



Building Design into the Surrey Hills

Guidance on the preparation of Design Statements
for new development



The settlement of Albury nestles into the landscape of the Tillingbourne valley. The buildings contribute to the beauty of the area and the wooded setting helps to minimise the impact of vehicles and parking.



New development respects the distinct scale, form, colour and use of materials within Albury. The dominant building material is the red/orange hued brick, and tile hanging is a common feature of the village.

Introduction

The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 37 nationally protected landscapes in England, having equal landscape status and protection to a National Park.

The aim of this leaflet is to encourage greater attention to the design of development within the Surrey Hills to ensure that its future as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is not prejudiced. Sustaining the quality of the landscape will be made that much easier if new development respects the natural and built character that is there already. The preparation of a Design Statement will help to ensure that new development is based on a thorough and caring understanding of place and surroundings. This leaflet has been prepared to help landowners, developers and agents in this process.

Preparing a Design Statement

The Design Statement is a document that supports your planning application by setting out how you have arrived at the design of your proposal. It should demonstrate how your proposal has incorporated basic principles of good design in the Surrey Hills AONB (see page 5).

It will help you, the planning authority, neighbours and other consultees to fully understand and assess your proposals and the principles of your design. A Statement will be expected to accompany all planning applications in the Surrey Hills AONB, including General Householder and Change of Use applications where these affect the external appearance of the property or its curtilage.

The principles outlined in this leaflet are particularly pertinent to development proposals requiring planning permission, including equestrian facilities, new houses or ancillary uses. However they can equally be applied to development where permission is not required but where there could be a landscape impact.

The Design Statement should include:

- A short description of the plot, its history and its surroundings. It is helpful to include photographs
- An explanation of how you have taken on board the design principles (see page 5) to arrive at the final design of your proposal
- Illustrations of the proposed development in its surroundings.

The content and detail of the Design Statement will vary according to the proposed development. Larger scale proposals will require a more in-depth analysis of both the existing site and the reasoning behind the proposal. It may be necessary to submit an historic analysis to show how the site has evolved, together with more detailed plans and photographs.

Sources of design advice

As improving the quality of design is a national objective, your local planning authority should be able to advise you on Design Statements and what might be needed for your proposal. They should also be able to advise on reference materials, including information on the following documents:

- 'By Design' (DETR/CABE 2000) is a national guide
- 'Surrey Design' (SLGA 2002) is a county guide
- Supplementary planning guidance is available at a district level and includes advice, design checklists and other details
- Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2004) summarises key landscape features and landscape character areas
- Village design statements are available for some villages
- Conservation area statements identify key characteristics.

Contact details for the local planning authorities are provided on the back of this leaflet.



Bargate stone is a hard, coarse grained, calcareous sandstone, coloured by iron oxide. It is the main building stone in the area but is no longer quarried, so the best possible match should be used.

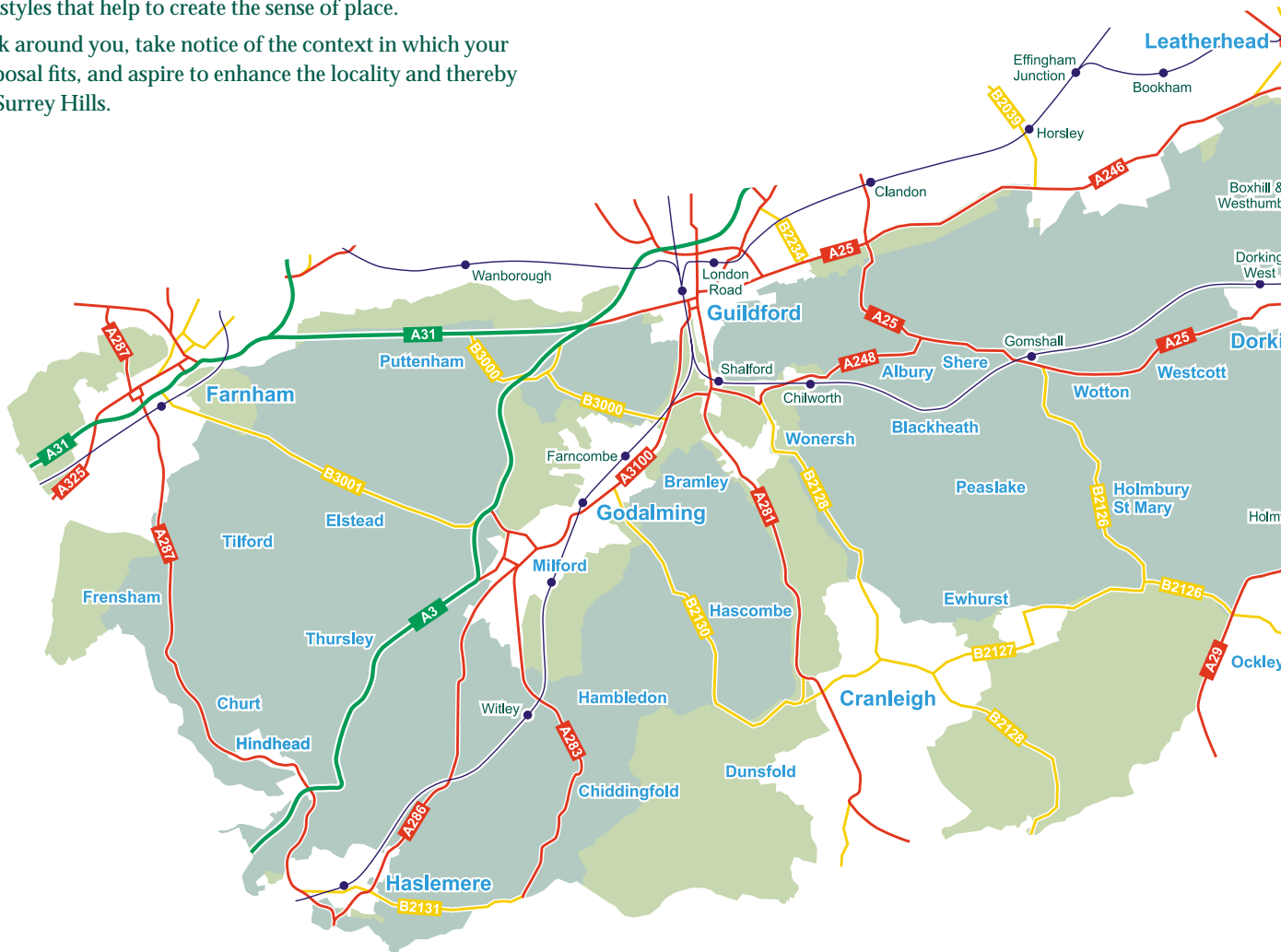


Orange/red hues are in keeping with the clay tiles traditionally used in the Surrey Hills, derived from the Wealden clay. Tile hanging, particularly to upper floors over brick or render construction, is a traditional feature.

The Surrey Hills

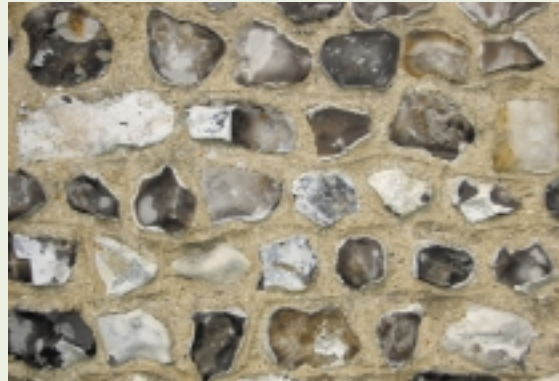
The map identifies the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) that provides a buffer to the AONB. The images demonstrate the variety of local building materials and styles that help to create the sense of place.

Look around you, take notice of the context in which your proposal fits, and aspire to enhance the locality and thereby the Surrey Hills.

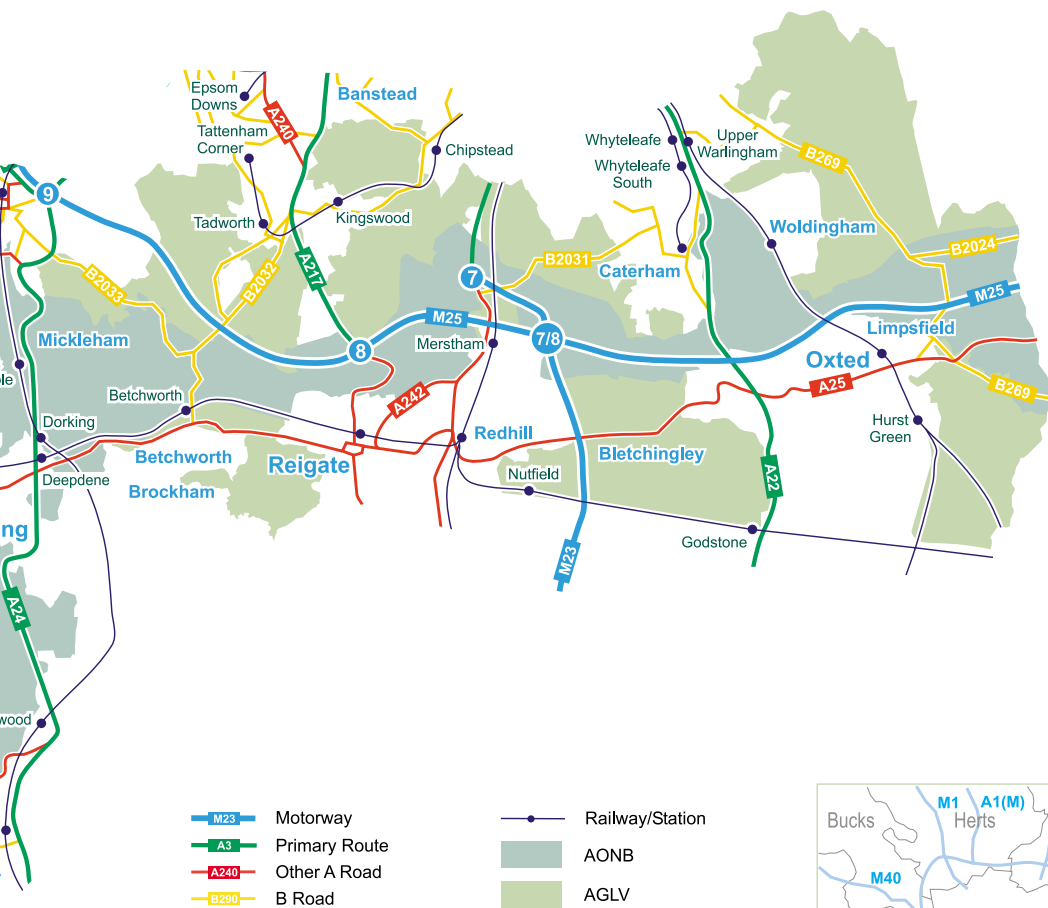




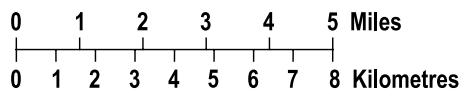
Weather boarding is used as an alternative to tile hanging and is traditionally painted white on houses and black on barns and other outbuildings.



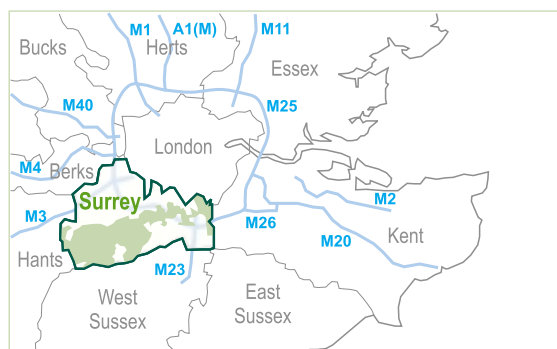
Flint is a traditional building material generally limited to the chalk North Downs. It is usually used selectively on the facades of buildings and boundary walls.



- M23 Motorway
- A3 Primary Route
- A240 Other A Road
- B290 B Road
- Railway/Station
- AONB
- AGLV



Note: This map is designed for approximate location purpose only.



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Surrey County Council, LA076872, 2004.



Simple variation in finishes creates rhythm in the facades of these dwellings in Shere. Boundary features enhance the setting of buildings.



High quality contemporary architecture can compliment the diversity of settlements or may require a well-wooded setting in a low density area (as above).

The design principles

The following design principles should be adopted for all forms of development within the Surrey Hills AONB, whether inside or outside settlements, or for large and small developments, including those for which planning permission is not required. These principles should be referred to in the Design Statement to demonstrate how the proposal helps to conserve and enhance the beauty of the Surrey Hills landscape.

Respect the pattern of the settlement, its open spaces and greens – contain development within the settlement; reflect established (historic) street and plot patterns; maintain variable building lines; respect the contribution of open spaces and village greens to character and form; avoid closes and culs-de-sac.

Conserve the character of the setting – avoid development on skylines, prominent spurs and open slopes; make maximum use of existing trees and landscape features to shield development; new buildings adjacent to traditional ones should link through elements such as scale, form, colour and materials to create a larger group.

Complement the scale, height and proportion of buildings – aim for harmony with the height and massing of existing development; retain density and relationship between roofscape and tree cover when viewed from outside the settlement.

Celebrate the detailing of buildings and architectural features – Surrey buildings have a wide range of styles; extensions should respect the host; new buildings should pick up local characteristics – forms of building, existing proportions (windows and doors), roof designs and elevational details.

Choose appropriate materials and finishes – Surrey buildings use a wide range of materials and finishes which may be locally specific; maintenance, improvement or extensions should respect the host; new buildings should explore the existing local palette of colour and finishes or justify innovative solutions.

Promote contemporary architecture – high quality contemporary architecture can extend the diversity and character of settlements.

Value the treatment of boundaries – retain the variety in, and characteristics of, boundary treatments – walls, hedges, fencing as appropriate; natural boundaries should use native species not conifers such as cypresses.

Use representative trees and landscape design – retain existing trees wherever possible; use native varieties of trees and shrubs in planting schemes.

Cherish designed landscapes – retain estate and parkland character, boundary walls, gates, fencing, lodges, estate cottages.

Celebrate local distinctiveness – diversity is a key feature of the Surrey Hills and local character should be cherished and reinforced.

Be creative on access and parking – seek to minimise the impact of vehicular access and parking, including hard surfacing; improve the network of pedestrian and cycle routes; seek opportunities to increase footpath access between settlement and countryside.



The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Surrey Hills was one of the first landscapes to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958 in recognition of its natural beauty. Although geology, soils and climate have created the bones of the landscape, the appearance of the Surrey Hills has been shaped for centuries by the changing patterns of land use and settlement.

The end result is a rich and diverse built heritage featuring many small farmsteads, pleasant hamlets with village greens, and grand houses set in parkland. Local materials like stone, flint, tile, brick and timber are featured throughout the Surrey Hills, defining the sense of place. Many villages are picturesque and many feature 'Surrey Style' architecture inspired by Lutyens and the Arts and Crafts Movement whose designs sought to reflect local vernacular traditions. Many villages evolved around village greens, creating picturesque scenes, and are often designated as Conservation Areas. Old buildings often have significant nature conservation value, for example old agricultural buildings as roosting sites for barn owls and bats.

Settlement pattern in the Surrey Hills is surprisingly varied with some villages still having an isolated, remote feel. Woodland cover and topography in the Surrey Hills combine to conceal even expansive development, and create a perception of quietness and seclusion. Many villages integrate well into the fabric of the landscape.

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