

Winterbourne Bassett Village Design Assessment

May 2022

Aerial view of Winterbourne Bassett



Content

A Brief History of Winterbourne Bassett

The Village of Winterbourne Bassett

Winterbourne Bassett Village Design Review

1. Sarsen Stone & Thatch
2. Brick & Slate
3. Brick & Thatch
4. Stone and Clay Tile
5. Brick & Clay Tile
6. Render & Clay Tile
7. Render & Slate
8. Timber & Clay Tile
9. Timber & Slate

Summary

Design Guide Outline

A Brief History of Winterbourne Bassett

The village was recorded in the Saxon Charters of 964 as 'Winterburnan', after the seasonal tributaries of the River Kennet with Winterbourne as the source of the head stream that flows into the river. Later, in 1220 the manor was recorded to be held by the English Baron Alan Basset who gives the village its name (Baggs et al 1983). The well-drained lands of the village have been used chiefly for arable farming.

The Village of Winterbourne Bassett is approximately 180m above AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) or Sea Level.

The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as West Melbury Chalk Formation and Zig Zag Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) of the Cretaceous Period.

The earliest map which shows the village in reasonable detail is the Andrews and Drury map of 1773.

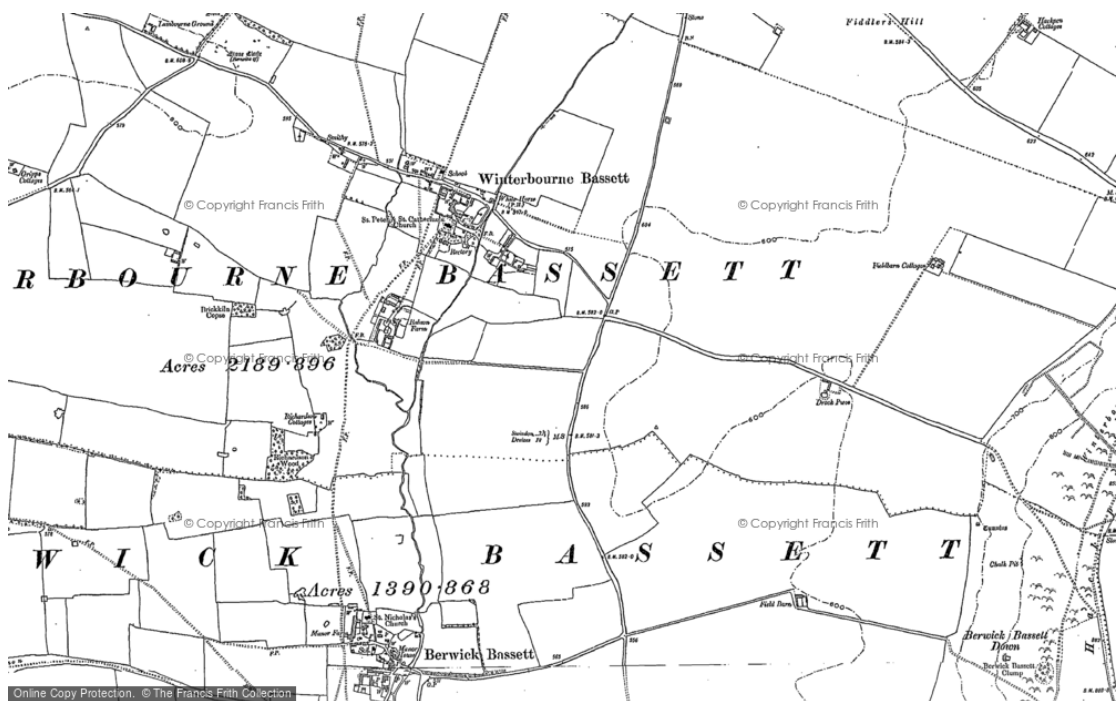
1773 Andrews and Drury Map



In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* described **Winterbourne Bassett** like this:

WINTERBOURNE-BASSETT, a parish in Marlborough district, Wilts; 5 miles SSE of Wootton-Bassett r. station. It has a post-office under Swindon. Acres, 2,210. Real property, £2,762. Pop., 249. Houses, 58. The property is all in one estate. Many barrows and Druidical stones are on the downs. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Salisbury. Value, £634. Patron, Magdalen College, Oxford. The church was restored in 1857.

1899 Map



The Village of Winterbourne Bassett

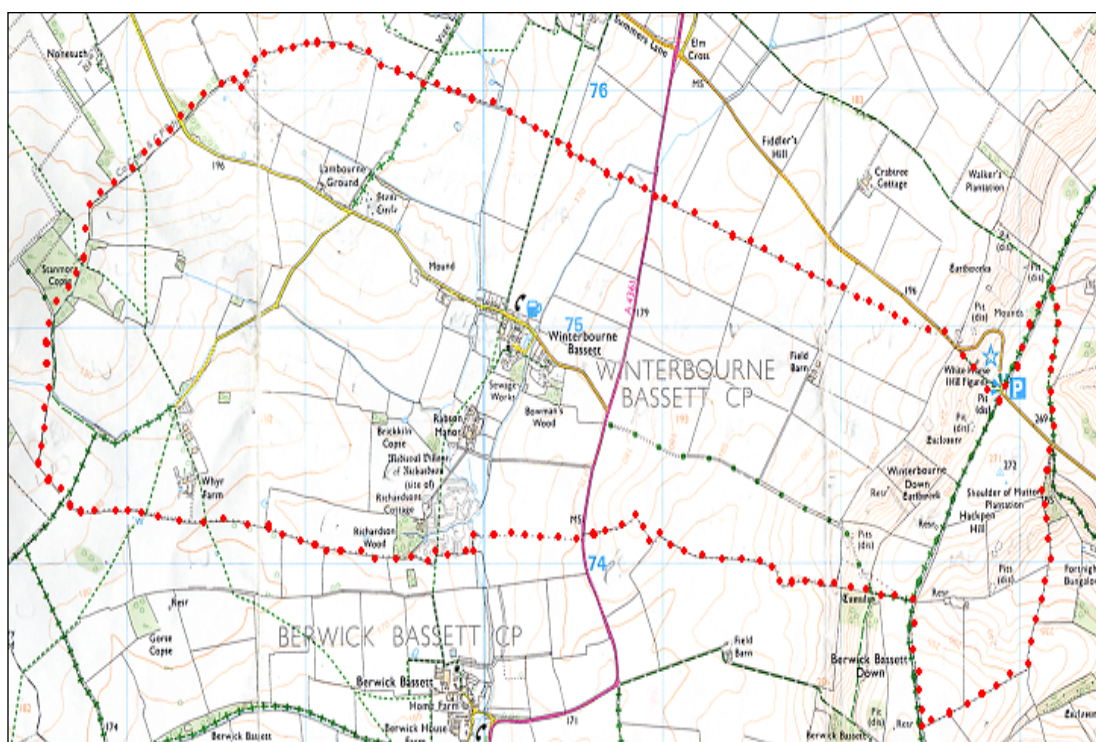
Winterbourne Bassett is a small village and civil parish in Wiltshire, England, about 6 miles (10 km) southwest of Swindon and 7 miles (11 km) northwest of Marlborough.

The village lies just west of the A4361 road between Swindon and Devizes, about 3 miles (5 km) north of Avebury. The minor road through the village continues west to Clyffe Pypard

In 1086, Domesday Book recorded 37 households at *Wintreburne*, and land held by Amesbury Abbey. The name Winterbourne refers to seasonal streams in the area, which meet to form the upper waters of the River Kennet. The Bassett suffix is from lords of the manor in the 12th and 13th centuries, there are now 54 residential properties in the main settlement area and 10 properties outside the village boundaries with an estimate of 167 residents (2021 E census)

Winterbourne Bassett and the larger adjacent parish of Broad Hinton elect a joint parish council called Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett. It falls within the area of the Wiltshire Council unitary authority, which is responsible for all significant local government functions.

Civil Parish Boundary



The village has a public house and restaurant called The Winterbourne, owned by a community benefit society, the village also has a C of E Church still in service and it had a Methodist church which became a private residence in the 1960s, it also holds three designated heritage assets.

The Winterbourne Public House



St Katherine and St Peter Church - Winterbourne Bassett



A Methodist chapel was built in 1904 and sold in 1960



The Village has three Designated Heritage Assets

- Winterbourne Bassett mound (Scheduled Monument; 1004749)
- Concentric stone circle (Scheduled Monument; 1005708)
- Nos. 19 & 20, Cliffe PyparRoad (Grade II listed building; 1033811)

Winterbourne Bassett Village Design Review

The village is located within an area designated as one of 'Outstanding Natural Beauty'.

The Village has very few original buildings remaining mainly due to the poor access to good quality materials, principally materials originally used for building dwellings were soft chalkstone, wood and straw for thatch, the only quality materials available in the past was locally made brick and sarsen stone and although sarsen stone was not ideal as a building material, it is no surprise the few remaining older properties have an element of sarsen and old fired brick within their build.

The village has no real identifiable Vernacular houses, by which we mean houses built in the main from locally available materials that reflect custom and tradition.

Visually the village is mainly formed from mainstream architectural fashions of different decades, the original settlements were primarily around the manor and church at the lower end of the village and then at the upper part of the village which is where the Smithy and properties more akin to that of accommodation for agricultural workers was found, this layout was not unusual from a settlement layout point of view in small villages.

The rest of the village infill was formed between 1950 & 1990, this can be clearly identifiable from the middle village architectural form.

Below are some examples of the listed architectural form throughout the village.

- Fig 1: Sarsen Stone & Thatch
- Fig 2: Old Fired Brick & Thatch
- Fig 3: Mix of Old Fired Brick & Sarsen & Thatch
- Fig 4: Modern fired Brick & Slate
- Fig 5: Stone and Clay Tile
- Fig 6: Modern Fired Brick & Clay Tile
- Fig 7: Render & Clay Tile
- Fig 8: Render & Slate
- Fig 9: Timber & Clay Tile
- Fig 10: Timber & Slate

Apart from around 15 new properties as infill and a new estate after the breakup of the manor farm, the village has not really change much since medieval times and the main reason that some villages did not expand as much as other villages was the issue of sourcing water, i.e. the lower the water table the harder it was to form wells that did not dry up during longer summers, the water table in Winterbourne Bassett varies from circa 10m BGL (Below Ground Level) to 55m BGL.

Another reason some villages did not progress was again water for irrigation and livestock, and although the village has two small water courses running through the village, they are only feeder courses meaning they are dry throughout summer when the water is needed the most.

The nature of the ground is clay over chalk this means the water will stand on the surface after heavy rainfall and will tend to clear via run off and evaporation as opposed to filtration and absorption, the water courses although run quite fast under heavy rain there has been no evidence of any flooding within the village.

Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10



Landscape

The village is well concealed by trees when viewed from the edge of the escarpment that is home to The Ridgeway national trail. It is surrounded by arable fields on all sides. Any future development should be sympathetic to maintaining these views within the AONB.

Wildlife

The parish is home to several species of animal including several types of deer, foxes, badgers, rabbits and hares as well as bats, red kites, hawks and owls nesting in the surrounding trees and barns.

The following farmland birds have been noted by Defra in our Parish:

Lapwings, Corn Buntings, Grey Partridge, Pheasant, Tree Sparrow, Yellow Wagtail. Wood pigeons also are found in large numbers, feeding on the arable crops during the day. There is also a large rookery near the Old Rectory Cottage.

Summary

It is considered that the essential historical rural character of Winterbourne Bassett village has hardly changed from medieval times apart from some minor expansion in the second half of the 20th century, however there are 3 less properties today than at the peak of the village property numbers and there are over 100 less residents now than at the village peak population numbers.

A crucial element in maintaining a thriving and prosperous rural village is by careful management of continued expansion and allowing affordable housing via housing associations or CLT's (Community Land Trusts) for following generations to remain in the villages they were born, this would in turn create more employment in rural areas along with supporting local businesses and schools.

Assuming that future development may be required to meet national housing demands, the community's view as to whether this should be contained within or outside the existing Boundary will be necessary. If the view is to be within the boundary, this will probably have to rely on individual ownerships choosing to develop as infill or freeing up local landowner's land for housing within the existing village boundaries.

However, the local community should adopt a forward-thinking approach to new dwellings and controlled expansion is not a bad thing, villages suffer when there is an all too often nimbyism mentality, a more positive approach would encourage better quality building and progressive thinking as a community, this in turn would allow younger families the luxury of raising their families in areas of their own origin.

Fig 11: Village Boundary to the West



Fig 12: Village Boundary to the East



Design Guide Outline

It is notoriously difficult to try and put together a design guide as to the appropriate design parameters for development. Good design is very subjective with at times totally different views being held for the same solution, however all new buildings should be representative of the era in which they are built.

The phraseology of providing a design in keeping with the location/site and maintaining the scale and proportion of the surrounding properties is a common baseline. This allows a degree of interpretation by all parties and certainly gives a talented architect/designer scope to bring imaginative ideas rather than be restricted by prescriptive directives.

As described earlier, Winterbourne Bassett has adopted a range of different styles and materials. Different quality assessments would then be undertaken depending on the location of the proposed development.

However, the following points could be applicable to all areas:

- a) All new dwellings should primarily have low carbon sources of energy.
- b) Dwellings to be no higher than surrounding properties.
- c) Properties should respond to the local identity and character, but still be representative to the era of building.
- d) Landscape frontages to the access road of the property should be maintained and/or reinforced.
- e) Off street parking for 2 cars to be provided per household.

If further development outside the village boundary is considered appropriate by the community, then further guidance would be required.

The Guide to Rural Housing can be found via this link.
[parish-councillors-guide-to-rural-affordable-housing.pdf](#)
([ruralhousingalliance.net](#))

The National Design Guide which can be downloaded for free from the gov.uk website gives a good explanation of the issues involved
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>).

An overhaul of the planning system should take place to allow building control to become the primary path to new dwellings, this would ensure higher building standards and low carbon sources of energy being enforced and achieved.