

PREFACE



About this Booklet

In 1996 the community of Winkleigh came together to write a book in celebration of all that made Winkleigh special. This book, called 'Winkleigh, Past, Present and Future' was published in 1997. The book was written against the background of changing times for the village. Winkleigh has always been important to the surrounding rural area, as a local service centre, for jobs and housing, and expects to continue in this role. However, the changing fortunes in farming, the mobility that the car has given, and the redefining of the role of town and country all have an impact on the village.

The Community Appraisal (1996) and work on the book project showed that many people were concerned about managing change in the village, and that most worries were about new housing. Realistically most people expected new building in the village, and felt this was needed to help keep the village alive. Of more concern was what sort of development would happen, and whether or not it would become part of the village, both in terms of what new buildings looked like, and the contribution newcomers could make to village life.

This village design booklet has been written by local people to help manage the changes that may happen in Winkleigh, and to help ensure that change occurs in a way that is sympathetic to the village. The villages in different regions of England all have a different character borne of local circumstances. The design that would be appropriate to say the Yorkshire Dales, or the Cotswolds is not typical of Winkleigh, where stone is not the main building material, and where the landscape and topography has shaped the settlement pattern in a different way. Too often regional differences are eroded away by new development that is too suburban in character. To keep Winkleigh the special place that local people feel it is, it is important to protect and enhance our local character. To do this, we need to define exactly what it is. This booklet attempts to look with a different eye at Winkleigh, and to draw a set of principles based on the traditional appearance of the village.

About Winkleigh

Winkleigh lies in the heart of Devon, a compact village clustered on a hill top. This hill is the highest spot between Dartmoor to the south and Dolton Beacon to the north. The countryside around the village has been shaped by geology, and the farming practices of those working the land. The geology of the Culm Measures has created a wide rolling landscape, with hidden wooded valleys. Poor soils and wet weather mean farming based around permanent pasture. Open fields, marked by hedge boundaries and Devon banks are typical of the area.

Historically, the name of the village and many of the farm names are Saxon in origin. Both before and after the Norman Conquest, Winkleigh is associated with the Earls of Gloucester. The manors of the time were very powerful forces in the area. At the time of Edward II there was a Court (Court Barton) at Winkleigh. A second manor of Winkleigh was given at an early period to the Tracy family and probably focused on Croft Castle, built as a seige work during the Civil War. The Domesday Book also lists Winkleigh as having the only 'park' in Devon. This 'park' was a royal hunting forest. During the Middle Ages Winkleigh is recorded as a separate Hundred.

The Village Today

Winkleigh is a long way from the nearest town. Torrington (11 miles to the north), Crediton (16 miles to the south) and Okehampton (11 miles south) are the nearest towns, and even these are small by modern standards. This remoteness from other places means that Winkleigh is a very self-sufficient village, and has kept most of its village facilities and shops. Commuting to bigger towns for work does happen, but many people still live and work locally; farming based businesses are significant employers in and around Winkleigh.

Winkleigh lies at the southern extremity of Torridge District. The Local Plan, prepared by Torridge District Council, shows how much new development can be expected in Winkleigh. The fields to the south of the village, between the edge of the present village and the new bypass are already identified for housing. The Local Plan is now being reviewed, to find enough land to meet the needs of Torridge District up to 2011. It is likely that Winkleigh, with its good local services and quality of life will have more new development.



Winkleigh in the Landscape

Looking at Winkleigh and its setting in the landscape, one is struck by how exposed the village appears. The position of Winkleigh on the top of the hill gives fantastic views out the village, especially to the south, where the mass of Dartmoor dominates. The open nature of the countryside re-inforces the remoteness of the village. Away to the west the broad sweep of the landscape is more broken by trees and distant views of the wooded valley of the River Lew.

Most people approaching Winkleigh from the south will see the village from some distance away. The first impression will be of a compact village, clustered around the church, with a clear division between the countryside and the village. Most of the buildings appear white. There are groups of trees which "soften" the picture, for example, around the churchyard and Parsonage, and on the Castle and Village Hall Mounds.

Along the A386 tall Beech trees mark the route of the road. The plantations of Winkleigh Woods can be seen away to the east.

Travelling towards Winkleigh from the west, the clustered form of the village is once more obvious, with the land falling away to the south. The compact nature of the village is less obvious along Torrington Road, where newer houses follow the route of the road. The church and Clotworthy Farm are two buildings which stand out. There are wider views of Seckington and Kings Plantation. Small groups of trees around Croft and the churchyard are important within the village. Winkleigh Woods forms an impressive backdrop to views.

The setting of the village from the east, from Bude Hill, is dramatic. Winkleigh clusters on the top of the hill, with extensive views of the Taw Valley, Dartmoor, and the rolling countryside to the west. The village looks very remote in its setting. Approaching the village, large Beech trees set on hedge banks are a feature.

Winkleigh seems to be a completely different village when viewed from the north; it is almost hidden. The church tower can just be seen from some vantage points. Most of the village lies beyond the ridge line, on the south side of the hill. New development can be seen spreading beyond the ridge line, but entry to the village is sudden. The casual visitor travelling along the B3220 could miss the village altogether.

What Does the Village Setting Tell Us?

The starting point for thinking about the design of new development in the village is the “shape” of the settlement, and the impact it has on the countryside. Studying the setting and views of the village has led to some important conclusions which can be used as the basis for design principles:

- ◆ The views of Winkleigh from the south are probably the most important. As the hillside falls away from the church, so do the buildings, and this gives an interesting mixture of rooftops and houses. These fall away down the hill, at different heights and angles.
- ◆ In contrast, the newer houses on the southern edge of the village follow the contour lines of the hill, and cut horizontally across the hill. This is re-inforced by the route of the southern bypass road.
- ◆ Houses and buildings are bright and light in colour; roof tops are mostly grey.
- ◆ The church is the dominant hilltop feature.

Design Principle 1

New development should respect the clustered settlement shape of Winkleigh, and relate well to the existing village form. Hard, stark boundaries with open countryside should be avoided.

Design Principle 2

The design of new development on the south side of Winkleigh should create a varied alignment of buildings and rooftops, to avoid reinforcing the horizontal alignment of Southernhay and the road to the south of the village.

Design Principle 3

The church should remain the dominant building in distance views of Winkleigh.

Design Principle 4

Materials used in new development should maintain the overall impression of light coloured buildings when viewed from a distance.

- ◆ The village is embedded in the surrounding farmland, and there are important trees and hedge boundaries creating field patterns. The remains of ancient field boundaries can be seen to the south of Winkleigh.
- ◆ Beech, Oak, Hawthorn and Holly are especially noticeable in hedges and hedgebanks, and there are often substantial trees along the hedge line. Hedges and banks are important refuges for wildlife. The pattern created by hedges and fields is an important part of the landscape.

Design Principle 5

When new sites are developed, the development will take advantage of the natural features of the site. This means:

- The layout and design of new development should respect:
 - a. the shape, slope, and aspect of the site concerned; and
 - b. the relationship of the site to adjacent fields and the built up area of Winkleigh.
- Wherever possible existing trees and hedges should be retained, along with any features which are important habitats, eg ponds, streams.
- New boundaries should complement existing field boundaries and patterns, with new hedges and banks being created wherever they are lost (for example, to create access roads).
- New hedges should be planted with native species.
- When detailed planning applications are submitted, the plans shall include a landscaping scheme.
- Where fences, gates and stiles are necessary, these should be made of natural materials using good quality craftsmanship.

Inside the Village



The very heart of Winkleigh is its central square. It is fully enclosed by buildings, and standing in it, it is difficult to see exit roads. The buildings lining the edges of the square are mostly built of stone, and cob, and rendered. The Kings Arms stands as an “island” at one end of the square. The doors recessed into some buildings show how thick the cob walls are. The older houses probably date from the 18th century, but most are early 19th century. Some houses are quite large, especially on the north side of the square. The buildings front the pavement, but a glance above eaves level shows different roof levels, gables and pitches. There is very little

greenery or garden to be seen. This part of Winkleigh has changed very little over the years, the only noticeable change being the numbers of cars.

Small roads wind out of the square to all parts of the village, and the buildings continue to follow them for some distance out of the square. Most noticeable are the houses fronting the west side of Barnstaple Street, with their mixed coloured frontages and roofs of thatch and slate. Mixed between the houses are outbuildings and workshops, giving a pleasing assortment of buildings. On the opposite side of the road, a high bank gives way to the more open cul de sac of Old Chapel Gardens.

Wrapping itself around the eastern and southern side of the square is Court Castle Mound, the Old Parsonage and Churchyard. Court Castle is ringed by a wall. The Mound itself is overgrown, and the trees growing on it can be seen from some distance outside the village. Greenery spills over the boundary wall. This quiet area is complemented by the grounds of the Old Parsonage. The old cob and thatch buildings are hidden in the grounds, behind walls, dense shrubbery and tall trees. The sinuous thatched roofs form the eastern boundary to the churchyard. From the grounds of the Old Parsonage there are unusual views of the eastern end of the church, with its decorated chimneys and the angel adorning the eastern gable end.



As befits the most prominent building in the village, the church stands in its own oasis of greenery. The churchyard lies on the summit of the hill, and is an open green area providing the church with a good setting. There is a panoramic view of the countryside to the south, with Dartmoor in the distance. The churchyard has few trees, but a Yew tree standing close to the southern edge can be seen for miles. Below the church, the houses of Dial Street, Coopers Hill and Church Hill cascade down the hill.

Coopers Hill leads to the other older part of the village – Lower Town and Farmer Franks Lane. These were originally lanes leading away from the village, with assorted farm buildings and cottages along their length. Once the lane flattens out and turns westward, it becomes very rural in character, with a high bank on the north side, marking the southern edges of gardens in Southernhay. Eventually the lane opens out into the wide spaces around the school.

Southernhay is the largest post-war development in Winkleigh. Houses and bungalows lie in well ordered lines, set back from the roads. They are ranged across the hillside, and look out towards the moor. The open character of the area is in contrast to the closer, more densely knit character of the older part of the village. Houses are plain, and the lack of detailing means their appearance is rather stark.

The road running along the western edge of Southernhay is effectively the western boundary of the main part of the village. This narrow lane, with high hedgebanks along its western edge ascends the hill steeply, before opening out at Townsend Cross. Townsend House, The Cottage and Clotworthy Farm are important large houses next to the cross roads. Travelling northwards along Torrington Road, most buildings date from the post war period. Bungalows have been built alongside the road to take advantage of the views across the countryside to the west. Croft House is hidden in its own grounds, between the village and the road. Torrington Road joins Barnstaple Street on the northern edge of the village. This entrance to Winkleigh is marked by two old cottages – Candy Cottage and Folly.

The trees on the mound of Croft Castle are an important splash of greenery at the western end of the village. The Castle School Village Hall, Community Centre and Methodist Church form are closely grouped; each marks the evolution of social and community institutions in Winkleigh.

The newest development in Winkleigh, Kings Meadow lies on the northern edge of the village. The layout, style of houses, and materials used are in marked contrast to the majority of houses in the village. A wide access road, with banded brick retaining walls looks very urban against the more rural hedges and banks nearby. This site is one of the few parts of the village that can be seen from the north and east; the predominate colour is red. Earthworks and site contouring has meant the use of brick retaining walls.

The map on page *** shows the main character areas in Winkleigh.

The following conclusions have been drawn from the character appraisal:

- ◆ The older part of the village has a very ‘urban’ feel; there is little greenery or open garden space. These are hidden behind the tight knit frontages along the road. The square is an important enclosed space and a focal point for village events like Winkleigh Fair. Traffic congestion and parking are becoming a problem.
- ◆ There is a variety of house types and sizes, with different roof pitches and alignments
- ◆ The two mounds, Croft and Court Castles are local landmarks as well as having historical importance. Their trees and greenery can be seen from many vantage points within and outside of the village.
- ◆ Development tends to follow slopes and road lines in a meaningful way, that links all parts of the village together.
- ◆ Roads and lanes are narrow; because many are lined by hedges and banks, and there are no footpaths,
- ◆ Glimpses of the wider countryside are common

Design Principle 6

The design of new development in the older part of Winkleigh should respect the settlement form. Care should be taken to ensure that the continuous frontage in the square and along the feeder roads to it is maintained. Replacement buildings, and infill development should follow the building line. Any access to the rear of buildings should be through passageways designed as an integral part of the building.

Design Principle 7

New development should reflect the density and form of adjacent buildings. Generally, new building in the older part of Winkleigh will be of a denser form than elsewhere.

Design Principle 8

The Croft and Castle Mounds should be protected from development. Efforts should be made to gain public access and to provide information (on site) about their history.

Design Principle 9

New development should aim to provide a range of house sizes and types.

Design Principle 10

Where new development occurs, care should be taken to maintain existing countryside views out of the village, and to create new vistas from within the development site.

Buildings and Building Materials

Buildings in Winkleigh are a variety of ages and styles; there are some 50 buildings listed of historic or architectural interest. Many of the listed buildings are mid 17th century in origin, but have been altered over the years. Most are built of stone, cob rendered and colourwashed, and many are also thatched. Many of these early houses were ‘modernised’ in the 18th and 19th centuries, a process which continues today. Traditional building materials reflect what was available locally – stone footings for walls has been locally quarried, cob made from local sources, and slate for roofing quarried in north and west Devon. Thatch would traditionally have been straw.

Some more modern materials have been used in the older part of the village. A disastrous fire in the early part of the 20th century destroyed houses and the pub (formerly the Butchers Arms, and now the Winkleigh Hotel). This gave the opportunity for ‘modern’ building. The pub, and cottage next door were rebuilt in granite, with the top storey rendered and colourwashed. A further two houses were also replaced, with new brick and stone walls being built up on old stone and cob footings. As the present century has advanced,

new buildings have been introduced into the village with varying degrees of success. Generally speaking, those that draw on the characteristics of nearby houses have been the most successfully integrated into the village scene.

The traditional houses and buildings in the village are plain and simple in appearance. They are usually flat fronted, with a centrally placed front door, often leading to a passageway which passes from the front to the rear of the building. Windows are often arranged in a symmetrical fashion around the doorway, with each window opening having a vertical emphasis. Windows and doors are usually set into the cob walling. Doorway recesses in particular bring the depth of the cob walls to attention. Many of the older buildings were originally thatched, but now modern materials predominate. Some natural slate remains, but asbestos slate and its modern equivalent is common. Buildings which have been improved in the late 19th and early 20th centuries often have decorative ridge tiles and finials. Some of the thatched properties in the square have gutters – presumably to stop water dripping from the thatch landing on pedestrians on the pavement below.

Traditional and locally derived building materials are not the only contributor to local character. Many of the small details like chimneys, windows, doors, guttering, railings and traditional garden boundaries such as stone banks, all add to the scene. Former privies, wells and granite rollers can all be found in garden boundaries in Winkleigh. The small details that add to local character are also the most susceptible to change and loss. Planning permission is not needed to remove guttering, windows, doors etc unless a property is listed. Over time, small incremental changes gradually erode the quality of local character, particularly where features have been made by craftsmen using local materials.



Nearly all the older houses in the village have distinctive large chimney stacks. Many are built of stone, but later brick stacks and flues are also present. Some of the most prominent buildings in the square have rendered rubble stacks projecting forward from the main building. The more prestigious a building the more likely it is to have a decorative clay chimney pot.

Replacement doors and windows are common in Winkleigh. These are now mass-produced, and with the vogue for do-it-yourself are an easy and inexpensive way to upgrade property to modern standards. However, their use does not always add to the village scene.

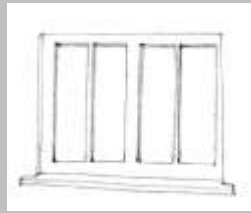


Traditional window types are shown in the sketches alongside. Traditionally, window openings have been in proportion to the frontage of the building. They are usually recessed into the wall, with a distinct window ledge. The window openings have a vertical alignment. Sash windows are typical, and even casement windows tend to have fine, narrow glazing bars which break up the area of glass. Double glazed replacement windows vary in their design, and some fit into the village scene better than others. Those that are least successful tend to have bulky plastic or stained timber surrounds. Large flat areas of glass also detract from the building.



Even where 'glazing bars' are inserted into the glass cavity, the flatness of the window remains a problem. Replacement windows often require subtle alterations to the window opening, with loss of proportion and scale.

Like windows, doors tend to be recessed into the walls of traditional houses. There are many styles of door, each adapted to the size and shape of the opening. Some have interesting door knockers and bell-pulls. Traditional doors tend to have panelling which reflects the vertical emphasis of the door itself. Modern doors which work best tend to be solid, without glass, and without small panels (which break up the vertical appearance of the traditional door). There are also a range



of porches in the village, some of them thatched, such as the Alms Houses and Kings Arms, and some have plain slate covers. Some of the more important houses have impressive portico type doorways, for example, Linden House.



Typical Traditional Designs: Some Examples

Keswick House, The Square:

This house is important as it completes the enclosure of the square on the south side. It is a large house of early to mid 17th century origin. It has many features typical of older properties in Winkleigh. Its plain painted rendered frontage hides walls with stone footings, topped with cob. The length of the frontage is broken by a projecting rendered rubblestone chimney stack. There are 2 further chimney stacks made of brick at each gable end. The roof is thatched in the simple style typical of mid-Devon. Window openings are assymetrically placed in the frontage (probably because of the position of the frontage chimney stack).



The windows themselves date from the mid to late 20th century. Although they have no glazing bars their appearance does not detract from the character of the building, probably because of their vertical emphasis. The front door is older, dating from the 19th century, and is glazed and panelled. The house is simply painted with pale coloured walls and black windows and doors.

Elm House, Exeter Road:

This house is one of the largest in Winkleigh, and probably originated in the 18th century. The house (and adjoining Krow Cottage) appear as one unit, because all are rendered and painted in similar style. However, there is evidence to suggest that while the older part of the house probably dates from the 18th century, and is built of stone and cob, the house was extended and modernised in the 19th century. At this time a new wing was added, and towards the end of the 19th century/early 20th century, a front porch added with decorative stained glass and tiling

The overall appearance of the house is simple. Most of the windows are of traditional sash design.



The former Winkleigh Hotel, The Square

The former Winkleigh Hotel is an imposing building on the south side of The Square. It was built at the beginning of the 20th century following a fire. The design incorporates the cottage next door, which is slightly set back from the pavement, with a small frontage area enclosed by railings. The access to the hotel yard is through high gates, with decorative iron work panels at the top. Both hotel and cottage are decorated in complementary styles, in black and white. Both retain individual window styles of sash type, with the upper sash divided by small glazing bars.



Carpenters Cottage, Barnstaple Street



This is a modern infill development which respects the character of the street and the relationship of new to old. The house is built straight on to the pavement, and maintains the continuously built frontage of Barnstaple Street. The front of the building is plain and simple

Modern sash windows make use of new technology, but their bulk, form, style and relationship to the rest of the frontage is harmonious. The house is colourwashed in keeping with its surroundings. Allowance has been

made for rear access without sacrificing the continuity of frontage.

Design principles need to reflect the following:

- ◆ The village has evolved over time, and part of its charm is the organic way in which it has grown, and the way different styles and designs have been absorbed. Guidance needs to give pointers for good design but not stifle creativity and create uniformity.
- ◆ The local character is dominated by buildings that are simple in design. The richness and variation in appearance is created through the relationship of buildings to each other, and by subtle differences created by proportion and detailing. Older cob buildings do not have straight walls, and this also creates interest in the street scene.
- ◆ The biggest threat to the character of existing buildings lies in the small changes brought about by unsympathetic changes to windows and doors.

Design Principle 11

New buildings should be simple and plain in appearance, and have regard to the context of the site and the characteristics of any buildings nearby. Particular attention should be paid to the alignment and proportion of windows and doors, and to local craftsmanship and detailing. Preference will be given to the use of local materials or their equivalent, where this reflects the stone, colourwashed rendering, and slate typical of Winkleigh. Pattern book, standardised design should be avoided. Where larger developments are proposed, variation in alignment and design should be introduced to avoid uniformity.

Design Principle 12

Where changes and alterations to buildings are made, care should be taken to retain original features which contribute to the character of both the building and the village.

Design Principle 13

In all new development the opportunity should be taken to introduce craftsmanship which will

enhance the buildings and their setting. This could be through detailing on the buildings, landscaping or boundary treatments. When the opportunity arises, new cob construction should be encouraged, for example in small buildings such as shelters, and in walling.

Design Principle 14

Thatched roofs should be conserved wherever possible.

Design Principle 15

PVCu and double glazed windows, should be carefully chosen so that window voids do not need altering, and the design and method of window opening reflects the original. Care must be taken to minimise the bulk of window surrounds. Narrow, external glazing bars should be used to enhance the appearance of the window. Windows should be recessed into the wall to create a windowsill.

Traffic and Pedestrian Movement

Nearly all the shops and services in Winkleigh are concentrated in and around The Square. At certain times of the day traffic congestion is a problem, and parking can be difficult. As the village grows, and car ownership increases, this is likely to become more rather than less of a problem. One obvious solution would be to look for a site for a car park close to the centre of the village. However, this has disadvantages; parking problems are often only at peak times of the day, and a car park would create an open area in or close to the village centre where enclosure has been identified as one of the defining characteristics. Parking controls and road lining would also be necessary to control on street parking.

While things are manageable at present, further development in Winkleigh will increase vehicle numbers. It is therefore important that the design of new development encourages pedestrian routes to the main attractions in the village – shops and school for example. It is also important to ensure the roads built to service new developments do not draw traffic through The Square.

New road and pedestrian routes should be designed with user safety in mind. However, the use of highway standards in rural settings can cause difficulties because of the lack of reference to the village context. Visibility splays are a particular problem because they often create wide open areas along a route which was previously enclosed. Signage and road engineering which is alien to the village scene can also be a problem. New footpaths and concrete curbs are in sharp contrast to traditional pavements and granite edges.

Design Principle 16

Every effort should be made to link new development in a meaningful way to the main part of the village. Cul-de-sac development should be avoided.

A network of footpaths between new development and the square should be developed.

Design Principle 17

To help reduce traffic congestion in the square, new houses should wherever possible, provide for their own parking needs.

Design Principle 18

The principle points of access to new developments should feed traffic onto main roads skirting the village, avoiding the necessity to drive through The Square.

Design Principle 19

Wherever possible the design of new roads should discourage traffic driving through the centre of the village.

Design Principle 20

Road design standards should be interpreted in a way sympathetic to the local context, avoiding the need for excessive visibility splays, earthworks and road engineering.

Design Principle 21

New pavements created as part of a package of highway improvements should link effectively to existing pedestrian routes, in terms of the route taken and the use of appropriate materials.

Thinking of Improving Your Property?

New development in Winkleigh is just one way in which the character of the village changes. If you are thinking about modernising or altering your house in some way, what you do can be just as important. Here are a few important tips.

Before you start:

- ◆ Look carefully at your property from all angles and from all directions. What sort of building is it? Does it look like its neighbours? How are the windows, doors etc arranged? Are they the traditional designs? Have traditional materials been used? What are the distinguishing features of the property?
- ◆ Think clearly about what it is you want to do. Is it necessary for maintenance, or has it more to do with wanting to update the appearance of the property?
- ◆ Think about the impact of the changes you want to make. How will it affect adjacent houses? Does the existing appearance of the property contribute to the group value of buildings in the street?
- ◆ Look at the details of the building. How are windows arranged? What is the roof like? What about the proportions of the building?
- ◆ Make a note of all the things you consider important about the building.
- ◆ Decide whether the changes you want to make will affect the things you have listed as important. Decide if any change is a good or a bad thing.
- ◆ Try to avoid mass produced windows and doors. Replacing like for like is usually the best policy for traditional features.
- ◆ If you have a house which is a listed building, you should consult the Conservation Officer of Torridge District Council for advice on ANY alterations you wish to make, however trivial they may seem to you.