

Character Assessment for Brock Hill

Historical Context

The green belt village of Brock Hill is located on the old coaching route marked by several milestones in the area.




It is one of the traditional small Victorian Villages set to the North of the Parish.

The village was originally made up of workers' cottages.

The local beer house was the Jolly Gardener which is now the Stirrups Country House Hotel.



Locally Distinctive Contextual Features	
Age of Buildings	1850 - 1900
Type of Buildings	Small detached and symmetrical semi-detached Victorian villas. No bungalows or 1 bed residences
Main Uses	Residential with Garden Centre, Hotel and Recycling Facility
Building Heights	Two storeys
Prominent Building Materials	Red brick, white render. Black slate style roofs
Prominent Boundary Treatments	Frontage parking onto pavements and roads means boundary markers are all but lost
Open Space/Vegetation	Hotel set in 10 acres of gardens. Low hedges, few trees

Built And Landscape Character	
	<p>Brock Hill is a very small Victorian ribbon development set along the Bracknell Road (B3022). It is well defined with reasonably dense housing in small narrow plots, on both sides of the street. Just outside the area to the East is a mobile home park which is invisible from the road and to the North, Hand Post Farm which is listed.</p> <p>Private back gardens back onto agricultural land, the settlement is inward facing towards the road.</p>
	<p>Housing is surrounded by light commercial/ agricultural uses: a garden centre (Oak Tree Nursery), The Stirrups Country House Hotel and Planners' Farm Recycling Centre.</p> <p>To either end of the village lies open green belt countryside.</p> <p>There has been very little infill development but where this has occurred it is mostly sympathetic to its Victorian roots.</p>
	<p>The street scene is dominated by cars with many frontages being converted into parking spaces.</p> <p>There is also considerable on street parking effectively reducing this B road to a single lane.</p> <p>Mostly small, open and uniform frontages.</p> <p>Small wood panel fences and low walls.</p> <p>A few larger and set back frontages provide variety to the building line.</p>
	<p>Deep window sills. Varied sash windows. Some ground floor bays.</p> <p>Very uniform roof heights with mostly black slate style roofing on red brick and white render walls.</p> <p>Some red and brown flat roof tiles.</p> <p>Predominantly semi-detached with one central chimney stack supporting multiple cream flower pot style chimney pots.</p>



Locally Distinctive Positive Features

Houses back onto open farmland.
With a few exceptions the Victorian style has been maintained.

Negative Aspects

The Maidens Green Crossroads has been the site of many accidents, some fatal.
Traffic noise and volume of HGV passage through the village.
Prone to sporadic flooding.

Detractors

Narrow pavements and parked cars can cause safety problems for pedestrians.
HGV movements and delivery vehicles.

Landscape

Brock Hill is set on a flat plain surrounded by open farmland. It has a mainly open feel with few tall trees but some taller hedgerows.

Valuable Views Worthy of Protection

The Parkland Gardens of the Stirrups Country House Hotel

Visible Landmark Features

The Stirrups Country House Hotel and Parkland Gardens

Essential Individual Trees Providing Character Features



Entering Brock Hill from Maidens Green, as you proceed towards Oaktree Nursey, is a large specimen tree.

Design Guidance

Landscape and Vegetation

Rural gaps between Brock Hill and Winkfield Row and Maidens Green should be kept and reinforced with tree and hedgerow planting in keeping with the local landscape pattern.

Landscaping should form an integral element in layout design, making provision for new

planting and sensitive boundary treatments. Significant trees should be protected from development.

Trees, hedges and hedgerows play a particularly important role in screening and providing a distinct setting within the area and should be protected and maintained.

The dominance of the green landscape over the built form should be retained and inappropriate mass and height in new development should be avoided.

Design

Development should reflect the predominant form in terms of existing height, scale, bulk, spacing, form and appearance of buildings.

Traditional windows, doors and detailing should be retained where ever possible.

Development should avoid dominant, incongruous extensions and alterations to a building, both in relation to itself and neighbouring buildings and spaces and will not unreasonably harm the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties or persons using outdoor space.

New properties require driveways which reduce on street parking spaces.

Any new development will have to provide for its own parking as well as mitigating the lost road space caused by its entrance as well as proving parking for visitors.

Existing traffic calming measures will not be removed and where possible will be improved. New development will try to promote alternative main routes for existing traffic especially with regard to HGV movements.

When trying to integrate new development with older more established development, new parking areas should improve existing patterns of parking provision.

Other

Future development needs to be mindful of sporadic flooding and extra run off.

Listed Buildings

Hand Post Farm, Barn and Granary, Grade II stands just outside the character area.

The 18th century (c1770) milestone at the junction of Bracknell Road (B3022) and Church Lane (A330), opposite Handpost Farm, Inscribed on the north-west face: HYDE PARK CORNER / 26 / MILES / READING / 14. Grade II.

Local Heritage Assets

The Stirrups hotel (formerly the Jolly Gardener Public house) is on the site of former beer house that was demolished in 1930's/early 1940's). This is a relatively modern building but has good quality materials and design with landmark character and has been accepted for nomination by Bracknell Forest Council for Local Heritage Listing.