

ELWICK VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



MAY 2016

Introduction

Those of us who are fortunate to live in Elwick believe it is a very special place as one of the most attractive villages in the North East of England. It has a unique setting and character very precious to those of us living here.

Although we wish to preserve all that is good about the village, we recognise that it is a dynamic, living environment which needs to develop in order to maintain itself as a sustainable community. Standing still is simply not an option, but such change and development which may be necessary to sustain the community must be done in keeping with the character of the village. Changes should be made to enhance and develop the village, preserving and protecting that which we hold dear and developing in the interests of the community as a whole.

This Village Design Statement has been prepared to try and capture and preserve those special characteristics in such a fashion that they can be used to inform and direct planning issues which will face the village in the future.

We recognise that decisions on planning applications will be largely determined by the provisions of Hartlepool Borough Council's Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan for the Rural Hinterland of Hartlepool (known as the Rural Plan), but it is intended that this design statement will be adopted by the Borough Council as a supplemental guidance to planning policies in the Hartlepool Local Plan.

This Village Design Statement has been prepared as part of a Neighbourhood Plan for the wider Hartlepool rural area. The Village Design Statement will include:

- Descriptions of the built and natural form of the parish, as it currently exists, identifying its essential qualities, backed by photographs, maps and drawings;
- Statements regarding use of space, against which future development proposals can be measured; and
- Recommendations for future development which will act as supplementary planning guidance.

Elwick Parish Council has strong links with Hartlepool Borough Council regarding development and conservation matters. There has been communication between the Parish Council and the Conservation Officer and Planning Officers regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. These and other officers have helped with professional knowledge in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Draft Rural Plan has been accepted by the Planning Committee and the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Committee.

Aims and Objectives

Aim:

To influence and support the local authority planning department, by providing a local context for development within the parish, based on character and sense of place, ensuring that any change is in harmony with the existing settlement and makes a positive contribution to the local environment.

Objectives:

- To protect the distinctive character of the parish and surrounding countryside, including its landscape setting, the roads, lanes and footpaths and the nature of the settlement and buildings, through adopting local design principles; and
- To work in partnership with the local planning authority on local and future planning policy.

Elwick Village

Elwick Village is located about four miles to the west of Hartlepool, only a short distance from the A19 Trunk Road linking Teesside and Tyneside. It is closely linked with the villages of Hart, to the North West and Dalton Piercy to the South.

The village is typically medieval, probably dating to the first half of the 12th Century. A village green runs from east to west around which two rows of farmsteads were built representing the original settlement. Elwick has been an agricultural settlement for most of its life and there are still working farms within the village. However, post war development to the north and west of the village has increased the population significantly. This also includes sheltered housing developments for older people.

The village has a manor house (Elwick Hall) and church built on top of a bank to the west side of the village, the church was built separate from the main village as a private chapel for the Lord of the Manor.

Although the Parish of Elwick covers a large area to the west and south of the village, this Design Statement specifically refers to the Village itself.

The Village Today

Elwick has a population of approximately 600 people with over 200 houses within the curtilage of the village. It has a primary school, church, village shop and post office, two pubs and a Women's Institute (WI) Hall, which is used extensively by community groups, showing the vibrancy of the community.

Over the past 50 years the village has moved away from a traditional agricultural economy although there are still five active farms in the village. Nevertheless, mainly due to its good transport links, the majority of villagers tend to commute to the nearby conurbations of Hartlepool, Teesside and Tyneside.



Landscape Setting

Elwick is mostly hidden from view on the approaches to the village from the east and west. The Church and Manor House are clearly separate and more obvious. The majority of the village is concealed by the rising farmland surrounding it. This setting, concealing the village from the surrounding countryside, seems to emphasise the unique sense of identity, a community set in its own environment.



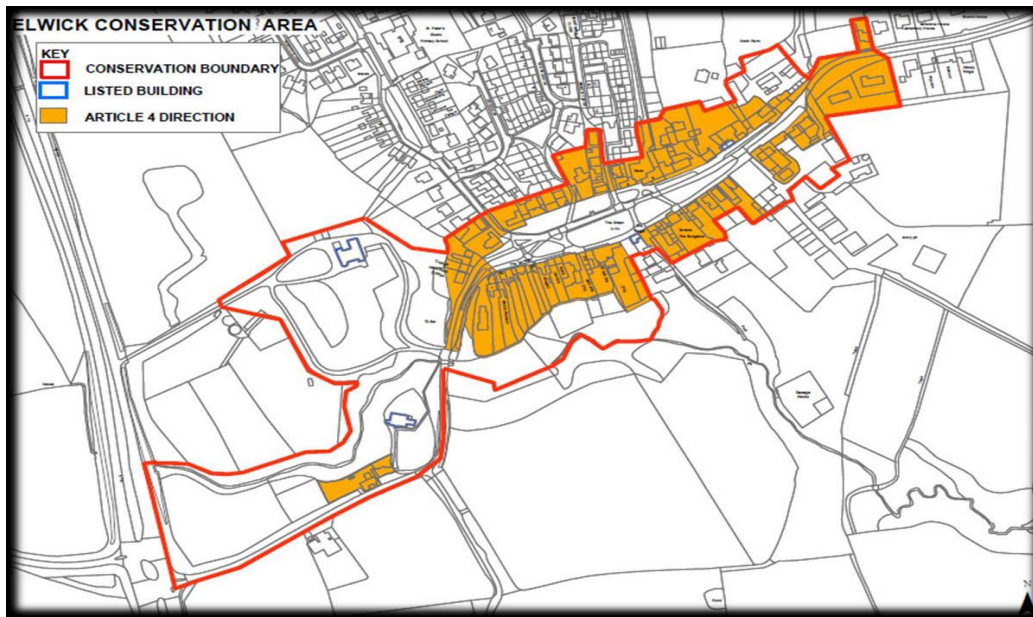
Although Elwick is part of the Borough of Hartlepool, it is set in the rural west of the Borough and has its own distinctive separation from the rest of the Borough. Indeed, for many years the Village was only accessible from Hartlepool by an un-metalled road and it looked much more towards the villages of Durham for any sense of identity. Even now, many of the older residents regard themselves as belonging to County Durham.

Even until 1974, for local government purposes, the Village was part of Stockton Rural Council within the County of Durham. Although it has now developed strong links with Hartlepool, it nevertheless values its sense of rurality and separation and has resisted any proposals to allow development along the Hartlepool Road which would erode its separate identity. Many people living in the village do so because of its unique identity and rural nature and would resist any suggestion that development should extend the boundaries of the town to Elwick.

Elwick Conservation Area

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest where the groupings of all the buildings make a significant contribution to the townscape, the character of which it is desirable if not essential to preserve or enhance.

Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities because of the quality of the buildings and environment. This quality is fragile and can easily be damaged or destroyed by badly directed modernisation and maintenance work or lack of concern and knowledge of the importance of the area. Any development, alteration or indeed any changes proposed within the conservation area must obtain prior permission from the local planning authority.



In particular, buildings are seriously affected by changes to such aspects as roof materials, gutter and downpipes, wall finishes, windows and dormers, doors and door surrounds. Even the simplest cottage or brick terrace is part of Elwick's local heritage and once its quality is destroyed, it is not easily recreated.

This Design Statement therefore endorses the guidelines set out by the local authority in relation to trees and buildings which lie within the boundaries of the Conservation Area. Further information on this can be obtained from the Planning Department of Hartlepool Borough Council.

The Use of Green Space and Setting of the Village



The Village Green, at the centre of the community, is key in determining the open character of the Village. However, other developments such as The Walk, the Paddock and Greenlea as well as Manor Close and Martindale Close have their own open spaces much valued by the residents. Consultation with residents has indicated that to a lesser extent, but nevertheless of importance, are the wide verges and green areas on roads leading out of the village which are pleasant to the eye and contribute to the feeling of roominess. Again, this type of design contributes greatly to the rural nature and feel of the village and is one of the important characteristics of the settlement which contribute to the sense of space and wellbeing.



Two particular open space developments have been made in the last thirty years which are of importance. At the western end of the village the James Grieves playing field has been developed which is a highly valued asset for the village and must be maintained as such.

Equally, a wildlife garden has been constructed at the north end of Greenlea which provides an important social and educational facility for the Village. Again, this open space should be maintained.

The historical centre of Elwick is The Green, which is an open green space that has a mix of traditional buildings running parallel with the road. The housing mix is varied in type, style, height and grouping in relation to the neighbouring properties. Most of the traditional housing stock for the village is located along The Green. The buildings range in size and shape, as shown in the photos included in the building design section. Sizes and groupings range from single storey detached to double storey terraced. There is also variance in the ages from older detached double cottages to more modern detached single bungalows. This, combined with differing roof heights and the change in gradient from east to west, all add to the character of The Green. Interspersed with the residential property on The Green are two pubs and a village shop/post office.

The Green is the heart of the village in terms of amenities, and the houses along it form the southern edge of the Elwick. To the north the housing type, layout and the density of housing changes. These suburban areas have been added to the village in a number of separate developments over many years, each with its own unique character. To understand the views of the villagers within Elwick, and what type of housing or layout of space they would favour for future development, a community engagement event was held. In this we talked in groups using photographs of the different housing styles and layouts to help visualise the different styles for the group.

The core issues raised in the Community Engagement event were to ensure:

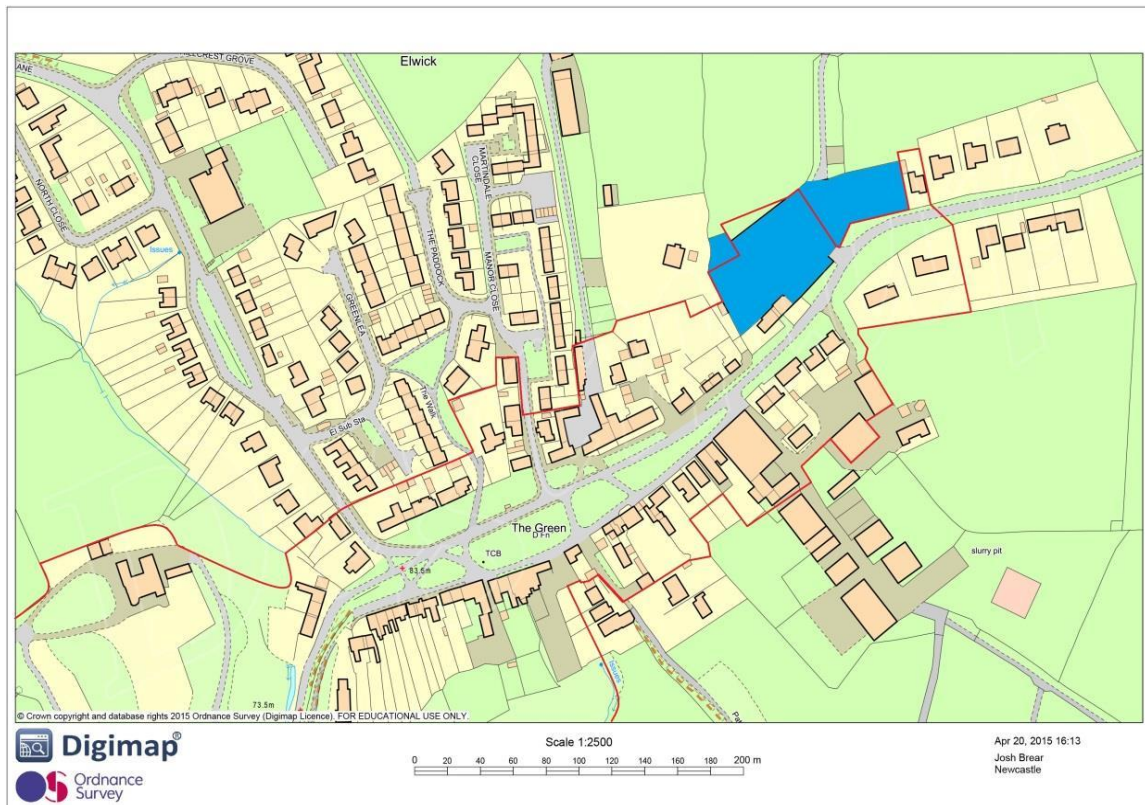
- Any new development in Elwick has appropriate pedestrian links to the rest of the village and especially The Green;
- New development answers the needs of the village in terms of the requirement of affordable housing and different sized dwellings to accommodate single occupants and new families;
- Different types of housing is provided, to reflect the differentiation in size and shape that give character to the area and match that of the village;
- Any new development reflects the village as a whole and links back to the heart of the village;
- If bungalows are included in a new development scheme, these will be located closer to the heart of

the village and near pedestrian links, so that they are incorporated into the community instead of being on the perimeter of the village;

- Use of one and two storey developments, with nothing higher than double storey; and
- Any new boundary to the village remains rural in its aesthetic, so the use of boarded fences on external boundaries is not be encouraged, and native hedgerows are preferred.

Future Development of the Village

Future development within Elwick will concentrate on the North Farm site which has been previously identified in the Hartlepool Strategic House Land Availability Assessment and also identified in the Rural Plan. North Farm is located at the east end of the village at the end of The Green, with most of the site located within the Elwick Conservation Area. There is a traditional brick barn fronting this last section of green space leaving the village, and the entrance heads into the site at an angle from the main road on the corner, just before it drops into the village. Within the site itself are predominantly modern farm buildings and storage areas.



North Farm Site

Any new development at this site needs to be based on an understanding and reflection of the relationship between buildings and space, as at the heart of the village. It also needs to respond to the core issues raised by the community, such as how The Walk encompasses green space into a relatively modern development.

To provide visual examples, the North Farm Site has been put into a suggested two phase development scheme below.

Phase 1

New development should incorporate the use of the existing buildings to the south of the site. Due to their conservation status these buildings have to remain.

The layout is flexible, however the key concern is access, as the main entrance will be both vehicular and pedestrian. The second pedestrian link to the west incorporates the potential use of a side access in-between the main housing fronting The Green. This responds to the requirement raised during the community engagement event for better pedestrian links to the heart of Elwick.

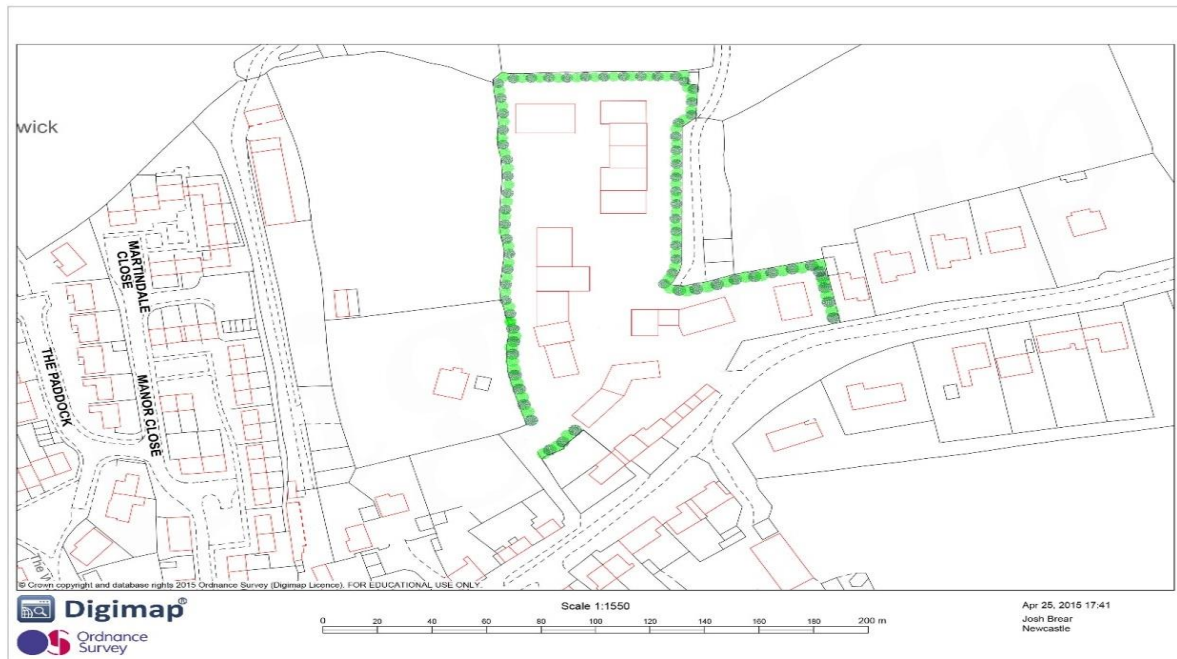


Phase 1

The types of housing are smaller dwellings, for example single storey bungalows or terraced property and 2-3 bed houses for first time buyers.

This mix of housing was another key point which was raised and is felt strongly by the residents. It provides opportunities for a community to grow where the mix of ages can enjoy the green space and links to the centre of the village. An additional point raised was that by having the bungalows nearer the heart of the village and on the pedestrian routes, they will have ease of access but also have a sense of community around them. This was felt to be crucial for the wellbeing of the residents. By contrast the existing bungalows in Martindale Close are not on any pedestrian links and are on the edge of the village away from the community, leading to some sense of isolation amongst the residents.

Phase 2



Phase 2

The 2nd phase expands into the northern field, which is currently in agricultural use. The layout again is flexible to meet a developer's design. However, there is the potential for an adjoining 3rd phase site to be developed at some point in the future. The example layout takes this into consideration along with the points raised during the community engagement. There will be a single access road serving the properties, whilst providing linking green areas where building groupings and pedestrian routes can contribute to a sense of community. The access road runs around the perimeter of the site, in order to reduce the amount of boarded fence on this edge and instead having a natural border such as bushes and hedges next to the road.

The groupings of the houses will produce a mix of sizes, shapes, roof angles and heights reflecting the design points from The Walk and The Green. As with the established sites, detached and long rows of terraced housing will not be supported – rather semi-detached and small groups of terraced properties of 4-6 dwellings, to produce a design of housing that feels consistent with the village rather than just another residential street.



Building Design

The old part of the village surrounding the Village Green has evolved over the centuries with the addition and replacement of buildings but is largely in the same layout pattern originating as an

agricultural community. This area is mainly covered by the Conservation Area although small extensions have been made in the centre and to the east of the main village. Indeed, one of the commendable aspects of the conservation area is that it comprises such a variety of buildings, from four of the original farmsteads built many years ago, to the attractive Victorian terrace running along the southern edge of The Green, interspersed with buildings which, generally, have been in sympathy with the original buildings blending with the general character.



Away from The Green the village has developed during the post war period with buildings typical of the day from the former council housing in Manor Close and North Lane to the 1960s two storey and single storey buildings typical of such developments in North Lane, North Close and Hillcrest. The development of the "Yuills Estate" in The Walk, Greenlea and the Paddock in 1974 increased the population of the village significantly.



However, the development introduced terraced, semi-detached and detached housing, designed sympathetically to fit into a rural village setting, with a mix of brick and rendered finishes and an emphasis on open green spaces. Following this, only small infill developments have been permitted.

Requirements

- Any new development should look to reflect the Village Green and Conservation Area, which have been identified as the most attractive and valued parts of the village character.
- Any new developments in the Village should include open spaces as a central feature of their layout, similar to those in The Walk and along Manor Close, Martindale Close and in North Lane, which are highly valued as pleasant features contributing to the sense of space in the village.
- The mix of housing in any future development must reflect the needs of the population of the village, recognising both the aging population and the need to provide homes for young purchasers, in order to maintain a sustainable community rather than simply the commercial demands of developers.
- Any new development must include sufficient car parking to alleviate the need for parking on pavements.
- The Village Envelope, as defined in the Rural Plan, should be preserved to ensure Elwick's distinct identity as a small rural village.
- The network of pavements around the village should be preserved and maintained and, where possible, linked into any new developments.

- Street furniture in the village, particularly on the Village Green should be reviewed, minimised and, where possible, a unity of style adopted.