

Milborne St Andrew

PLACE Assessment Summary Report

April 2016



feria
urbanism





Working with
Milborne St Andrew
to develop a
neighbourhood plan



Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio with specialisms in neighbourhood planning, urban strategies, architecture and civic design. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of planning and design projects across the UK.

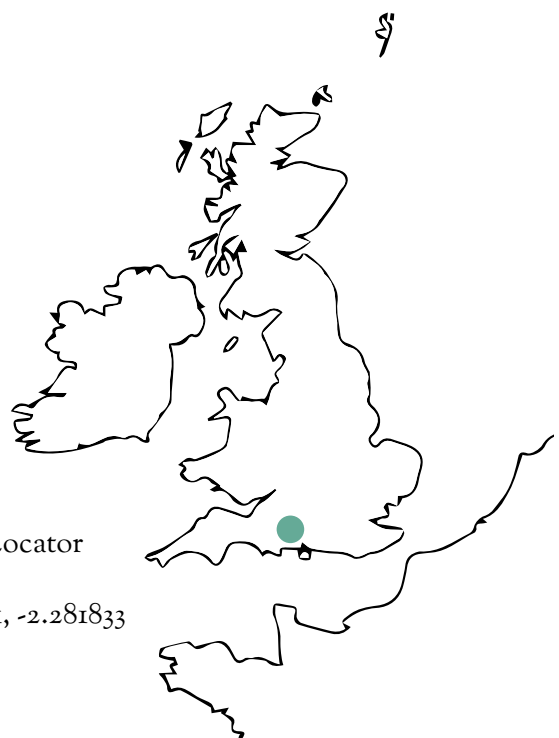
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PLACE Assessment



On Saturday 5th March 2016, the Milborne St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group undertook a PLACE assessment of the village. Working alongside the team from Fera Urbanism, a local design and planning practice based in Bournemouth, the group made a series of assessments based around the five components of place-making, namely Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering (i.e. street design and traffic management).

This summary report captures the results of the day, together with a photographic record and commentary on some of the more relevant architectural elements uncovered by the PLACE assessment; see pages 12 — 21.



About PLACE

The purpose of the PLACE assessment for Milborne St Andrew was to provide an insight into the way the design of the built environment needs to be considered as part of the neighbourhood plan process.

The background to using the PLACE format for the assessment process is the Farrell Review¹ a national review of architecture and the built environment, independently run by a panel of built environment experts.

The Farrell Review asks for an increased focus on the civic value of well-designed public spaces, streets and amenities and the character and needs of existing communities, instead of a narrow focus on architecture.

This increased focus requires greater collaboration between the Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering professions. The review suggests that only when all five professions work together effectively can successful place-shaping truly happen.

The place assessment for Milborne St Andrew was designed to provide the neighbourhood plan steering group with a greater understanding of the five key aspects to successful place-making and how this can positively influence the emerging neighbourhood plan.

The project process

The neighbourhood plan potentially represents a once in a generation opportunity to shape the future of the parish and its surroundings.

At this stage, the neighbourhood plan is not yet finished. However, if sites were to come forward for development through the neighbourhood plan process, or sites for redevelopment and improvement were to be identified, what would be the right design response? What will be considered good planning and good design?

Working in teams of five, each team member was responsible for Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation or Engineering. The teams undertook a critical analysis of Milborne St Andrew and its immediate surroundings. This analysis was undertaken without any specific design proposals in mind.

The teams of five were issued with bespoke handbooks, containing maps and key questions to answer. Each handbook was prepared for a specific element of the PLACE process. Participants were asked to focus their observations exclusively around their specific PLACE element only when out on site. Back in the venue, they were able to compare their observations and ideas with other members of their PLACE team to generate a more considered assessment.

This has helped to provide a greater understanding of the village, as captured in this summary report, and this can help inform the emerging neighbourhood plan.

¹ <http://www.farrellreview.co.uk/>

Key Messages

The following is a summary of the main points raised by members of the group that undertook the PLACE assessment.

Planning

- The school grounds and surrounding land needs to be safeguarded for future expansion.
- There needs to be better signage and a more positive appearance to the industrial units along the main A354 route as this is the eastern entrance into the village and is currently considered unsightly.
- Any new development to the north and south of the A354 should consider traffic impacts and connectivity between the two sites, possibly via the introduction of a new junction.
- The space requirements for a new GP surgery, and its precise location, needs to be defined and identified.

Landscape

- The stream running through Milborne St Andrew needs to be considered carefully within any new development plans. Flooding and obstruction issues need to be addressed.
- There are small patches of open green space that are located within the north of the village and could be put to better use.
- The south east of the village provides much of the green, open space and this needs to be preserved and enhanced.
- Many of the long-distance views are focused to the east of the village, with some longer views to the south too, towards the hills.
- A few of these views are enhanced by tree-lined edges and buildings in the foreground.

Architecture

- The centre of the village is rich with positive architectural features and buildings that need to be protected.
- The Huntley Down properties to the north of the village are considered to be good examples of modern low-density development.

— The development to the south of the village along Orchard Rise contains a good mix of building styles and materials. However, garage conversions and increased numbers of cars has made the area feel too dense.

— Homefield and Weatherby Close properties to the south east of the village currently have good views out onto the surrounding countryside beyond.

— The location and the orientation of the pitched roofs makes roof-mounted solar panels in the village highly visible. Future development should ensure sustainable technology is better integrated into the property itself.

— The Rings development was originally built for local workers and the properties are now privately owned. These large plots are geographically separated from the rest of Milborne St Andrew and are situated along a private road which is in need of maintenance.

Conservation

— Trees-lined roads are a key feature in Milborne St Andrew and should be conserved as much as possible.

— There are a few pieces of heritage, including an ancient settlement on the current industrial site and old gate posts to a previous manor house to the south of the village.

— The flint walls that run throughout the village and line many of the roads should be preserved and maintained.

— There are a number of heritage buildings in the village that should be preserved.

— The working and community part of the village is in the central area, surrounding the village square, that needs to be rediscovered.

— There are a collection of shops and small industrial units that need protection.

Engineering

— Speeding cars and parked vehicles can dominate the streets in some areas.

— More pedestrian and cycle-friendly options are needed, for example: improved road-surfaces, better footpaths and more frequent crossing points.

— Benches and seating in appropriate areas need to be preserved or implemented.

— The stream could be celebrated further, all the while keeping in mind the need to protect against flood risk.

Planning
Landscape
Architecture
Conservation
Engineering

- Planning**
Landscape
Architecture
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Many buildings or heritage such as the Old Rectory and a shop site at the village square need to be preserved

Important areas of green space that need to be preserved or redesigned to provide better quality open spaces

The square offers great potential and should be redeveloped as an attractive, focal feature of the village

Longer distance views

Speeding cars and parked vehicles dominate many roads. More pedestrian and cycle-friendly options are needed including improved surface maintenance, improved footways & crossing points

The stream needs to be considered carefully within any new development plans and flooding and obstruction issues need to be addressed

Good design, but some properties are overlooked by others that rise higher. Could this be restricting natural light?

This development is nicely laid out and of relatively low density

This patch of land is considered an eyesore and is not well-maintained

Unattractive and over-bearing road

New junction to be implemented here if development to the north

There was an ancient settlement here

The Rings development is a significant part of the village's working heritage. They are 3 storey brick buildings situated on large plots. The road however, is believed not to be adopted and therefore there is no cohesive maintenance between the private owners

This development is nicely laid out and of relatively low density

This patch of land is considered an eyesore and is not well-maintained

Unattractive and over-bearing road

New junction to be implemented here if development to the north

There was an ancient settlement here

The Nest and flint wall

Conserve tree-line

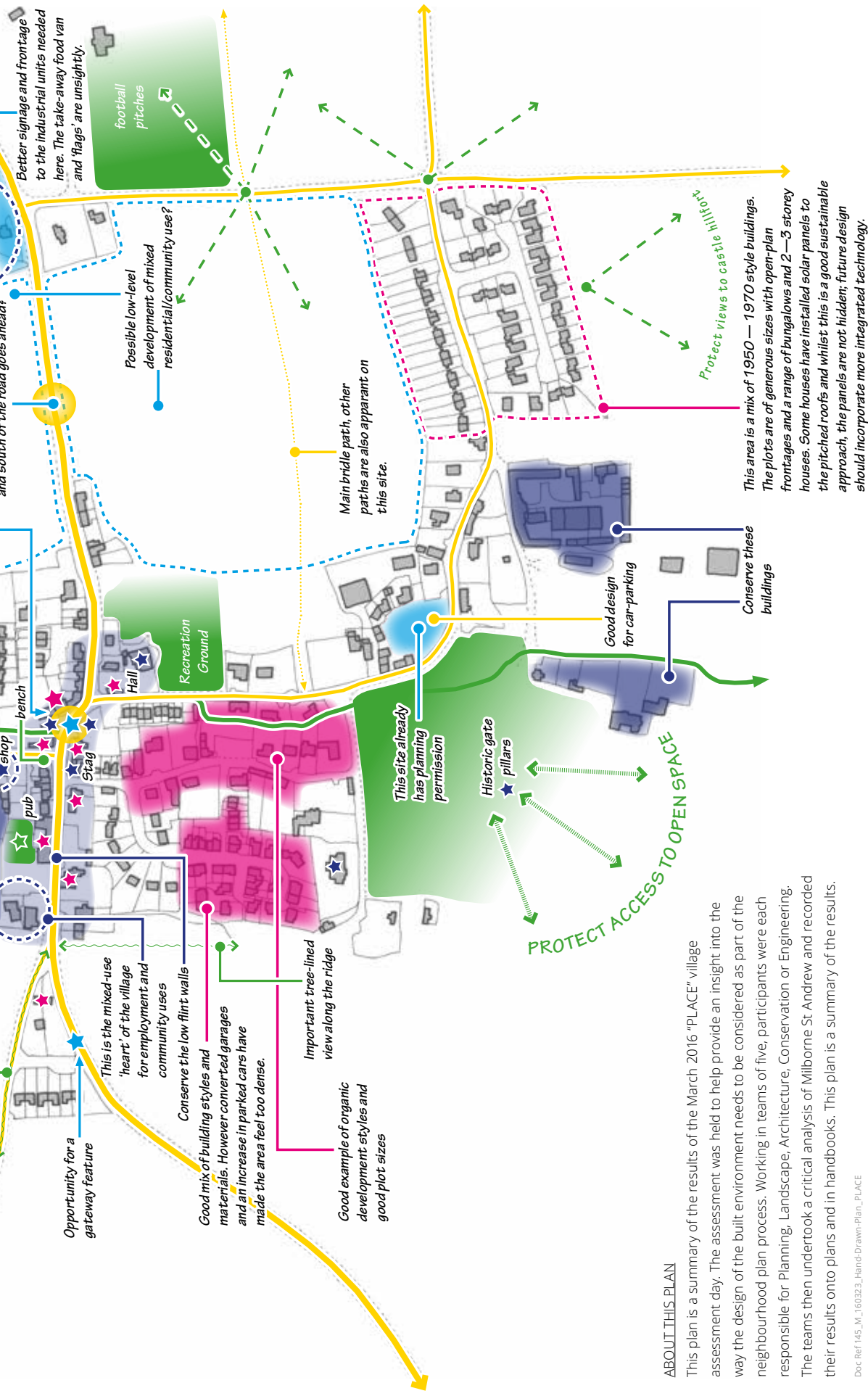
This is a sunken lane lined with a rural hedgebank tunnel

Safeguard this land for future expansion of the school and pre-school

Temporary summer seating?

Important tree-lined view along the ridge

Good design and car parking layout



Ground Details



Driveways that are a combination of hard-paving and gravel/grass allow for drainage, whilst also remaining a suitable area to drive and walk on.



Central drainage channel to a road allows for the edges to be used by pedestrians and cyclists without obstruction.



Clear definitions between private land and public space are important. However, what practical use are these small patches of green space? Are they useful or just a maintenance headache?



Ground detail can help define a boundary. However the materials should be cohesive and enhance or reflect local character, unlike this example.



If public space is left undefined, it can become under used, appear shabby and unattractive.



A lack of soft landscaping and too much hard surfacing has encouraged parking and hindered pedestrian access and use.



Hard surfaces (such as this "black top" area by the shop) are useful for car parking, but what purpose does the space serve when it is not being used by vehicles?



Several different surface materials and level changes can be visually confusing and prove a frustration to those with impaired mobility..

Boundary Details



High boundary walls with flint details clearly define public and private areas but can create blank edges.



This high boundary edge is a combination of a low wall with a fence, allowing light into the garden.



This stepped brick wall provides a sense of welcome as the junction is approached. This is enhanced with seating and planting, but will anybody sit here, right next to a litter bin?!



There are many different boundary styles in the village, reflecting a sense of individuality and a character mix.



Many properties in Milborne St Andrew are located adjacent to the stream. This is a distinctive feature and whilst flood protection is essential, more open boundaries and public access to the stream could help to celebrate this aspect of the local topography and landscape.



High boundaries can provide privacy. However in this instance the strong divide creates a “dead” street frontage.



Long, uninterrupted walls can encourage roadside parking and have a negative impact on pedestrian access and the visual quality of the street.



Chain link fencing allows can be too open in character and often fails to fully define the public and private realms. Such details are uncharacteristic of the area.

Frontage & Facades



Flat-fronted facades and small front courtyards are a typical architectural feature in the village and collectively provide a strong street-scene to the village.



White, rendered and thatched cottages are softened with green landscaping that borders the front of the property.



This property has used different coloured brick, laid in a distinctive pattern. This attention to detail creates a sense of individuality and quality.



The mix of exposed brickwork and render allows the building to be visually broken into layers and deters the eye from the three-storey height.



When front gardens are lost to car parking the area can quickly begin to feel much more dense and crowded.



Porches and front stairways can be characteristic of the village. However the stark layout, metal railings and awkward turn to the entrance here could be better.



Blank and largely windowless facades can suffer from neglect and impact negatively on the immediate surrounding space.



Open front gardens with a mix of greenery and hard surfacing are visually appealing and help the street to become cohesive and integrated.

Rooflines



The mix of curves and sharp angles to this roofline bring a sense of style and creativity to the property and its neighbours.



The rooflines surrounding the village square vary in materiality but are relatively consistent in height and pitch.



Development here is nestled into the landscape and the different roof heights reflect the drop of the adjacent hill.



The houses at the top of this road stand tall and have little variation in roof pitch. They sit on a ridge and do not appear to be at ease with the surrounding landscape.



This row of thatched cottages frames the view to the surrounding green space and leads the eye towards the openness of the land beyond.



The jumble of buildings in this scene has a sense of “ordered chaos” and is very characteristic of a typical English village.



Behind garden walls, the rooftops beyond are visible and the gabled walls are screened with garden greenery.



As with the older thatched cottages at the end of this road, the rooflines of these 20th Century properties appears consistent with the surrounding topography.

Massing & Scale



These bungalows stand closer together than traditional farm buildings, but provide a subtle entrance to the village and low roofs have reduced visual impact.



A mix of shapes and building materials can allow the village to grow organically and help prevent new areas from becoming separate communities within the village.



Creating linked blocks of homes and garages allows the residential form to define a strong street-scene. It also makes the garage more adaptable (i.e. it could be converted to an extra room or workshop) unlike stand-alone garage blocks.



There are many large building forms in the village that work well in a rural setting. Can these be sensitively replicated elsewhere without imposing modern or alien structures on the village?



The Rings development was originally a large set of terraced houses built for employees of a local business. They are now converted flats but provide a possible template for other residential schemes elsewhere in the village.



The general repetition of building materials and overall form identifies Weatherby Close as being a more modern development built at the same time. This is not the type of “organic” growth often sought after.



Although there are established three-storey buildings elsewhere in the village, the angles and proportions to this particular block do not complement the surrounding area.



This addition to the more historic part of the village takes introduces semi-detached houses with off-road parking and wider road layouts. Is this an appropriate design approach?





