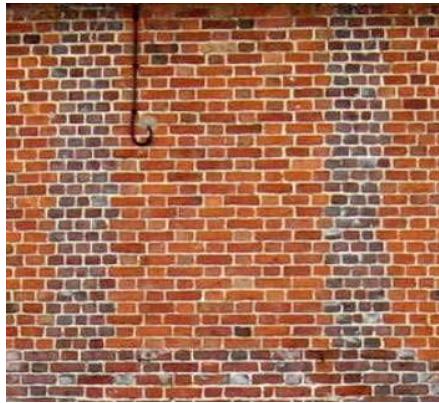


- 61 Brick is now the dominant facing material in the village. In many cases this is the result of older timber buildings' being re-fronted, but Water Farm seems to have been brick-faced from the C17th and at the Abbot's Fireside we see an apparently original brick end-wall to a timber-framed building. Brick is also used in conjunction with flint to provide dressings. The older, locally-made bricks are of a soft brownish-red, laid in Flemish bond; this is sometimes interspersed with grey glazed headers, either in a chequerboard pattern (Anne's Cottage) or as *chainâge* (Coopers). For a more even, 'classical' effect brickwork was sometimes rendered over (Well House, the Methodist Church). After the arrival of the railway, houses began to be built of a harder, brighter imported brick (Lime Villas), occasionally showing moulded patterns (Bank Side/St Zita).



Brickwork patterns: chainâge (Coopers, left) and decorative moulding (Bank Side/St Zita, right)

- 62 Clay tile was nearly ubiquitous as a roofing material until well into the C20th, although Welsh slate is to be seen on one or two later buildings such as the Vicarage Lane cottages. Tile hanging has long been common, especially for the first floor of domestic buildings, where it might be applied to disguise a timber-framed jetty as a cheaper alternative to full re-fronting. (A belt-and-braces approach was taken at Wise Follies, where the first floor has been hung with 'mathematical' tiles in deliberate imitation of brickwork – a subterfuge undermined by the re-fronting of the ground floor in genuine brick!) Older tilework displays very large tiles of varying shades, giving a pleasant dappled effect (Water Farm, Updown Cottage). Later tiles tend to be smaller and more even in colour, sometimes incorporating ornamental motifs such as fish-scales (Bank Side/St Zita, Oriel Cottage).



Tilework: as illusion (Wise Follies, left) and as decoration (Bank Side/St Zita)

Greenery, green spaces & ecology

- 63 There are two main public green spaces within the CA. The first and most important is the churchyard. As well as its obvious memorial role, this space provides a setting for the church and the several listed monuments around it, and acts as an apparent extension of the countryside into the centre of the village. This last is by virtue of its topography: the land falls away quite steeply on the eastern side, hiding the modern houses beyond in a dip and creating a visual continuity between the grassy slope in the foreground and the hillside in the distance. The churchyard also contains some notable trees, particularly the fine pair of yews flanking its southern entrance.



Yew trees in the churchyard

- 64 The second space comprises the triangle of open land in the fork between the Old and New Roads. This has something of the appearance of a village green, although it has not historically played that role. The avenue of beech trees planted along the New Road also give it a park-like air, but with the countryside so close by, and the school playing fields and public recreation ground just across the road, it is hard to imagine it being used as such. It does, however, make a fine formal approach to the village from the south, and also serves, like the churchyard, to connect the village with the wider landscape.
- 65 There are one or two marginal areas which, whilst hardly 'open spaces' in the usual sense, make a distinctive contribution to the local scene: the grassy bank (now partly tarred over) that runs down the western side of the High Street from the War Memorial as far as Oriel Cottage, or the little enclosure with its oak tree that marks the site of the former village pound. Private gardens also enrich the environment of the village. This is less true in the centre, where most buildings stand on the street-front, but on the fringes of the settlement some houses have large grounds with fine mature trees, such as the old Vicarage with its tall Scots pines, or Five Bells with its willows overhanging Duck Street.



Duck Street showing Five Bells (right) and willow trees

Negative & neutral factors

- 66 Whilst Elham remains a remarkably attractive and intact historic village, it has not been spared the two chief scourges of the CA: unsympathetic alteration, especially to unlisted buildings, and poor-quality new development. The effects of the former have been relatively mild, by far the worst being from re-fenestration; this is, of course, part of a historic process that includes the Georgianisation of the houses round the Square, and FC Eden's restoration of the Vicarage, but nevertheless it is difficult to imagine (for example) the huge uPVC windows with false internal glazing bars on the Methodist church complex ever blending harmoniously into the local scene.
- 67 New development has been much more damaging. Visually insensitive redevelopment is nothing new – one or two late 19th/early 20th century and inter-war houses can rival anything built later in this regard – but the late 20th century has made some outstandingly Philistine contributions to Elham's villagescape. In the gaps between traditional two-storey buildings on the street-front, a lack of contextual awareness of scale and setting has produced sprawling bungalows set far back from the road (Springfields, Wayside) or utilitarian sheds surrounded by parking lots (the Surgery). Not that attempts to reproduce the local vernacular have produced much happier results, as the crude replacement Vicarage or the Tudorbethan executive homes of Hunters Bank clearly show.
- 68 These last, like many of the worst new developments, lie just outside the CA; this may indicate that more control is being applied within its boundaries, but it spares the CA itself only at the cost of severely eroding its setting: the boxy houses on Water Farm, for instance, now dominate what must once have been a fine view into the village from the east.



Left: Springfields. Right: the Surgery

- 69 A number of properties have fallen foul of UPVC replacements and additions that disfigure and create negative impact on otherwise well presented buildings. It cannot be stressed enough how detrimental an effect the unsympathetic use of materials and loss of architectural detail impacts on a CA.



Left: The village from Duck Street. Right: contrast the 1912

- 70 Little remains that could be regarded as simply 'neutral'. Manorfield, a little group of vaguely vernacular 1950s council houses – not badly designed, but not yet old enough to have blended into the village scene – perhaps falls into this category, as do many of the newer houses on the east side of the Row, which being set below the level of the street do not intrude into the public realm. The new terrace called Church Walk is overscaled but tolerably reticent and contextual in its design. The primary school makes few such concessions to context, but has a certain minimal elegance for which it may yet come to be valued.

General condition, problems, pressures and the capacity for change

- 71 Modern-day Elham is prosperous, and its buildings are by and large well-maintained. No structure in the village appears on the English Heritage *Register of Buildings At Risk*, and only one is visibly dilapidated – the grade II listed barn behind the Rose and Crown, which, roofless at time of survey is currently undergoing refurbishment and redevelopment. Problems relating to alteration and new development have been described above; the former may now be under control, but the latter can only increase with the growing popularity of the area as the 'gateway to the Continent'.
- 72 The village still takes much of its character from a close relationship to the landscape; this relationship already been compromised, and it is hard to see how it could survive much more in the way of suburban growth. One other factor deserves to be mentioned, a result of Elham's popularity with visitors as opposed to residents. The pressure for parking is now such that spaces like the Square and the High Street resemble open-air car parks, making their architectural and spatial qualities all but impossible to enjoy at busy times. The village economy thrives on visitors, but their numbers are now such as to undermine the very qualities which they seek, not a unique problem to Elham.

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

- 73 In accordance with English Heritage advice, the Council's brief included a requirement to involve key stakeholders in the appraisal process. The principal means was by a questionnaire, the content of which was agreed with the Council. The questionnaire was sent to 2 groups and individuals as advised by the Council. Of these, no responses were received.

SUGGESTED BOUNDARY REVISIONS

- 74 Two minor revisions to the boundaries of the CA are suggested, in each case taking in some early C20th buildings whose significance was not perhaps fully appreciated at the time of the initial designation. First, it is proposed that the northern boundary be extended as far as the fork in the road where Park Lane branches off to the left (Appendix 2). This seems both a more natural frontier point – the top of the hill, and the effective end of the High Street – and also has the advantage of including Fairfield Cottage, an interesting late C19th bay-windowed house with an intriguing porch topped with what appear to be Composite capitals, plus a good small Arts and Crafts style house known as Elmcroft.



Above: Fairfield Cottage with detail of porch. Below: Elmcroft



- 75 The second extension would bring all the houses on the western side of the Old Road, excluding the more recent houses on Hunters Bank, into the CA. This would recognise the contribution made by this group of buildings, set high up on a bank overlooking the road, to character of the green space, which is already within the area boundary. A number of these properties are modern and of neutral or negative value; but the same is true of many others within the CA, and the group also includes a number of pleasing Edwardian villas, typical of the development of the village following the arrival of the railway, and also the Old Lock-Up, once the village police station.



Left: the Old Lock-Up. Right: typical Edwardian villa overlooking the Old Road

LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

- 76 Threats to the character of the CA have been noted. The most common are erosion of detail, inappropriate alteration or extension and uncontrolled, disfiguring householder alterations such as UPVC windows. Control of development outside the CA boundaries affecting character or setting is already provided for by way of Government policy Section 4.14 of PPG15 which refers to Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

Article 4 Directions

- 77 The introduction of Article 4 Directions is recommended. Their purpose is to prevent further harmful alteration to the exteriors of single family houses by removing the rights to make changes allowed under permitted development rights. The following are examples of what can be controlled:
- a. Any changes to roof coverings.
 - b. Certain roof lights and solar panels.
 - c. The erection of fencing and boundary walls.
 - d. The removal of walls, fences or any other boundary treatments.
 - e. The erection of sheds, garages and outbuildings.
 - f. The erection of a hard standing.
 - g. Painting or rendering of natural masonry.
 - h. Any extensions or conservatories.
 - i. Any changes to doors and windows.
 - j. Any changes to elevations that is visible from the public highway.

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS / STRATEGY

Design guidance

- 78 A local design guide is desirable in order to inform building owners of best practice with regard to maintenance, repair and reinstatement, as well as what the Council is likely to consider acceptable by way of design, alteration and extension of property. This could include topics on the design, layout and density of any new development as well as traffic, parking and circulation issues. Reference to the scope of a future Management Scheme and details of any Article 4 Directions is also recommended. In the interim, the IHBC/SPAB guide, *A Stitch in Time*, directed at householders and downloadable from the IHBC website, is recommended for publicising and distribution. Encouragement to reverse inappropriate changes to historic buildings is desirable.
- 79 The main problems and pressures identified above should be addressed in this guide. Topics could include:
- Description of principal design features
 - Extensions
 - Building materials and details
 - Roof conversions and dormers
 - Rain and foul water systems
 - Chimneys
 - Porches
 - Windows and doors
 - Garages and parking spaces
 - Garden buildings
 - Fences, walls and hedges
 - Trees and landscape
 - Communication aerials
 - Reinstating lost features
 - How to make an application
- 80 Issues concerning works within the public realm, which are within the control of the Council, should be grouped together for inclusion in a policy document for implementation by the Council or County Councils, as appropriate. Specific guidance on the importance of co-ordinated design of objects, installations and surfaces within the CA, and of collaboration between Council services to that end should be included. A comprehensive audit of street furniture and signs would be an essential preliminary towards de-cluttering the public realm.
- 81 Consideration should be given in the Management Plan Stage to the development of a detailed local evaluation tool which would be more objective in measuring development proposals, whether alterations or new build, against the key characteristics of the CA, or its character areas, as appropriate.

USEFUL INFORMATION

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