

Character Area Appraisal: Area K - South Downs National Park

Summary

This part of the Parish lies within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and takes two different forms. At Shurlands Corner, the Fittleworth Road departs the A272 on a sharp bend as it leaves Wisborough Green en route to Petworth, heading for the village of the same name which is its destination. The road gently curves between low rolling ground marked by pasture fields edged by hedges with native trees occurring intermittently along their lengths both parallel to the road and at right angles. There are no pavements or lighting. The lane crosses a very small tributary of the river Arun before heading up over Bedham. To the east of the road the river Arun reaches its highest tidal point at Pallingham Quay.

Along its length there are far views of woodland. However, approaching Bedham the ancient wood of the Mens takes over to the west of the road such that the whole panorama is then dominated by woodland; this is regarded as the least disturbed part of England. The return journey from Fittleworth to the village has mossy covered banks alongside the lane topped by beech trees thus providing a similar experience to

entering a tunnel. At one point there is a wonderful view of the low lying land but it is brief, short-lived and comes as a bit of a surprise!

Landscape Character

There are intermittent open views of pasture to both sides with neat well maintained hedges and occasional blocks of woodland plus a plantation of trees interspersed by intermittent tracks to isolated farmhouses joining the road. Mature trees dot the horizon as well as the hedgerows. There are no views back into the village nor onto the South Downs rather, after the road links back to the A272 past Hawkhurst Court, the views are enclosed by or directly of, ancient woodland. Some of this is common land administered by the Association of Bedham Commoners in association with the woodland's owner, the Sussex Wildlife Trust. The fact that this area remains wooded is a tribute to the active vigilance of local residents who firstly in the 1960s dissuaded the owners from clear-felling it all and secondly in the 1970s got the route of some pylons diverted to avoid damaging the habitat of a very rare beetle.

Main Characteristics

- Fittleworth Road is derived from a lane which used to serve a variety of isolated farmhouses. It carries consistent traffic but speeding along this section is an issue.
- Sections of the verge are recorded as Notable verges supporting species such as Primrose, Early Purple Orchid and others.
- Residential housing is predominantly comprised of detached farmhouses, two storey in height in a range of styles although some occasional residences are single storey. Very occasionally a house fronts the lane.
- Most garages are detached on older properties and attached on newer properties and there are some dispersed areas of hard standing.
- Some agricultural buildings and industrial sheds are hidden at the end of tracks including businesses such as Champions Caterers.

- Roofs are mainly gabled, some hipped, and tiled with steep pitches and overhanging eaves.
- Properties have mainly single brick chimneys with some metal flue chimneys evident.
- Windows are a mix of sash and casement and some original windows have been replaced.
- Materials used on properties throughout tend to reflect the mellow reds of local brick and tile, there are some rendered and painted houses
- Important building groups include Pallingham Quay, Bedham Common and Ingrams and Redlands farms and barns.

- There are a number of Listed Buildings within the Character Area:
 - Bedham House partly in Fittleworth Parish
 - Malthouse, Bedham Road
 - Collin's Marsh, Bedham Road
 - Pallingham Manor Farmhouse and Barn
 - Old Smith Cottage
 - Fowlers, formerly called Horsebridge Farm
 - Glasshouse
 - Arundel Holt
 - Rose's Farmhouse
 - Cheesemans
 - Pallingham Quay Farmhouse and Barn
 - Ingrams Farmhouse
 - Redlands Farmhouse