

Character Assessment – Yorkley

Overview

Yorkley village, and the small attached hamlet of Yorkley Wood, sit on the southern edge of the Forest mainly on a ridge between the Forest and the Severn Estuary. At 600ft at the top of the village, Bailey Hill, there are spectacular views over the Cotswolds, the Severn and the Welsh Hills as far as the Brecon Beacons.

The village is vibrant and has a mixture of housing, traditional miners cottages to small modern developments. Yorkley Court Farm on the southern edge of the village and Danby Lodge are Grade 2 listed.

It has a thriving primary school and playgroup, a health centre, two public houses, and two shops, one with a busy and well supported post office.

At the heart of the village is a recreation ground which houses Yorkley Football Club, a busy children's skatepark and playground. In the grounds, a modern Community Centre was built in 2015 which is well used by a large number of organisations, clubs and classes and is a popular venue for many social events including children's parties at the weekend.



Geographic location

Yorkley sits astride a hill some 600 feet above sea level, giving panoramic views of the River Severn and the Cotswold Hills to the South-East, South & South-West from one side, and the hills of the Brecon Beacons to the east. To the north the village is bounded by forest, and to the south by agricultural land. There are many pockets of open space known as 'forest waste'.

A distinct ridgeline within the village of Yorkley forms a locally distinctive landscape feature and from this vantage point Lydney Sands, which borders the River Severn, can be clearly seen. Along the Yorkley ridgeline elevation climbs from 165m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) at Shaphouse Farm north east to 203m AOD in Cockshoot Wood.

It is a pastoral landscape and the presence of a strong ridge line allows long range views. landscape Roads lead down the hill towards the smaller villages of Oldcroft and Viney Hill to the east and south and westwards towards Pillowell and Parkend.

Links

The village is poorly served with public transport which is infrequent and sporadic.

Roads lead down the hills towards the smaller villages of Oldcroft and Viney Hill to the east and the main A48 to Gloucester, Cheltenham and the M5 and south and westwards through Pillowell, Whitecroft and Parkend to Chepstow, Cinderford and Ross on Wye.

Surroundings

The close relationship of Yorkley to the Statutory Forest and the extent, nature and variety of the open spaces within, give the landscape a very special character.

The village has a strong relationship with the Forest boundary creating a fringe characteristic.

It is surrounded on the west, north and east by forest under the management of Forestry England; to the south is farmland.

Free roaming Forest sheep, wild boar and Fallow and Muntjac deer can regularly be seen around the village and adjacent woodlands.

Structure

Yorkley (and Yorkley Wood), is the largest of the Forest Edge South settlements, experiencing substantial growth since the start of the 20th century. As well as infill development, the spatial extent of the village has changed through the addition of multiple developments at varying periods in history, including, The Rudge, development along Stag Hill and the additions to Yorkley Slade. Settlement density has also increased along Lydney Road and within Yorkley Wood which has a more structured grid-like pattern.

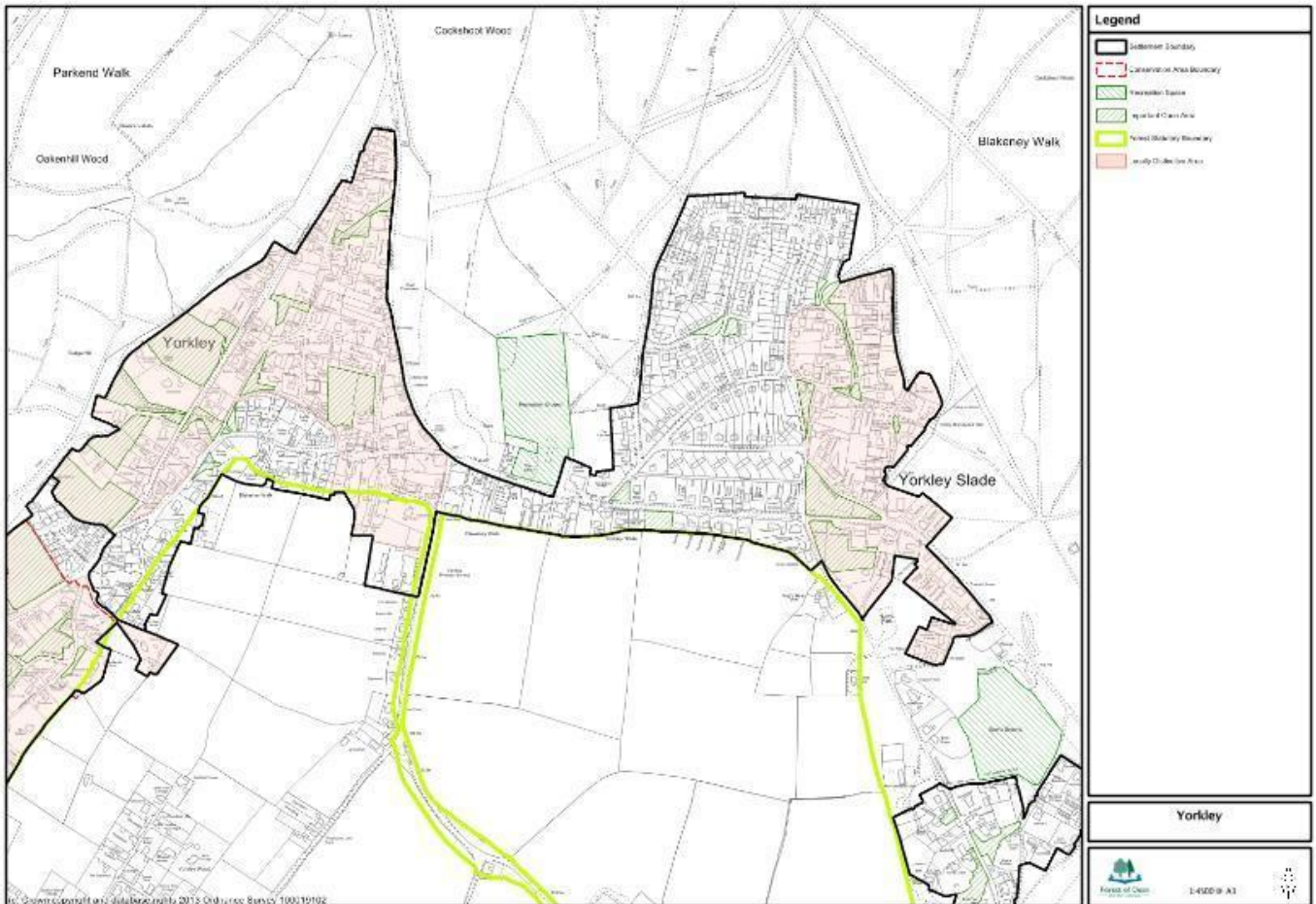
There are large areas that are still distinctive and have a strong character. The nucleated settlement pattern has been added to with new housing developments and additions over time. The settlement comprises both a linear and nucleated form, loosely following the route of Main Road with two large nucleated settlement offshoots.

Boundary treatments are typically stone walls of varying construction with grass verges with buildings of varying date and construction.

Yorkley can be split in two with West Yorkley displaying Forest Fringe characteristics while large parts of Yorkley Slade are dominated by modern housing. There are large areas that are still distinctive and have a strong character. The western edge of Yorkley and the eastern edge of Yorkley Slade have been designated a Locally Distinctive Area (LDA).

Most of the new development is by 'infill' . These are mostly single buildings. Some properties within the LDA have large gardens and orchards which could be 'infilled' in the future.

Views out or Yorkley (and Yorkley Wood)



Yorkley West - The area features traditional styled dwellings within spacious curtilages, mainly with strong frontages onto highways. There is some backland development, but also a large number of open spaces and Important Open Areas. Dwellings are mainly arranged informally and feature traditional materials.

Yorkley Slade - Dwellings are located in an informal pattern with strong relationship to highways and minor access roads. Comparatively large Important Open Areas within the LDA. Eastern edge of the area meets the forest boundary, creating a fringe characteristic. Dwellings are located within large curtilages with clear boundaries between public and private space. There is widespread use of traditional styles and local materials.

Building types

Yorkley grew in a haphazard way from its origins in mining and quarrying with cottages being built in good-sized plots of local stone with stone wall boundaries. Most modern building has been infilling and is brick, with tile or slate roofs. Most of the older cottages have been extended.

Historic buildings



Yorkley Court Farm farmhouse and curtilage buildings are Grade II listed (see photo).

Also Danby Lodge is Grade 2 listed.

Forest Waste

The importance of Forest waste is not to be overlooked in our whole NDP area.

There are large areas of forest waste which are important open spaces but also all of the road verges and small pieces of land around properties are also classed as forest waste and cannot be sold.

The photo shows a typical patch of Forest waste



Facilities

There is a range of facilities. A primary school and playgroup, two shops, two pubs, a health Centre, a Community Centre with a recreation ground, football pitch, playground and skatepark.

There is also a well-used Community room owned by Two Rivers housing association at Danby Road which serves the elderly residents there



Geographic location

Approaches to Yorkley

Yorkley is 3 miles from the nearest town of Lydney to the south which enters the village from the Allastone ridge to Bailey Hill. There is a minor road on the left which leads to the hamlet of Yorkley Wood



The road (Lydney road) continues past Yorkley School to Bailey Hill



At Bailey Hill the road joins roads to the left. The first turns down Stag Hill to Pillowell and the second follows the western edge of forest to Parkend.



Turning right at Bailey Hill the road leads along the highest part of the village down towards the A48 at Blakeney



At the bottom of Bailey Hill, the crossroads lead left to Yorkley Slade and right to Oldcroft.



The approach to Yorkley from **Parkend and Moseley Green**



The approach to Yorkley from **Parkend and Moseley Green** is through woodland on Yorkley Road. It carries on up Parkend Road to Bailey Hill



Where the road divides and bears right towards Pillowell and Whitecroft there is a spectacular beech tree.



The uphill approach from the Conservation village of **Pillowell** passes on the left the only modern development in Yorkley West called The Rudge after the valley which was built on a brownfield site of the former Kears bakery.





The road divides at this point leading up Stag Hill to the top of the village and Lower road on the western side. After that, on the left the area on the Forest side up the length of Lower Road is designated a LDA.

It includes this area known as Captains Green, showing a large open area of Forest Waste.



Approaching from the east through Viney Hill the forest is on the right with linear development on the left.

Active transport

There are a large number of public footpaths and forest tracks linking Yorkley to the surrounding settlements.

Cycling is popular and it is hoped that, when the proposed Dean Forest Greenway multi use track is completed from Parkend through Whitecroft to Lydney, that more people will use the forest tracks to enable safe active transport for leisure, school and work.



Commercial

Although originally a mining village, there is now very little industry in Yorkley but many small and one person type businesses based from home such as those in the building trade, soft furnishing makers and much more are operating.

There is a big increase in live work businesses covering many aspects of commerce, for example architects, designers, computing, craft work, including artists, abound in all of the Forest Edge South villages making it a popular place to live and create.

Tourism is important and there are a number of small bed and breakfast businesses, holiday cottages and a busy Holiday Park, Deanwood Holidays, on the former equestrian centre in Yorkley Wood.

Some of the hirers of the Community Centre are businesses, for example Pilates, Yoga and Zumba and these are all well supported and appreciated.

Positives

Easy access into adjacent woodlands with the ability to roam freely for recreation and tranquility

Open landscape with views over the Severn, Cotswolds, Brecon Beacons

Many very quiet areas set back from the traffic

Well-respected and popular village school and playgroup

Vibrant Community Centre, recreation grounds and children's playground and skatepark

Centrally appointed Health Centre

Two well-stocked shops

Negatives

Some traffic passes far too quickly through the village causing much concern

Poor public transport links

Damage to grass verges by wild boar

Free roaming sheep droppings on pavements, especially near to the school and playgroup.