

Oldcroft and Viney Hill

Introduction

- 33.1 Oldcroft and Viney Hill comprise open and extended settlements which merge with each other in an almost indistinguishable manner. They form part of the southern edge of the Forest Ring being almost wholly within the statutory Forest. The settlements enjoy an elevated and open situation with many fine views, and both contain very attractive areas of forest waste and amenity planting at the Forest margins. The traditional built form of the Forest Ring is most apparent, with buildings laid out in a haphazard manner, often in large plots, and served by a network of tracks and paths. Within Viney Hill there is a more intensively built up area which forms a recognisable focus to the settlement. Oldcroft and Viney Hill are part of the nearly continuous settlements around the fringes of the forest. It is the close relationship of these settlements to the forest itself and the extent, nature and variety of the open spaces within the settlements, which gives this landscape its special character. Within Oldcroft a nucleus to the settlement can also be recognised, though it is far more open in character. Overall however the extended areas of these settlements have a semi-rural character which is more characteristic of the open countryside than a built up village area.
- 33.2 Oldcroft has no services or local employment, though there is a large informal recreation ground. It looks to nearby Yorkley for local services. Viney Hill has a restricted level of services, including a post office and shop, a Church, public house and a large private football ground and related Social Club.
- 33.3 Oldcroft and Viney Hill, which are of roughly equal size, have a combined population of approximately 400, with a housing stock of 162 dwellings. There was one outstanding planning consents in Viney Hill on 1st January 2004

Development Strategy

- 33.4 The attractive qualities of the settlement form and character of Oldcroft and Viney Hill are worthy of special protection. The Plan strategy therefore treats large parts of Viney Hill and Oldcroft as if they were part of the open countryside. Two specific areas of a more nucleated character have been identified for Viney Hill and Oldcroft. The strategy of the Plan will allow small developments of one or two dwellings within the defined settlement boundaries, although there are likely to be restricted opportunities for such development. Oldcroft has no local service base, and is very open in character. Further development would be likely to detract from that form and character. It will be important when considering any proposals for development that design and materials are complementary to the surrounding area reflecting the more traditional forest dwellings typical of the locality and that development proposals should not result in an uncharacteristic or cramped form of layout.
- 33.5 The nature of these settlements means that they are largely set within the open countryside having a generally spacious feel with attractive trees, open views and a complex pattern of access routes. There are many important areas of forest waste within the settlements which contribute significantly to the settlement form and character and provide areas of visual quality and amenity value. These include various small open areas and road verges scattered throughout the settlements. Specific protection will be given to the open areas within both settlements which are particularly important to their attractive form and character and also to the unique character of the area within which the settlements are located.