

# VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

## What it is

All planning policies, in our area, are the responsibility of the East Devon District Council and the policies are enshrined in the East Devon Local Plan. The Village Design Statement is designed to provide an input to the Local Plan and to be used by the Planning Department in determining the suitability of planning applications. It will also provide assistance to the local authority in cases where appeals are raised.



It has been drawn up at the instigation of the Parish Council who asked a representative group of parishioners to take on the task. Extensive consultations, including a parishwide questionnaire, have been employed in the preparation of this Statement, to ensure that it reflects the views of the majority of the parishioners.

The Village Design Statement is designed to manage change, whether that change is major, new development or just cumulative, small-scale additions and alterations. Its concern 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, enhancement, of the local environment.

It should be read in conjunction with the Parish Plan.



Local communities are in a unique position to appreciate and understand their own place, and a Village Design Statement is based on this knowledge. It describes the qualities and characteristics that people value in their village and its surroundings. It sets out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in the village, based on that character. It will not stop development and change from happening, but it will help to influence how new development fits into the village.

The Village Design Statement is intended for all people who are seeking planning permission for new houses, extensions, conversions, industrial developments, change of use etc. It will be as useful to an individual householder planning to build an extension or put in a new window as it will be to a housing developer building new houses, an industrial developer or land owner planning tree-felling or new planting.



Every householder in the village should have a copy. It is intended to reflect the views and opinions of the parishioners and to assist the preparation of the next local plan.

### Introduction

The village and parish of Aylesbeare are ancient, dating back to Anglo Saxon times, and a record of Aylesbeare is to be found in the Domesday Book as Ailesbergon. Despite its relatively small size, there are a large number of listed buildings within the parish, mainly reflecting its agricultural past. The oldest, largest and most dominant building in the parish is the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and still acts as the village centre and parish "identifier".



The large majority of houses and barn conversions in the parish, however, date from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These modern houses and conversions exhibit a mixture of designs, ranging from

the 1950s council houses at Scotchmead to the bungalows at the southern end of Village Way, from the affordable housing at Bramble Mead to the dominant houses in Minchin Lane, from the "executive" houses opposite the Aylesbeare Inn to the small development at Chestnuts and from the barn conversions at Rosamundford, Little Houndsbeare and Nutwalls to the houses at the west end of Withen Lane.

There is no evidence of any attempt, in the past, either to create a unifying look to the building developments of the last 50 years or to create a "conventional" village look or feel. Although the Church is the most outstanding building in the village and is used to define the centre of the village, the village lacks a "true centre" and has been developed along Village Way, as a ribbon development. This issue is dealt with in the Parish Plan and recommendations made to encourage development at the centre of the village.



Over the past 50 years housing numbers in Aylesbeare parish have probably doubled and the prevailing look has changed from "old, rural and widely spaced" to "modern, commuter belt/retirement and more closely but still well spaced". Each of the developments which has taken place over the last 50 years, has its own individual design features resulting in what can only be called an "eclectic" mix of housing in the

village and parish. The photographs illustrate the range of buildings and building designs within Aylesbeare. With this range of building designs, it is not possible to draw on a well of "typical" buildings in order to define desirable features or indeed materials. Houses in the parish/village range in construction from ancient cob and thatch to modern timber frame and concrete tile with a few older brick buildings.



On the basis of this variety of design and construction, planning criteria for future housing can be neither prescriptive nor detailed. It must rather seek to ensure that the village environment which was identified, in the Parish Questionnaire, as being very important to a large majority of the parishioners, is maintained or strengthened.

The guidelines, which are listed are an attempt to retain and enhance a village ambience without restricting change in what is now a modern village.



## Housing Design

Although the design features listed below cover mainly new build housing, they should be used, where appropriate, when considering extensions, modifications and renovations to existing houses or development of other buildings e.g. barns.

The Parish Plan envisages the building of a limited number of new houses within the parish. With the high percentage of "social housing" already existing in the parish and village, it is likely that, initially, most of the houses built in the parish will be private family dwellings.



The main planning issues which should be considered when approving new housing or changes to existing buildings are:-

- They should, if possible, be sited so as to enhance the feeling of a village, rather than "string out" the village even more
- They should match, reasonably, in both size and design, the existing housing in the immediate area of the development
- The scale and height of rooflines should be in proportion to existing buildings nearby
- Flat roofs should generally be discouraged (but see experimental and "eco" houses below)

- Dominant houses, such as the two in Minchin Lane should be discouraged as they do not sit happily in a "village" context



- If new areas of the village or parish are to be developed, the designs used should be in sympathy with the existing housing stock
- Experimental or "Eco" housing should be considered, even if it deviates markedly from the existing houses, provided that it has architectural merit and does not dominate the area in which it is built
- Rendered finishes are preferred as these match the general finish in the village
- In general, house colours should be white or light cream rendering but pale pastel colours may be considered if they enhance the area. Woodwork should be white, black or dark brown. Strong, non-pastel colours should be avoided on both render and woodwork
- Preservation of hedgerows and trees should be given a high priority in any development. Where it is absolutely necessary to remove trees or parts of hedgerows, it is essential that these are replaced in their original position or new planting employed to return the area to a reasonably matching condition
- Any new affordable houses should be built to match and be sited close to

the existing housing estate at Bramble Mead to help create a focal point for the village

## Highways and Byways

Aylesbeare remains in a rural setting despite its closeness to Exeter and the lanes and roadways are important in ensuring that it retains its village feel. The Parish Plan deals with the issue of the lanes and roadways in depth.



It is important that the planning of new housing and any alterations to the roads and the lanes, in particular, is dealt with sensitively in order to retain the rural feel of the area. Developers should consult this Statement and the Planning Authority at an early stage regarding the treatment of roadways and footways, entrance splays, frontages, hedgerows, trees etc., in order to ensure that the "village and rural" characteristics are not compromised.

A number of guidelines to help achieve this are listed below:-

- All electric and telephone cabling for new dwellings should be underground and efforts made to also place existing overhead wires underground, where possible
- Where a new house or development is approved, existing

trees, hedges and walls should be preserved, with suitable new planting encouraged in the initial design for planning purposes

- A uniform pattern of street furniture should be adopted
- Road signs and other streetside information should be kept to a minimum consistent with safety and located to prevent undue visual intrusion

## Commerce

Apart from working farms and the local pubs, Aylesbeare has a large international haulage business based at the Aylesbeare Common Business Park. There are also a number of smaller firms catering for local household and farming needs.



The general trend for more people to work from home, either full or part-time, is likely to continue. Aylesbeare, with its proximity to Exeter and nearby air, rail and road links, may be likely to see this trend in the village.

The Parish Plan suggests that some light industrial or commercial activities would be acceptable in the parish. If such developments are realised the following guidelines should be considered:-

- Only a limited number of small, light industrial enterprises should be considered
- New enterprises should be sited outside the village area and preferably on the Aylesbeare Common Business Park
- Any commercial developments should not adversely affect the residential character of the village
- Any new development should take account of the restricted road access within the village area and be sited on one of the larger roads at the edges of the parish
- Any conversions of existing buildings for commercial use should be done sympathetically and in a way which reflects the village character
- Where people working from home wish extensions to their property, to facilitate this homeworking, alterations and extensions should be sympathetic to the style of the surrounding houses

