

Introduction

- 19.1 Balcombe village is located approximately three miles to the north of Cuckfield and Haywards Heath. It is situated on a ridge between steeply dissected valleys which leave it exposed from the east and west. It is surrounded by countryside of high quality, with a landscape of wooded hills and farm land. The village is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 19.2 The historic core of the village is at the crossroads where Haywards Heath Road and Bramble Hill meet. This provides the focus of the community with a small village green, a number of shops, including a post office and a public house, together with the Victory Hall and, nearby, the recreation ground. Many of the buildings in this part of the village are listed as being of architectural or historic interest.
- 19.3 In the late 19th and 20th centuries the village has extended southwards, including both private and local authority housing developments. However, despite inevitable pressure for development due to its location on the main London to Brighton railway line and the B2036 Horley to Brighton Road, Balcombe remains a relatively compact settlement. The majority of development in recent years has taken place on infill sites within the built-up area of the village. Away from the village centre, housing is generally low density, with a high proportion of dwellings being large detached houses in spacious gardens.

Policies and Proposals

Built-up Area Boundary

- 19.4 A built-up area boundary is defined for Balcombe which seeks to conserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary development. The boundary excludes some peripheral areas which due to their low residential density are considered to have a rural character which would be adversely affected by infilling.

Conservation Area

- 19.5 Part of Balcombe was designated as a Conservation Area in 1984. This was focused on the central village crossroads and extended in linear form, as far as St. Mary's Church in the north and Mill Lane in the south. Some of the buildings grouped around the village centre date from the 16th and 17th Centuries and most are pre 20th Century. To the south east, grouped loosely around the junction of Haywards Heath Road and Mill Lane, is another area of older timber framed and brick properties; whilst many are Victorian there are several listed buildings dating from the 17th Century.
- 19.6 The Conservation Area boundary was extended in March 1990 to include two additional areas:
- (i) the northwest side of Bramble Hill and the trees and hedgeline on the south east side, together with the east side of London Road northwards to the original Conservation Area boundary, and
 - (ii) those parts of Stockcroft Road and Deanland Road not previously covered, together with Victoria Road and part of Oldlands Avenue.

These roads are, for the most part, characterised by large detached houses of varying ages and styles with spacious gardens, set in attractive tree and hedge lined roads with

wide grass verges. Although there has been some recent infill development these areas have retained an attractive character and appearance worthy of Conservation Area status.

19.7 The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:

- the attractive stone walling within the area;
- the large detached houses, set predominantly in spacious gardens, and the extensive grass verges bordering wide roads which contribute to the overall open character of the residential area of Stockcroft Road, Deanland Road and Oldlands Avenue;
- the number of hedgerows and fine trees, both deciduous and evergreen, in the area;
- the use of natural and traditional building materials including clay roofing tiles and local stock brick;
- the ornamental barge-boarding on some of the properties in London Road; and
- the attractive views of rolling countryside.

Housing

~~Land at Deanland Nursery, Balcombe~~

~~19.8 Within the village of Balcombe one site has been allocated for housing. This is a site of 0.85 hectares and occupies the area between Troymead, Coomers, Foxwells and Deanland Road. The site comprises of the former Deanland Nursery site and two bungalows. A planning application for the site was approved in February 2001, and the construction works are now nearing completion.~~

~~**BA1** Land at Deanland Nursery (approximately 0.85 hectares) is allocated for residential development to provide approximately 16 dwellings. Permission for residential development will be subject to the general requirements of the Local Plan, particularly policies G3 (Infrastructure), B2 (Design), H2 (Dwelling Mix), H4 (Affordable housing), T4 (New Development), R3 and R4 (Outdoor Playing Space).~~

~~Additionally permission will be subject to the following requirement:~~

- ~~(a) satisfactory access be provided from more than one location.~~

Transport

Through Traffic

- 19.9 In view of its position adjacent to the B2036 Horley to Brighton Road, and its proximity to larger towns such as Haywards Heath and Crawley, Balcombe is adversely affected by a significant volume of through traffic. Following construction of the new M23 Junction (10a) at Maidenbower, to the north of the village, additional traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures, funded by the Maidenbower Consortium as part of the M23 junction works, have now been implemented.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

- 19.10 Balcombe is also vulnerable to the effects of heavy goods vehicles. Whilst some require access to the local area, others do not and can cause unnecessary danger and inconvenience to other road users. The Council will support any additional controls in the form of weight and width restrictions on roads in the vicinity of Balcombe, in addition to the measures already implemented. Policy T3 in the Transport Chapter of this Local Plan sets out the Council's approach to development proposals which will generate additional heavy vehicle movements.

Public Transport

- 19.11 The station in Balcombe is part of the South Central Ltd and Thameslink railway network. This is a much valued facility to the area as a whole, but services from the station have been reduced in recent years, to the concern of the Council and rail users alike. The Council will continue to press for the retention and improvement of rail services through Balcombe.

