere these are absent. As a result, there is very little light pollution.

Signs and street furniture are a challenge to rural communities such as West Hill. On the one hand there is a need for road signs and house signs (as houses are named rather than numbered). On the other hand, signage tends to conflict with the rural nature of the village.

Such signs as there are announce 'no pavement', 'horse riding', 'school', 'bridleway', 'narrow lanes', and the old style finger posts on the perimeter of the village are all in keeping with the general character of the village.

There are a number of post boxes hung on telegraph poles around the village and a traditional red post box outside the post office, which are in keeping with the rural character of the village. There is also a modern telephone box adjacent to Potters.



THE COMMUNITY

and its Economy

THE RESIDENTS

Today, West Hill is a dormitory village for Exeter and the cities of Plymouth and Taunton and points between. While most people commute locally some residents commute daily or weekly to London and the South East. Others make use of the nearby Exeter International Airport to travel the world on business or pleasure.

In the 1970s mains drainage and sewage disposal facilities were installed at Fluxton to support a domestic population of three thousand (though subsequently part of the facilities at Fluxton was used for Ottery) and the water mains extended. Today the population is around 2000 inhabiting over 800 houses with around two cars per household.

Whilst West Hill has always been a popular place for retirement there are an increasing number of young families settling in the village, some moving to the South West for a better quality of life, some because the companies they work for have joined the flow of companies relocating to Exeter. All are attracted to West Hill by the reputation of the primary school, the availability of excellent secondary education, the quality of housing and the attractiveness of the location.

The surrounding countryside is within walking distance. Beaches, the sea and the rivers that flow into it, the moor land of Dartmoor and Exmoor and a host of visitor attractions are within a short drive as are numerous good pubs and restaurants, contributing to the quality of life.

VILLAGE FACILITIES

There is a parish church St Michaels which is currently being extended to provide further community facilities.

The village primary school is highly acclaimed nationally and locally. There are at present 190 pupils and 20 members of staff. It has limited space on its present site and sits alongside its own playing field. This field is also used for the Annual Village Fete. The school has instigated a 'walking bus' which helps to reduce traffic congestion at school times.

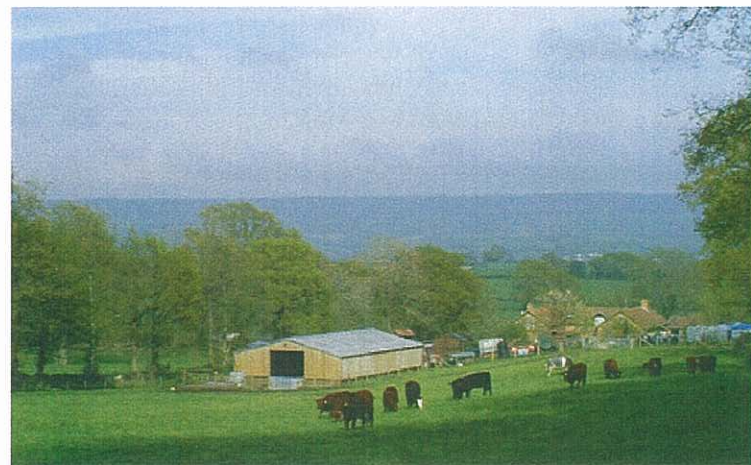
The village is also served by an excellent local comprehensive - The King's School at Ottery. There are also many other good secondary schools in the surrounding area.



The village store - 'Potters' to all - is the social heart of the village, containing a post office, a news agents, a butchers and bakers, a food hall, wines and spirits. Also within the same building are an estate agent, and a firm providing financial services advice.

There is a large village hall whose principal room seats 200. It is used by the school and a pre-school group, and for painting, badminton, keep-fit, short mat bowls, ballet, ballroom dancing, yoga, Pilates, bridge, Guides and Brownies, and a Youth Group.

The garage, which in addition to the normal repair business and, unusually for these days, an attended petrol service, is the local video shop.





PUBLIC TRANSPORT

West Hill, like most rural villages, is served by way of public transport with a bus service along Bendarroch Road on the village's northern perimeter, to Exeter, Honiton, Axminster and many other nearby towns. There is a bus service from Ottery St Mary to Sidmouth which normally runs past the Salston Hotel and through Fluxton but now does one return journey a day along West Hill Road, Higher Broad Oak Road and through Metcombe Vale.

There is also a Ring and Ride service operated from Honiton which can be used for door to door transport to Honiton.

West Hill is also within easy reach of Whimble and Honiton stations on the Waterloo line to London and of Exeter St David's for London Paddington.

West Hill is also close to Exeter airport which allows access to a variety of destinations both within the UK and further afield.

Adjacent to the garage, in shop units converted from the original village hall, are a consultant providing holistic therapies, a hairdresser and a dentist. Adjacent to these shop units is the Women's Institute meeting hut.

There is no pub in the village though the Royal British Legion Club is used as a meeting place. Nor is there a Doctor's surgery or a pharmacy, although there are excellent facilities in Ottery St Mary.

Recycling is growing as an activity in West Hill. East Devon District Council provides an excellent household collection service for glass, tins and paper and provides sites close by for disposal of garden and other household waste. Additionally Otter Rotters operates a collection and recycling service for garden rubbish.

A mobile library goes round the village on alternate Fridays.

West Hill has a website www.westhillvillage.co.uk initiated by the Residents Association. It is the place for information in the village - what's happening, sale or part exchange, where to eat or what to see in our beautiful area of East Devon. It has links to West Hill School, East Devon District Council and Devon County Council.



ECONOMY

West Hill's economy is driven by the high earning families moving into the village and the spending power of the retired generation.

Employment within the village is provided by:

- Two retail complexes
(Potters & the garage/shop units)
- Six working farms
- Nurseries
- Stables and riding establishments
- The catering foods complex located on Barrack Road
- A number of small businesses involved in building and similar work
- People working from home.

The ease of communication has opened up opportunities to work from home and this currently accounts for 20% of those working. The range of services offered is diverse including architectural, engineering, and property and financial services.

West Hill Village

West Hill Residents Association



Welcome to the West Hill Village web-site!

The East Devon village of West Hill is well known for its mixture of individual properties in its Lovely Wooded Landscape

"Add this web site to your favourites"

www.westhillvillage.co.uk



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The special character of West Hill described in the preceding chapters can be summarised as follows:

- West Hill is a rural, wooded, settlement with narrow lanes lined with Devon banks, hedgerows and trees
- The special character of the village owes much to the extensive planting of trees and shrubs both within and on the boundaries of plots
- The density of development is low
- Dwellings are generally set well back from the road
- The buildings are almost entirely domestic dwellings of one or two storeys
- There is no distinctive style but materials are generally brick or rendered brickwork with tiled roofs
- There is ample provision for off-street parking leaving the narrow roads clear of parked vehicles
- There is little street lighting and few pavements.

The Design Principles set out in Table 1 (see p25 to 27) are intended to help preserve & enhance this special character.

In a survey of the whole village conducted in August 2005, 63% of the 840 questionnaires issued were completed and returned. Of the many features of the village that respondents liked, the most frequently mentioned were “green”, “leafy”, “low density”, and “privacy”. There was also strong dislike for creeping urbanisation.

APPLICATION OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES

These Design Principles apply to all new development including:

- Modifications to existing buildings
- New dwellings
- Sub-division of existing plots
- Group developments i.e. developments of two or more dwellings including apartments.

Where group developments are permitted it is essential that the design, in particular: street lighting, pavements and roads, frontage and boundaries are such as to enhance and preserve the general rural nature and special character of West Hill. Existing trees, hedges and banks should be preserved, with suitable new planting incorporated.

An intending developer should show how the development conforms to the Design Principles in the developer’s design statement.

By definition, development not requiring planning permission cannot be controlled by the Local Planning Authority. However, those responsible for such development are encouraged to follow the Design Principles, which are intended to provide guidance as to good practice.

The Design Principles are not intended to stifle innovation, originality or initiative and there will be occasions when a development of a high quality design does not meet all the design principles but nevertheless will be acceptable if it positively improves the character and environmental quality of the area.





BACKGROUND TO THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

In drawing up the Design Principles, consideration has been given to the following:

A. Density of development

A knock-on effect of higher density is that with increasing numbers of houses and people, the strains on the special character become accentuated – more traffic, less greenery, further pressure for pavements and street lighting etc.

It is recognised that while the design and materials used in buildings are important, so are the open spaces and the gaps between buildings and the trees growing in them which all contribute to a village that sits at peace with its surroundings.

Generally within West Hill houses are set in their own grounds well back from the front boundary. They are separated from the adjoining properties by hedges and trees providing a high degree of privacy and seclusion.

Frontages are of the utmost importance as they are often the part of any development most directly impacting on the general appearance of the village.

Low density is a key factor in maintaining the green character of the village. It also creates the spaces through which frequent glimpses of the surrounding countryside are obtained.

B. Style of buildings

There is no distinctive village style but materials are generally brick or rendered brickwork with tiled roofs. Therefore the Design Principles do not seek to lay down any particular style but only to ensure that buildings are well designed, of good quality, and are in sympathy with their surroundings.

In recent years a number of dwellings have been demolished and replaced by new. There is no objection to this but it is important that any replacement is in keeping with its surroundings in style and size, and satisfies all other Design Principles.

C. Parking

The general absence of on-road parking is part of the special character of the village. This is also of importance to road safety in view of the narrowness of most of the village roads. It is therefore essential that adequate provision is made for off-road parking within all new developments.

D. Trees and greenery

The importance of trees and greenery to the special character of the village is emphasised throughout this Design Statement. It is clear that this is a key area in the design of all development if this special character is to be preserved and enhanced.

Devon banks and hedgebanks are an important feature of the village: wildlife is encouraged by the use of native species such as beech, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn and hazel.

To ensure that Devon banks and hedgebanks are retained in new development it is recommended that the Local Planning Authority withdraw Permitted Development rights in respect of fences, banks and walls.



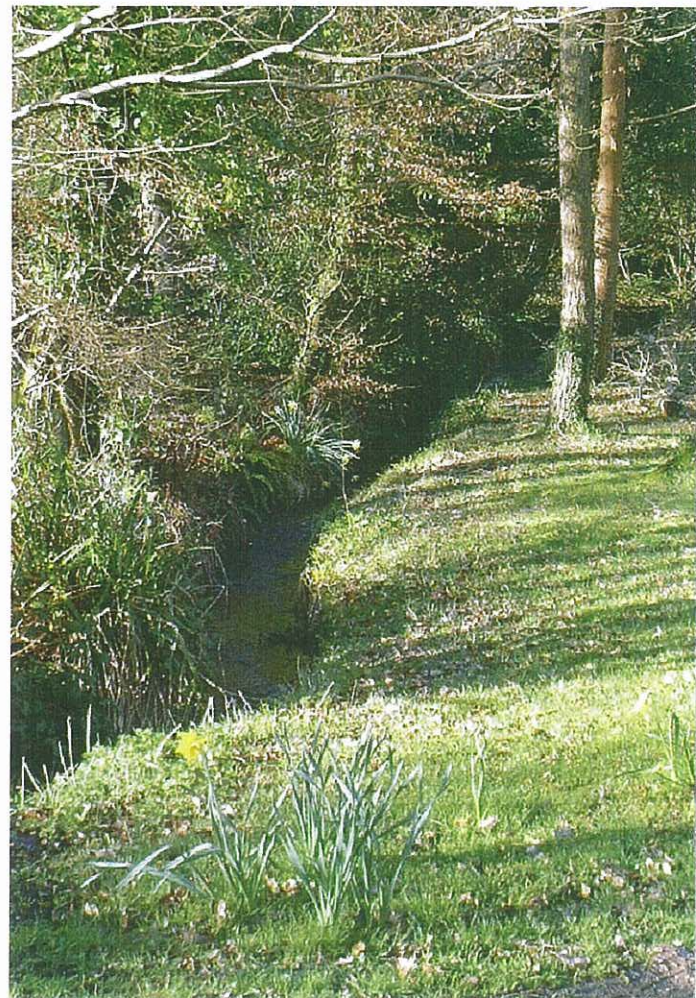
E. Drainage

Surface water run-off is an increasing problem within and around the village. A part of this problem is the increasing extent of impermeable surfaces within developments. Minimising impermeable surfaces would help to prevent the exacerbation of problems and protect the local streams and their banks.

Flood risk assessment should be carried out to the appropriate degree at all levels of the planning process to assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development.

It should also be noted that Local Plan Policies prohibit impermeable surfaces within the immediate vicinity of trees.

The streams and springs throughout the village running down into the River Otter are important to the village and must be protected.



F. House accesses to roads

Increasing numbers of accesses onto village roads create concerns both for safety and for loss of established hedges and Devon banks, eroding their ecological value and the unique character of the village. To reduce the impact, existing drives and accesses should be shared by new development wherever possible, and multiple accesses for a single dwelling (for example 'in and out' drives) are strongly discouraged.

Accesses should be designed in accordance with current national guidance which includes requirements for substantial visibility splays.



G. Built-up Area Boundary

The extent of the built-up area is a matter for the local planning authority to define in the Local Plan/Local Development Framework. However, it is reasonable to state that any significant extension of the boundary will put the special character of the village in danger due to increased traffic etc. There are no current proposals to extend the Built-up Area Boundary.



H. Public rights of way

The existing public rights of way provide important traffic-free links around the village. These need to be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

I. Sustainable construction

The principles of sustainable construction should form the basis of all development proposals. This should also apply at Outline Planning stage particularly with regard to the placing and orientation of buildings and spaces and access to good quality daylight and sunlight.



TABLE ONE: DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES	RELATED LOCAL PLAN POLICIES
<p>A. Density</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The low density of development in West Hill is one of the key factors in the special character of the village which should be retained. 2. The scale of future developments should seek to retain the existing balance between buildings and greenery which is part of the distinctive character. As a general guide existing developments, including garages and hard standings, do not cover more than 20% of the plot and this is a major contributor to the spaciousness of the village. 3. Building lines should be respected and followed in relation to adjacent properties. 4. Houses should be placed within their plots in such a way as to maintain separation and privacy. 	<p>D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D1.5, Appendix 1 – West Hill</p>
<p>B. Style of buildings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roofs of new or extended buildings should not be significantly different from those of nearby dwellings in respect of both eaves and ridge height. 2. The design of new or extended buildings should not be such as to interfere with the privacy and character of adjacent dwellings. 3. The design of any new dwellings particularly located towards the Built-up Area Boundary should be in sympathy with the surrounding countryside. Appropriate landscaping will assist in achieving this aim. 4. Building design and materials used should be in sympathy with their surroundings and with the adjacent buildings, their materials and scale. 5. Dormers should have pitched roofs, be appropriate in scale to the main roof, and should not be a dominant feature. 6. Flat roofs should be avoided, unless a strong design case is set out in the developer’s design statement. 7. Developments of groups of houses should show individual variation, and be in character with the immediate surrounding area. 8. TV dishes and aerials should be discreetly sited and preferably not visible from the road. 9. Provided the above requirements are satisfied, variety can be encouraged. 	<p>D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4, D1.5</p>
<p>C. Parking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate parking for the size and type of property must be provided off-road. 	<p>D1.1, D1.4, D1.5, D5</p>

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

RELATED LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

D. Trees and greenery

1. Any development should be subject to a requirement to landscape and tree plant with native species that match surrounding tree cover and be subject to approval by the EDDC Tree Officer for the area. Retention or enhancement of the characteristic tree and shrub screening in West Hill should be regarded as an overriding requirement.
2. All new developments should be designed to prevent loss of trees generally, and particularly mature trees whether or not protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Conditions should be attached to ensure that trees continue to be retained or replaced with appropriate species.
3. All new development should be designed to ensure that existing hedges and Devon banks are retained and conditions should be attached to ensure that these continue to be retained.
4. Where new boundaries are required (including frontages), these should consist of Devon banks or hedges incorporating native species, rather than metal or close-boarded fences or brick walls.
5. Existing individual trees, groups of trees, and hedges should be retained as a boundary between the countryside and village.

E. Drainage

1. Sustainable drainage principles should be used in all new developments to mitigate the effect of increased run-off.
2. Permeable surfaces, such as gravel, grass, should be used in place of non-permeable surfaces.
3. Drives should not discharge gravel or water onto the highway.
4. The streams and springs throughout the village running down into the River Otter are important to the village environment and must be protected.

D1.5, D5, EN27

F. House accesses to roads

1. The creation of new private accesses should only be permitted where there are no safety issues and the retention of Devon banks/hedges is carefully considered. In order to achieve this, access drives should be shared wherever possible.
2. New entrance splays and gateways from village roads and lanes should blend in with adjacent properties and existing property boundaries.
3. Each dwelling should be limited to a single access to the road where the creation of additional access points would result in dangerous highway conditions or in the removal of boundary treatments, particularly hedgebanks, which contribute positively to the street scene.

D1.5

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

RELATED LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

4. Multiple accesses from a single dwelling (e.g. in and out drives) are strongly discouraged, and any property should have provision for on-site turning.
5. Accesses should be designed in accordance with current guidance (DOE publications Places, Streets and Movement and Design Bulletin 32 along with the Devon County Council publication "Highways in Residential and Commercial Estates Design Guide"). Further advice may be obtained from Devon County Council as Highway Authority.

G. Built-up Area Boundary

1. The design of any new dwellings located towards the Built-up Area Boundary should be in sympathy with the surrounding countryside.
2. Development that causes unacceptable visual damage should be avoided to safeguard our distinctive landscape character. Key views from and towards the village should be maintained.
3. Existing individual trees, groups of trees, and hedges should be retained as a boundary between the countryside and village.

H. Public rights of way

1. Where development necessitates changes to existing paths and/or bridleways, or the creation of new paths, they should have permeable surfaces and be in keeping with the rural character.

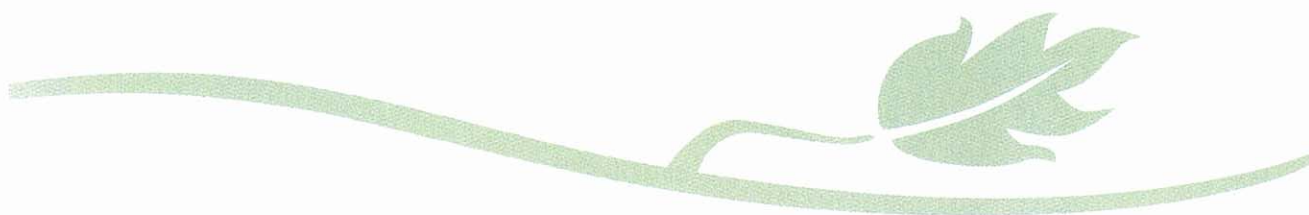
I. Sustainable construction

1. All reasonable measures should be used to minimise energy and water use and to use materials wisely including recycling and re-use.
2. The use of renewable energy should be considered at an early stage of development and should be used wherever appropriate and cost effective.

In submitting a planning application (outline or full) for development in West Hill an intending developer should prepare a design statement showing how the development conforms to these Design Principles.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. East Devon Local Plan Revised Deposit September 2003.
Includes map showing Built-up Area Boundary as Inset 53.
2. Highways in Residential and Commercial Estates Design Guide
Published by Devon County Council 1996.
3. Places Streets and Movements. Department of the Environment.
4. Design Bulletin 32. Department of the Environment.
5. The Book of Ottery St Mary. Gerald Gosling and Peter Harris.
Includes section on the history of West Hill by John Pilsworth.



APPENDIX

The Consultation Process

October 2004	<p>Open meeting held at Village Hall. A presentation was made to explain the concept of a Village Design Statement, its importance to the village and how residents could get involved and influence the content. After being shown photographs of the village the audience was divided into groups to stimulate discussion about what constituted the village character. Volunteers were recruited as a result of the evening to help with the preparation.</p>
Winter 2004/05	<p>Format for the descriptive part of the document – ‘The Character Statement’ - agreed and working groups established to look at particular aspects of the village: landscape, settlement, community and economy, buildings and street scene.</p>
July 2005	<p>Questionnaire prepared, printed and hand delivered to 840 addresses – both homes and businesses – asking for information and views on the village. Questions included demographic details, likes and dislikes, development options and comments. A section of the questionnaire was specifically aimed at children and young people. There were 530 questionnaires returned giving a 63 % response.</p>
October 2005	<p>840 copies of ‘Village Character Statement’ were printed and hand delivered throughout the village. This ‘Draft for Consultation’ described both the history and the landscape combining to form the special character of West Hill.</p> <p>Public meeting held at the Village Hall to present the results of the questionnaire, to hear comments on the ‘Character Statement’ and to outline the remaining stages for the eventual production of the final ‘Village Design Statement’. The further steps outlined included preparation and discussion with EDDC and DCC of the draft ‘Design Principles’ before general issue for comment throughout the village. Typical examples of topics to be covered by the design principles were shown.</p>
December 2005	<p>Discussion with EDDC of initial draft of the design principles.</p>
January 2006	<p>Meeting with DCC Highways to discuss highways aspects of the design principles.</p>
February 2006	<p>Following comments from both EDDC and DCC 840 copies of the revised ‘Design Principles’ were hand delivered as ‘Draft for Consultation’.</p> <p>Open day and photographic exhibition held at Village Hall to allow residents to comment on draft of ‘Design Principles’. At this photographs were displayed and Steering Group members were on hand to discuss any aspects of the design principles and the character statement.</p>

