



Stratfield
Mortimer
Parish Council

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Mortimer Library
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Village Design Statement

A Community View of The Character
and Identity of Stratfield Mortimer



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Village Design Statement

A Community View of The Character and Identity of Stratfield Mortimer

Introduction

Stratfield Mortimer is an extensive parish pleasantly situated east-west on the southern boundary of Berkshire with beautiful views over the Hampshire border. Despite residential expansion and urban influences which have continued since Victorian times, the village still retains a rural identity and has the benefits of a close-knit community life.

Still identifiable today is the single street village on the eastern side of the parish with its 19th century church and churchyard on its ancient site. Long gone, are the manor house and the water mill once powered by the Foudry Brook. The Manor Farm, however, rebuilt in the 19th century, survived until 1987.

The arrival of the railway in 1848 led to increased accessibility to the towns of Reading and Basingstoke. At the time the parish had a small population of just over eight hundred inhabitants, many scattered in small farms and hamlets, some in squatter cottages on former common land. Also around the middle of the nineteenth century, there began a period of rapid expansion and social change, with an influx of new villagers establishing the modern community with its network of roads, schools and shops.

Unable to expand to the east of the village due to the girdle of farms, growth occurred westward, up hill on to former common lands where the poor soil was unsuitable for farming. The local scarcity of picturesque old cottages is perhaps explained by the policy of the principal landowners here, the Benyon family of Englefield, of re-housing people in the best available dwellings.

What are usually called cottages are often small farmhouses made redundant by the 'great rebuilding' of the 1850s, when groups of small farms were combined to form larger ones. The true cottages in this area, once the homes of the rural poor, were often, with no building stone available except flint, hovels of timber, wattle and daub, which were pulled down as they fell empty.

The increase in population meant that there were not enough old houses of sufficient quality to go round. This problem was overcome locally by building groups of semi-detached cottages with modern facilities. These are still much in evidence today and form the basis of the village housing stock.

Background and Consultation

Executive Summary

As set out in the Parish Plan (published 2004) Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is seeking to produce a "Village Design Statement" (VDS).



The War Memorial

Following the changes in the planning system brought about by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Parish Council, by way of the production of this Village Design Statement, is seeking to provide a broad, consensus view of the character and identity of Stratfield Mortimer, as well as providing an overall view of the local community. The community hopes that the Village Design Statement will directly influence those future planning and development decisions which could impact on the overall experience of living in the parish of Stratfield Mortimer and help preserve, maintain and enhance its environment and ambiance.

The Mortimer Village Design Statement has been produced by the people of the Parish and is based on an identification and analysis of local character. The intention is that it should be used to encourage improvements in the design of future developments within the village. The Mortimer VDS is a means for local people to contribute to the planning process and help manage change in their community.

It is recognised that while some development in the parish is inevitable, the people of Mortimer value their environment and landscape and wish to ensure that its special character will be retained or enhanced by any new development.

In producing this statement we have sought to engage as wide a cross section of people as possible. The statement has been produced in consultation with the local community and stakeholders, including statutory consultees and has been designed to conform to relevant development plan policies.



View from Victoria Road down West End Road

It is hoped that the VDS will be of use to:

- West Berkshire District Council as a material consideration in planning decisions
- the Parish Council when commenting on planning applications
- Prospective designers, architects, builders and developers
- Residents and owners of existing buildings who want to either extend or change the use of a building.

Community Involvement

Working Party/Steering Group

In order to achieve its goal of engaging as wide a cross section as possible the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council invited interested members of the community to come together to form a working party. This working party undertook the task of acting as a steering group to oversee the acquisition and compilation of information so that the Design Statement should represent as wide a range of views and opinions as possible.

The Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council organised a meeting for Mortimer residents to show how a Village Design Statement (VDS) could benefit the village.



A public meeting in St. John's Hall

The invitation to produce the VDS was taken up by the residents of Mortimer, mainly because of the impact of recent changes to the village, particularly with the implementation of a new 120 dwelling housing development and the increasing pressures of 'infill' development on existing sites and the re-development of 'Brownfield' sites within the existing village settlement boundary.

Involving The Wider Community

In order to ensure that the Design Statement reflected the views of the whole community the Working group organised a series of Contact Events and a Parish wide questionnaire to gather together input from as wide a public base as possible.

- January 2005: the Parish Council issued a call for interested community members to volunteer to take part in the VDS Working Party.
- May 2005: Repeat of request for volunteers and up date of preliminary steps in formulating VDS via the Parish Council Newsletter (issued to every house in the village).

- September 2005: Issue of a questionnaire to every house in the village surveying views and opinions Re: the VDS.
- 17th September 2005: Public “Contact Meeting” to review the results of the questionnaire and collect further views for inclusion in the VDS
- 25th May 2006: Public Meeting including presentation of 1st draft of VDS (posted for review on the Parish Council Website www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk) to the wider local community
- 18th May 2007 – 18th June 2007: 4 week formal consultation period
- June – July 2007: Collation of consultation responses and final amendments
- 9th October 2007: Village Design Statement presented at Kennet and Pang Area Forum for adoption by West Berkshire Council as a material consideration

Village Design Statement

Continuous Occupation Since Pre-History

From Palaeolithic to Roman Times

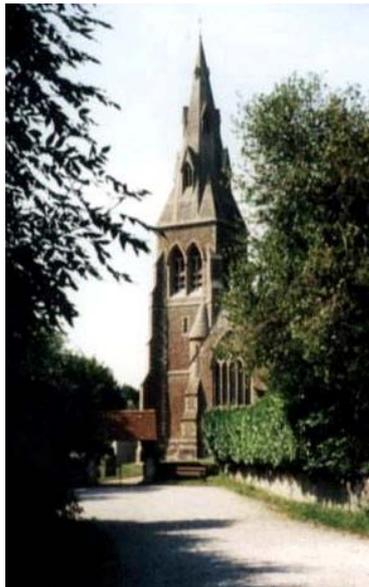
Within the parish man has roamed and hunted since pre-historic times, the earliest artefact so far found is a Lower Palaeolithic flint hand axe from about 200,000 years ago discovered at Holden's Firs, where there are also a group of Bronze Age barrows, which are listed in Appendix 2 as scheduled ancient monuments. Romans from Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) also passed this way. The Roman Road known as the Devil's Highway marks most of the southern boundary of the parish and from this the word Stratfield comes, meaning an area of open land crossed by a Roman road.



The Roman Road going towards Silchester, from the Roman Star on Swinlev Forest.

Saxons, Normans and Tudors

We know that the Saxons lived here as there is an 11th Century tombstone to Aegalward son of Kypping to be found in St. Mary's Church. However, it is from the Norman Conquest that Mortimer gained the second part of its name.



St Mary's Church

Roger Mortimer, a supporter of William The Conqueror, gave himself a surname derived from the Norman village of Mortemer-en-Brai where he had a castle. His nephew Ralph Mortimer held the Manor of Stratfield Mortimer as recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. In the Middle Ages Hugh Mortimer gave 160 acres to the newly founded Reading Abbey which land reverted to the Crown at the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Henry VIII was thus able to include Great Park and Little Park as part of the marriage portion given to 5 of his 6 wives - Anne of Cleves excepted. Although the Civil War came very close, visiting Aldermaston, Padworth, and Swallowfield; it did not directly involve Mortimer.

From the 1800's to the Present Day

Until the enclosure of Mortimer Common in 1801-06 the village was centred, around the Foudry Brook where there was good agricultural land and flood meadows. However, with the doubling of the national population in the 18th Century anxieties were raised about food production. Attempts were made to cultivate areas, such as Mortimer Common, which had previously been regarded as wasteland. Unfortunately poor soil conditions made this uneconomic.

House building started slowly on the land enclosed by the Act; witnessed by the fact that the Parish population in 1801 was 600 and in 1871 had only increased to 800. It surged to 1423 by 1911 however. It was the period 1870-1910 which saw the greatest time of house building on the common, with little further expansion until the 1950- 60's when **Stephens Firs**, **Stephens Close** and **College Piece** were built, along with **Croft Road** and **Leigh Field**.

Brunel's railway came to Mortimer as Broad-gauge in 1848, mixed gauge in 1856 and Standard gauge in 1892. Mortimer Water Works pumping station at the Tun Bridge was built in 1912 and household mains water was available from 1918.

The Water Tower opposite the Fair Ground was demolished in 1965 Both Electricity and the Telephone Exchange arrived in 1936. The 1980's gave the Parish **Groves Lea** and 2005-06 the **Mortimer Hill Farm** development.



A house on the Mortimer Hill Farm development

The Mortimer Fairground

Georgian Origins of The Modern Fairground

The Fairground and Grazing Area is a jealously guarded "open space" amenity in the centre of the village. It has been available to the residents of the Parish since medieval times. Its status was formalised in 1804 when the enclosure movement came to Mortimer and farmland was redistributed; the Fair Ground however was preserved. The Lord of the Manor, the Vicar and the "Church Wardens and Overseers of the parish" were authorised to set out an area "at or near a certain Place called the Horse and Groom...not exceeding twenty Acres... for the Purpose of holding and keeping the annual Fair called Mortimer Fair, which hath been usually held.... On the Sixth Day of November". But, subject to the holding of the Fair, the land was to be let out at a rent for income to be used "in the Purchase of Fuel to be... distributed to the Poor of the said Parish".



Pond dipping on the fairground

Post War Changes

In 1948 the Fair Ground (still twenty acres, as in 1804) was put in the ownership of the Parish Council by the Charity Commissioners, to hold under a charitable trust for the purposes specified in 1804; but up to eleven of the twenty acres could be used as a public recreation ground. Hence today's division between the grazing area, adjoining **Windmill Road**, and the recreation area adjoining **The Street**.



The play equipment on the recreation area of the Fair Ground

The Grazing Area

This has been let from time to time down to recent years, but for diminishing amounts reflecting diminishing demand (which has now all but vanished). Grass nowadays is cut for management reasons not grazing.

The Fairground Trustees

In recent times it became clear that the Parish Council could no longer legally act as trustees of the Fairground, and in 2005 the Parish Council gained the approval of the Charity Commission to pass this responsibility to a new board of trustees. The Parish Council have now negotiated a lease with the trustees enabling them to continue to maintain the Fairground by lawful public expenditure (under the Open Spaces Act 1906); and to pay a lawful and reasonable rent for the right to do so.



Mortimer's Fairground

Village Design Statement

Summary

There are fourteen listed buildings and four designated and scheduled ancient monuments within the parish ranging from St. Mary's Church, which although built in the middle of the Victorian era has medieval and Tudor monuments, and stands on a site used as a church since Norman times, to a railway station designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1848.

There are eight dwellings, houses and farm houses, with the remaining building being stables, barns and outbuildings. All of the buildings are "Grade II" listed apart from the railway station and its waiting room which are Grade II "star"

A full description of the buildings and their listing is contained in Appendix 1 and a description and locations of the ancient monuments are set out in Appendix 2.



Mortimer Railway Station

Village Design Statement

A Rural Setting; A Separate Community

Landscape and Environment

The village of Mortimer, situated in a rural setting and surrounded by open countryside and woodland is located within a triangle formed by the busy towns of Reading, Newbury and Basingstoke.

It is important to note that the village retains a unique and separate identity from its neighbours Burghfield, Mortimer West End, Wokefield, and Beech Hill and that the residents expressed a strong desire to maintain development within the existing "settlement boundary". The M4 motorway at junction 11 is approximately 5 miles from the village and allows would be travellers' access to London and the West Country, similarly the M3 passing close by at Basingstoke makes the South Coast within easy reach.



A view of
Brewery Common

Passing open fields and the golf course at Wokefield Park, located towards the eastern edge of the village, the steeple of St. Mary's Church comes into view above the hedgerows and tree tops. The church can also be observed when entering the village from the **Beech Hill Road** after passing open countryside dotted with roadside cottages and farms.



The north east corner of
St. Mary's church

The Foudry Brook ambles around the southern tip of the village with a small waterfall just below the lychgate of the church.

Further to the south an interesting walk can be made around the ruined walls of Calleva, the one-time important Roman City. The Amphitheatre and Devils Highway are landmarks also originating from these times.

To the North, the villages of Mortimer and Burghfield Common are separated by woodland areas and numerous walks have been mapped out. The Parish Council organises various 'health' walks for all who wish to participate and are overseen by trained leaders.

Englefield Estate administers a large proportion of the surrounding countryside, including farms and cottages.

Further to the north-west, the Kennet and Avon canal can be visited. A variety of wildlife, numerous locks, swing bridges and canal boat activity can be observed on the tow-path walks.

St. Saviour's Church at Mortimer West End is worthy of note as is St. John the Baptist Church at nearby Padworth. Together with the village churches of St. Mary's and St John's, they form the United Benifice within the Diocese of Oxford.

Located close by and to the South east is the country residence of the Duke of Wellington at Stratfield Saye. The estate covers a large area. The house is open to the public during summer months as is the Wellington Country Park, offering attractions for children and adults alike.

All in all the surrounding countryside has a lot to offer and creates an environment that can be appreciated by everyone and forms a desirable location for all who dwell within and visit our village of Mortimer.



St John's church

Topography and Geology

To The North Of The Village

The area to the north (Mortimer Common) consists largely of gravel overlaid by a thin layer of soil. Due to its unsuitability for agricultural use much of the housing development carried out so far has been here. It is mostly surrounded by heath-land and pine forests typical of the Hampshire - Berkshire borders. Some of this area is also used for gravel extraction, which places pressure on traffic movements and highway maintenance.

To The South Of The Village

The area to the south around St Mary's Church and the Railway Station is mostly clay based and used for both arable and livestock farming. Foudry Brook runs past St Mary's Church and the area between the Church and the Station is subject to flooding during periods of prolonged heavy rain. Consequently little recent development has taken place and the landscape is typically agricultural.

Flora and Fauna

The parish has extensive and varied wildlife, many of which are protected by law. Examples of bird species found include Tawny and Little Owls, Kestrels, Sparrowhawks and Buzzards alongside more common species such as the Blackbird, Blue Tit, Robin, House Sparrow, Great Tit, Starling, Greenfinch, Dunnock and Chaffinch.

Larger animals include Foxes, Badgers, Muntjac and Roe Deer, while smaller animals include grey squirrels rabbits, Brown Hares, Hedgehogs, and Woodmouse.

Adjacent to the Fairground are two Wildlife Heritage Site ponds that support a colony of Great Crested Newts (a protected species).

Village Design Statement

Amenities, Services and Recreation.

The village enjoys a wide range of Amenities and Services in a compact area central to the village, with The Fairground and Grazing area being the focal point. These amenities cover a wide range of every day necessities and are within walking distance for the majority of residents. This accessibility has, so far, limited the need for extensive parking facilities for parishioners compared to many villages with a similar size population.

Amenities:

1. Medical

- a. Mortimer Surgery is a practise with a range of facilities in a modern building located on Victoria Road
- b. A Dental Surgery (which has recently had to move to larger premises)
- c. Physiotherapy Practice
- d. Chiropody, Acupuncture, and Chiropractic Clinics
- e. Chemist.

2. Services

- a. Schools St, John's and St. Mary's schools provide education up to the age of eleven
- b. Garage offering car sales and vehicle servicing (MOT Testing Station)
- c. Nursery Schools and Toddler Groups

3. Library (incorporating Parish Council Office)

4. Fire Station

- a. The village has its own fire station which enjoys the services of retained fire-fighters and a supports its own tender



Mortimer fire station

5. Shopping

- a. Everyday shopping is covered with small supermarket, hairdressers, Gift-shop, Convenience Store, Hardware/Do-it-Yourself, travel agent and newspaper shop. In addition, a bank and Post Office provide services that are very important to keep a village alive.

6. Pubs/Restaurants

- a. There are four public houses within the village, three of which provide restaurant areas.
- b. There is a café/coffee shop attached to the bread shop and takeaway.
- c. A Chinese takeaway/Fish & Chip Shop



The Victoria Arms

7. Recreation

- a. The fairground has a cricket and tennis club, with the hope of a new pavilion.
- b. There is a children's play area sited on the fairground with swings, a slide and a climbing frame.
- c. In addition, the fairground provides for horse events.
- d. Also a flourishing football club within the village has regular fixtures.
- e. There are vibrant Scout, Cub Scout and Girl Guide troupes.
- f. The Mortimer Dramatic Society has continuously presented three plays a year for over 55 years.
- g. The Flower Circle holds regular meetings and gives demonstrations.
- h. The Model Railway Society meets twice a month in St. John's Hall



St. John's Hall

8. Churches

- a. C of E Churches are in both the upper and lower part of the parish together with two church halls.
- b. There is a Methodist Church on West End Road

9. Railway Station

- a. A station is a considerable benefit and has increased demand for residing in Mortimer but with the Station, a mile away from the principal part of the village; parking at the station has become inadequate for the existing population. We believe that there will have to be a radical increase in parking provision at the station, or improved public transport if there is to be any further increase in housing.

10. Travel

- a. Bus service to Reading
- b. A locally subsidised bus service to Mortimer Station at peak times.

Village Design Statement

Building Materials

Introduction

As already stated the development and architecture to be seen in Mortimer effectively begins with the coming of the Brunel inspired railway from Reading to Basingstoke and those buildings worthy of Listing by English Heritage are named elsewhere in this Design Statement.

Houses and small business premises were built as ribbon development from Tun Bridge and The Saddlers, up The Street and included the old Post Office, Forge, Fox and Horn public house, and the old school house.



Mortimer Railway Station

St Mary's Church, the School and Church Farm House and the Barns date from the mid eighteenth century are some of the few stone buildings to be found in Stratfield Mortimer. Most of the houses from this period, and those built well into the twentieth century, were built with bricks made using local clay at brickworks at the end of Kiln Lane. The Horse and Groom, facing the fairground, is thought to be one of the oldest buildings in Mortimer Common, a mile west up The Street from Tun Bridge. The core of the present day village originally comprised mainly red brick two up two down cottages and slightly larger houses in King Street, Windmill Road, West End Road, St John's and St Mary's Roads.



The Horse & Groom Pub
A view into the village from The Street

The majority of these 19th century houses were on two floors and less than 8m high from ground to chimney pot. Three storey houses were rare, although some of the Victorian properties had attic rooms under the rafters with dormer windows or sloping

framed glass and some had cellars. Tiled dormer and Velux® type roof lighting are therefore to be preferred rather than felted flat roofs over large boxed windows in the roof space.

Original Fabrication and Construction

Typically the original detached and semi detached cottages were solid 9 inch or 11 inch cavity brickwork on shallow brick foundations, with pitch and sand or slate damp proof courses, under a gabled tiled or slate pitched timber roof. Decorative coursing or banding, diamonds and overburnt headers in English or Flemish bond and stretcher bond were favoured, and can still be seen to good effect throughout the village. The houses were heated by coal or wood fires and therefore most rooms had fireplaces and chimneys.



Typical semi-detached housing showing decorative coursing

Front doors were generally of local hardwood, sometimes with a small glazed light to illuminate the hallway and stairway within, while rear doors were of the braced latch type often very draughty. Windows were either vertically sliding sashes or hinged casements in wooden frames recessed behind a reveal or built into the inner leaf of brickwork. Although simple in design, the proportions (1:1.4) were pleasant and satisfying in both window shape and room size. It is felt that this simplicity can and should be followed in modern construction and extensions wherever possible.

Based on the results obtained from the questionnaire prepared for this Design Statement and distributed to the whole village population in the autumn of 2005, over half of the houses were built after WW2 when materials were difficult to obtain and the quality of the construction was lower than in the pre-war period. Today this trend has been reversed with improved building codes and the change to metric sizes.

Modern Fabrication and Construction

In addition to the changes brought in by metrication it should be noted that whereas red/orange bricks were the local norm, bricks imported from brickworks further away introduced the buff and yellow colours which can be seen in several of the recent housing developments. - ***The Crescent, College Piece, Orchard Road, and now at Mortimer Hill.***



Modern housing in the Laneswood development showing decorative banding and corbelling

Whether that colour variability is desirable to the village scene is, according to our survey of local opinion, debatable. It is, however generally felt that Victorian gable roofed designs and red bricks, red/orange tiles or black/green slates compliment the original architecture better than the designs from the 1950's to 1970's. Also, while part rendering can add interest to a design, fully rendered elevations, if not adequately maintained, tend to deteriorate quickly and are not favoured by a majority of those people surveyed.

It was also the opinion of the survey group that mixed fully hipped and gabled roofs in the same building seldom work well together and should be avoided both in new construction and extension planning. Flat roofs and long vee valleys were also a common source of concern and it was felt that they should be discouraged.

Services and Sewerage

Wells were the main source of water for domestic use and few of these homes had bathrooms or internal toilets as mains drainage was not available until the mid 1930's. Gutters and downpipes were predominately made of cast iron. Pit latrines at the bottom of the garden were common and many properties in the area today still have septic tank drainage.

It is generally felt that to reduce runoff and flood risk and increase groundwater recharge, surface water should be directed to soakaways or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). In order to improve the ecological and sustainable credentials of additional housing and development Mortimer residents stress the importance of the use of greywater which should be incorporated in new developments to reduce potable water demand in the area. Similarly solar panel water heating and non fossil fuelled electricity generation should be considered where appropriate.

Village Design Statement

Traffic Movement, Street Furniture, Signs & Lighting

Traffic Movement



West End Road Mortimer
With West Berkshire's
Speed Indicator Device (SID)

Traffic on the unclassified rural roads in and around Mortimer is either locally generated, commuting to and from the nearby towns of Reading, Newbury and Basingstoke, or of a commercial, trade, business and delivery nature. Recent traffic surveys have shown that over 3,400 vehicles a day travel east-west in each direction into and through the Village (TRL 2005).

The speed limit within the centre of the village of Mortimer Common and in the lower part of **The Street** is 30mph. The surrounding country lanes are subject to the national limit of 60mph for two lane roads.

A survey, undertaken by TRL Limited on behalf of the Parish Council in January and February 2005 (25th Jan – 1st Feb 2005 and 2nd – 9th Feb 2005) revealed that these speed limits are widely exceeded throughout the day and at night. TRL and WBC traffic volume and speed survey results in 2005 for **The Street** and for traffic elsewhere in the village have given the community cause for concern. Speed checks, undertaken by TRL using surface mounted pneumatic sensors, at the school have shown that 73% of vehicles travelling eastbound (downhill) and 59% westbound (uphill) exceed the 30mph limit. Between 8 and 9 am and between 3 and 4 pm, 15% of all vehicles using the road exceeded 36mph, over a stretch of road which claimed five personal injury and fatal accidents in the 3 year period to 2004.

Signs & Lighting

Except for key warning signs and at the four mini roundabouts, the old roads of Mortimer are unlit. This is the stated preference of parishioners, according to the Parish Plan, to minimise detrimental environmental and economic factors, to preserve an unspoilt and dark night sky, and to ensure that electrical energy is not wasted. A majority of villagers who expressed a preference for street lighting said they would prefer lighting standards which were in keeping with the Victorian nature of the core village.

Street Furniture

Other street furniture such as pavement bollards, railings, salt and litter bins, etc, where they already exist are, generally, finished in black to be in keeping with the existing infrastructure.

In the post 1960's areas of Mortimer power and telephone lines are below ground level but elsewhere it is unfortunate that many roads are impaired visually by the number of electric power and telephone poles and the wirescape that emanates each pole. The poles also constitute a hazard for pedestrians and a haven for dogs!

It is felt by the majority of villagers who expressed an opinion that urban traffic signage and road markings, humps and build outs are not necessary or appropriate in what is still considered by many to be a rural village like Mortimer. Concrete or granite set kerbs with drainage gullies are the norm in the built up areas but outside grass verges and open ditch drainage are considered by the residents to be both more efficient and attractive.

Signs & Road Markings

White centre lines and cats eyes do exist within the road structure, particularly where the road is clearly a two way carriageway. Signs have been generally kept to a minimum, again contributing to the rural, country feel of the village street scene.

Village Design Statement

Guidelines An Recommendations

Guidelines for Development

There is no specific opposition to modern or innovative design, though villagers want their VDS to enable best solutions for respecting rural living. The main requirements are for openness and consultation at all stages in development so that following the principles for design as set out herein can be met to the benefit of all.

- 1) In general, Mortimer residents appreciate buildings that sit well in the landscape so that they do not interrupt the line of the land and are in harmony with the buildings that surround them. Preferred roofs are of slate or tile, and successful developments have rooflines and use materials that blend well, presenting some variety in height, angle and plane. Gable type roofs, rather than flat or 'hipped' are generally preferred. *(See Section 6 Streets & Buildings, Original Fabrication and Construction).*
- 2) Residents expressed a keen desire to maintain the separation and individuality of the village and are anxious to contain building and development within the existing 'settlement boundary', thus maintaining the Greenfield and rural aspects of the approaches to the village itself, which, it is felt, do much to establish the character of the community.
- 3) The spatial relationship between buildings and landscape is important for the character and feel of the village. Buildings with soft-edged boundaries like hedges and trellises, weathered walls, paling or picket fencing which blend well into the landscape are preferred. Solid fence panels or iron railings are less in character. *(See Section 6 Streets & Buildings, Original Fabrication and Construction)*
- 4) Buildings which use detail, such as coloured brick inserts, mouldings or patterns of raised brick around windows or between levels to break up monotony of line are more appropriate to the character and feel of the village. Porches breaking up flat wall surfaces are appreciated, and weatherboards and fascias to emphasise roof-lines are preferred, especially those made of wood rather than plastic. *(See Section 6 Streets & Buildings, Modern Fabrication and Construction)*
- 5) Due to the wide timescale of development of residential units within the village, new development (up to three units) should take account of the immediate surrounding (200 metres) properties for appearance. Developments in excess of three should always reflect the dominance of the late Victorian style in the village and surrounding area. *(See Section 2 Evolution & History)*

- 6) Whether the introduction of variability in brick colours as described in Chapter 6 (Building Materials) is desirable to the village scene emerged as a matter of debate among the villagers, but generally it is felt that Victorian gable roofed designs and red bricks, red/orange tiles or black/green slates compliment the original architecture better than the designs from the 1950's to 1970's. While part rendering can add interest to a design, fully rendered elevations tend to deteriorate quickly and are not favoured in Mortimer. Mixed full hipped and gabled roofs in the same building seldom work well together and should be avoided both in new construction and extension planning. *(See Section 6 Streets & Buildings, Modern Fabrication and Construction)*
- 7) Groundwater recharge, surface water should be directed to soakaways or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). The use of greywater should be incorporated in new developments to reduce potable water demand in the area. Similarly solar panel water heating and non fossil fuelled electricity generation should be considered where appropriate. *(See Section 6 Streets & Buildings, Modern Services and Sewerage)*
- 8) Inappropriate development is a major threat to the preservation of the habitats necessary to protect wildlife and flora. It is essential that these habitats are properly managed and protected in any future planning and development proposals. *(See Section 4 The Setting Today)*
- 9) Consultation with the villagers revealed that a majority believe that the amenities and services are currently in balance for the existing size of population. It further believed that any substantial increase in population would mean many of the commercial business premises and medical services would need to expand physically. *(See Section 5 Amenities Services & Recreation)*
- 10) Where street lighting has to be used, on new developments or to comply with traffic and other statutory legislation, black painted wrought iron designs with a cantilevered globe are considered more appropriate for Mortimer than the galvanised steel lighting standards that have been installed around the roundabouts and in the Mortimer Hill development. *(See Section 7, Signs & Lighting)*
- 11) Other street furniture such as pavement bollards, railings, salt and litter bins, etc should be finished in black if possible to be in keeping with the existing infrastructure. *(See Section 7, Signs & Lighting)*
- 12) Urban traffic signage and road markings, humps and build outs are not necessary or appropriate in a rural village like Mortimer. Concrete or granite set kerbs with drainage gullies are the norm in the built up areas but outside grass verges and open ditch drainage are considered more efficient and attractive. *(See Section 7, Signs & Lighting)*
- 13) White centre lines and cats eyes are helpful where the road is clearly a two way carriageway but cross hatching is generally unnecessary if the roadway is well designed. Elsewhere signs should be kept to a minimum, clean and clearly visible, unhidden by trees and the street scene and pavements uncluttered support posts. *(See Section 7, Signs & Lighting)*

Village Design Statement

Summary

There are fourteen listed buildings within the parish ranging from St. Johns Church, which although built in the middle of the Victorian era has medieval and Tudor monuments, and stands on a site used as a church since Norman times, to a railway station designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1848.

There are eight dwellings, houses and farm houses, with the remaining building being stables, barns and outbuildings. All of the buildings are “Grade II” listed apart from the railway station and its waiting room which are Grade II “star”

A full description of the buildings and their listing is contained in an appendix to this VDS

Listed Buildings

GREAT PARK FARMHOUSE

G.V. II

Farmhouse. Early C18 rebuild of older house, altered C20.. Brick, with part flint on end gable old tile hipped roof. Double—depth plan. 2 storeys and attics, 3 chimneys. Brick dentil eaves course, plat band above flint on left hand gable 5 bay front, sash windows in architrave frames, with glazing bars and segmental brick arch heads: on the first floor from the left, the 1st and 3rd bays are wide sashes, the 2nd and 5th are blocked and painted as windows, and the 4th is a narrower sash. On the ground floor the 1st, 3rd and 5th are wide sashes similar to those above and the 2nd and 4th bays are 6—panelled entrance doors with rectangular overlights and flat hoods on carved brackets. Interior contains an early C18 stair with turned balusters and a moulded handrail.

LITTLE PARK FARMHOUSE

G.V. II

Farmhouse. 1712 altered and extended early C19. Brick, old tile hipped roofs. L—plan with extension at rear. 2 storeys and attics. Central chimney with date panel FP (1712). Entrance front Brick plinth and plat band. Two, 2—light casements with glazing bars in gabled attics. 2 tripartite sashes on first floor on either side of centre narrow recession painted as a window. On the ground floor sash windows on the left of the entrance door and one tripartite sash to the right. All with glazing bars and rubbed brick heads, segmental on the ground floor. Entrance door is 4—panelled in doorcase with pediment and pilasters with moulded heads and cornice. Interior contains an early C18 staircase with turned newells and moulded handrails.

GRANARY APPROXIMATELY 40 METRES NORTH WEST OF LITTLE PARK FARMHOUSE

G.V. II

Granary with hayloft and dovecote over, now agricultural store. Early C18. Timber framed with weatherboard cladding and old tile half hipped roof. Rectangular plan on 12 stone staddles. Planked entry door.

STABLES APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES WEST OF LITTLE PARK FARMHOUSE

G.V. II

Stables. Early C18. Brick with old tile half hipped roof. 2 fixed light windows and 3 planked stable doors on south side.

IMPLEMENT SHED, ADJOINING THE GRANARY APPROXIMATELY 40 METRES NORTH WEST OF LITTLE PARK FARMHOUSE

G.V. II

Implement shed. Early C18. Timber framed of 5 bays and one small barn to bay at each end. Old tile hipped roof with eaves level almost to ground at each end. Rectangular plan open on south, weatherboarded on north. Queen post roof, short curved braces to posts and ties.

CHURCH OF ST. MARY

G.V. II

Parish Church. 1869 by Richard Armstrong, vestry added in 1896 by E.S Harris. Rock faced stone with ashlar dressings, steeply pitched tiled roof with decorative ridge tiles and stone coped gables. Nave, north and south aisles, chancel, north chancel aisle, engaged tower and spire on south east; north and south gabled entry porches at west end; south

west vestry. Windows with geometric tracery, 2 and 3—lights to nave between 2 stage buttresses; 2—light foiled clerestorey windows. Clasped buttresses to chancel, angle buttresses to north porch and south west end to nave. Single storey vestry with 2 flying buttresses and pinnacles over square piers at corners. Tower in 3 stages, with moulded and foliated cornice, broached spire above, 2 tiers of lucarnes and weathervane; stair turret on north east side, in angle with chancel, reaches to second stage with semi—circular conical tiled roof. Interior 5 bay arcades with columns having stiff leaf capitals. Plain arch braced collar roof with braced king posts. Carved stone arcaded reredos with decorative painted panels by O. Connor 1868. Stone piscina and sedilia. Finely carved wood chancel screen; carved stone font with tall carved wood coned cover on long hanging chain. Stained glass in the west window by Clutterbuck some C15 and C17 pieces including heads, in the window behind the organ. Monuments 2 brasses to R. Travet and wife 1441 on the south wall of chancel, together with a Saxon stone coffin lid with an inscription referring to Aegelwardus, who died in 1017. B.O.E. (Berkshire) p.229. Murray's Berkshire p.144.

MORTIMER HOUSE

G.V. II

Large house, (at one time a home for the blind). Late C18 extended C19 and C20. Brick with vitreous headers, low pitched slate hipped roof of varying heights. Original plan rectangular with extensions to the left and at the rear. 2 storeys and attics. Several chimneys irregularly spaced. Plinth, red brick dressings; cornice and plain parapet with stone coping. South Front: 5 bays, sash windows with glazing bars in architrave frames, rubbed brick heads: those on ground floor taller. Central bay slightly projecting with c1900 closed porch with lean—to tiled roof with pair of half glazed entrance doors with stone head. Windows to right of porch replaced early C20 with tall 4—light casement window in square bay with stone coping and flat roof. 2 bay similar wing set back on left, C19 and C20 single bay extensions recessed to left of this. Interior: C18 staircase with iron scrolled balusters, moulded tread ends, string and moulded handrail with inlaid star pattern on wreathing. Domed lantern light with cornice over staircase hall, doorcases in hall on both levels with moulded architraves, panelled linings and carved cornices. 2 Corinthian pilaster arches in principal room on ground floor. An early C17 carved wood overmantel with bead and reel ornament and early C19 firebasket in attic bedroom in C19 extension. B.O.E. (Berkshire) p.229.

MORTIMER STATION

G.V. II*

Railway Station. 1848 by I. K. Brunel for the GWR. Red brick with stock brick strings and surrounds to openings; hipped slate roof with deeply projecting eaves on cut brackets. Single storey. Entrance front: A pair of central 4—panelled doors with fanlight with radiating glazing bars under round arched head, and with projecting doorcase; flanked either side by a group of 3 single light windows with similar heads; continuous projecting string course linking doors and windows at impost level and forming impost blocks. The platform front is similar. The return on the north is 3 bays with two 4—panelled doors with fanlights as before, a central round headed window with glazing bars and stone cill. The Station is on the Reading — Basingstoke line which was laid under Brunel's personal direction. Originally the Berks and Hants Extension Railway it was taken over by the GWR before completion. One of the most unaltered of Brunel's wayside stations.

WAITING ROOM AT MORTIMER STATION ON SOUTH WEST SIDE OF RAILWAY LINE

G.V. II*

Railway Station waiting room. 1848 Red brick with stock brick strings and dressings to openings. Symmetrical front to platform with deeply recessed central part with round headed arched opening. Projecting wings on either side with round headed semi-circular niches, and continuous string at impost level and forming impost blocks. See previous item

THE SADDLERS (The Street: North Side)

G.V. II

House. C17 extended C19, altered 020. Part timber framed/part refaced with brick, part brick, part render. Old tile gabled and pent roof. T—plan with baffle entry, 2 framed bays on front and lower extension on north. 2 storeys and one storey. Chimney on ridge to left of centre. Scattered C19 casements within frame on east gable. Entrance front: has 2 bays; C19 casements with glazing bars, of-a c10se gabled entry porch with doorway now blocked. Much timber frame exposed internally.

HARRIS HOUSE (The Street: North Side)

G.V. II

House. c1840. extended C20. Painted stucco, hipped slate roof. T—plan. 2 storeys. Chimney on right hand. Entrance front 3 bays, sash windows with glazing bars: 6 panelled central door, radiating fanlight in arched recess with architrave, key block and springers; under curved hood. A one bay 2—storey mid C20 extension on left in similar style and with bow window on ground floor.

FOUDRY HOUSE (The Street: North Side)

G.V. II

House. Early C19 extended late C19 altered C20. Roman cement, part brick, old tile roof. Irregular plan with lower 2 storey extension at rear. 2 storeys. South front 5 bays with cornice, string and parapet. Sash windows with se heads and flat moulded architraves and bracketed cills. 6-panelled entrance door, rectangular radiating fanlight in small projecting porch with arched opening, architrave and springers to arch. At each end the return wall is curved back in quadrant form, with roof carried round, and one bay in curve. The curve is stopped by a slightly projecting bay that on right hand with chimney. Interior contains a good early C19 staircase with turned balusters and moulded handrail.

ABBEYCROFT

(The Street: North Side)

G.V. II

Large house in landscaped surround. Late C18, extended C19. Brick, hipped old tile roof. Rectangular plan, service extensions on right. 2 storeys and attics. One chimney on ridge to the right and 2 at rear. Entrance: front 4 attic windows, 2 and 3—light casements. Original build . symmetrical with two 2—storey angular bays with cornice carried round, sash windows with glazing bars on either side of central similar window over 6—panelled central door with rectangular fanlight of radiating looped pattern, in doorcase of pilasters and entablature with rounded ornament in frieze. 3 bay extension on right in similar character, but sash on ground floor to the right has been blocked. Interior: contains C18 staircase with turned balusters and moulded. handrail.

MORTIMER HILL

(The Street: North Side)

G.V. II

Large house now divided in 2. C18 altered and. extended C19. Roman cement, old tile lipped roof. Irregular plan. 2 storey and attic. 3 c at front, several at rear.

South front: 3 dormers with 2— light casements and pediment heads supported on long scroll brackets. 4 5 bays in main part with one slightly recessed bay on left and 3 bays set back from this all sash windows with Venetian shutters. Central door in main part with late C18 doorcase with panelled reveals, architrave, fluted frieze and cornice under stone Done porch. The right hand ground floor window has been altered to a French casement. B.O.E. (Berkshire) p.229.

2 Ancient Monuments

Village Design Statement

Summary

There are four scheduled monuments, listed by English Heritage, located within the parish of Stratfield Mortimer. These are "Barrow" cemeteries thought to date from the Bronze Age period (c2300 to 700 BC). In addition there have been significant and important archaeological finds at Mortimer Hill House. Investigations in 2003 revealed a Bronze Age roundhouse, a possible Roman trackway, a Roman period cremation cemetery and a medieval timber building.

Ancient Monuments

Scheduled Monuments in Stratfield Mortimer Parish

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

ROUND BARROW CEMETARY AT HOLDEN'S FIRS

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 12073

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SU64386498

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a round barrow cemetery, orientated SE-NW and comprising two bowl barrows and three bell barrows located within Holden's Firs. The bell barrow at SU64336502 has a maximum diameter of 17m and is 0.5m high. Surrounding the mound are a narrow berm and a ditch from which material for the mound was quarried. The ditch survives on the west side of the mound as a low earthwork 3m wide and 0.5m deep and as a buried feature elsewhere. The bell barrow at SU64396497 has a maximum diameter of 50m. The central mound survives to a height of 2m and a diameter of 20m. The ditch is 5m wide and 0.5m deep and the berm survives to a maximum diameter of 10m. The bowl barrow at SU64426494 has a maximum diameter of c.10m and survives to a height of 0.25m. The bowl barrow at SU64436493 is 20m in diameter and 1m high. The bell barrow at SU64376503 has a maximum diameter of 50m. An outer bank survives to a width of 10m and a height of 0.3m and the ditch to a width of 2.5m and 0.2m deep. A berm 5m wide surrounds the central mound which survives to 15m in diameter. The bell barrow at SU64336502 adjoins the barrow on its southern side.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

The Holden's Firs barrow cemetery is of particular importance as it survives well and, with no evidence for formal excavation, has considerable archaeological potential. The group is central to a wider barrow cemetery dispersed over an area of c.500m. Such concentrations provide a clear indication of the intensity with which areas were settled during the Bronze Age period.

BOWL BARROW: Part Of A Barrow Cemetery In Holden's Firs

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 12231

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SU64446514

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a bowl barrow set on high level ground between the River Kennet to the north and Foudry Brook to the south. The barrow mound is 25m in diameter and is 1m high. Surrounding the barrow mound is a ditch, from which mound material was quarried. This survives as a low earthwork 4m wide and 0.3m deep to the south-west of the mound, and as a buried feature elsewhere.

The monument is an outlier to a barrow cemetery located in and around Holden's Firs.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

The Holden's Firs barrow is important as it survives comparatively well and, despite disturbance to the barrow mound by forestation, has potential for the recovery of archaeological and environmental evidence. The significance of the site is considerably enhanced by its inclusion within a dispersed barrow cemetery. Such monuments give an indication of the intensity with which areas were settled during prehistory and provide evidence for the range of beliefs and nature of social organisation in the Bronze Age.

BOWL BARROW: North of Holden's Firs

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 12232

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SU64246514

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a bowl barrow set on high level ground between the River Kennet to the north and Foudry Brook to the south. The barrow survives as a raised area 2m above present ground level within a large area extracted for gravel in the early 1980s. The barrow mound is 25m in diameter and c.0.5m high. Although no longer visible at ground level, a ditch from which material was quarried during the construction of the monument surrounds the mound and survives as a buried feature. Partial excavation in the early 1980s showed the ditch to be c.2m wide and also produced evidence for a central turf stack which formed the base of the barrow mound.

The monument is an outlier to a dispersed barrow cemetery located in and around Holden's Firs.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

The Holden's Firs barrow is important because, despite partial excavation, it has potential for the recovery of archaeological and environmental evidence, especially in the area of the ditch and from the old ground surface beneath the barrow mound. The significance of the site is considerably enhanced by its inclusion within a dispersed barrow cemetery. Such monuments give an indication of the intensity with which areas were settled during prehistory and provide evidence for the range of beliefs and nature of social organisation during the Bronze Age.

BOWL BARROW: In Stephen's Firs

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 12233

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SU64516465

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a bowl barrow set on high level ground between the River Kennet to the north and Foudry Brook to the south. The barrow mound is 28m in diameter and stands to a height of between 1.5m and 2m. Although no longer visible at ground level, a ditch from which material was quarried during the construction of the monument surrounds the mound. This has been in-filled over the years and survives as a buried feature c.3m wide. The monument is an outlier to a barrow cemetery located some 300m to the north west in Holden's Firs. The road surface immediately east of the barrow mound is excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath it is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

The Stephen's Firs barrow is important as it survives comparatively well and, despite disturbance to the barrow mound by forestation, has potential for the recovery of archaeological and environmental evidence, especially in the area of the ditch and from the old ground surface beneath the barrow mound. The significance of the site is considerably enhanced by its proximity to a linear barrow cemetery in Holden's Firs. Barrow cemeteries can give an indication of the intensity with which an area was settled during prehistory and provide evidence for the range of beliefs and nature of social

Village Design Statement

Summary

The following maps are included to show:

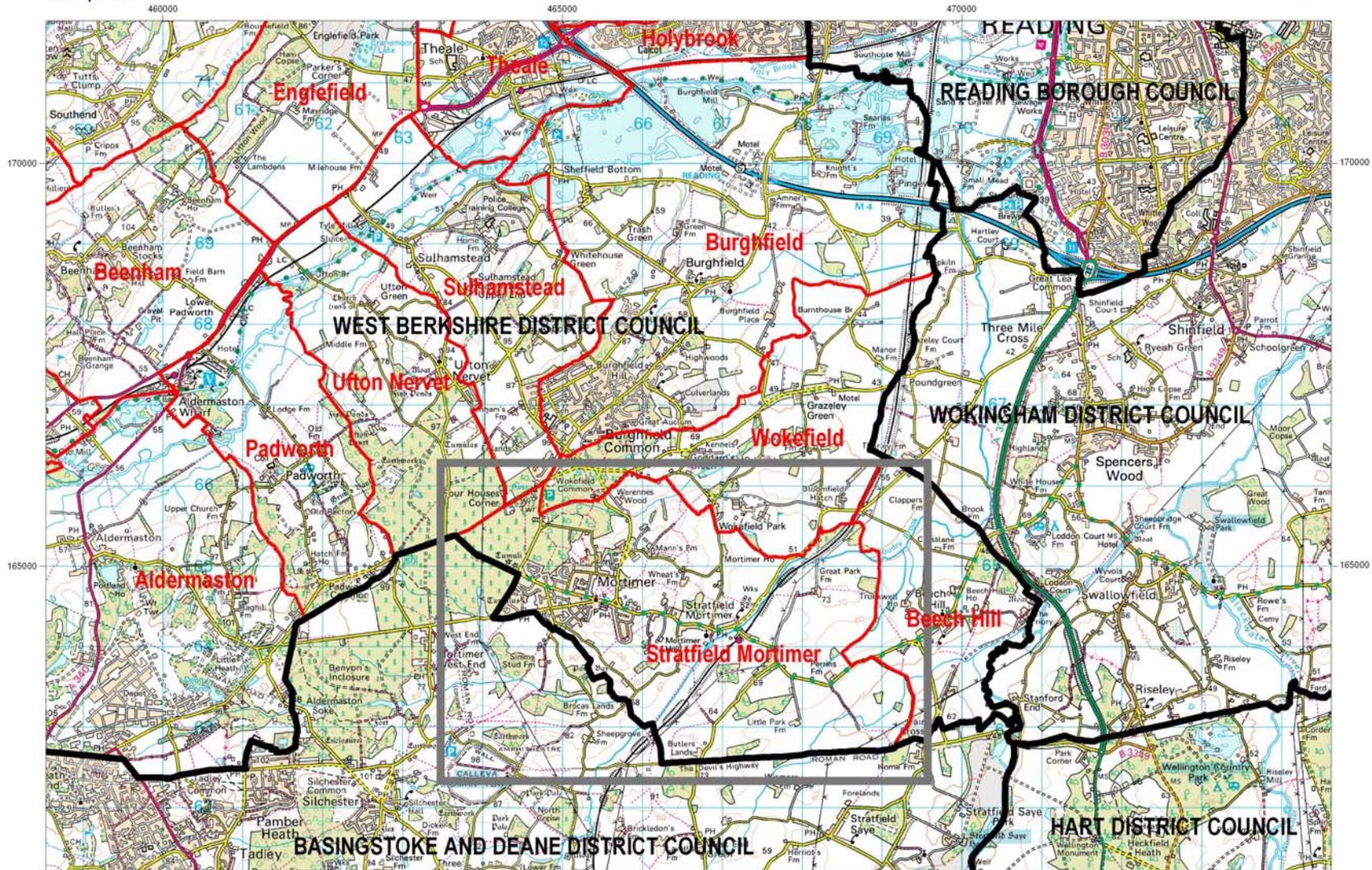
- 1) The location of the Parish Of Stratfield Mortimer in relation to the surrounding communities.
- 2) The Boundary of the Parish of Stratfield Mortimer.

Stratfield Mortimer Location Map

Stratfield Mortimer Parish

27Sep2007

1:60000



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Stratfield Mortimer Parish
27Sep2007

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