ARDLEIGH
VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

December 2011

THANKS

Thank you to all who have contributed to the creation of this document.
The original steering group, led by Christopher Hamblin,
Everyone who completed the original questionnaire
Everyone who attended the meetings and exhibitions
Ardleigh Parish Council

Contents

1. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS

Introducing the VDS concept and promoting discussion

The three key functions of a Village Design Statement (VDS) are:

- **to record information about the current visual character of the village**

- **to report the wishes of the residents in relation to the village's evolving visual character**

- **to explain how these wishes can best be met by anybody involved in activities likely to affect the visual character of the village. The people involved could include local authority planners, parish councillors, prospective developers, architects, builders and existing or prospective householders.**

It is essential that a VDS should be the product of a democratic research and consultation process. The Ardleigh VDS was prepared using a staged approach recommended by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE).

How a VDS fits into the Planning Process

- The current policy framework for future development and the use of land in Tendring is contained in a document called the Local Plan (2007).

- There are also various types of supplementary guidance documents, which may need to be taken into account by the District Council when determining planning applications.

- Village Design Statements, once approved by the District Council, will be approved as supplementary planning guidance and so may be taken into account when determining applications. This VDS was approved by Tendring District Council as planning guidance in December 2011

The Ardleigh VDS

The Ardleigh VDS is organised as follows:

- **Section 2 provides a general description of the Parish as it is now in terms of geographical location, settlement pattern and existing uses typically found within the Parish.**

- **Section 3 sets out broadly how future growth and new development should be managed in Ardleigh.**

- **Section 4 provides a general description of the existing character of Ardleigh Village, the Conservation Area and the outlying hamlets that should be preserved and includes specific guidance for new building development within these areas.**

- **Section 5 provides more detailed building design guidance to help preserve the existing character of Ardleigh, wherever possible.**

- **Section 6 provides a summary of the consultation that took place during the preparation of this VDS and a summary of responses received, which helped to shape the final VDS**
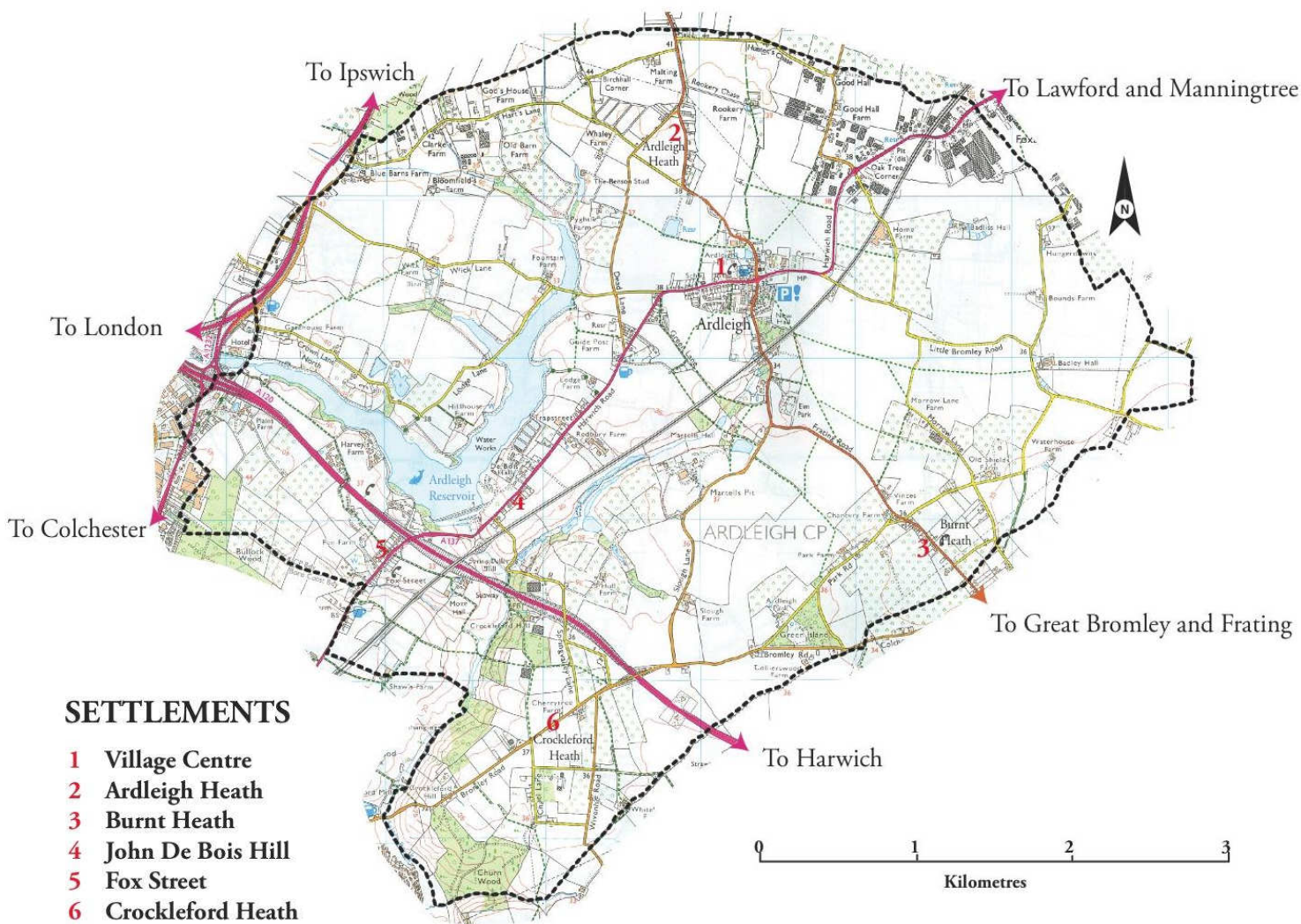
2. A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PARISH OF ARDLEIGH

Ardleigh stands on a flat gravel plain in open countryside between Colchester and Manningtree. The parish measures some 6 kilometres east to west and about 5½ kilometres north to south. It consists principally of agricultural land, but there is an obvious village centre, in the vicinity of St Mary's Church and the A137/B1029 crossroads.

To the west and south of the village centre, there is a valley system, which may no longer be very apparent to the casual passer-by. Ardleigh reservoir fills a large part of one of these valleys and the only obvious sign of that valley's existence is at John de Bois Hill. However there is also a hilly, sunken lane leading down into the wooded area of Spring Valley, which is strikingly different in atmosphere from the essentially flat land on which most of Ardleigh lies.

Relationship of Buildings to the Landscape

THE PARISH OF ARDLEIGH

SETTLEMENTS

1 Village Centre
2 Ardleigh Heath
3 Burnt Heath
4 John De Bois Hill
5 Fox Street
6 Crockleford Heath

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Probably every house in Ardleigh, even in the village centre, is less than 150 metres from the nearest agricultural field.

View across Ardleigh Heath to Dedham Road

Overall, the parish shows a pattern of ribbon development along the roads and lanes, with no development of street networks in the hamlets or in the centre. This pattern is largely the result of unplanned growth, with individual houses being built from time to time, as the need arose. The view between houses from the road commonly gives some indication that there is open countryside just beyond, rather than more housing.

In the lanes and hamlets, houses are mostly set back from the carriageway, sheltering behind hedges. Many of them are relatively low structures, often bungalows.

The farmhouses and other big houses in the parish, that seem to be making a statement through their presence are, like the smaller houses, in no way dominate in the landscape.

In the village centre, the frontage of most of the older houses is close to the street, with little or no front garden. Here, there is no view from the road of the farmland in which the village is situated.

Khartoum Villas, The Street

Colchester Road

Ardleigh as a Residential Area

Ardleigh is a village with just over 2000 residents, which has long been seen as a desirable location for house buyers.

The Ancient House - Recently converted to residential

It offers village living, yet retains easy access to local towns such as Colchester and Ipswich and easy access by train to London.

The parish boasts over 70 Grade II listed buildings
(*Ref .www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)* and the heart of the village has been a designated Conservation Area since 1981. *(See TDC Conservation Area Review/Ardleigh Conservation Area March 2006)*

A recent conversion of a village hall to residential use

Industry

Although part of the population commutes, Ardleigh retains its character as a working, farmland village.

Quarry restoration

It is also home to a number of small and medium size businesses, related to a wide range of activities including farming and market gardening, engineering, technology, the timber trade and leisure pursuits. Few of these have an adverse visual impact. Some of the smaller businesses are based unobtrusively in redundant farm buildings. South of the village there is a long established quarry extracting sand and gravel and manufacturing associated products. There is also a recycling and landfill business. Good effort has been made to mitigate the environmental impacts. An extension to Ardleigh Reservoir has recently commenced. Because of screening, this has limited visual impact to the public.

In the village centre there are three shops (one of which is also the village Post Office), a public house and a fish-and-chip shop. There are three other public houses in the parish, one of which is effectively a restaurant. All of these enterprises are housed in pre-20th century buildings, with the exception of the Crown Inn near the A12, which is actually a rebuild of a fire damaged mediaeval inn.

The Village Shop

Open Spaces

Although it is not seen as a tourist attraction, Ardleigh has its own areas of quiet beauty.

Ardleigh Reservoir

The village centre is surrounded by agricultural land, but within the centre there are several enclosed spaces which add to the visual quality of the village environment and to the amenities. These are St Mary's churchyard, the grounds of Ardleigh Court, the village cemetery, the village allotments, the open space within Church View/Chapel Croft, the recreation ground and the Millennium Green.

It is a characteristic of the village that most of these spaces are adjacent to open countryside, separated from it only by hedges. They are therefore sheltered without seeming to be in any way enclosed.

The Allotments

The Recreation Ground

3. MANAGING GROWTH AND NEW DEVELOPMENT IN ARDLEIGH PARISH

Under current planning rules, Tendring District Council has a responsibility for managing future grown in the district and determining any planning applications that may come forward for new development whereas Essex County Council is responsible for Minerals and Waste Planning.

In the District Council's current Adopted Local Plan, Ardleigh is not seen as a focus for growth but it is accepted that some small-scale development might be acceptable. It is the view of the District Council that this should be limited to *"infill development within the Settlement Development Boundary ("village envelope") and small-scale development on the edge of the village that is appropriate in a countryside location."*

See section 4 for a map showing Ardleigh's Settlement Development Boundary ("village envelope").

The overriding purpose of this VDS is to encourage all new development, whether in the centre of the village or in outlying areas, to be well designed and to be in keeping with the existing character of the Parish. The District Council's Local Plan (2007) is a useful starting point as it contains a number of aims and policies relating to new development.

Although many different policies might be relevant to any proposed development or change within Ardleigh, Policy QL9 stands out as an overall guide. Its philosophy lies at the heart of the thinking that went into the VDS and that is why it is reproduced here.

Policy QL9 – Design of New Development

All new development should make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment and protect or enhance local character. Planning permission will only be granted if the following criteria are met:

i.   **new buildings, alterations and structures are well-designed and should maintain or enhance local character and distinctiveness;**

ii. **the development relates well to its site and surroundings, particularly in relation to its siting, height, scale, massing, form, design and materials;**

iii. **the development respects or enhances views, skylines, landmarks, existing street patterns, open spaces and other locally important features;**

iv. **the design and layout of the development incorporates important existing features of landscape, ecological or amenity value such as trees, hedges, water features, buffer zones, walls and buildings (as well as opportunities to enhance such features e.g. habitat creation); and**

v.   **boundary treatments and hard and soft landscaping are designed as an integral part of the development, reflecting the function and character of the development and its surroundings.**

In the case of large, complex or sensitive sites, applications for planning permission must be accompanied by a Design Statement.

Some may claim that these criteria are nearly all matters of taste or opinion and therefore unrealistic. On the other hand, the research carried out for the Ardleigh VDS, as with other Village Design Statements around the country, shows that most people do react strongly to issues of quality, sensitivity and appropriateness of building design and placement.

The Ardleigh VDS is an attempt to present these opinions, and the recommendations that logically follow them, in the context of a description of the parish of Ardleigh.

Planning Guidance

Ardleigh Parish Council would like to make prospective developers and anyone intending to carry out physical change in the parish aware of existing District Council Policies contained in the Adopted Local Plan designed to manage growth and new building development.

In particular the Parish Council is keen to:

- **Preserve the existing traditional settlement pattern of Ardleigh Village and its outlying hamlets.**

- **Protect the surrounding countryside and landscape character of the parish from inappropriate development.**

- **Maintain the existing balance and mix of uses currently found within the parish.**

- **Encourage good design and seek to protect or enhance the existing character of the parish.**

4.   THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF ARDLEIGH

This section begins by giving a general description of the types of building typically found within Ardleigh Parish. It then gives more detail about the existing character found within Ardleigh Village, the Conservation Area and the outlying hamlets and provides specific guidance for new building development within these areas.

An Overview

N.B. For the purposes of this document, eras of building are identified simply as Mediaeval, Georgian/Victorian or Modern.

All eras of building are represented in the parish. It is not possible to sum up the character of any part of the parish simply in terms of the age of its buildings. Even in the conservation area at the heart of the village, mediaeval or Georgian/Victorian buildings are out-numbered by modern buildings.

In the outer-village areas generally, there appears to be a small nucleus of mediaeval buildings. Most of the larger farmhouses or other large houses seem to have been established in the 18th or early 19th centuries. Nineteenth and early 20th century housing grew up along the roads between the farms, probably in most cases to house the people working on the land. Later in the 20th century and now in the 21st century, building and rebuilding has continued along the roads and lanes, to house people who have chosen to live in a rural setting but who, for the most part have never worked in it. It is this category of housing that has contributed most to the urbanisation of building design in the parish.

Mediaeval

The oldest buildings in the village have survived from mediaeval times and were originally built from whatever local natural materials lent themselves to building. Houses were timber framed, filled with mud and sticks and thatched with straw.

Most would have had steeply pitched roofs and whitewashed walls – a pattern that persisted for centuries. After centuries of repair those timber-framed buildings are now mostly rendered over and have tiled roofs instead of thatch.

An example of a rendered, timber-framed building

*Thatched cottages at
Dead Lane/Dedham Road junction*

Georgian and Victorian

The Georgian and Victorian periods saw some older buildings being given a new look but also, some new buildings being constructed with materials brought in from other areas. Red bricks, for example, came in from Suffolk and other parts of Essex.

A handsome red brick house

Victorian railways brought materials from all corners of the British Isles – such as yellow stock bricks from London and roofing slates from Wales. These two periods – roughly the 18th and 19th centuries – also saw the introduction of *styles* made possible by the new materials. For example: brick allowed taller, squarer buildings; slate permitted lower-pitched roofs.

Elegant facade with a low-pitch slate roof

During this period the vertical sliding sash window was added to many mediaeval buildings, disguising their origins.

Original small-pane vertical sliding sash windows

The Present

From about 1920 onwards, building materials and components such as windows and doors, have been mass-produced and transported across the entire country. As a result, new houses in rural areas like Ardleigh have followed the national trend.

Forge Court

Local authorities, spearheaded by Essex County Council, tried to restore some local character to modern housing developments by issuing design guides. These had some success in steering developers back towards native local colours and styles - but some architects feel that there is now a tendency for design guides across England to promote vernacular styles that are neither authentic ancient nor honest modern.

Planning Guidance

Ardleigh residents would like to see the village maintain its own visual identity by encouraging, wherever possible, the recognition and adoption of local styles of building, choice of materials, colours and components.

Progress in this direction will be easiest within the Conservation Area and, in the case of listed buildings, anywhere in the parish. These are the situations in which the Local Authority can demand compliance, whether it be for new building or for alterations, extensions, or exterior repairs and renewals. In the case of new building outside the Conservation Area, the Local Authority's controlling power is more limited and complete success will only come about as the result of a campaign of education and persuasion. It is hoped that this VDS, which has been formally adopted by Tendring District Council as planning guidance, will be the first step in that campaign. (Section 5 provides more detailed guidance about what would be preferred in Ardleigh).

The Village Envelope and Conservation Area

Boundary of Village Envelope

Boundary of Conservation Area

BING maps © Getmapping plc ©2011 Microsoft

Neighbourhood and Community

The older houses in the village centre were mostly built close to the street, with little or no front garden. A community atmosphere was created from the outset, because none of the housing was remote. In contrast, where a new house has been introduced into an area such as The Street ignoring this principle, the distancing effect may be very noticeable. This distancing effect can be increased if urban styles of fences and gates are coupled with urban styles of architecture.

Phoenix Mill and the Mill House, in Station Road

Church View / Chapel Croft - another important open area

More recent building developments in the village have taken a different approach to creating a community atmosphere. The neighbourhood concept has been incorporated in the design of developments such as Church View/Chapel Croft. In that small estate, the community atmosphere is combined with an airiness resulting from the open green area at its centre and a sense of shelter resulting from its enclosure. There is no through traffic. The development is self-contained. The same comments apply, to some extent, to the earlier development of bungalows in Ardleigh Court, The Limes and Forge Court.

Millennium Green

Ingrams Piece

Wheatlands development combines a sheltered, neighbourhood quality with an open face to the road. The gardens back onto the Ardleigh Millennium Green

Wheatlands

Millennium Green


Colchester Road

Car parking problems elsewhere in the village

Parked cars are a visual blight, and a frequent cause of obstruction. All new housing developments in the village must include garaging or other off road parking facilities.

The Conservation Area

The old part of the village centre lies close to St Mary's Church and the main crossroads, within the Ardleigh Conservation Area.
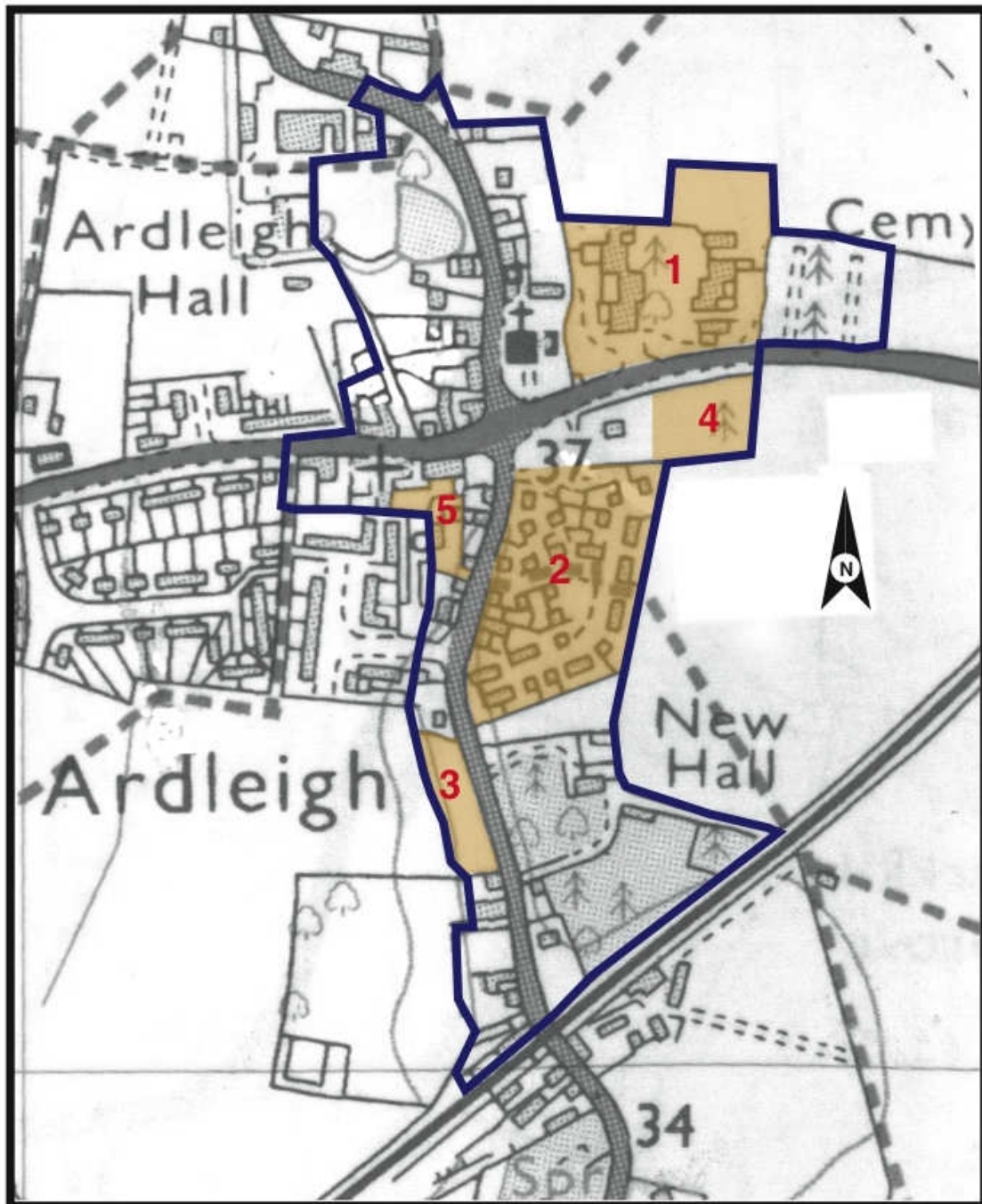
Ardleigh Conservation Area
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However, the Conservation Area also includes much of the post WWII building development near to the historic centre, namely:

1. Ardleigh Court, next to the church, north and east of the crossroads.

2. Chapel Croft/Church View, to the south and east of the crossroads.

3. Wheatlands, on the west side of Station Road

4. The Limes, on the south side of Harwich Road to the east of the crossroads

5. Forge Court, a recent small development on the west side of Station Road.

Although there is limited space for further house-building within the existing Village Envelope, nevertheless this is the main area of Ardleigh where any change is likely to take place, whether through new building or through extensions or other alterations to existing buildings. If, as seems likely, most development will take the form of alterations, it is felt that an important function of the VDS should be to influence the design element in such exercises.

The 1950's local authority housing to the south and west of the crossroads and the housing lying on the north side of Colchester Road, west of the Village Shop, are both outside the Conservation Area but, like most of the Conservation Area, they do lie within the Village Envelope.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal

"Ardleigh is a small mediaeval village at an important road junction and retains its fine church and sequences of attractive vernacular buildings" according to the Conservation Area Appraisal.

"The well-treed approaches to the north and the east are essential to the character of the village and are also included in the Area."

"The village expanded southwards in the 19th century, resulting in further groups of distinctive building which, with their settings, are also recognised by Area designation."

Ardleigh Conservation Area Character Appraisal was adopted by Tendring District Council in March 2006 and is derived from an earlier document produced for the Council by consultants in 2001. The authors of the Conservation Area Appraisal drew attention to individual buildings, groups of buildings or other features which, in their opinion, were positive, neutral or negative in effect.

Features that *they approved of* included:

- the fact that, despite the general openness of the landscape, the approaches to the older part of the village were relatively well-screened
- the dispositions of buildings and the arrangement of mature trees in the area of the cross-roads
- the low brick walls associated with the churchyard and Ardleigh Court
- the designated Important Open Areas of the village centre, at St Mary's Churchyard, at the village cemetery and within Church View/Chapel Croft several of the available views, such as St Mary's Church from Station Road, the crossroads and surrounding buildings seen from the east and the view across the fields towards Rookery Farm from the northern end of The Street.

Ardleigh Court

Buildings at Ardleigh Crossroads – a positive feature

Ardleigh Cemetery – an important open area

St Mary's Church

What they regarded as negative were, above all, those buildings, which combined a lack of historic interest with a lack of visual appeal and a lack of any positive relationship with their surroundings.

Character features to be aware of when considering alteration

Ideally, the same kind of conservative thinking should be applied, at least initially, to buildings of any age in which repairs, replacements, alterations or extensions are being considered. In modern buildings, just as much as in old buildings, respect for the original design concept will commonly lead to the most appropriate choices, when change is to be made. It is likely to produce the most visually attractive result and the greatest enhancement in the value of the property

Station Road

Crossroads

Specific Guidance for the Conservation Area

Information

Tendring District Council has published a valuable series of free advisory booklets. The individual titles are:

Conservation Areas: Advice for property owners and the general public

Listed Buildings: General Advice for owners, prospective owners and developers

Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas: Technical Advice on Painting

Listed Buildings: Technical Advice on Extensions & Alterations

Listed Buildings: Technical Advice on Windows & Window Details

Listed Buildings: Bricks and Brickwork

Listed Buildings: Plaster Work and Renders

Planning Guidance

Anyone considering building or repair work of any kind within the Conservation Area, or involving a listed building anywhere in the parish, is strongly advised to read the relevant booklets before starting work.

Planning Guidance

For development within
the Village Envelope and Conservation Area

For Specific design guidance please refer to the next section.

1.   Development should be confined to land within the boundaries of the defined settlement.

2.   The open spaces within the village centre should be preserved, particularly the recreation ground and Millennium Green. As the village continues to grow, new open areas should be created.

3.   Uniformity of design and materials for new housing would not be appropriate. A variety of house sizes would be preferred.

4.   Trees make an important contribution to the character of the village and its approaches. The planting and management of hedges and trees should be of paramount importance in the consideration of any development. Appropriate indigenous species should be used.

5.   The concept of shelter without confinement is best produced by low walls, fences or hedges.

6.   Boundary fences and gates should be in keeping with the village surroundings.

7.   If new building developments take the form of clusters rather than ribbons, efforts should be made to give them an open face to the village

8.   Any new building plans for dwellings must include adequate provision for off-road car parking.

9.   Extensions and alterations should be compatible with the character of the immediate surroundings. They should be in keeping with, and not detract from, the overall character and appearance of the original building and nearby properties.

Checklist for Conservation Area

The following checklist is not complete but it may help to focus thinking when choices and decisions are to be made in repairs, replacements, alterations or extensions:

Original design - what are its key characteristics e.g. period/style, siting, height, scale?

Original construction materials - how much do they contribute to its appearance?

Existing alterations to original design or materials - were they well-judged or could they be improved?

Roofs - can repairs or new areas of roofing be carried out using materials that closely match the original in type, size and colour?

Chimneys - can they be retained/incorporated in new building? (Houses without chimneys look odd.)

Fascia - can repairs or replacements be made to match the originals? (Especially important in semi-detached or terraced properties)

Dormer windows - if there are some in the house already, new ones or replacements should match them. As a general rule, they should not be introduced into old buildings where none existed before. New dormer windows should not be disproportionately large.

Wall finishes - exterior wall finishes such as renders or painted surfaces can create long-term problems if the materials are ill-chosen. It is sensible and not difficult to obtain technical advice beforehand.

Porches, doors and their decorative surrounds - if these are being replaced or added, the effect upon the visual character of the building – and neighbouring buildings - may be considerable. Anachronistic and stylistic incongruity should be avoided.

Other windows - all windows are such an important part of the visual character of a building that any change is likely to have a pronounced effect. In most cases, introducing windows that do not match the existing ones in a building is likely to be unacceptable.

Boundary walls, railings, fences or hedges - these are all important features of the building in its setting and they merit careful thought. In Ardleigh, high brick walls, tall ornamental iron gates, urban-style metal railings, undulating brick walls topped by wooden palings, and Leylandii hedges can be out of place.

THE OUTLYING HAMLETS AND LANES

The parish of Ardleigh comprises the village itself plus a number of hamlets.

The recognisable outlying hamlets are:

- Ardleigh Heath, along the B1029 towards Dedham
- Burnt Heath, along the B1029 towards Great Bromley
- The John de Bois Hill area, along the A137 towards Colchester
- Fox Street, a hamlet beyond John de Bois Hill on the A137
- Crockleford, along the road from Colchester to Great Bromley

In addition to these readily identifiable hamlets, there are individual dwellings along most of the narrow lanes that run through the farmland surrounding the centre of Ardleigh.

Early maps show the village concentrated at the crossroads, with the church just northeast and most other buildings lying to the west, along the road towards Colchester.
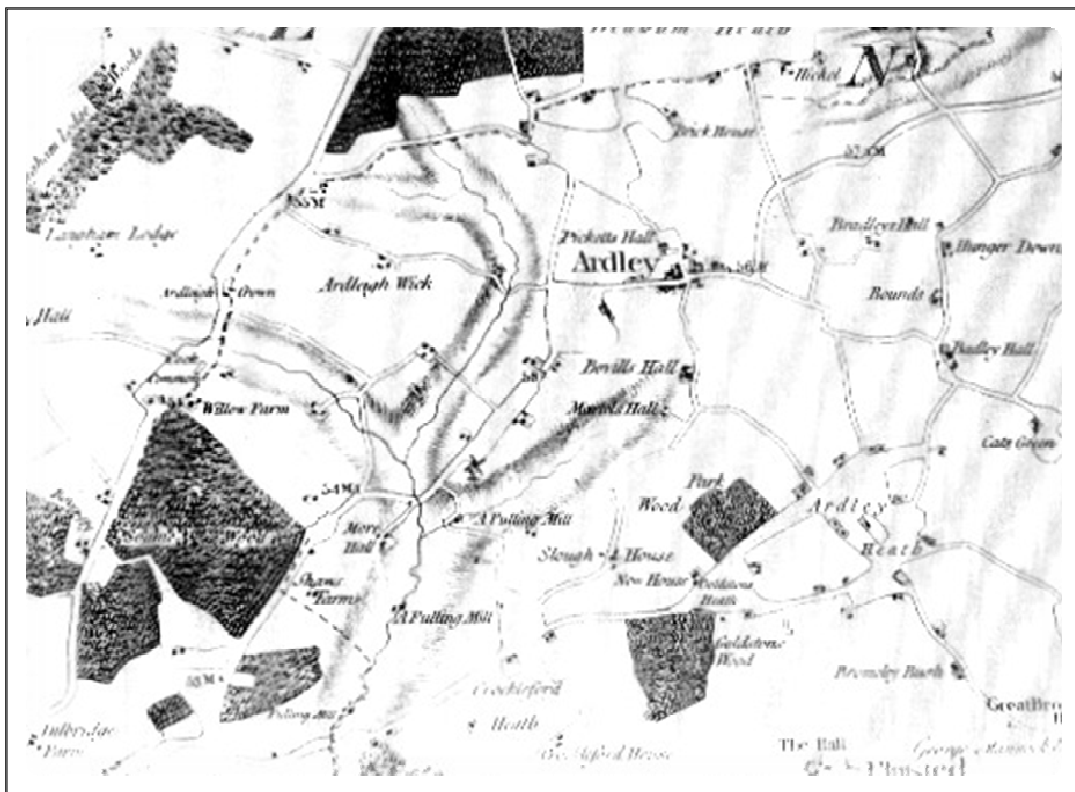
Ardleigh in 1777 (Chapman and André)

This remained the case until well into the 20th century, despite the development of the railway line and associated buildings to the south of the village. Since the end of World War II however, there has been considerable expansion of the village centre, most notably in the form of six separate building developments.

(*See 'Village Centre' Section in 'The Individual Areas of Ardleigh'*)

Parish Hamlets

The hamlets are an important part of Ardleigh Parish

One has the impression that it is not the buildings but rather the field-patterns that have changed and to some extent, the land-usage. In other respects, parts of the parish might still be recognisable to someone from fifty or a hundred years ago.

New hedge and tree planting has been carried out.

Crockleford

The field boundaries on the OS map hint that this area was once a cluster of smallholdings. There appear to be examples of houses from each general historic period. The by-roads, where there are a few houses located behind well-established hedges and trees, appear relatively quiet. Bromley Road is relatively busy.

Wivenhoe Road

The Crockleford end of Spring Valley Lane

Although the old roads from Crockleford to Ardleigh (Spring Valley Lane and Bromley Road) are still intact, the cutting of the A120 runs beneath them like a boundary mark. This is partly because the land immediately beyond the A120 looks different, being relatively more open.

The area has much in common, visually, with other outer-village areas of Ardleigh.

Bromley Road from the A120 to Frating Road

There are small clusters of houses in the Ardleigh section of this road and larger clusters in the Great Bromley section where (under the name Colchester Road) it approaches Frating Road. Again there are examples of housing from each period of history. The overall picture is one of a small number of unassuming houses along a partly hedged road which runs through open farmland, passing beside one area of woodland.

Junction of Bromley Road and Park Road

Park Road

This is a quieter road, which for part of its length runs between parkland and woodland. For the rest, it runs through farmland, where it is only partly hedged. There is one prominent listed building, Ardleigh Park, an associated lodge, a farmhouse and various cottages. Most of these are on the north side of the road.

Ardleigh Park

Cottages at east end of Park Road

Slough Lane

There are few buildings along this lane. The most southerly are those associated with Slough Farm. Further north, on the west side of the lane, are two properties and then the buildings of the quarrying operation and associated businesses. Opposite is the entrance to a recycling and landfill site. At the north end of the lane there are two cottages on the west side and a farm building on the east side. Slough Lane does carry a fair amount of traffic associated with the businesses in the designated employment zone and the farm. Nonetheless, it is not unpleasant and this is largely the result of well-maintained hedging on both sides.

Slough Farm

Frating Road & Burnt Heath

Between its junctions with Slough Lane and Park Road, Frating Road has only two dwellings, Vince's Farm and Chancery Farm. This stretch of the road is slightly winding, between low hedges. The stretch between its Park Road junction and its junction with Mill Lane is densely housed on its southwest side, with only two dwellings on its northeast side. The cottages along the southwest side all lie quite close to the busy carriageway.

Nichols Corner, looking northwest along Frating Road

This part of the parish, Burnt Heath, is sufficiently well built-up to have the character of a village street. It includes a former chapel and, just over the parish boundary, a pub.

Frating Road, Burnt Heath

Mill Lane/Back Road/Waterhouse Lane/Morrow Lane

In more open countryside to the northeast are clusters of small houses, which were originally farm workers cottages. These have been augmented by more modern houses

Cottages in Waterhouse Lane

Home Farm Lane/Little Bromley Road/Hungerdown Lane

A more open weave of lanes, skirting large cultivated fields. The lanes are very lightly populated - principally by large farmhouses, several of which are listed buildings.

Badley Hall, Little Bromley Road

Industrial buildings in Home Farm Lane

A hedge re- planting has been carried out along the south side of Little Bromley Road.

There is light industry in the northern part of Home Farm Lane, adjacent to the railway and the beginnings of the former LSA settlements, which stretch out of the parish towards Lawford.

Fox Ash Estate (part)/Oak Tree Corner/Harwich Road

The character of this area results largely from the buildings and land-use established by the inter- and post-war Land Settlement Association(LSA) in Ardleigh and Lawford.

Although the honest, 1930s-style smaller houses built for the LSA have often been extended, some are still associated with lines of outbuildings and glasshouses. Ardleigh parish contains only the south end of this settlement, where it gives way to older and more traditional-looking farm buildings.

Hunters Chase

This area runs along the northern boundary of the parish. The western half of the lane is characterised by very open unhedged farmland on its south side and by a line of dwellings, mostly bungalows, set back behind hedges along the north side. Like many lanes it contains some buildings which are prominent and others which are not.

Most of the dwellings at the east end of the lane were smallholders' semi-detached cottages, built for the LSA. Some of these have been altered and extended.

Coggeshall Road

Coggeshall Road is a fairly busy through route between Dedham and Ardleigh. Its northern end is in Dedham Heath where there is a large cluster of housing. From where it enters Ardleigh, just north of Hunters Chase, to where it joins the A137, it is well-hedged on both sides and accommodates only about a dozen dwellings. Most of these originated as LSA properties but opposite the entrance Hunters Chase lies Goodhall, a handsome Gault brick building which is one of Ardleigh's listed houses. Further south are Goodhall Farm and Goodhall Cottages.

Most of the buildings are set back from the road. A pleasing feature of this stretch of road is a large ditch on the west side, which holds water and aquatic plants for much of the year.

Ardleigh Heath incl. Dead Lane/Malting Farm Lane/Fen Lane/Dedham Road

On Dedham Road, the dwellings originally related to the land were situated mainly along the east side, facing open fields to the west.

These have been supplemented with 20th century houses, of widely varying sizes. Some of the older houses have been seen as candidates for conversion to larger homes. There are obvious clusters of housing at either end of Dead Lane and at the apex of Malting Farm Lane,   New houses have been sheltered behind hedges and trees.

One of the older houses in Dedham Road

Harts Lane/Wick Lane Crown Lane North/Old Ipswich Road

These lanes are grouped together in most villagers' minds as the single-track lanes to the old A12, leading to Colchester and beyond - but they are all different in character.

Wick Lane, a protected lane, is still a predominantly farming area, with only a few houses in addition to the two old farmhouses. It is hedged but has far fewer trees than the other two lanes. At its east end, like much of Crown Lane North, its character is influenced by the broad valley of Salary Brook, now occupied by Ardleigh Reservoir.

There is ribbon industrial development along the Old Ipswich Road making use of the good connections to the national highway network. Turnpike Close has a number of neat bungalows.

Wick Lane

One of the older buildings in Harts Lane

Industrial buildings on Old Ipswich Road as seen from Wick Lane.

Crown Lane North is sufficiently narrow and winding to have avoided much use as a vehicular through-route. Both Crown Lane North and Harts Lane contain original farmhouses and outbuildings as well as older smaller dwellings, but in both lanes, plots have been developed for individual housing in the 20th century. Because it is not dense development, it seems in general to be adequately absorbed and screened.

The reservoir is much used for angling and for dinghy sailing. Crown Lane North and Wick Lane both afford views of the reservoir and these are highly regarded by Ardleigh residents.

Colchester Road including John de Bois Hill/Fox Street

Development along the A137 toward Colchester is varied. The road supports a filling station, a pub, a restaurant, a little light industry, a car dealership, a bowling club and many houses of various ages and sizes, in interrupted strings first on one side of the road, then on the other.

*Houses near John de Bois Hill*

The Bowls Club

There are still big open spaces to be seen on both sides of the road. Many of the buildings are very similar in origin to those found along Dedham Road or Hunters Chase.

This is mostly early to mid-20th century building with occasional more modern landmarks, such as the filling station, the reservoir buildings and their associated houses in Clover Way, just off the A137, and the car dealership at Fox Street. There are also older houses, some with an agricultural past.

*Haddock's Car Dealership, Fox Stree*t
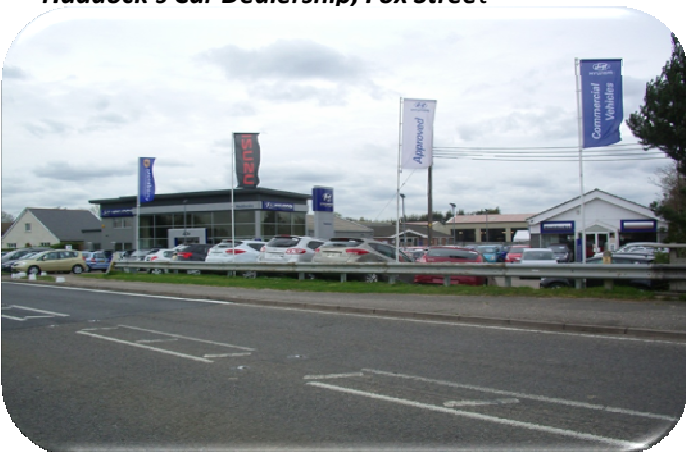
De Bois Hall

Spring Valley Lane and Jubilee Lane

Spring Valley Lane runs from the A137 to Bromley Road in Crockleford. It crosses the railway about 100 metres east of the A137, then winds and descends steeply between hedges into the bottom of the valley, where it passes Spring Valley Mill and the Mill House, both listed buildings.

There are a number of small businesses, engineering, horticultural and arboricultural, particularly extensive orchards.

This part of Ardleigh has a clearly defined character because of its steep valley. This should be respected. The open spaces are an important feature.

Spring Valley Mill and Mill House

House In Jubilee Lane

Plains Farm

The Plains Farm area is the westerly section of the parish adjacent to farmland and the A12/A120 interchange.

Plains Farm Close

The properties back onto farmland. This forms an important green space between Ardleigh and Colchester but directly in front of them are large car showrooms, an hotel and the Ipswich Road.

Plains Farm Close – one of the car showrooms

Planning Guidance

For the Hamlets and Lanes

1. All development should respect the countryside setting.

2. Development should enhance the specific defined character of an area. In rural lanes development should be set back from the carriageway and partly screened, to preserve the character of the lane.

3. Any new building that is allowed should be in keeping with its local surroundings, particularly where the roads are of an open nature

4. Lanes should be preserved, particularly the protected lanes.

5. Hedges and trees should be carefully preserved and/or replaced with indigenous species. Hedges and verges should be well-maintained.

6. Any extensions or alterations should be in keeping with its neighbours. Consideration should be given to the overall building when one part of a semi-detached house is extended.

7. Development should take account of the fact that excess speed and volume of traffic is detrimental to the character of the parish. Any developer must take account of increased road activity.

8. Rural views should be retained by placing utilities underground and resisting applications for telecommunications masts.

9. Road signage, whilst important, should be kept to a minimum.

5. BUILDING DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR ARDLEIGH

General Comment

Residents do not expect all new building works in the parish to replicate the styles of former ages but they do feel they have a right to oppose development proposals which do not meet the criteria listed in Tendring Policy QL9.

It is certainly possible to conform with Policy QL9 without following the original building traditions of the locality. Outside the Conservation Area (and where listed buildings are not concerned) there is no compulsion to take note of these traditional practices. However, respecting them is likely to result in more sensitive proposals for building projects in the village. This is as relevant to house refurbishments, improvements or other modifications as it is to new building, whether in a modern or in a traditional style.

When building owners or planners are proposing to build, extend or repair in past styles, they should endeavour to do this with adherence to traditional proportion and detail. Good quality modern building should also be encouraged – but not uncritically. Bare concrete and stainless steel for example, are materials unsympathetic to the character of the local built environment. Modern buildings can have architectural integrity while yet adopting the scale, overall shapes and materials (or carefully-chosen modern equivalent materials) of Ardleigh's traditional native building stock.

Refurbishments, Improvements and Other Modifications

Where older buildings are being modified in any way, the best visual effect will normally be achieved if the modifications are carried out in a style complementary to that of the original building. This is especially important, so far as the visual environment is concerned, when it affects the frontage of the property or other parts on view to the public.

As earlier modifications might have been carried out with no concern for such issues of taste, it does not necessarily follow that 'more of the same' would be acceptable.

New Building

Ardleigh Parish Council will consider any new development proposals with the following in mind:

1. Planning Policy, Building Regulations, any local or national designations.
2. The design of a new building.
3. Do they maintain or enhance local character and distinctiveness?
4. Is the proposed building well-positioned on their site?
5. Is the height and scale of the proposed building acceptable on this site?
6. Are the design and choice of construction materials acceptable on this site?
7. Will the visual impact of the proposed development on this site be acceptable in relation to the area surrounding the site?
8. Does the proposed building respect or enhance the views, skyline and any natural or man-made features currently visible from the site?
9. Does the proposed development incorporate in an acceptable manner any existing landscape features such as trees, hedges, walls, buildings, water features or buffer zones?


Forge Court

The Limes

Plains Farm Close

Checklist of desirable features for new buildings, additions, extensions and refurbishments in Ardleigh

Roofs

Preferred:

- Pitch of 45 degrees: 'handmade' plain clay tiles, or equivalent modern alternative
- Traditional small dormer windows
- 'Laced' (swept) valleys and 'bonneted' hips *(as opposed to valleys with modern cut valleys, or hips covered with ridge-tiles which may be ungainly on smaller buildings)*
- Chimneys
- Materials used should match in colour, texture and style of the original building and neighbouring buildings where appropriate

- In older properties, roofs should be retained in their current form and any alterations or repairs should use reclaimed or compatible materials
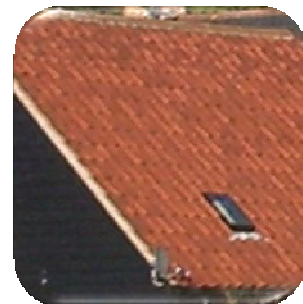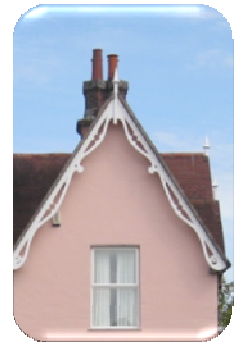
Acceptable in smaller areas:

- Natural slate

Undesirable:

- Shallow pitches
- Sheet roofing
- Pantiles of clay or concrete
  (pantiles are not strongly represented in local tradition)
- Large unrelieved roof areas
- Large flat-topped dormers
- Absence of chimneys

Walls

Preferred:

- Red, handmade (or handmade style), brickwork walls to match local 'soft' red bricks; any arches or decorative features to use fine joints; preference for mortar colour
- Rendered walls (ideally finished with traditional limewash or other truly matt finish)
- Sawn weather-boarded walls: simple 'feathered' Essex boards with black stain or matt paint finish
- Machined weather-boarded walls, flat except for 'bead' moulding to bottom edge, with matt paint finish
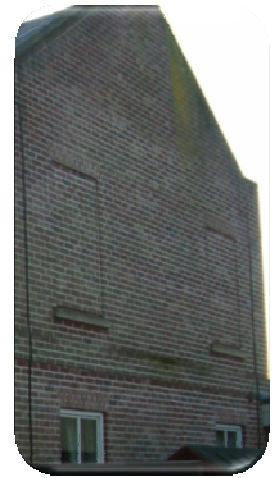
Acceptable in smaller areas:

- White 'Suffolk' handmade (or handmade style) bricks
- 'Pebbledash' render (again ideally finished with traditional limewash or other matt finish)

Undesirable:

- Large areas of unrelieved render finished with bland glossy or semi-matt paints
- 'Shiplap' 1960s weatherboarding (machined with face profiles or bevels)

Windows

The pattern and style of windows should be replicated in extensions to properties.

In semi-detached and terraced houses, windows should aim to achieve unity in the design of the whole building.

Preferred:

- Honest simple glazing in wood (or metal) frames based on traditional sizes
- Glazing bars, if added for effect, to be no wider than 25mm
- 'Cottage' pattern side-hung, multi-pane windows ('landscape' format) based on traditional sizes, without small fanlights and with glazing bars no wider than 25mm
- *(Given the regulatory requirements for double-glazing, electing to use narrow glazing bars implies that these are to be added as an applied grid to the exterior - and not inserted between double-glazing, OR that they are to be a functional part of traditional single-glazed windows installed alongside internal secondary glazing.)*

Undesirable:

- Large unrelieved areas of glazing
- Obscured glazing featuring large-pattern designs

Doors

The pattern and style of windows should be replicated in extensions to properties.

In semi-detached and terraced houses, street-facing doors should aim to achieve unity in the design of the whole building.

Preferred:

- Solid timber in keeping with setting.

Undesirable:

- Doors visible from public streets that are of non-vernacular design

Colour:

- Ideally, the chosen colours should echo the local usage of traditional mineral or vegetable paint colours that characterise many of the houses in the village

Landscaping features

Preferred:

- Clay (brick), stone or concrete individual 'setts' of square or rounded non-geometric design, (if brick or concrete then with batches well-mixed to avoid colour patches)
- Gravel
- Hedges using native stock, such as hawthorn, especially in country lanes
- Brick walls as for buildings, with brick copings
- Vertically boarded fences and gates (stained black or brown, not painted)
- Post and rail fencing (again stained, not painted);
- Traditional timber joinery gates
- Traditional iron fencing and gates in simple styles, not too ornate for village setting
- Simple modern or genuinely traditional light fittings
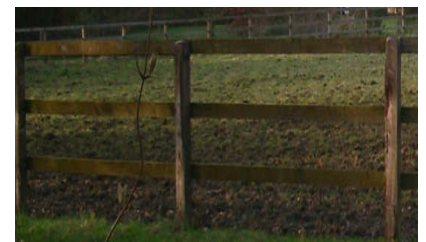
Undesirable:

- 'Suburbanisation' of country lanes with over-elaborate or alien fencing and gate patterns;
- Inappropriate hedging;
- Large unrelieved areas of tarmac, monolithic concrete, or geometric pavers;
- Patterned concrete (e.g. monolithic concrete with surface designs to mimic real stone finishes);
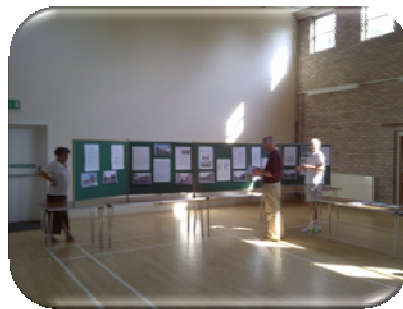- Large numbers of exterior lights.

6. VILLAGE CONSULTATION

Summary of Responses

In 2003 a survey and a number of exhibitions were held to gather the views of the Village.

In 2011 an open day was held to present the draft VDS.

Building and Architecture

Most respondents believed that:

- first-time visitors to Ardleigh would be likely to find it an attractive village
- the overall mixture of architectural and building styles in the village was pleasing
- in general, they would prefer to live in an old house
- future building should not join up the village centre with the outlying hamlets
- the number of houses in any new estate within Ardleigh should not exceed 6
- houses in new estates should be of varied design and size and should either be detached or in informal groups with some linked
- new housing would blend in best if built with materials traditional for the area
- good modern architecture should be allowed but ultra-modern designs would be inappropriate for the village
- ideally, new houses in the village should not look modern
- an individual new house or extension should not overpower its neighbours
- new housing should be planned to include sufficient car parking, preferably hidden from the street
- within the village, hedges were preferable to high wooden fences
- concern was raised about nuisance, particularly security lighting and shiny chimney cowls

Roads, Lanes and other Routes

Most respondents believed that:

- the overall feel of the roads, lanes, hedgerows and any signage was an important impact
- the centre of Ardleigh needed some effective traffic-calming measures
- the old lanes around the village should *not* be developed for the benefit of motor traffic
- rather, they needed to be protected with some appropriate traffic-calming measures
- the roads leading into the village centre should have dedicated ways for pedestrians and cyclists
- the footpaths around the village must be protected
- footpath access to the reservoir would be a great benefit to the village
- within the village centre, street furniture should be appropriate in character

Other Aspects

Most respondents believed that:

- appropriate trees should be planted wherever possible in the village centre
- the village outside the centre did not have enough trees or hedgerows
- the finest views within the village centre were those of St Mary's Church from the south and of the mediaeval cottages (and The Lion public house) from the east
- the finest views outside the village centre were views of the reservoir
- thought should be given to recycling provisions

APPENDIX

Some policies in the Local Plan likely to be of relevance to any proposed development in Ardleigh

QL1	Spatial strategy
QL9	Design of new development
HG1	Housing provision
HG3	Residential development within defined settlements
HG4	Affordable housing in new developments
HG12	Extensions to or replacement of dwellings outside settlement development boundaries
HG22	Gypsy Caravan Sites
COM7	Protection of existing recreational open space etc.
COM7a	Protection of existing playing fields etc.
EN17	Conservation areas
EN18	Fascia and Shop Front signs in Conservation Areas
EN18A	Advertisement Control in Conservation Areas
EN20	Demolition within Conservation areas
RA4	Housing development within defined villages
TR8	Public car parking

Please note: this list is not exhaustive and the Local Plan should always be read as a whole.