



Churston

Village Design Statement

An integral part of the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan

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1 Introduction

- 1.0.1 In 1983 the then Countryside Commission published *Design in the Countryside* which noted that the character of the countryside was under increasing threat from standardisation and poor design. The commission proposed Village Design Statements (VDSs) as one mechanism for understanding and influencing future rural design.
- 1.0.2 The purpose of a VDS is to record the characteristics, both natural and man-made, which are seen by the local community to influence the distinctiveness of the area. The VDS then recommends a set of design principles based on the distinctive local character. In this way, local people can influence change by stating how planned development can be carried out in harmony with its setting.
- 1.0.3 At the core of the VDS is a set of development and building guidelines intended to preserve the character of the village and its setting within the surrounding land. The land which this VDS applies to is particularly environmentally sensitive from the perspectives of landscape character and biodiversity, being home to protected species.
- 1.0.4 Although the guidelines are primarily intended as an aid to the planning process, owners can make many changes to their properties, which have an effect on character, without seeking planning permission. It is hoped, therefore, that where such permitted changes are made, those making them will have due regard to any relevant guidelines and so help preserve the character of the village.
- 1.0.5 This statement is the result of considerable consultation with the residents of Churston along with dialogue and productive co-operation between Torbay Council, the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Forum and the Churston, Galmpton and Broadsands Community Partnership. We confidently expect, therefore, that Torbay Council will respect the guidelines produced and work towards maintaining the character of the village when making future planning decisions.

2 The special character of Churston

2.0.1 Churston is a semi-rural/semi-coastal village situated between the towns of Paignton and Brixham. It is an area different in character to other parts of Torbay for the following reasons.

2.1 Undeveloped coastline

2.1.1 Viewed from a boat out in the centre of the Bay, Torbay appears as a continuous ribbon of urban development from Hope's Nose to the north east – via the centres of Torquay, Preston and Paignton – all the way round to Broadsands beach to the south west.

2.1.2 From Broadsands for 3 miles there is then a section of unspoilt undeveloped coastline stretching as far as the Port of Brixham to the south east. This undeveloped coast lies entirely within Churston.



Figure 1: The undeveloped coastline of Churston as seen from Elberry Cove.

2.1.3 The geography of Torbay, with views being afforded across the water to land on the other side of the Bay, means this undeveloped coast provides a crucial landscape contribution to many urban parts of Torbay and the character of the

Bay itself. Put simply, the undeveloped coast of Churston makes Torbay as a whole feel more rural and greatly increases the charm and attractiveness of the Bay as a whole.

2.2 Band of countryside stretching from the Bay to the Dart

- 2.2.1 The landscape contribution made by the 3 mile section of the undeveloped coastline of Churston is reinforced by the way in which this land extends inland towards the river Dart.
- 2.2.2 From the coast in a south westerly direction there is a wide swathe of largely undeveloped countryside. This landscape comprises the whole of the Churston Golf Course, local farmland and woodland. This area provides an important characteristic of openness and spaciousness.
- 2.2.3 Looking onto Churston from other parts of Torbay, this largely undeveloped countryside frames views of the undeveloped coast.



Figure 2: View towards the River Dart in the distance across the semi-rural environment of Churston.

2.3 Semi-rural setting

2.3.1 In contrast to other parts of the Bay, built development in Churston has taken place in a way which has retained a distinctive rural character. The following are all material factors in this:

- Development is limited in both scale, visual massing and density.
- No one single urban expansion has taken place in a way which has dominated the surrounding area.
- Open green spaces have survived urban creep and now serve a valuable purpose in separating out discrete pockets of development (which would be otherwise read as much larger blocks of development).
- Open vistas exist providing distant views which provide a feeling of spaciousness.
- Trees, hedges, grass banks and historical stone walls have been retained.
- There is a relative lack of usual urban and suburban features. For example, even Churston Traditional Farm Shop, a relatively new retail outlet, has been sensitively designed to appear as an agricultural building.

2.3.2 Due to the fact that the main road from Brixham to Paignton crosses through the undeveloped landscape and these urban settlements are grounded in rural surroundings, there is an important landscape contribution provided by Churston at a Torbay wide level by making the whole of the Bay more attractive and rural.

2.4 Historical development

2.4.1 Archaeologist Mike Parker Pearson, who grew up in Churston before later becoming a presenter on the Channel 4 television programme "*Time Team*", found evidence of Bronze Age and Stone Age settlements at Churston.

- 2.4.2 Even the very name "*Churston*" has ancient origins. It is an adaptation of the word "*Ceretone*" which derives from the Anglo-Saxon words "*Cyric*" meaning Church and "*Tor*" meaning settlement. "*Ceretone*" is first recorded in the Domesday Book population survey commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086.
- 2.4.3 The earliest development still evident today is around the Church, the manor house now known as Churston Court and the adjacent farm buildings. There is a record of a property on the site of Churston Court going back to the doomsday book. The Church itself was originally the chapel to the manor house and dates from the 15th century, although what we see today is largely the product of the 1864 restoration.
- 2.4.4 The 1765 Benjamin Donn map of Devonshire suggests much of the historical built form of Churston has survived largely intact. The convoluted current form of Bascombe Road can clearly be seen, as can Bridge Road, Green Lane and the current junction arrangements at what we now call Windy Corner.

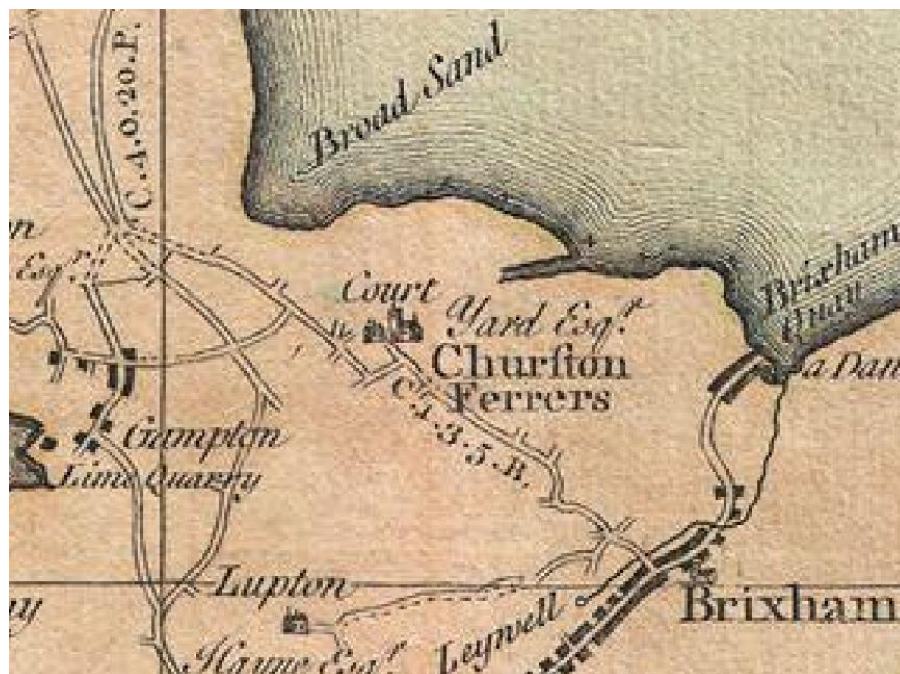


Figure 3: Extract from the 1765 Benjamin Donn map of Devonshire.

- 2.4.5 The two families of Ferrers and Yarde Buller and the two properties of Churston Court and Lupton House dominate the recorded history of Churston. The association with the Ferrers family goes back to the 14th century and gave rise

to the name Churston Ferrers, which was used to describe the historic civil parish which included the village we now call Churston and the adjacent village of Galmpton. The association with the Yarde Bullers started a century later, from the 15th century, and the current Lord Churston is a descendent of the Yarde Buller line.

- 2.4.6 Lupton House was built in 1772 by Charles Hayne, the then Sheriff of Devon, and sold sometime before 1792 to Sir Francis Buller, 1st Baronet. The property has been subject to numerous additions and modifications throughout its existence and some of its original architectural features were destroyed by fire in 1926. In its current form it is styled as a grand Palladian Country House.



Figure 4: Lupton House.

- 2.4.7 The railway came to Churston in 1861 and was extended a further 2 miles with a branch line to Brixham in 1868. It lasted nearly a hundred years before being closed in 1963 as part of a major rationalisation of the rail network under the Beeching Report. Churston Station is now part of a privately owned steam railway.

- 2.4.8 Churston Station is operated by the Dartmouth Steam Company who run a service between Paignton and Kingswear. It features in the Agatha Christie novel "*The ABC Murders*" where Hercule Poirot alights at Churston Station (the "C" in the title of the novel) and proceeds through Churston and across the golf course to Elberry Cove.



Figure 5: Churston Station.

- 2.4.9 There is little evidence of any industry other than Agriculture ever having been carried on in the area. There are a few small disused quarries in Marridge Woods. The character of the area has always been agricultural. The narrow lanes, agricultural vehicles, horse riders and walkers give a sense of timelessness.

3 Built environment

3.1 Old Churston and Alston (the "Churston Conservation Area")

- 3.1.1 The earliest built development at Churston was centred around the Church and Manor House (now the Churston Manor Hotel) which has Elizabethan origins and was reputedly frequented by Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh.

- 3.1.2 Close by is the Manor House, orchards and barns of what was a “model farm” in the Victorian era. Stone buildings and walls in this part of the village are listed. This is the oldest part of the village.
- 3.1.3 Subsequent development extended the village in a ribbon development along what we now call Churston Road. This includes the many stone-built terraced houses of estate workers from various periods of the development of the Churston Estate. Most are from the 18th to 19th century and the majority retain their original features of slate roofs, wooden windows and doors, beach pebble floor yards and small gardens to the front with larger ones to the rear for kitchen gardens. A few small cottages from earlier periods are also to be found on Churston Road and this short stretch of road has no less than 24 of the 31 grade II listed structures present in the Churston area as a whole.
- 3.1.4 Traffic can enter Churston Road from both ends, but can only exit at the northern end of the road towards the Church and Churston Court. Egress onto the Brixham Road is restricted because of the inherent danger of exiting onto this very busy route, in part due to the poor visibility created by the two semi-detached cottages on the corner. This one-way system limits the traffic flow through the village creating a quiet residential setting.
- 3.1.5 To the east side of Churston Road, alongside the post-war housing, is Ferrers Green. This was built in 1980–81 with a design ethos which was intended to create the appearance of a “village” that had developed over a period of time.
- 3.1.6 Also on the east side of Churston Road next to the railway bridge is new build terraced housing having a rendered finish with tiled grey roofs. The terrace “rural” design and front gardens are sympathetic to the village environment. Parking facilities are within a wooden barn style construction.
- 3.1.7 The defining characteristic is very much one of a traditional English village.



Figure 6: New build housing displaying good design principles.

3.1.8 In 1970, the Churston Conservation Zone was established as the first conservation zone in Torbay, with the specific aim of protecting this area. Even now the conservation zone is one of only two in Torbay where an “Article 4 Direction” has been made to remove Householder Permitted Development Rights; such is the perceived value and special character of this area by the Local Planning Authority.

3.1.9 In keeping with the distinctive character of this area, future development should:

- be small in scale and limited to modest infill development which is subservient to the existing village character. Modern “landmark” designs or typical “suburban” designs are unlikely to comply with these guidelines.

3.2 Bascombe Road and development bordering the golf course

3.2.1 Bascombe Road is a narrow, rural country lane leading to Windy Corner and the junction with the main Dartmouth Road (A3022). The road has historical connections as seen earlier on the 1765 Benjamin Donn map, and appears to have changed very little since. The form of the road is very clearly from a much earlier time period.

- 3.2.2 The road had no properties built along its length until the 1920s when Lord Churston and a group of associates commissioned and built a small number of substantial, individual, detached houses, all on large plots.
- 3.2.3 Subsequently, in the 1960s and 1970s further substantial detached properties, each individual in design, were built along Bascombe Road to Windy Corner junction and up to the beginning of Green Lane which connects to the old village.
- 3.2.4 The properties in Bascombe Road have all been built such that there are never properties on both sides of the road at the same point. Along with the absence of pavements and the Devon bank and stone wall boundary structures, this contributes to the rural character and the feeling of space and tranquillity, as open views are afforded from key public vantage points across the golf course and out to the Bay.
- 3.2.5 The houses which adjoin the golf course employ means of enclosures such as Devon banks and hedges rather than suburban features of wall and fences, which eases the transition between the built environment and the landscape.
- 3.2.6 A few houses are accessed across the golf course. The access here is between narrow historical stone pillars opposite Bridge Road. This traditional access maintains the rural character but is clearly substandard as regards highways visibility.
- 3.2.7 The large gaps between buildings and extensive cover of soft landscaping serves to give the area a semi-rural characteristic which helps ease the transition between the built environment and the natural or open landscape of the golf course, local farmland and the adjacent coastal landscape.
- 3.2.8 The defining characteristic is openness and spacious in a rural setting.

3.2.9 In keeping with the distinctive character of this area, future development should:

- maintain the existing large plot sizes of dwellings adjacent to the golf course (by avoiding any subdivision and infilling across large garden plots) in order to preserve the semi-rural nature of this part of the village
- prioritise the use of traditional means of enclosures – such as stone walls, banks and hedges – along public highways and the golf course
- use highway accesses designed for low speeds that reinforce the rural nature and character of the area.

3.3 Warborough Road and Green Lane and the Closes

3.3.1 In the 1960s an upsurge in demand for retirement homes in a seaside location spawned a raft of development within Churston. Almost exclusively these were bungalows and characteristically 1960s style, having white rendered finish on block construction with concrete roof tiles and integral garages.

3.3.2 These bungalow developments are in three distinct locations, namely, Green Lane (close to the old village), Bascombe Close (an infill development backing onto the old Railway Line to Brixham) and Brakeridge Close. These latter developments are both of less than 10 homes each.

3.3.3 Warborough Road has also infilled land connecting parts of Dartmouth Road across to Bascombe Road at the Windy Corner end of Churston Village.

3.3.4 The defining characteristic is very much one of good design helping to provide the feeling of spaciousness and a greener environment despite the higher densities when compared with the Bascombe Road and bordering golf course character area.



Figure 7: Warborough Road.

3.3.5 In keeping with the distinctive character of this area, future development should:

- prioritise the use of traditional means of enclosures – such as stone walls, banks and hedges – along public highways
- follow the existing line of development, particularly where that is set back, so as to retain the spacious character of the area.

4 Churston Golf Course

4.0.1 Churston Golf Course plays a key part of the defining character of Churston. It is ideally situated and is much loved by both golfers and residents alike; however, for various reasons Churston Golf Course has been at the centre of a series of planning applications relating to its development.

4.1 Historical background

4.1.1 The Golf Course was originally laid out as a nine-hole course in 1890 to the south and inland of the railway between Paignton and Brixham, and was reputedly not of great merit.

4.1.2 Shortly after World War I, the course was redesigned totally by the acclaimed course designer Harry Colt and this newly designed course survives through to the present day. It retained only two of the holes of the original course which now form the 1st and 18th.

4.1.3 Harry Colt made the following observations after laying out the present course:

"from a great portion of the ground are obtained magnificent views over Torbay, and the situation and surroundings are admirable".

4.1.4 This is still true today and the retention of the golf course at Churston has ensured that some of the best views of the Bay have been preserved across the generations.

4.1.5 Baron Churston was key in the development of the course. Himself reputedly a very keen golfer, the course was constructed on Churston Barony land and the works were funded by the Barony. It was Lord Churston's intention that there should always be a golf course at Churston and to facilitate this it is understood discussions took place to sell the course to the Club. It is also understood these discussions broke down with the result that in the end the course was sold in 1972 to what is now Torbay Council with restrictive covenants being put in place to ensure that the course is always retained as a golf course.

4.2 Current situation

4.2.1 The retention of a golf course at Churston has ensured that a valuable local green space has been protected across generations and not lost to development.

4.2.2 In Agatha Christie's "*The ABC Murders*", Hercule Poirot alights at Churston Station, and walks – presumably along Bridge Road – and refers to a "*view of the sea*", which could only have been across the golf course. The golf course was also the setting for her book "*Murder on the Links*", where a villa with a "*view of the sea*" was separated from the golf course by "*a neat line of small bushes*" and the golf course was a "*wide stretch of open downs*".

4.2.3 The openness of the course and the way the course connects to the wider surroundings of Churston makes a very significant contribution to the open and semi-rural character of the area, maintaining separation between patches of built development and a tangible connection with the open countryside. This link is as strong now as it was when Agatha Christie wrote about the area in the 1930s.



Figure 8: View of 3rd and 16th fairways from popular public footpath.

4.2.4 The golf course is one of the defining characteristics of the village, and we seek to preserve that character into the future. It is proposed to be designated as Local Green Space in the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2.5 In keeping with the distinctive character of this area, future development should:

- ensure the openness and spaciousness of the golf course is retained so that it can continue to define the characteristic of Churston village
- ensure that sweeping views across the fairways are retained from the public rights of way that cross the course and run adjacent to it. This is particularly important for views of the sea and of distant landscapes.

5 Landscape and natural environment

- 5.0.1 As set out above, the landscape and natural environment of Churston is central to its special character. Churston is unique within Torbay in that not only is it adjacent to the Bay but it is also surrounded by green space with Warborough Common to the west, the golf course to the north and fields to the South and East.



Figure 9: Iconic public view out to the Bay across the golf course from Bridge Road.

- 5.0.2 In Torbay Council's Landscape Character Assessment of Torbay¹ the greenspace in Churston is designated a "countryside zone" with the requirement to avoid development which would lead to the loss of open countryside and prevent the merging of urban areas and settlements.
- 5.0.3 This western end of the golf course is an extension of the coastal zone of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a critical element of the landscape. In the east-west direction this green corridor provides important open vistas in both directions, and the corridor itself is an important passage route for all manner of wildlife including Greater Horseshoe bats from the colony at Berry Head. Looking in a northerly direction this open area also provides access to the

¹ Torbay Council Landscape Character Assessment, May 2010, <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/1790/torbaylca1.pdf>.

views of Torquay across the Bay and is part of a very popular walk from the main road down to the beaches of Elberry Cove² and Broadsands.

5.1 Brokenbury

5.1.1 Adjacent to Bridge Road is an open area popular with dog walkers.

5.1.2 Further down the road is Brokenbury field. This Large field is a critical natural green space which defines the change of character between the suburban continuum of Torquay round to Paignton and the entry onto the spectacular Brixham peninsular, with the attractive surroundings of Churston Ferrers at its gateway.



Figure 10: The large field at Brokenbury as viewed from Bridge Road.

5.2 Marridge Woods and other land of environmental value

5.2.1 This strip of natural woodland runs between the golf course and the Bay joining up with the Grove woodland on the edge of Brixham. It is an important part of the seascape of the Bay. From Torquay and Paignton (and the Bay itself) it provides a view of a long stretch of unspoilt coastline between Paignton and Brixham. Access to the woodland is provided by a number of paths including the South West Coast Path.

² There have been various spellings of Elberry over the centuries: Elbinny Cove is recorded on Admiralty Chart 26 of 1808; Helbury is the spelling on the Tithe Map of 1844; then Elbury on the Ordnance Survey map of 1865; and a common spelling in later usage is Elberry. This document uses the spelling Elberry.

5.3 Amenity space

- 5.3.1 There is a significant amount of amenity space adjoining the A3022 between Bridge Road and Elberry Lane. Organised activities consist of Caymen Golf, Battlefield Live and the Go-karts. Of these the Caymen Golf is in keeping with the semi-rural nature of the area and Battlefield Live is mostly quiet and also well-screened. However the Go-karts are highly visible – emulating the look of a motor race track – with much bunting and flags in broad view. The operation of the Go-karts is noisy and intrudes on the tranquillity of the area. It is proposed that a project be instigated to examine the operation of the business and seek to address these visual and noise intrusions. Were future development proposals to come forward for this amenity space they must also respond to the rural character of the area.



Figure 11: The Go-kart track.

- 5.3.2 Previous proposals have included an expansion to this area using greenfield farming land behind these current developments as new employment space. The type of employment use and design would need to be in keeping with the semi-rural setting. The use of an access from the Brixham Road rather than Bridge Road or Bascombe Road would also be important so as not to impact on local character. Having addressed these constraints, such proposals are likely to offer the most viable new employment opportunities for Churston.

- 5.3.3 The field on the other side of the road, on the corner of the junction of the roads to Brixham and to Dartmouth, is used for car boot sales and occasionally for visiting attractions such as the annual steam fair.

5.4 Environmental protection and biodiversity

- 5.4.1 The Brixham peninsula, of which Churston is part, is located totally within the 4 km flight zone of Greater Horseshoe Bats and the Berry Head Maternity roost.
- 5.4.2 The green spaces, mature hedges and agricultural land (most particularly pasture) of Churston help provide essential fly zones for the bats so that they can access areas of sustenance.
- 5.4.3 Other protected species are to be found in Churston, including Cirl buntings of which a nationally significant breeding population is to be found on farm land close to the village. The biodiversity of Churston is such that it is sensitive to change and vulnerable to impact from inappropriate development. Devon Bio-diversity Records Office hold information on numerous species in the area.

5.5 New Churston Court Farm and other farmland

- 5.5.1 The swathe of undeveloped land separating the Brixham parish boundary from the villages of Churston and Galmpton plays a vital role in defining the character of the area. This land, including the Lupton estate is deemed to be of high landscape value and is of heritage significance, particularly the village of Churston and its surrounding countryside. Along with the golf course, the farmland is what maintains the "village" character of Churston.
- 5.5.2 There are a number of fields within the village itself including the one next to Churston Manor where sheep can often be seen grazing.
- 5.5.3 On a negative note the old village of Churston is subject to flooding. The problem also effects Bascombe Road and the medieval fields between the old village and Elberry Lane.



Figure 12: Sheep grazing with a backdrop of Churston Court and St Mary's Church.



Figure 13: Flooded field.

5.5.4 In keeping with the distinctive character of this area future development should:

- ensure that amenity areas are in keeping with the semi-rural nature of the area in appearance and use type. Noisy and highly visible activities are not appropriate.

- ensure that greenspace is maintained in its current use and cared for in such a way as to protect the wild life habitats and continue to provide its visual appeal
- ensure that to keep the character of Churston, existing areas of public open space are maintained in a green and landscaped nature.

6 Transport

6.0.1 Churston and the adjacent village of Galmpton sit on the narrow neck of Brixham Peninsula bounded by Torbay on one side and the River Dart on the other.

6.0.2 All traffic to and from Brixham has to navigate through this narrow neck using the only major road, the A3022, and the Windy Corner junction. Its geographical location also makes Churston a popular through route for cyclists and walkers.

6.1 The A3022

6.1.1 As the only main road in and out of the Brixham Peninsula, the A3022 is very busy and becomes gridlocked at peak times of the day and in summer months.

6.1.2 In addition to all of the Brixham traffic, there is also a significant amount of traffic from Kingswear, Dartmouth and the South Hams. The traffic all has to pass through the junction at Windy Corner, which is a major bottleneck. Attempts to bring forward a relatively low cost solution have not been successful, in part because the land adjoining Windy Corner is protected Common Land.

6.1.3 Closer to Brixham is the Churston Cross junction, where Churston Road to the north and Alston Lane to the south meet the A3022. At this junction there are problems of extremely bad visibility due largely to houses adjacent to the main road.

- 6.1.4 Improvement of the junction would require compulsory purchase of land and the demolition of historical features. On the Churston side this would include the listed semi-detached cottages on the corner.
- 6.1.5 For the moment the balance which has been struck is to make Churston Road no entry onto the A3022. This is a solution which could be applied to Alston Lane.
- 6.1.6 Brixham and its economic development is constrained by inadequate vehicle parking and it is considered by many that this is likely to get worse as the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan proposes to use principal car parking locations such as the Town Centre car park and the Oxen Cove and Freshwater car parks for employment and retail space.
- 6.1.7 To offset this the existing park-and-ride operation at Churston located on the A3022 at Churston may need to be enhanced. Given the location of this Park and Ride in the undeveloped landscape and the urban visual characteristic of large groups of parked cars it will be necessary to ensure good design.
- 6.1.8 In keeping with the distinctive features of this area future development should:
- continue to retain good screening of the Park and Ride so that the visual impact of large numbers of parked cars does not impact on the village. Any expansions of the facility should ensure upgrades to the screening
 - ensure that street lighting furniture should be of a quality appropriate to the area it is located within. Lighting should be designed to minimise light spillage and to have the minimum brightness and period of illumination necessary for its location and purpose. Energy efficient lighting should be used where possible in preference to conventional external lighting
 - avoid signage clutter along the A3022 and avoid signs which fail to reflect the rural area.

6.2 Bascombe Road and Bridge Road

6.2.1 Bascombe Road is a narrow, rural country lane leading to Windy Corner and the junction with the main Dartmouth Road (A3022).

6.2.2 Bascombe Road has historical connections as seen earlier on the 1765 Benjamin Donn map and appears to have changed very little since. The form of the road is very clearly from a much earlier time period.

6.2.3 This historical trading route runs parallel to the A3022 joining it on the Brixham side of Windy Corner. It is a popular route for cyclists, walkers and horse riders providing the only alternative to the main road. It has no pavements and for much of its length is little more than an unlit country lane with passing places. It also contains blind corners and poorly sighted junctions. In busy times it is used as a rat run to avoid the gridlock on the main road. This is despite it being unsuited to vehicles and the hazard caused to walkers and cyclists.



Figure 14: Bascombe Road at one of its narrower points.

6.2.4 Bridge Road provides a link from Bascombe Road to the A3022. It contains a narrow single lane section and a blind corner. The junction with the A3022 is at capacity for much of the day. The junction with Bascombe Road is exceptionally

poorly sighted as is the junction opposite from the private road across the golf course. Bridge Road is also popular with walkers including children who attend Churston Grammar School. There is a short pavement but most of the lane is shared access.

6.2.5 In keeping with the distinctive features of this area future development should:

- where safety concerns permit, avoid street lights for the sake of the wildlife and to protect the rural nature of the area.

6.3 Walkers

6.3.1 Churston is very popular with walkers with the South West Coast Path, the John Musgrove Trail, Greenway Walk, Riviera Walk and the Agatha Christie ABC Murders Walk all passing through Churston. Parts of these walks are along the village's narrow lanes. A footpath also runs along the A3022 from Windy Corner to Brixham with the exception of the stretch of road between Elberry Lane and Churston Cross. This stretch is hazardous for walkers and cyclists and there is currently no suitable diversion that they can take.

6.3.2 In keeping with the distinctive features of this area future development should:

- ensure that American Way (Quay Lane) is maintained as a historical footpath while improving the surface where it gets extremely muddy and flooded in wet weather.

7 General design guidelines

7.0.1 The above sections described distinct areas within Churston and their different characters. Where appropriate specific guidelines are set out for each area.

7.0.2 However, there are guidelines which apply equally to all of the distinct areas. These are set out below and are grouped into specific categories:

- **Views and vistas.** Any development should be considered in relation to its visibility from within and from outside the village, so that it is appropriate to its location. As Churston lies between the sea and

important public transport routes, the important public views and vistas towards the surrounding countryside and towards the sea are important and should be maintained.

- **Settlement edges.** Development at the edge of the defined settlement will need to be at a low density and provide a soft edge to the built form with landscaping and tree planting in order that the rural character of Churston is maintained.
- **Scale of development.** Any development should be substantially of the same or lesser scale, height and mass of adjacent buildings, unless proposed as a key feature or landmark, to ensure a consistent street scene. Variation in height is acceptable, but the overall heights should be respectful of those of adjoining and nearby buildings.
- **Roofscapes.** Any development should provide a roofscape appropriate to its location and visibility in terms of materials used, pitch and design. Where there are significant views from public areas surrounding the development, the roof should not unacceptably reduce these.
- **Infill development.** Infill development and building in gardens should not be detrimental to the overall quality and amenity of the area, and should respect its character and appearance. In certain sensitive locations infill development is unlikely to be appropriate at all as it will not comply with guidelines in this VDS.
- **Development density.** The density of new residential development should respect its setting and context. Low densities will be appropriate in parts of Churston where existing development is typically detached villas in spacious gardens.
- **Relationship between development.** Churston is currently not dominated by built development from any one time period but rather shows an organic development with variety in building type and appearance from natural growth. This should continue.

- **Boundaries.** New boundaries and changes to existing boundaries, both between properties and to the street, should make close reference to the traditional treatment of similar boundaries in the locality, such as height, material, planting species and style. They should be of high quality and be appropriately durable or maintainable.
- **Front gardens/areas.** The conversion of front gardens to hard surfaced areas should be avoided where possible. The area of hard landscaping should be minimised to enable soft landscaping to dominate and to reduce the potential of flooding from water run-off as well as the visual intrusion into the rural character.
- **Landscape design.** New development should have a quality landscape scheme, which incorporates new tree planting and retains as many of the natural landscape features as possible. The hard and soft landscape design should successfully integrate the development into the local environment.
- **Hard landscaping.** Materials of hard landscaping should be of high quality and reflect the character of adjoining buildings and areas.
- **Parking.** On-street car parking should be avoided, as it reduces the rural quality of existing street scenes. The provision of suitably designed garages, car ports and effective screening of parking areas is promoted.
- **Wind turbines, solar arrays and other renewable technologies.** Householder renewable energy proposals will be encouraged, but large-scale developments are unlikely to be able to remain in keeping with the guidance in this document.
- **Trees.** Development should ensure that the trees which provide an important contribution to the character of the area are retained. These may be the best quality trees but may also be mature specimens of lesser quality trees in highly visible locations.

- **Street trees.** Individual street trees on public land make a demonstrable contribution to the character of the area. Besides retaining these trees and their visual impact, consideration of new landmark tree planting in the built environment is encouraged.
- **Outside lighting.** Street lighting furniture should be of a quality appropriate to the area it is located within. Lighting should be designed to minimise light spillage and to have the minimum brightness and period of illumination necessary for its location and purpose. Energy efficient lighting should be used where possible in preference to conventional external lighting.

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