



# Coombe Bissett and Homington Design Guide - FINAL

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Introduction

01

FOX &  
GOOSE  
Freehouse

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# 1. Introduction

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AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Group through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded Neighbourhood Planning Programme, led by Locality.

This Design Guide has been produced to inform new development proposed in the area. It presents a summary of the key characteristics of Coombe Bissett and Homington which make this a special place to live and visit. This information is then used to inform specific design guidelines to promote sustainable development.

The approach set out here is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which encourages local authorities to consider using design codes, or in this case guidelines, to help deliver high quality outcomes for new development. It is important however, that guidance finds the balance between promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and allowing for innovation and originality. The NPPF suggests that 'design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics' (NPPF, 2019).

The NPPF also emphasises that 'the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities' (NPPF, 2019). It is therefore important that planning policies and decisions should address the connection between people and places and how any new development will respond to and integrate successfully into the natural, built and historic environment.

## 1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this document is to establish principles so that new development is designed and planned with regard to the existing character and context of the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area. It sets out a series of design guidelines related to residential development.

The document initially provides context to the design guidelines including strategic issues identified during the consultation carried out by the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Group. The aspirations by the communities involved, although not strictly design issues, need to be considered in the context of any design proposal.

## 1.2. Process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this document:

- Initial meeting with members of the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Group and site visit;
- Further site visits, character assessment and urban design analysis;
- Preparation of design principles and guidelines to be used to assess future developments;
- Draft report with design guidelines; and
- Final report.

Context

02

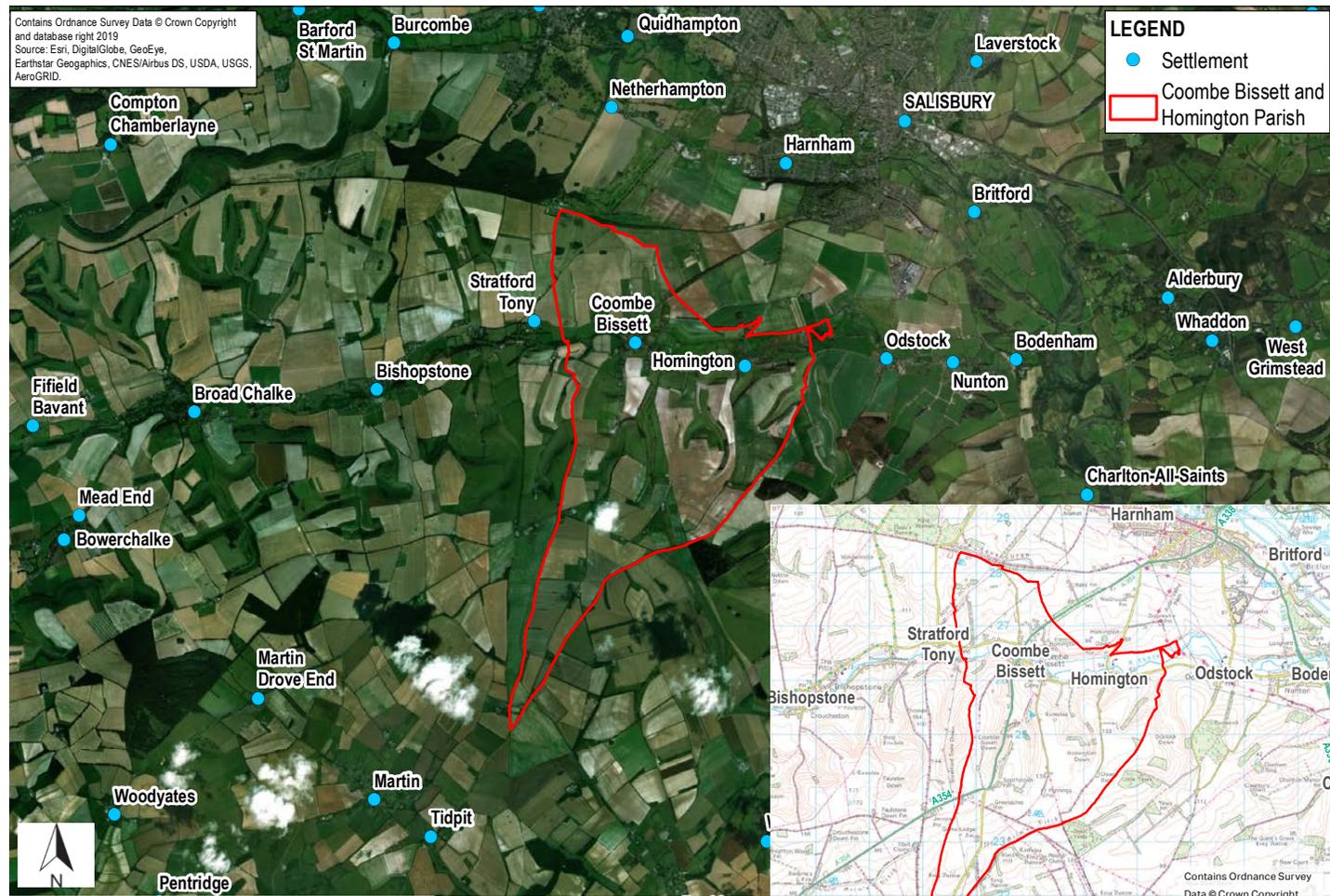


## 2. Context

### 2.1. Location and area of study

The parish of Coombe Bissett and Homington constitutes the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area. Situated in Wiltshire, approximately 3 miles south-west of Salisbury (Figure 1), it is comprised of the two villages, Coombe Bissett and Homington, and their surrounding area (Figure 2). Coombe Bissett is located on the A354 Salisbury to Blandford Forum road. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is connected east to west by a minor road which follows the River Ebbles. The village of Homington is located approximately 1km east of Coombe Bissett. The Neighbourhood Plan Area has a population of approximately 675.

Both villages are located within the broad valley of the River Ebbles (Figure 1). The two villages are also within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the rolling chalk downland, which extends to the south and west of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. There are a number of footpaths and bridleways that connect the two villages with the surrounding countryside.



## 2.2. Historical development

An historical development timeline has been produced to demonstrate the influence of settlement growth on the history of the Neighbourhood Plan Area (see over).



St Michael and All Angels Church



The Old House, Coombe Bissett



Homeacre, Homington



The Brines, Coombe Bissett



Box Cottage, Homington



Simms Cottage, Homington



St Mary the Virgin Church

Examples of historic buildings in Coombe Bissett and Homington

**Early history**

There was human habitation in Coombe Bissett and Homington from at least the Neolithic Age (4000-2500BC), through the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman period. The Roman Road from Old Sarum to Badbury Rings crosses the north-west corner of Coombe Bissett.

**1086**

Coombe Bissett was a royal manor in the Cawdon Hundred, held by King William, at the time of the Domesday survey. The Domesday Book states that Osbern the priest held Homington and there was land for one plough.

**14th Century**

The Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II\*) was built in Homington.

**19th Century**

The Packhorse Bridge (Grade II and Scheduled Monument) at Coombe Bissett, and Homington Bridge (Grade II) at Homington cross the River Ebbel. They date to the medieval period and the 17th century, respectively, although they were both widened in the 19th century.



**1934**

The two parishes of Coombe Bissett and Homington combined in 1934 to form a single civil parish.

**7th - 10th Centuries**

There are Anglo-Saxon archaeological finds that date to the 7th century. The first documents relating to Coombe Bissett and Homington are two Anglo-Saxon charters dating from the 10th century, referring to land at 'Ebbesborne'.

**12th Century**



The Church of St. Michael and All Angels (Grade I) was constructed in Coombe Bissett.

**Early 19th Century**

Homington House (Grade II) was constructed.

**1880's**

The First Edition Ordnance Survey shows the village of Coombe Bissett with development to the north and south-east of St Michael and All Angels church following the course of the River Ebbel. Homington has followed a more linear shape, to the east and west of the Church of St Mary, and to the south of the river.

**1950's - 1970's**



Post-war development mainly took place to the south, north and north-west of the village of Coombe Bissett with some infill development in both villages.

## 2.3. Landscape and heritage designations

Landscape and heritage designations within the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area include:

- Cranborne chase AONB;
- Coombe Bissett Down Local Nature Reserve;
- Coombe Bissett and Homington Conservation Areas;
- 34 listed and locally listed buildings, the majority of which are Grade II listed and located within the conservation areas; and
- 6 Scheduled Monuments: Packhorse Bridge, Bowl Barrow, Grim's Ditch, Long Barrow and Bowl Barrow on Little Toyd Down, Bowl Barrow north-west of Northdown Barn .

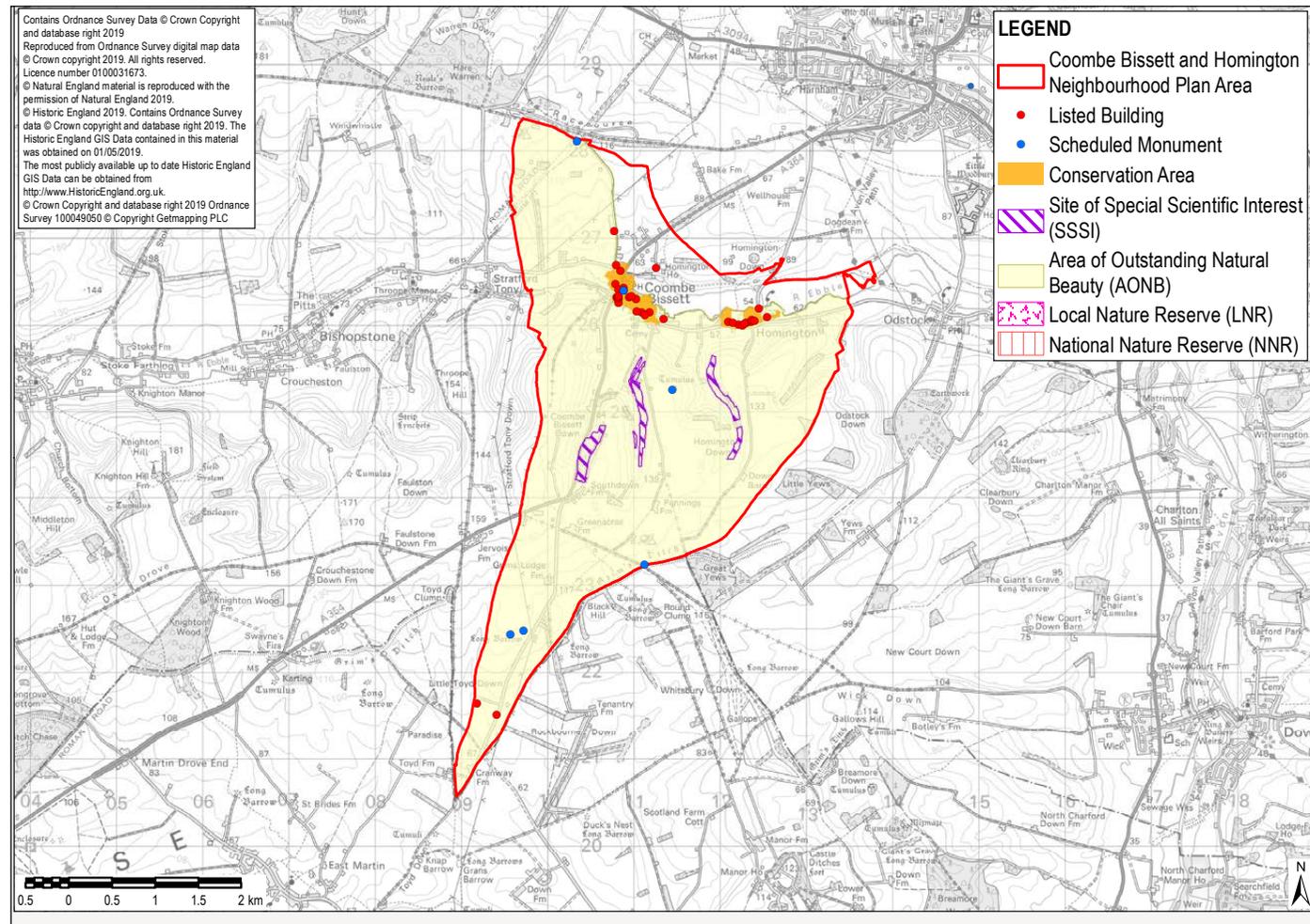


Figure 3 Landscape and heritage designations

## 2.4. Public Consultation

The Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Group has worked to engage the community, share information and seek the views of local people in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and this Design Guide. The Group has held public meetings, posted information on the parish website, and in the parish magazine.

In November 2018 the Group sent a questionnaire to all households in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Group has also been in contact with local interest groups to ask for feedback on the Neighbourhood Plan and its progress.

Several draft pages of this Design Guide were displayed at the village Plant and Cake Sale on the 8th June in order to seek feedback. The observations made have been used to inform this Design Guide.

A number of key considerations and strategic issues emerged from the consultation, which have informed the preparation of the Design Guide.

In summary, new development should:

- Be in keeping with nearby buildings, old and new;
- Use local materials;
- Provide parking;
- Blend with the surrounding landscape;
- Include features to reduce energy running costs and emissions; and
- Provide outdoor space.





**Character assessment**

**03**

## 3. Character assessment

### 3.1. Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area. Within this broad characterisation, this section also identifies a finer grain of character within the two villages. Character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place, identifying recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. The Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area sits within a number of character areas identified at National, County and District level. These are outlined in section 3.2 below. In addition, this report sets out two settlement character areas that help characterise the more built-up areas of Coombe Bissett and Homington. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the design guidelines.

### 3.2. Existing character assessments and design guidance

Coombe Bissett and Homington is situated in a sparsely settled area of lowland England. Natural England characterise this region as '*strongly rural and agricultural [...] characterised by large open fields of pasture and arable, punctuated by blocks of woodland all draped over an undulating chalk topography*'. (Natural England, 2013).

The landscape of the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area is described within several district-level character assessments. These assessments have been published by Wiltshire County Council (2005); Salisbury District Council (2008); and, the Cranborne Chase & Chalk Valley Landscape Partnership (2018). The character areas that cover the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area are identified by Salisbury District Council (2008) as: Ebble Broad Chalk River Valley Floor; Ebble Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes; and Cranborne Chase Chalk Downland (Figure 4). These District Character Areas define the rural areas of the Neighbourhood Plan Area outside of the main settlements.

#### C2 Ebble Broad Chalk River Valley Floor:

- A semi-enclosed character as a result of riparian woodland, mature hedgerows and lines of willow and poplar trees.
- Patchwork of grassland with remnant water meadows and watercress beds.
- Picturesque hamlets and villages located along the valley bottom in a linear pattern, spaced at close intervals.
- Brick, flint, thatch and slate are common building materials.
- A strong sense of tranquillity and a rural character.
- Some settlements extend up and onto the downland slopes.

#### B2 Ebble Broad Chalk River Valley Slopes:

- Small areas of unimproved chalk grassland and rough pasture on steeper slopes.
- Intensive arable production. Some rural diversification present where converted farm buildings are let to other businesses.
- Settlement generally absent.
- Numerous tumuli and surviving elements of Roman road.

#### D7 Cranborne Chase Chalk Downland:

- Elevated downland, deeply eroded to create a dramatic series of coombe valleys and ridges.
- A mosaic of both pastoral and arable land uses.
- Chalk grassland and ancient woodland provide important nature conservation.
- Low density settlement pattern with few villages and dispersed farmstead.
- Neolithic and Bronze age barrows, late prehistoric to Roman earthworks.

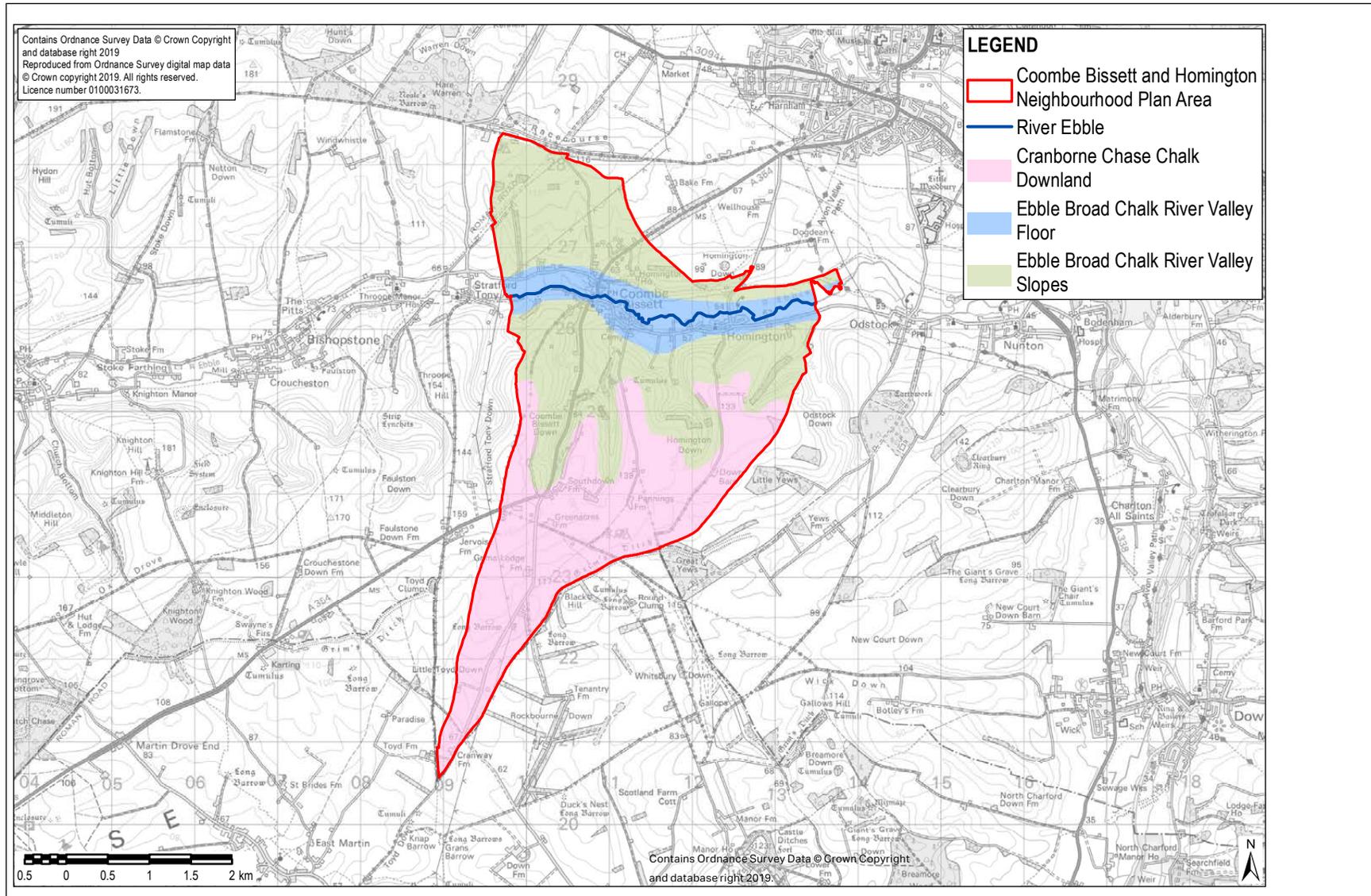


Figure 4 District Character Areas

### 3.3. Settlement character

In addition to identifying the character areas within which the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area sits, this report identifies and describes two further settlement character areas that help characterise in more detail the villages' built-up areas. These settlement character areas are: Historic Village Core and Twentieth Century Ribbon Development, shown in Figure 5.

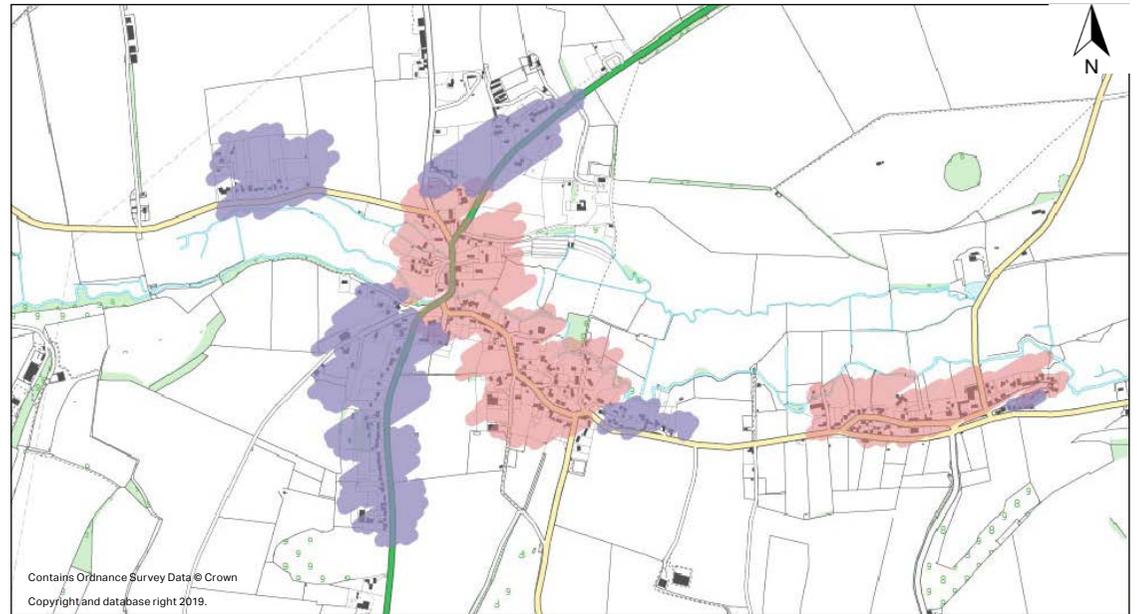


Figure 5 Settlement Character Areas



### 3.3.1. HISTORIC VILLAGE CORE SETTLEMENT CHARACTER AREA

#### Settlement pattern

The historic cores of both Coombe Bissett and Homington are defined by the course of the River Ebble, creating linear settlement patterns which follow the river valley (Figure 6). At the heart of each settlement is the church, with the settlements radiating from these key points, along the river corridor. From the north there is a sense of transition into Coombe Bissett from the surrounding valley slopes as the A354 Salisbury Road descends the hill through a narrow belt of woodland. A large copper beech tree and street-facing buildings create a sense of arrival.

There is a simple hierarchy of streets as illustrated in Figure 6. The busy A354 from Salisbury to Blandford Forum crosses Coombe Bissett from north to south. The minor roads of Stratford Tony Road, Homington Road and Lower Road follow the course of the river valley. A series of minor residential lanes branch off these streets, some of which are gravel surfaced, rather than tarmac. Several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the river as well as following its course east to west along the valley.

As evident through designation as conservation areas, the historic core of both villages exhibits a strong character and locally distinctive architecture. There has been a modest amount of infilling over the 20th century and more recently. This has sometimes diluted some of the qualities of the historic village identity, for example through a lack of architectural detailing or choice of window. Whilst in other places, infilling has contributed to a 'sense of place', such as the Village Store, which has used characteristic weatherboards on its façade.

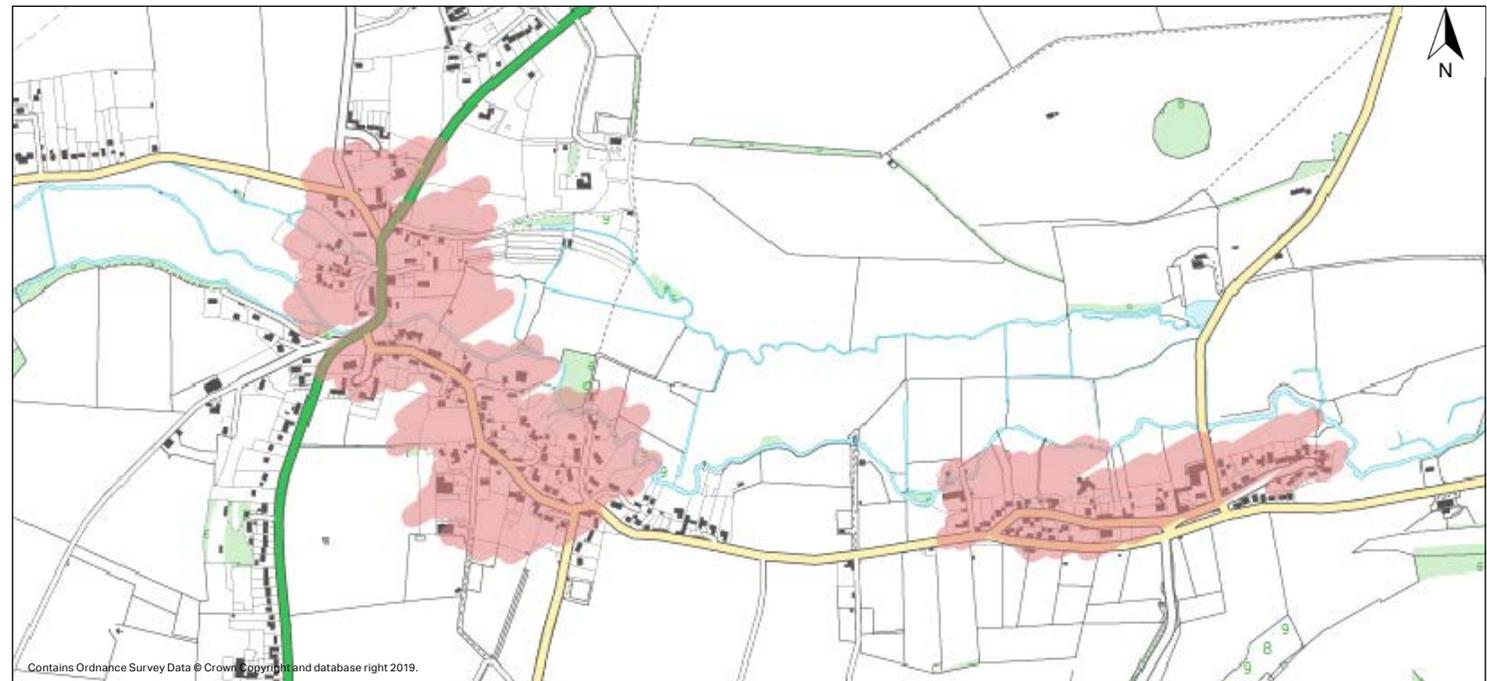


Figure 6 Historic Village Core Settlement Character Area

## Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

Most streets lack pavements apart from the main Blandford Road (A354), which runs through the centre of Coombe Bissett. This helps to retain the rural character of the villages. Maintained areas of grass and mature trees are characteristic, particularly at road junctions. The green in front of St Michael and All Angels Church at the junction of the A354 with Homington Road, is a key informal green space within Coombe Bissett. It contributes to the setting of the church and defines the village centre.

The River Ebble contributes greatly to the character of both villages. At the historic watermill building, Old Mill House (Grade II), Coombe Bridge and Packhorse Bridge (Scheduled Monument and Grade II) for example, is a natural open space of riverine habitat and mature trees. There is scattered tree cover throughout the Historic Village Core Settlement Character Area, most notably to the north of Homington Road in Coombe Bissett.

Residential properties along Homington Road (Coombe Bissett) and Lower Road (Homington) back onto the River Ebble and its broad flat valley where water meadows feature along the valley throughout the parish.

Secondary roads off Homington Road in Coombe Bissett, are narrow, flanked by mature trees or hedges contributing to the rural and informal character of the village.

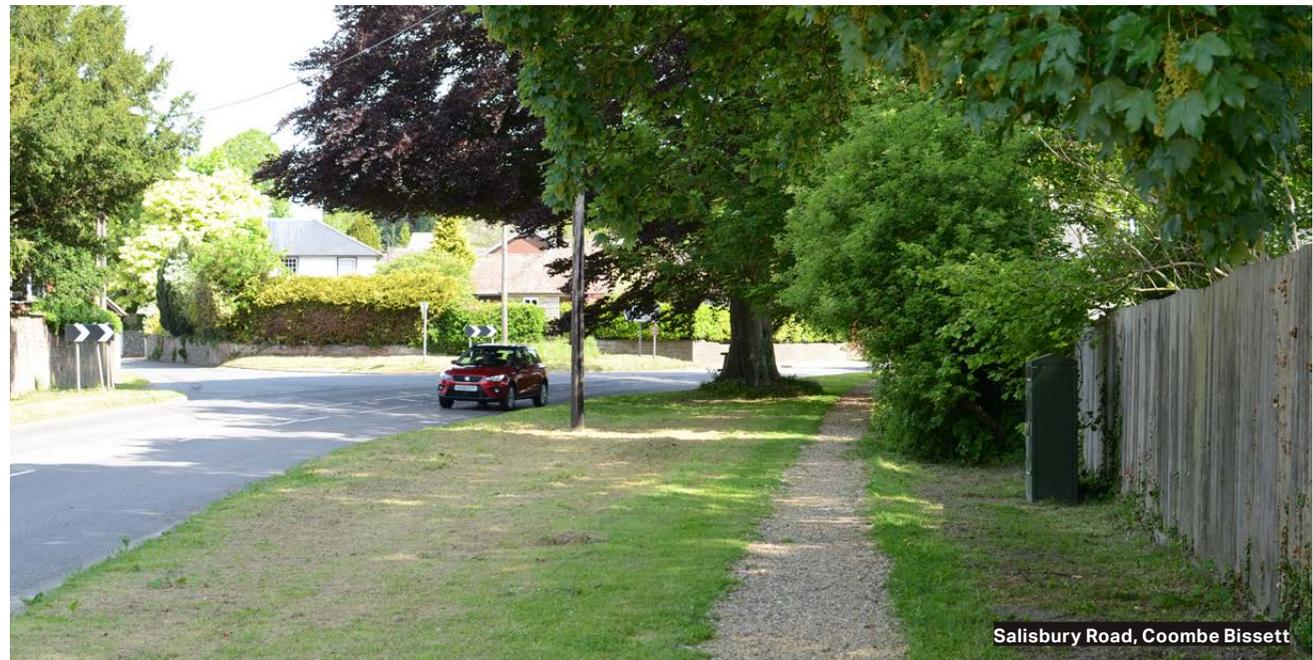
Key green spaces include the school playing field and the Parish Recreation Ground (Public Open Space), both of which are adjacent to the Village Hall.



Coombe Bissett C of E School playing field



Lower Road, Homington



Salisbury Road, Coombe Bissett

## Pattern and layout of buildings

Most of the buildings within the Historic Village Core Settlement Character Area are detached houses situated on large plots. Some of the houses are semi-detached. Very few are terraced. The low building density gives rise to views out to the surrounding landscape.

As a result of the linear settlement pattern along the valley, many properties back onto countryside and/or the river and its tributaries.

Recesses of varying depths provide for large front gardens. Maintained areas of grass and gardens are common, often comprising clipped hedges and mature trees. Where properties open onto the street there is usually a decorative 'buffer' of lawn and/or plants.

Small no-through roads (or cul-de-sacs) are common in Coombe Bissett, serving small clusters of detached houses. In Homington, houses are generally located along the street and in addition tend to be on smaller plots, compared to Coombe Bissett.

Many of the buildings date from the 17th to 19th century, with some 20th century infilling. Infilling has generally been on generous individual plots therefore limiting its overall impact on the historic character.

## Views and landmarks

The Historic Village Core Settlement Character Area generally has a semi-enclosed character because it follows the River Ebble valley floor. Riparian woodland, mature hedgerows and trees generally limit long views. However, on slightly more elevated roads, low building densities often provide glimpsed views of the surrounding valley slopes and surrounding countryside.

The churches of St Michael and All Angels in Coombe Bissett and the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Homington represent key landmarks within the settlements.



## Building line and boundary treatments

Front garden boundaries are common and are predominantly walls, hedges or picket fences, and often a combination of these materials. Traditional materials include brick, flint and render, whilst a locally distinctive example comprises cob walls with thatched capping. Walls can be simple or substantial, the mixture providing variety and difference along the street. Building recesses also vary along the street, in some instances resulting in only a narrow maintained grass strip or garden.

The narrow winding streets, bounded by high walls and high mature hedges create a sense of enclosure that is in contrast with the surrounding countryside. Street lighting is limited to the A354 overbridge and along Shutts Lane, leading to the Village Hall. Pavements are uncommon, which helps maintain a rural feel.

## Building heights and rooflines

Building heights vary between one and two storeys, with two storey being the most common. There are a variety of rooflines with most buildings having brick chimneys. Rooflines are generally either pitched or half-hipped. It is not uncommon for a building to face side-on to the street. Gabled dormers are common.



Examples of the variety of boundary treatments



Barber's Lane, Homington



Homington Road, Homington

Examples of the variety of rooflines

## Architecture

There is a variety of traditional building features and local materials within this settlement character area, all of which define the character of Coombe Bissett and Homington, creating their distinctive sense of place. There are many positive examples of these vernacular architectural details: some examples are provided in the following images.

There are important examples of buildings surviving from the 15th and 16th centuries within both villages, but the majority of buildings are Georgian and Victorian cottages and farmhouses.

The most prominent material is brick with exposed mortar. There are a few examples of timber framed buildings; however most of these have been altered. A few properties are constructed of local materials, including chalk and/or knapped flint. These are more common in outbuildings, rather than in the main properties. Such buildings also reveal use of timber weatherboarding, a traditional local feature.

Historic fixtures and fittings have been preserved well across the settlements. These include local thatch and clay tile roofing. Timber windows also survive, although a number of them have been replaced with a variety of modern styles and materials.

Although the majority of 20th century development lies on the outskirts of the villages, some infill development is evident. In some cases, the material and style of these buildings are in contrast with the surviving historic examples. However, their scale, mass and orientation is predominantly in keeping with the surrounding properties, maintaining the rural character of the village.



Clay pantile and slate roofs (left & right)



Chimney styles (left & right)



Thatch roof and detail



Decorative window



Enclosed porch



Open timber porch and stone quoins (adjacent building)



Sash windows



Casement windows



Knapped flint



Chalk

## Land use and parking

Coombe Bissett and Homington villages consist mainly of detached residential properties. The parish churches are St Michael and All Angels in Coombe Bissett and St Mary the Virgin in Homington. Other community focal points and services throughout the settlements include Coombe Bissett Primary School, the Village Store and Post Office, The Fox and Goose public house, the Baptist Chapel and the Village Hall. There are several farms or former farms located in around both villages, the most conspicuous farm buildings being those on Homington Road, near the River Ebble.

Parking is mostly off-street, in front of, or next to buildings. Driveways, garages and covered parking are characteristic of residential properties.



Public House, Coombe Bissett



St. Michael and All Angels Church, Coombe Bissett



The Village Store, Coombe Bissett



Village Hall, Coombe Bissett

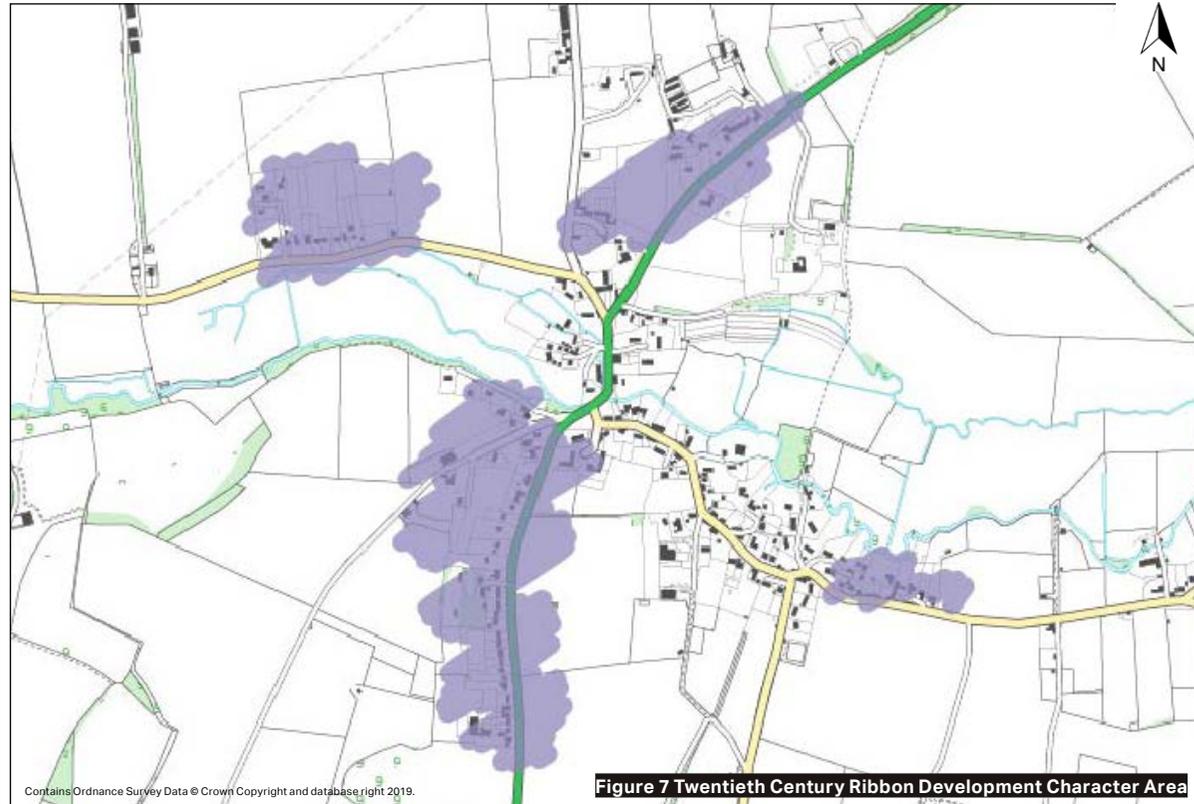
Examples of local services and community hubs

### 3.3.2. TWENTIETH CENTURY RIBBON DEVELOPMENT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER AREA

#### Settlement pattern

Throughout the 20th century there has been modest amounts of residential development on the fringes of Coombe Bissett and Homington (Figure 7). This has been focused on the routes in and out of both villages. The most significant development is along the A354 (Blandford Road), and to a lesser extent along the minor roads running east to west.

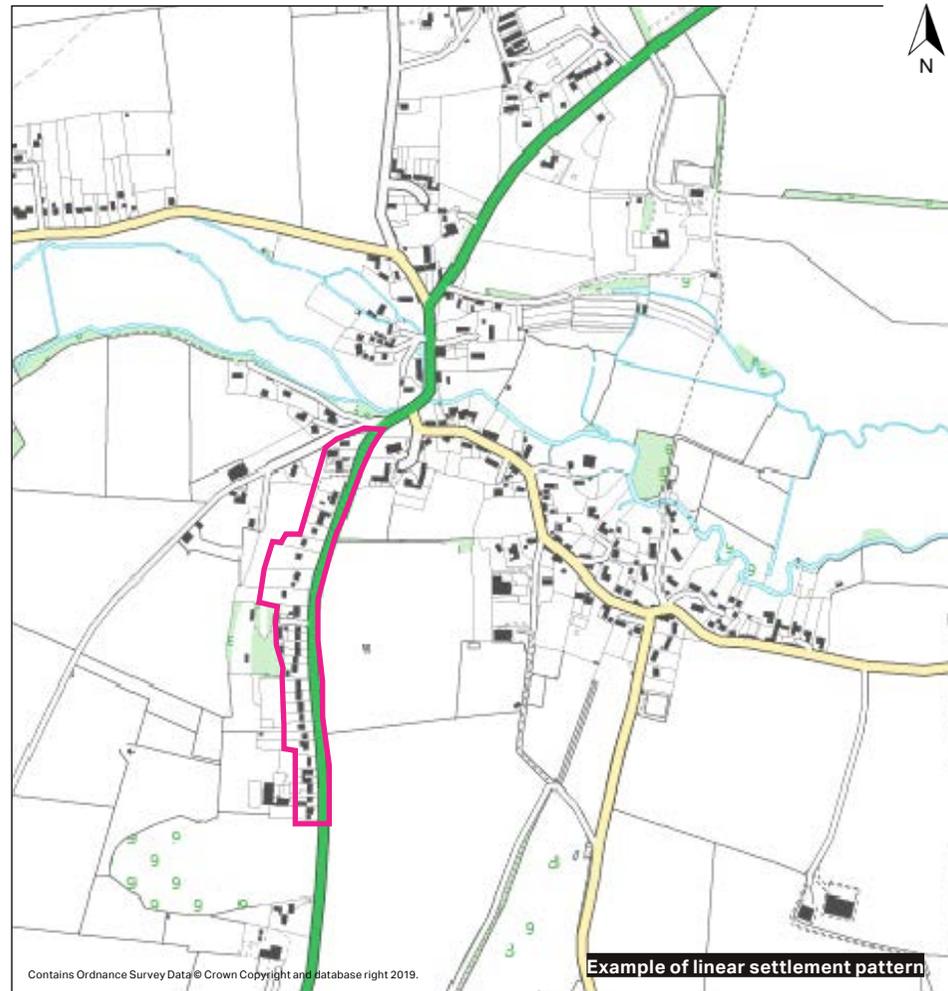
Following the topography of a shallow dry chalk valley, Blandford Road is linear. The Coombe Bissett settlement extends to where this road begins to rise from the valley, up to the chalk downland. This change in topography provides a physical transition between the settlement and surrounding open countryside. On other roads, development has been more modest.



## Pattern and layout of buildings

Properties with the Twentieth Century Ribbon Settlement Development Character Area are located predominantly along one side of the street, with open views to chalk valley slopes. In Coombe Bissett, occasionally there are small no-through roads serving one or two (or sometimes more) detached houses.

Plot parcels tend to be wide and the majority of houses and bungalows are detached. Properties have similar boundary treatments, and the resulting character sometimes feels a little more suburban than the Historic Village Core Settlement Character Area.



## Architecture

At different periods over the 20th century, mainly in the post-war period, there has been small amounts of development (typically between 1 and 5 houses) on routes into and out of Coombe Bissett and, to a lesser extent Homington. The age and architectural style varies considerably and includes 1950's detached villas and bungalows; mid-century bungalows; and detached houses built between the 1970's and 1990's. This has resulted in variations in building height, rooflines, construction materials, windows and other detailing. Materials include red and yellow engineering bricks; render; and slate or tiled roofs.

Although 20th century development has respected the relatively low density of the villages, its planned form, construction and modern materials create a suburban character, typical of the period, that deviates from the rural, informal character of the historic core of the settlements.



**Examples of Twentieth Century Ribbon Development architecture, Homington Road, Homington**

## Green spaces, public realm and streetscape

Streets generally lack pavements, the exception being the main Blandford Road (A354) to the south of Coombe Bissett. This feature, in addition to no street lighting, helps to maintain a rural feel to this settlement character area. However, vehicular traffic on busy routes reduces its tranquillity.

There is scattered tree cover and hedgerows throughout this settlement character area. These occur on field boundaries and front gardens bordering the highway. There are no formal green spaces within this settlement character area. The character feels open with a strong connection to the surrounding landscape.



## Views and landmarks

The linear settlement pattern gives rise to open views of the surrounding undulating chalk valley slopes. In elevated locations, there are panoramic views across the Ebble River valley and the villages of Coombe Bissett and Homington, including views to St Michael's and All Angels church tower.



## Building line and boundary treatment

Building lines are generally consistent and large recesses provide generous front gardens. Front garden boundaries include low brick walls, but are predominantly fences or hedges, or a combination of both. The combined result is a generally unified character to the street, typical of 20th century suburban development, even though building age and style may differ.

## Building heights and roofline

Building heights vary between one and two storeys. There are a variety of rooflines, with most buildings having brick chimneys. Rooflines are generally hipped, pitched or gabled, sometimes with gabled dormers.

## Land use and parking

The primary land use is residential. Parking is off-street on driveways in front of, or next to buildings. Garages are characteristic.



Variety of rooflines, large front gardens and generally consistent boundary treatments



Mid-century single storey bungalows



Design guidelines

04



## 4. Design guidelines

### 4.1. Introduction

This section is divided into two parts. The first is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a design proposal. These are presented as general questions which should be addressed by developers and their design teams who should provide clarification and explanation as necessary. The second part is design guidance setting out the expectations of the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Group.

It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that the new development responds to and enhances “sense of place” and meets the aspirations of people already living in that area. The aim of this section is to produce design guidelines that help to assess design quality and appropriateness in residential development proposals. Images have been used to reflect good examples of local architecture.

The guidelines developed in this document focus on residential development and consider the character of the immediate neighbouring buildings, the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and the surrounding landscape. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of new development whilst recognising that new building technologies can deliver acceptable built forms and may sometimes be more relevant.

### 4.2. General Design Considerations

This section sets out a series of general design principles followed by questions against which the development proposals should be evaluated.

As an initial appraisal, there should be evidence that development proposals have considered and applied the following general design principles:

- Harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use.
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views.
- Reinforce or enhance the established character of streets and other spaces.
- Integrate with existing paths, streets and patterns of activity.
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness.
- Retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built form features into the development.
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features.
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other; to provide a safe, attractive and cohesive environment.
- Make enough provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours.
- Sensitively integrate energy efficient technologies within the scheme at the start of the design process.
- Consider the impact of flooding when selecting materials, particularly for hard surfaces/driveways.

### 4.2.1. Key points to consider when assessing planning applications

The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment overview as to whether the design proposal has considered the context and provided an adequate design proposal. Following these fundamental principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines which should be used to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of development proposals.

#### Settlement pattern

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing settlement and street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal respect local landscape features including topography and hydrology?
- What are the important landscape or historic features within and surrounding the site? Have these features including existing trees been considered in the proposal?
- If located in a conservation area, does the proposal respond to the characteristics of the conservation area?
- How does the proposal relate to its setting? Are there any important links both physical and visual that currently exists on and adjacent to the site?

- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the new points of access and street layout take regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

#### Green spaces, public realm and street scape

- Does the new proposal respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features including trees on or adjacent to the site?
- How does the proposal affect the character of a rural or edge of settlement location?
- In rural and edge of settlement locations does the development impact the tranquillity of the area and has this been fully considered?

- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been considered?
- Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and streetscape?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the buildings and open spaces?

#### Pattern and layout of buildings

- What is the pattern and layout of existing buildings and have these been respected in the proposal?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of existing building layouts and their relationship with the main roads through the settlement?
- If the design is within or adjacent to a heritage asset, have the elements which contribute to their significance been considered in the proposal? (Heritage assets include listed buildings, scheduled

monuments, registered landscapes and registered battlefields.)

- Does the proposal affect or change the setting and significance of a heritage asset?

## Views and landmarks

- What are the existing key views and visual landmarks in the area and have these been retained and enhanced in the proposal?
- Where long distance views exist, how are these respected in the design?
- Are new views and visual connections with the existing settlement and surrounding area incorporated into the proposal?
- Are new landmarks to be formed within the proposals?

## Building line and boundary treatment

- Does the proposal respect the existing building line and harmonise with the adjacent properties?
- Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?
- Building heights and roofline.
- Does the proposed development compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?

- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens?
- Has careful attention been paid to height, form, massing and scale of new buildings? Is it appropriate to reflect the adjacent scale or could a taller development be considered?
- If a proposal is an extension, is it subsidiary to the existing property so it does not compromise its character?

## Architectural details and materials

- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- What are the distinctive materials in the area, if any? Do the proposed materials harmonise with the local vernacular?
- Does the proposal use high quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?

## Land use and parking

- Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?
- Do the proposed private car and cycle parking locations complement the existing provision or introduce new approaches? If new, do these new approaches change the character of the street?
- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage including facilities for waste separation and recycling?
- Is the location of the bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the impact of the design of bin storage facilities been considered, including quality of materials and location on the whole development? Could additional measures be incorporated to help integrate facilities into the development?
- Has the location of utilities including appropriate maintenance access been integrated into the proposal?
- Is the use of energy saving/efficient technologies encouraged and maximised? Are these technologies integrated into the proposal and not 'bolt on'?
- Has the lighting scheme been designed to avoid light pollution?

## 4.3. Design guidelines

The guidelines in this section should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of where it is in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. These guidelines advocate character-led design which responds to, and enhances the existing Neighbourhood Plan Area 'townscape', described in the Historic Village Core and Twentieth Century Ribbon Development Character Areas. Reference to context does not mean to copy or use pastiche solutions. It means responding to what is around as inspiration, so a contemporary solution that is in harmony with the surroundings may be just as suitable as a traditional style building.

Although the northernmost part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area lies outside of the AONB, the character of this area is not fundamentally different from the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, and therefore these Design Guidelines are intended to apply to all areas, both inside and outside of the AONB.

### Settlement pattern

- Streets must meet the technical highways requirements as well as be considered a 'space' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles. It is essential that the design of new development should include streets that incorporate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and if applicable, public transport users, particularly on busy routes through both settlements.
- New streets (should any be built) should be gently meandering - providing interest and evolving views. The length of streets is an important consideration; long straight sections of road tend to encourage higher speed and should be avoided. Instead, small clusters of housing accessed via a collection of small roads might be considered.
- Streets should be defined by adjacent built form, and the character of the buildings around them. Access to properties should be from the street, wherever possible.
- Proposals should respect local topography and hydrology.
- The distribution of land uses should respect the character of the area and street network, and take into account the degree of isolation, lack of light pollution, and levels of tranquillity.
- Routes should provide a permeable and connected pattern, creating different travel options, particularly for pedestrians. A number of streets in Coombe Bissett and Homington do not have convenient pedestrian linkages and present cul-de-sacs which prevent permeability. It is recommended that any cul-de-sacs proposed should be relatively short and include connection for onward pedestrian links.
- New development should consider using natural gateway features, such as trees, and also use trees to punctuate the ends of streets/vistas. Given the rural setting, planting should be informal and reflect local characteristics.
- New development should consider creating a barrier free environment using a change of surface material and/or boundary to mark access.



Gateway feature created by beech tree



Example of change of surface marking access

## Green spaces, public realm, streetscape and views

- Development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.
- Key views from or towards the towers of the churches of St Michael and All Angels, in Coombe Bissett and the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Homington should be protected and integrated into proposals for new development. Where possible such views should be enhanced.
- Historic open spaces and trees that contribute to the character and of the area should be retained.
- Historic boundary treatments should be retained, where possible, as they contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
- The spacing of development should reflect the rural character and where feasible allow for views of the countryside to reinforce a sense of place. Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design, including its edge, to prevent harsh boundaries between settlement and countryside.
- The existing quiet and peaceful atmosphere of Coombe Bissett and Homington should be preserved.
- Streets in Coombe Bissett and Homington are often informal, demonstrated by narrow carriageways shared between pedestrians and vehicles and any new streets should reflect this character.
- A green gap between the settlements of Coombe Bissett and Homington must be retained to avoid coalescence.
- Where relevant, any future development scheme should not impede views out to the open fields beyond the villages.
- Loss of trees as a result of development should be avoided. If losses are unavoidable, trees must be replaced with new planting that meets or exceeds the spatial extent and quality that has been lost.
- Ensure that tree and landscape planting has sufficient space to grow and adequate provision is made for future maintenance.
- Using green features as focal points in the wider streetscape should be considered, as within Coombe Bissett and Homington's historic cores.
- Materials used in the public realm should be selected to complement the character of the buildings and street, using a limited palette of complementary materials. Selected materials must be locally characteristic, durable and easy to maintain. For example, wood, local stone, red brick or gravel.



## Pattern and layout of buildings

- The existing rural character should be considered when contemplating new development, whatever its size or purpose.
- The River Ebble and local topography significantly influences the linear nature of the settlements, and any new development should respect this linear nature.
- The variety of built form is a key characteristic of the historic core of Coombe Bissett and Homington. There should be no use of a repeating architectural style along the entirety of a street. A variety of housing typologies that reflect the existing fabric of the village, should be encouraged.
- Statutory listed buildings and their setting should be preserved and where possible enhanced.
- The design and layout of new buildings (if development is considered appropriate), that fall within the setting of a listed building or the conservation areas, should respect the existing pattern and character of the settlement. The mass, scale and height of new development should be in keeping with the existing building line(s) and surrounding properties as well as the surrounding area where the new development stands.
- The layout of new development should follow the arrangement of adjacent buildings where it sits as infill within the settlement. Where development is not infill, the layout should consider the character most relevant to the site.
- Buildings are occasionally orientated side-on to the street. This could be considered, where appropriate, as long as the side elevation of the building contains sufficient architectural detailing to avoid presenting a blank facade to the street. Ground-floor windows should also be present in any side-on arrangement to ensure casual surveillance of the street.

### Examples of clusters of houses



## Building line and boundary treatments

- Building lines typically have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but will generally form a unified whole.
- Residential properties in Coombe Bissett and Homington typically have both front and rear gardens, or at least a small buffer to the public sphere where the provision of a garden is not possible. New developments should ensure there is sufficient set-back from the road to provide a buffer, and that rear gardens are commensurate with the size of dwellings being provided.
- Boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity in the building line and help define the street, whilst reflecting local materials and form (examples of which are provided opposite).
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of a property. Landscape areas could also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers. Such containers should only be visible when required for collection.
- Grass verges might include open ditches where this is appropriate and consistent with local hydrology and drainage.
- Street lighting is rare in Coombe Bissett and Homington, and new development should respect this key characteristic. Where the use of exterior lighting is unavoidable, bollard lighting should be used rather than column lighting, and downward directional 'dark sky friendly' luminaires should be used.



## Building heights and rooflines

- The height of proposed development should relate to adjacent buildings and should not generally exceed two storeys.
- Buildings are predominantly 1 or 2 storeys and the change in roof heights and the presence of chimneys contribute to the visual interest of both historic villages.
- Space between buildings with glimpses of the countryside is a common feature of Coombe Bissett and Homington and new developments should reflect this characteristic.
- New development should respect the existing roofline of adjoining properties to create a consistent roofline and rhythm along the street. Roofs are mainly pitched with some hipped and half-hipped examples.
- Traditional roof materials found in Coombe Bissett and Homington include clay pantile, slate, and thatch. These materials should be considered in any new development.
- Gabled dormers and brick chimneys, which are a local characteristic, can be used as a design element to add variety and interest to roofs of new buildings.
- The scale, massing and heights of new development should relate to the width of the street and any adjoining buildings and open space.
- Traditional materials are welcome in new developments, as these enable new developments to settle in well with the existing character.
- Green roofs may be suitable for modern developments built to high sustainability standards. However, green roofs should reflect the surrounding landscape in their design, species and setting.



## Architectural details and materials

It is beyond the scope of this report to provide a comprehensive set of architectural detail solutions. Yet it is expected that future development will make reference to historic building and traditional materials and details.

- The materials and architectural detailing used throughout Coombe Bissett and Homington should contribute to the rural character of the area and respond to the local vernacular.
- Materials used in new developments should be of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness.
- Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.
- Non-traditional building types e.g. live/work units should have a barn like character rather than a residential character to reflect the rural character of the area.
- Modern architecture which responds to the local character is welcome, providing it respects the scale and form of neighbouring buildings.

New residential development which takes a considered and appropriate approach to design, in a contemporary style, can be more sympathetic to the historic fabric and landscape of the villages than poorly executed historically referenced designs. Therefore, new builds which employ imitation of historic architectural styles, using cheaper modern materials and a lack of consideration to proportion and massing of local historic buildings, should be considered less appropriate.

Examples of local architectural features, styles and materials



## Materials palette



**Thatch**



**Slate**



**Clay pantile**



**Render (smooth or rough)**



**Stone/flint**



**Knapped flint**



**Timber weather boards  
(natural or black)**



**Red brick**



**Stone quoins/brick**



**Pea gravel footpath**



**Gravel driveway**

## Building modifications, extension and plot infill

- Replacement dwellings in the historic core of the settlements should be carefully designed in order not to alter the character of a settlement if not carefully designed.
- Alterations and extensions to historic buildings should respect the host building. Replacement of historic and traditional features, such as timber windows and doors with uPVC and other modern non-traditional building materials should be avoided. Extensions should be appropriate to the mass, scale and design of the main buildings.
- The original building should remain the dominant element of the property regardless the amount of extensions. The newly built extension should not overwhelm the building from any given point.
- Extensions and modifications should not result in a significant loss of gardens as these are a characteristic feature of both Coombe Bissett and Homington and contribute to green infrastructure.
- Extensions and modifications should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling resulting in street parking.
- Extensions and modifications should respond to the pitch and form of the existing roof where appropriate.
- Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes, and proportions of the existing building and should complement the existing building.



An example of a solar panel installation recessed into roof tiles



Contemporary side extension using characteristic roof form

- In the case of side extensions, the new extension should subservient to the main building, either through scale or setback and should ensure that views to the countryside between dwellings is not lost.
- In case of rear extensions, the new part should not have a harmful effect on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing, overbearing or privacy issues.
- Features to reduce energy running costs/emissions should be designed or retrofitted to integrate well into the built environment and landscape.
- Innovation and sustainability is welcomed in Coombe Bissett and Homington, providing design is complementary to local character and built form. For example, greenroofs may help buildings blend with the surrounding landscape.



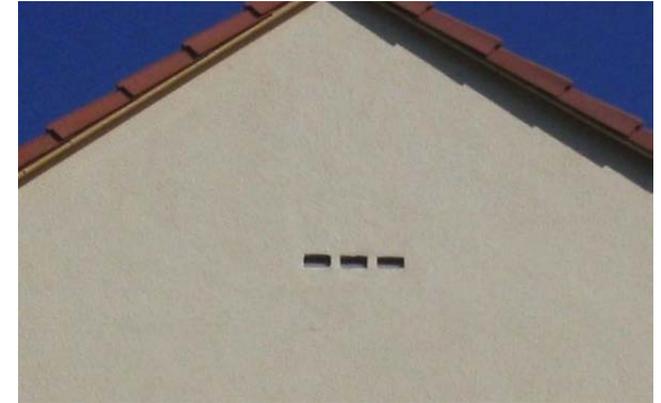
Contemporary side extension, respecting the existing building scale, massing and building line



An example of a green roof on a contemporary style new-build

## Sustainable design

- Non-traditional building types e.g. live/work units should have a barn like character rather than a residential character.
- Modern architecture which responds to the local character is welcome, providing it respects the scale and form of neighbouring buildings.
- The sustainability of the materials should be carefully considered, using sustainable options where possible.
- Modern materials can be effective on either traditional or contemporary building forms. Where contemporary materials are used they should be of high quality and relate sensitively to the surrounding context.
- Buildings are an element of the wider environment, including their boundaries, gardens, verges and nearby water courses. Their design should benefit the local community, biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- Regard should be given to wildlife corridors linking open spaces, and fences should provide gaps in any barriers to avoid disruption to the ecology.
- Biodiversity enhancements in potential new development should be integral to the built form. These can include bat boxes, and bird boxes set within the built structure (see images opposite).
- New planting should enhance biodiversity through the use of native species .



**Examples of measures to enhance biodiversity**

Image credits (clockwise from top-left): [www.birdhouses.co.uk](http://www.birdhouses.co.uk); [www.bats.org](http://www.bats.org); [www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk](http://www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk).

## Parking

- Car parking solutions should be a mix of on-plot, covered and garage parking.
- For family homes cars should be placed at the front or side of the property. For small pockets of housing, groups of parking spaces to the side or front may be appropriate, but these should be positioned within close proximity the front door of properties. Parking courts to the front or rear are not appropriate as they are not consistent with local character.
- Car parking should be sensitively integrated with soft landscape to minimise the impact of vehicles in the street scene, and from windows of properties.
- When placing parking at the front, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to prevent the potential for a continuous area of car parking in front of dwellings, by means of walls, hedging, planting, and use of differentiated quality paving materials.



Examples of car parking

## Flooding

- Any future development should take into account the needs for drainage locally, as new development will alter the patterns of surface water drainage.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into new developments wherever possible and should suit the site's individual circumstances. Solutions should follow SuDS key principles:
  - Allow water to infiltrate into the ground;
  - Collect and store water, releasing it slowly;
  - Slowly transport water on the surface; and
  - Allow for filtration to settle-out pollutants and sediment.
- Design solutions might include:
  - Surfaces that are permeable and respond to the local character e.g. pea gravel; or
  - Small swales, filter strips or drainage channels.
- Designs must also consider and make arrangements for the long-term maintenance of SuDS to ensure it continues to operate effectively.



Characteristic pea-gravel driveway



Ford, Stocks Bridge



Drainage ditches along side road - Homington

Intentionally blank

A scenic view of a paved road curving through a lush green landscape. The road is flanked by dense green foliage and trees. In the background, rolling green hills are visible under a bright sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

**Deliverability**

**05**

## 5. Deliverability

### 5.1. Delivery Agents

The design guidelines will be a valuable tool for securing context-driven, high quality development in the Coombe Bissett and Homington Neighbourhood Plan Area. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table below:

Actor	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers and landowners	As a guide to the community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Where planning applications require a Design and Access Statement, the Statement should explain how the Design Guidelines have been followed.	
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications.
The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.	
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are followed.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

### 5.2. Deliverability

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35) emphasises that a proportionate evidence base should inform plans. Based on a 'positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings' (see paragraph 15). Policies should be 'underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals' (paragraph 31). Crucially planning policies 'should not undermine the deliverability of the plan' (paragraph 34).

Neighbourhood Plans need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the corresponding Local Plan. Where new policy requirements are introduced (that carry costs to development) over and above Local Plan and national standards it is necessary to assess whether development will remain deliverable. The principles and guidance set out in this document and within the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are aligned with national policy and non-statutory best practice on design.

The values and costs of construction between new developments and within new developments will vary based on location, situation, product type, design (architecture, placemaking etc.) and finish; and the state of the market at the point of marketing the properties. The guidelines herein constitute place making principles and guidance to help interpret and apply the statutory policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is not an additional cost to development and good placemaking can result in uplifts in value.

## 6. References

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