



Beyton Village Design Statement

Draft

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Village Design Statement?

This Village Design Statement has been produced by a group of Beyton residents to highlight the qualities of the village and local character.

Local knowledge and ideas have been expressed in order to further the development and changes which continue in the village.

By preparing this statement, we look to influence the people involved in future development, so that there is a positive contribution and enhancement to Beyton's distinctiveness and character.

Changes are brought about by large scale development, building extensions and alterations, removing trees, altering boundaries removing hedges and installing visually dominant fences; all influencing the character and feel of the locality.

There is a strong sense of the community wishing to see our village thrive. If the changes, which are a timeless continuing process, are sympathetic to the existing surroundings, then they contribute to the quality of our village.

Who Controls Future Development?

This is in the hands of District Council who will deal with development proposals in the form of planning applications. Decisions are made following local consultation with Parish Council. Village associations, residents and landowners will typically contribute to the balance to the debate.

How Does the Village Design Statement Work?

By obtaining a consensus of opinion throughout the village and with the acceptance of the Mid Suffolk District Council - the Planning Authority - the Document will be adopted as a **Supplementary Planning Guidance**. The recommendations in the document will then be taken into account in all future planning applications and used by developers and builders in drawing up their applications.

The document will also aid local residents in planning alterations or additions to their existing properties.

THE VILLAGE CONTEXT

Beyton is a small, rural, Suffolk village lying 5 miles east of the historic town of Bury St Edmunds and 8 miles west of Stowmarket. It is situated just to the south of the A14 trunk road and 2 miles to the south of the Ipswich to Peterborough/Cambridge railway line with a station at Thurston.

The village existed before the Norman Conquest of 1066. The Domesday Book refers to Begotona. The antiquity of the settlement is seen in the Saxon church tower and a bricked up Norman doorway in the north wall. The tower is one of only four such buttressed structures found in the western half of Suffolk.



At the time of the first post-war census, in 1954, the population was 394. The Village Plan of 1977 records that in 1975 the population was had remained virtually unchanged at 398. The highest figure recorded up to that date was 447 in 1961. The current electorate is just over 500. Beyton won the Best Kept Village title in 1974, obtaining 95 marks out of 100, and beating 28 other entrants.

In 1979 a new A45 road (re-designated A14 in 1996) which by-passed Beyton was opened. This relieved the village of all but local traffic and altered its whole atmosphere. In 1981 an interesting feature was added to the village with the construction of the gates at Quaker Farmhouse and in 1991 the village sign was erected.

The village has two public houses, the Bear and the White Horse. In the early 1990s the village was deprived of the post office and general store. Many residents would wish to have these services restored.

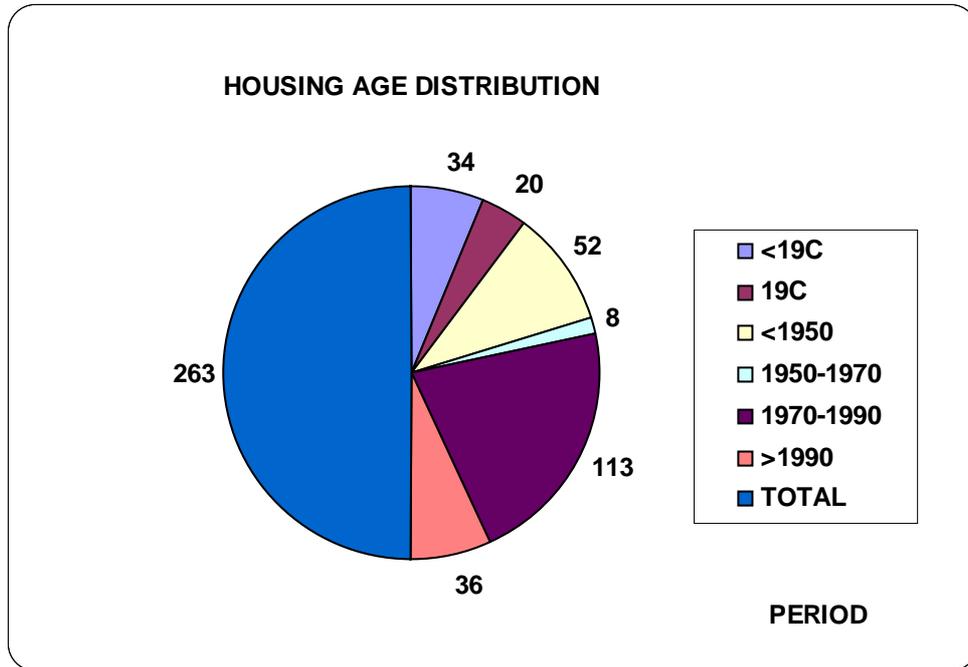
The village sign reflects the church and four geese which are representative of the flock, which have frequented the attractive village green for many years.



Beyton offers a circular walk of three miles which is very well illustrated with a map together with other local information on a Suffolk County Council leaflet. The village has its own Environmental Group (BEG) which is affiliated to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.



Beyton has developed slowly over the past thousand years. The majority of the present population is composed of first time inhabitants who have been attracted to the village by new development. Residents of the village have noted the effect of development and wish to maintain the existing serenity of Beyton, hence the village design statement. The following pie chart on the age of the houses gives an indication on the evolution of the village.



Recommendations

- *Beyton’s rural character should be retained*
- *The Conservation Area should be maintained and enhanced*
- *The Design of any development should be well mannered and confined within the existing Settlement Boundary, subject to the principles set out in the Village Design Statement*

THE CHARACTER OF THE LANDSCAPE SETTING

Beyton is approximately one mile square and is situated in the boulder clay region of the county, now known as Mid Suffolk. In the 18th century this region was known as the Woodlands, indicative that at that time the whole of mid-Suffolk was heavily wooded. In the 19th century the name was changed to High Suffolk. Today the region's wooded areas are very fragmented, small remnants of the past.

Beyton has one small named wood within its parish boundary, Upper Wood, on the north side of the A14. The visual panorama to the south and west affords a 'wooded' aspect and the south-west boundary runs alongside Chevins Wood, believed to be of ancient origin.



The more recent development has taken place to the south of this road particularly along Church Road towards Hessett, and to the east of The Bear public house. However, the rural ambience of the village has been preserved mainly by the countryside which so closely surrounds it. This rural aspect particularly enhances the view over the church.

To the north of the old A45 the area is bounded by the A14 and this sector of the landscape is mostly cultivated, arable land of cereals and sugar beet. Rougham Place Farm, situated to the north-west is moated and a footpath, believed to be Anglo-Saxon in origin, connects this to the village area known as Beyton Green. The trees and surviving hedgerows in this sector of the village are mostly deciduous and are mainly on the periphery of the fields.



To the south of Bury Road the village is again surrounded by cultivated, arable land. As in the northern sector, mainly cereal and root crops are grown. Here small copses of deciduous trees remain and hedgerows comprising hawthorn, blackthorn and other indigenous material flourish. Bury Road, leading from the village, is flanked by young oaks which in time will produce an avenue of trees.

On the south side of the village the land between Beyton and Hessett is again agricultural mainly under cultivation with the same crop elements as elsewhere. In this area there is also some pasture land on which both farm animals and horses graze.



These open areas add to the visual quality of the village as do the importance of ingenious trees and hedging, which is important to the rural character of the village. [\(see map\)](#)

There are walnut trees in the meadow behind the public house and a line of lime trees bordering the west side of Church Road. To the south of Quaker Lane which is bordered by a number of both old and new properties Beyton there is open agricultural land. To the south-west the parish boundary is designated by Chevins Wood, a large well-managed area of old woodland. Along the Drinkstone

Road lies Brook Farm. This is a moated building and is believed to be originally a medieval yeoman's dwelling. The bridge which now crosses the moat is formed from the bomb rack of a Lancaster bomber which crashed in the field opposite during World War 2.

The sector to the east of Drinkstone Road and the A14, whilst still open countryside, is more undulating. Here again the parish boundary is marked by a public footpath which connects the A14 to Drinkstone Road. The land under cultivation in this sector also has cereal and root crops, the latter being mainly sugar beet. The remainder whilst still under cultivation are farmed by units outside the parish.

In the last half century almost all the land surrounding the village has been turned over to intensive arable farming. Hedges and orchards have been grubbed out, stock ponds filled in or neglected, and the water table lowered by deep ditching. The resultant loss of habitat has caused a continuing decline in the variety and volume of wildlife in the wider countryside. A few very small areas of privately owned meadow remain close to the village boundary.

Within the village loss of open spaces - gardens, allotments, orchards, etc - for infill housing development, plus the ensuing extra pressures of increasing human population, have further contributed to the downward trend.

The visual context of the village landscape is recognised by the Planning Authority by their designation of a number of areas within Beyton's boundary as **Visually Important Open Spaces**. These include the Green and its surrounds, the pond and an area abutting Thurston Road north of the green. It is in everyone's interest that these features are preserved for our present enjoyment and for those to come after us.



Anyone planning the planting of trees and shrubs in new developments should be encouraged to follow the advice given in the Mid Suffolk District Council's "Landscape Specification for Development Sites" – a general guide for landscape schemes.

Recommendations

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- *The density of new housing should allow for the planting of trees and hedges for both visual and environmental benefit*
 - *The character of the landscape should be safeguarded, any development must be sympathetic to the local environment and existing buildings, especially those of historic interest.*
 - *Open spaces should be managed and maintained with due consideration given to the community and wildlife.*
 - *Existing trees and hedges should be improved by correct management with in-fill planting with indigenous trees and shrubs – in line with the Planning Authority's General Guide on Landscaping Schemes.*
 - *Any new development will only be within the existing village boundary in line with the adopted MSDC Local Development Framework, 2008.*
 - *Any development on the edge of the settlement should be edged with trees and hedging so that the approaches to the village are softened visually.*
 - *Existing old stock ponds should be revitalised.*
 - *The designated Visually Important Open Spaces must be protected and maintained.*

SETTLEMENT PATTERN CHARACTER

Overall Pattern of Village, District Zones and Layout

Beyton is made up of two distinct settlements connected by an area of orchards, school playing field and Church land.

The old Beyton Village straddled the road from Stowmarket to Bury St Edmunds and there still exists a well/pump and pond supplying water for animals in Quaker Lane. Beyton Lodge was the residence of the local squire whose farm workers' cottages dating from the 18th Century still exist. The Church is the oldest building in Beyton and occupies the highest point in the village.



The Parish Church of All Saints therefore provides an important visual focus in the village and open views to and from the church should be safeguarded. [\(see map\)](#)

Beyton Green grew as a separate village with areas for grazing farm animals, a pond and a communal pump on the open green following which a forge, shops and two pubs were built. The stream running through the green would have facilitated building further dwellings in the area.

Protecting the approaches to this area is essential to safeguarding the visual setting of the green

New residential developments in the Bury Road and in Bear Meadow have been built more recently, extending the original settlement area along its main axis routes. Unusually for such a small community there are two pubs, one at either end of the village, probably due to the village straddling the main trunk road from the East Coast to the Midlands. Also unusual is the large middle school just to the south of Beyton Green, built in the 1950s and serving a wide area of rural villages.

Character of Streets and Routes through the Village

The original track linking Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds is now known as Cangles and Quaker Lanes. The latter is now used as a short cut for traffic from the south of Beyton wishing to join the A14 westbound. Church Road takes traffic to Beyton Green thence onto the A14 eastbound. Both these routes are very busy during peak periods as commuter traffic is generated by recent village settlement and the Middle School.

The east-west corridor of Beyton Green is wide having formerly been a turnpike and in more recent times designated a main trunk road, the old A45. (a northerly by-pass, now part of the A14, was built in the 1980's. Modern housing roads to the north and west of the village contrast markedly with the original lanes, having footpaths incorporated with them and, in a few cases, street lighting.

A number of footpaths, which are rights of way, are kept open in the village including a circular walk and links to adjoining parishes.

Should traffic management schemes require physical improvements within the village, an enhanced standard of design and materials should be encouraged.

Character and pattern of open spaces in the village and connections with the wider countryside

There are five main routes leading into Beyton, **the** general aspect from each of these roads is of open formal agricultural land. The one exception to this is the route from Rougham leading into Quaker Lane, which is surrounded by high hedges.

Chevins Wood is a particularly attractive feature on this route as it is the only significantly wooded area close to the village. There are a number of maintained Rights of Way joining the village to neighbouring parishes.

The Village Green dominates the approach from the north, east or west and comprises open green now used for recreation, mature trees and a stream interspersed, with a small number of old dwellings, a former forge and village school amongst others.



Adjacent to the green lies the village pond, now an important visual feature and originally an important amenity for both local and driven livestock.

Linking the old village with Beyton Green are significant open spaces comprising former orchard land and school playing fields as a foil to 1950s and 1980s housing development in Church Road.



With few exceptions much of the village properties back onto open countryside and/or faces the village green. The impression is thus one of openness rather than narrow lanes and this is explained further in the next section.



Recommendations

In order to respect the character and appearance of the village, a mix of housing will be supported within the constraints of government guidance.

- ***Avoid overdevelopment to maintain open spaces and the rural character of the village***

BUILDINGS AND SPACES IN AND AROUND THE VILLAGE

An analysis of the ages of houses in the village shows that the majority of dwellings are relatively modern. Apart from the church (12th century), older buildings in the village consist of two 16th century cottages on the Green, seventeen houses from the 17th century (again mostly on the Green), some ten cottages and houses from the 18th century and five buildings of the mid-1800s. Most of these are listed. Otherwise, the majority of houses in Beyton were built from 1900 onwards. There were three intense periods of construction activity in 1930s, 1950s and 1980s. The majority of the village lies within a Conservation Area.

Tostock Road

A great deal of new building has occurred over the past few years, especially behind The Bear public house, where a number of new detached houses and one small terrace of four homes have been constructed. These houses are mostly built in light coloured brick with slate roofs. They do not seem obtrusive. There is a mixture of steep and shallow pitched roofs. Mature hedges and trees hide buildings on the northern side of the road. Garages are mainly on or behind the building line. Most buildings have double glazed or sash windows. Heading into the village, greenery is of mainly indigenous species. Most frontages are cut and give a cared-for appearance.



Drinkstone Road

Properties are mainly older with modifications of replacement windows and roofs, with some sympathetic infill. There are no footways. The road is edged with banks and some tended hedges on the eastern side. Approaching the village from Drinkstone, the road widens at the school entrance to give open views dominated by mature trees and well-tended grassy areas heading towards the green. A small development of three houses is well hidden behind mature planting including specimen trees and laurel hedges. Coaches entering the school grounds take a wide sweep to go through the narrow gates up to the school.



The Green, Thurston Road, Bury Road

There is a lack of dominant features but rather a general mix of styles, particularly of roof materials. The largest number of older houses (around The Green) are rendered and some have painted brickwork giving a rendered appearance. The most common roofing material is slate, not always paired with rendered walls, which is still popular today being used in recent construction. Three of the oldest properties have thatched roofs and these are all in good repair.

A considerable number of properties around The Green are of light, if not white, brick with slate roofs and as they are mostly over 50 years old, are now well weathered. There are also several concrete tile roofs, now well weathered, that do not intrude.



Architectural styles naturally reflect the period in which they were built and around The Green some attempts at compatibility were more successful than others. There is an interesting roof style (mansard) at Bridge House and three older houses, one each side of The Green, have the tall pitch of Suffolk farmhouses. There are no flat or single pitch roofs and generally a most interesting mix of styles and materials is evident. The house on the South side of the Green are the oldest and are all listed, together with Corner and Thimble Cottage and Well Yard. The White Horse public house

and the Manor House are also listed. This area is the oldest part of Beyton Green and should be preserved.

Beyond The White Horse along Bury Road a large amount of recent development has filled in between the few original properties. They are all of brick of various colours and, now matured and well screened by the original mixed hedging, give an agreeable aspect to the village.

The approach to the village from the West (from Bury St Edmunds via the A14 or from Thurston) is characterised by trees. A mix of willow and poplar growing alongside the stream/ditch is complemented by a relatively new copse, which screens the 1950s council houses. Beyond this there are two thatched houses together representing the pre-war outer limits of the village. The Green is well covered with trees, both along the stream and elsewhere, with all the houses being totally or partially screened by hedges of thorn, holly or privet.

Bury Road

Consistent with the rest of Beyton, there are no buildings above two storeys. The houses are predominantly post-second world war, the majority being in-fill between original properties. All houses are brick built with pitched and tiled roofs. Each house is sited in its own grounds and the majority are screened by mixed hedging.



Field Close

This is a stand alone 1980s development of houses and bungalows, built as an individual scheme, which is out of context with the rest of the village. The properties are of brick construction with tiled roofs. Field Close is very visible from the West when viewed from the Bury Road with some of the original hedge screening removed.

An opportunity was missed by not screening the development from the western approach to the village along the Bury Road by planting trees and shrubs in line with planning guidance publications.

Quaker Lane

Like so much of Beyton, the ages of the 35 houses in Quaker Lane span many years: over half being built between the 1930s and 1950s. Only a third pre-date the turn of the century, some going back to the 17th century. The balance were built in the 1980/90s. The buildings have pitched roofs with the majority being tiled - pantiles or modern concrete equivalents. There are two thatched houses. New and old buildings are inter-mixed throughout the length of the lane and have either north or south frontal aspects. The building material is either brick or coloured rendering. The roof lines are of similar scale with the exception of one recent infill. In many ways Quaker Lane presents one of the most interesting areas in the village and any further development, which by definition would only be in-fill should take account of the character and style of the area. The existing houses are surrounded by open country and trees and this sense of space and balance should be preserved.



Church Road

There are forty-eight houses on Church Road (from the White Horse to Beyton House), all brick built with only nine rendered or roughcast. Eight are actually bungalows with one chalet bungalow. Twelve properties have slate roofs, the others having a mixture of colours, shapes and types of tile material, e.g. concrete or fired clay. The stock is all in good repair. Bricks vary from white through to red with some flint used. The recent developments in Rectory Gardens have blended well together. One of the pairs of council houses has a tall, double pitch gambrel (mansard) roof. Two of the older cottages, presumably thatched originally, have tall, pitched roofs. There are no flat roofs except on the school buildings (1952), which are not prominent. Screening is varied from leylandii, privet and beech hedges to flint and brick walls and close-boarded fence.



Unique buildings in the area are:

All Saints Parish Church

- flint and stone, with flat red roof tiles, Saxon round tower and was largely rebuilt in 1850 when the Norman doorway was rebuilt into the wall of the new North aisle. A brick built vestry was added in the 1970's on the south side.

Picture 17

Beyton Garage

- a new steel clad construction with a concrete apron to the front with a mesh fence surround located in an otherwise residential area.

the Old Maltings Barn

- behind The White Horse, brick quoins with flint (knapped) and slate roof.

Recommendations

Diversity of design lends character to a village scene. Doors, windows, walls and roofs can and should be varied with the following constraints as applied to existing buildings as well as new developments.

Given the large number of recommendations, they are divided into three sections:

(i) Developing Areas and Layout

- ***The Conservation Area should not be diminished***
- ***Proposals for developments within the Conservation Area should respect and enhance the surroundings***

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- *Spaces between existing buildings should be recognised for the importance they give to the village scene by providing sightlines to the surrounding countryside.*
 - *Any extensions to existing buildings, including conservatories, should be in proportion to the original and the design and materials used in keeping with the original.*

(ii) Building Materials and Design

- *Traditional brick or rendering in traditional colours or flint should be used. Artificial stone is not desirable*
- *New developments should include natural hedging (field maple, thorn, etc.) Urban style, open plan fronts and boarded fences should be avoided. Inappropriate planting should be discouraged e.g. leylandii. Again reference to the Landscape Specification is recommended*
- *Windows should be in proportion to the building mass. Their style, particularly if they are replacement units, should be in correct proportion.*
- *Door, window and rooflight styles should be in keeping with adjacent buildings. Large picture windows on frontages should be avoided*
- *Doors and porches should not dominate the frontage*
- *Garages should be behind or in line with any new building, not positioned in front of the main building line. Large single doors for two-car garages and carports should be avoided*
- *Roof heights and pitches of any new building should visually enhance the surroundings and blend with adjacent buildings. Pantiles, slates or thatch are favoured. Flat and single pitch roofs and plastic tiles should be avoided*
- *In designing any new building in the village, it is strongly recommended that reference should be made to the “Suffolk design Guide for Residential Areas” where detailed information and illustrations are provided*

(iii) Infrastructure

- *Every effort should be made to blend roadworks associated with any development into the existing environment and any material chosen for inclusion in the Conservation Area should respect and enhance their surroundings.*
- *Mobile phone, or similar, masts should not be erected within the Settlement*
- *Satellite dish aerials should be installed in such a way as to minimise their visual impact and ideally coloured to match their surroundings.*

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- *Screen belts of trees and shrubs should be a pre-requisite for any development on the boundary of the village*
 - *Where security lighting is to be used, it should be placed so as not to spill over on to village roads. Unnecessary light pollution should be avoided*
 - *Where lighting is necessary, consideration should be given to fixing it to existing structures and not free-standing stanchions or posts*

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

Character

Streets in the village are mostly wide enough for two cars to pass with care. Some, however, have high banks and hedges.

There are footways in newer developments and on some roads, for example Church, Tostock, Bury and Thurston Roads and The Green towards the A14. There are many soft edges to roads and gravel and tarmac drives open onto thoroughfares. The village is used as an access to the A14 East and from the A14 West for surrounding villages.

Footpaths and Cycleways

An attractive Circular Walk has been laid out in the village, utilising public rights of way. It also links Quaker Lane to Bury Road and Church Road. There are no designated cycleways at present.

The construction of cycle routes and new footpaths and the extension of existing paths should be encouraged both within the present village and any new development.

Parking

Parking is mostly off-road in drives or private garages. There are congested areas in Quaker Lane and at all access points to the school during peak times. There is a shortage of off-road parking in many parts of the village.

Street Furniture

Overhead power and telephone lines are carried on poles except along the old A45 from The White Horse west towards Bury St Edmunds. The village has two telephone kiosks, a bus shelter on the Green, rubbish bins and marker posts for utilities.

Traffic

Most journeys are undertaken by cars with only one passenger to/from work in surrounding areas. At peak term times, there is considerable congestion at the Church Road and Drinkstone Road entrances to the school. Due to restricted access from the east, the village is used as a cut-through by some large goods vehicles approaching the Rougham Industrial Estate.

Traffic Noise Abatement

The village is affected by traffic noise, both from vehicle passing through the area and also from the A14 trunk road to the north. Given that traffic volumes will increase in future years any opportunity to minimise its impact should be taken.

Recommendations

- *Any development should take account the need to encourage traffic calming.*
- *Cycle routes and new footways or the extension of existing paths should be encouraged*
- *Surface finishes should be in sympathetic materials and should not conflict with their surroundings*
- *A mix of hard and soft edging to the verges should be retained – see map showing sensitive areas*
- *Where possible, existing overhead cables should be buried when opportunities arise and all new developments should have service cables underground.*
- *Parking for vehicles should be designed to avoid the use of soft verges, especially around the Green.*
- *Traffic noise screening must be an amenity pre-requisite for now and any future development within the Settlement Boundary*

Economic Development

The village has, like many others, experienced a decline in the number of businesses - in the last twenty years it has lost the village shop and a petrol station. The Middle School is the most significant local employer.

The village is predominately a dormitory settlement but it is interesting that there are a growing number of people who manage to work some of their time from home through the use of modern communications.

The present Development Plan has no provision for any commercial development.

Recommendations

- *Any economic development should be small scale and should utilise any redundant agricultural buildings in preference to new construction.*
- *Landscaping should be carefully considered in any development.*

08.01.2009