



**Bentley**  
PARISH COUNCIL

# **Bentley Village Character Assessment**

**Report by Bentley Parish  
Neighbourhood Plan Group**

**June 2023**

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## Introduction

The Bentley Village Character Assessment is a foundation document that provides evidence for policies included in the Bentley Parish Neighbourhood Plan. It describes specific aspects of both the built environment and the landscape surrounding the village.

The document describes the historic development of Bentley, the nature of the built environment within distinctive areas of the village, the overall topography of the village and the character of the natural landscape. Whilst providing a description of the built environment, it also assesses building in each character area, either individually or collectively. Thus, making an attempt to identify what enhances the built character of Bentley.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank residents who have contributed information about their own properties. Their support has been invaluable in writing this report.

## Historic development of Bentley

The history of Bentley can be traced back to Roman times (43 - 410AD) with the discovery of a Roman burial site near Bury Court. In the Anglo-Saxon period (410 - 1066AD) the village is mentioned in various charters as having ten hides of land and, in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, a period of tenure was granted to the Bishops of Winchester which lasted until the mid-1800s. Bentley is mentioned as an agricultural settlement in the Domesday Book (1086), with reference to cropping of rye, oats, and pease, with hay meadows and orchards supporting cattle, pigs and chickens. Hops, an important crop in the area, were first planted in the 1600s.

The settlement of Bentley evolved in two parts; one on the higher ground to the north, around the 12<sup>th</sup> Century church of St Mary's, which was part of the Bury Court estate and the main settlement, which developed on flatter ground above the River Wey along the coaching route linking London to Winchester, known today as the Main Road. The land between the two, made up of fields and pockets of woodland has remained remarkably intact (ref: Neighbourhood Character Study for EHDC, Dec 2018) preserving a rural edge to the northern side of the main settlement.

## Settlement Pattern

The parish of Bentley lies in the valley of the River Wey North, a chalk stream, rising to the west in the Alton area and flowing east into Surrey, before later joining the River Wey South and eventually flowing into the Thames.

The main village of Bentley sits above the river flood plain on a terrace to the north. The river defines the southern boundary of the parish. The terrace is approximately 15m above the flood plain. However, being relatively flat: it falls by 5m from west to east across the village, the terrace itself is very poorly drained. As well as the topography not being helpful to drainage it is exacerbated by the local geology; impermeable Gault Clay outcrops and underlies much of the village.

To the north of the village the Gault Clay gives way to more fertile and better draining Lower Greensand and eventually Chalk. These provide more undulating arable farmland in contrast to the grazing pasture on the clay in the valley below the village. The relatively open agricultural landscape provides expansive views along the valley and up to the higher ground to the north and across the valley to the south. The influence of the local topography and

geology have strongly influenced the settlement pattern of both the village and the parish. This pattern is still recognisable today.

The village has retained its linear character along the Main Road. Much of the historical development has been to the north side of the road on the better drained, gently rising ground as opposed to the south side where dew ponds and standing water are a regular feature in winter. This pattern of development, for the most part, has continued through to the present day. Although where drainage on the south side of Main Road is better, there has been some development from early times, mainly towards the eastern end of the village. The improved drainage to the east is in part explained by several geologically recent river gravel beds that occur along the terrace.

The other notable feature of the village settlement pattern is that building has generally remained within the outcropping Gault Clay. The more fertile Lower Greensand tends not to have been built on. Although there are some exceptions, most notably Jenkyn Place and the dwellings adjacent to St Mary's Church, such as Well Cottage and John O'Pease Cottage. The pattern around the church is more typical of earlier open, scattered farms across the parish.

The pattern of building from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century along the Main Road remained largely unchanged up until the end of the Second World War. However, during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and up to the present day development has included, denser, more suburban housing on cul-de-sacs (ref: Neighbourhood Character Study for EHDC, Dec 2018). The first of these, built in the late 1940's was Babs Field, off Hole Lane, to the north of the village centre. This development of 54 dwellings is broadly parallel to Main Road.

During the 1960's and 70's there was sporadic building: Four houses were built in School Lane; Oakway, off Hole Lane, was built; and some infill and replacement building occurred along the Main Road, for example, several small cottages opposite the Old Rectory were demolished and replaced with more modern dwellings.

However, it was not until the early 1980's that any further major projects began. From 1980 to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century a number of new roads were added within the village. All of these developments are situated north of the village centre and included: Eggars Field, built in two phases, with 49 dwellings in total; Broadlands Close, 24 dwellings; Bonners Field, 38 dwellings; and Longcroft, a spur from Babs Field, that included 20 new dwellings after 11 older dwellings were demolished. There were several other, smaller infill developments along the Main Road, this included several new houses between older properties in Rectory Lane, south of the Main Road, including the conversion of a stable block to residential. Although during this period there has been an expansion of the village to the north, the separation with the settlement around the church has remained, such that its identity is still clear.

At the beginning of the 1990's the by-pass that now skirts the village to the south was built. This relieved much of the traffic that had gradually built up along the Main Road (old A31) through the 1970's and 80's. Although benefitting the village, the project has not been an unqualified success: The siting and omission of slip roads has meant that traffic wishing to join the A31 at Bentley, particularly coming from the south, must travel through the village first. This has placed additional pressure on the crossroads in the village and the School Lane junction with the Main Road. This could have been avoided with more careful planning. The other issue that has arisen, common with by-pass projects, are the pockets of agricultural land that are no longer viable for farming.

After the Millenium, building continued in the village with more infill developments along the Main Road. However, there were several larger developments, the most significant being Somerset Field north of the Main Road and to the west of Hole Lane. This estate added 37

houses to the village. Two other notable developments were a rural exception site, Doctor's Field, of 9 dwellings and a backland development adjacent to the Bentley Industrial Estate, south of the Main Road which included 8 dwellings, Trimmings Close. At the western end of the village the farm buildings attached to Crocks Farm, north of the Main Road, were redeveloped into 9 dwellings: Holmes Field Court.

Apart from residential building the other significant feature of the village is the commercial area. This is sited in the centre of the village with retail, an industrial estate and business estate. Retail space includes the village grocery store and post office, and up until recently, a takeaway and a hairdresser, although these have now closed allowing the extension of the grocery store. The village pub, the Star, is also situated in the centre of the village. The industrial estate south of Main Road was formally a filling station and haulage yard, it now comprises nine modern industrial units, whilst the business estate, north of Main Road, includes office units in two buildings: one a former pub, the Red Lion, and several vehicle maintenance garages.

## Village Character Areas Overview

The village of Bentley has been divided into a series of Village Character Areas, such that each area has a distinctive character with a recognisable pattern of building and features that occur consistently and so generate a sense of place. These features include layout, massing, scale, building materials and architectural style. Building design in each character area is described in the context of sixteen features listed below.

These sixteen features allow an objective and consistent description to be performed, such that the distinctive features of a character area can be both qualified and, to some extent, quantified. In some instances, due to variability in the built design, it is not possible to practically classify some features. In such cases these features have been omitted.

The sixteen features are as follows:

1. Uniformity of design.
2. Conservation Area.
3. Road pattern
4. Period or age
5. Structure
6. Plot size
7. Dwelling density
8. Building line
9. Property gap
10. Roof form
11. Materials
12. Fenestration
13. Chimneys
14. Parking and garaging
15. Boundaries
16. Street lighting

Six Village Character Areas have been identified. These are areas which have a distinct character and are recognisable and perceptibly different to neighbouring areas.

The six areas in the village of Bentley are:

1. Historic Village
2. School Lane and Hole Lane
3. St Mary's Church
4. Post War development
5. Post 1970's development
6. Somerset Field

## Village Character Areas

### 1. Historic Village

The historic village of Bentley lays along the route of the old A31, (the current A31 designation at Bentley belongs to the by-pass) or Main Road. Although the Main Road is a relatively straight feature today, there is evidence, from the locations and orientations of the oldest dwellings in the village, that its route may have been more sinuous in earlier centuries. There are some small tracks and lanes to dwellings leading off the Main Road.

Building has tended to be on the north side of the Main Road in response to drainage: the historic village sits on a relatively flat terrace above the River Wey to the south.



Fig 1. View west over Bentley along Main Road from Carters Meadow. Most dwellings lay to the north (right) of the Main Road

The topography and geological setting appear to have dominated the settlement pattern of the historic village and this very much defines the character of Bentley: When arriving in the village from the south, the view is of open pastures backed by a row of houses from a mixture of periods on the north side of Main Road. It is a most striking feature of Bentley.

Much of the historic village falls within the Conservation Area; from the western end at Crocks Farm Cottages and Homewood Cottages to the village pond and Carters Meadow at the eastern end, with the exception of the Industrial Estate south of Main Road. There are 23 Grade 2 Listed buildings within the Conservation Area. There is no formal street lighting along the Main Road through the village.

To assess the built design of the historic village it is probably best to adopt a layered approach and consider the built characteristics in various periods, starting with the oldest properties through to the most recent. To this end the historic village will be described as follows:

- 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Century
- Georgian and Victorian
- Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Post Second World War
- Post Millennium

### ***14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Century***

The dwellings of this period that have survived are almost exclusively small, many timber framed, cottages with local red brick (local red brick was produced until quite recently at the Selbourne Brick Works) walls and panels. These are distributed along the Main Road with; Crock's Farm Cottages at the western end; at the centre of the village are Somerset Cottages, The Cage and Old Church Cottage; and Marelands Cottage towards the east. The distribution would appear to reflect their agricultural heritage as small farms or farm labours' dwellings, either in or on the outskirts of the early village. Roofs are predominantly red clay tiles, although there are some examples of slate roofs. Since slate is not a local material it is likely that these are not original and have been imported when constructing later extensions or alterations. All buildings exhibit red brick chimneys, though these are modest in design.



Fig 2. Crocks Farm Cottages

Generally, these buildings have upper floors. Upper floor windows are included below the eaves, although in some cases, Somerset Cottages and Marelands Cottage are examples, they do have dormer windows, however, these are likely to be later additions.

Crocks Farm Cottages are three 17<sup>th</sup> Century exposed timber framed cottages. The cottages are Grade 2 Listed and are sited on the south side of the Main Road.

The building line to the current road is variable and perhaps reflects changes in the route of the Main Road during this period. In particular, the orientation of Marelands Cottage, another Grade 2 Listed building south of the Main Road, is rotated some 20 degrees to the current road suggesting that historically the route past its door may have been different.



Fig 3. Marelands Cottage



Fig 4. Somerset Cottages

Towards the centre of the village sit Grade 2 Listed Somerset Cottages. Number 1 is a cruck framed design and includes a massive, inserted chimney breast. It is dated around 1311 and is probably the oldest surviving dwelling in the village and probably the earliest domestic cruck building in the county (ref. Bentley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan, EHDC, August 2014).

Today the plot sizes of these older dwellings are variable, although most sit in comfortable gardens. The terrace of cottages at The Cage are more constrained.

All properties of this period have off street parking with some having more recent garaging.

### **Georgian and Victorian**

This period is represented by many more properties in the historic village. Properties range in size from small terraced and detached cottages to much larger houses. There are some buildings with origins earlier than this period, but with modifications and extensions that date from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century and these have been included in this section. For instance, Greystones which was originally a barn attached to Tanners before being converted to residential. There are several Georgian dwellings known to be built on the site of older cottages, Ash Cottage and Cedar Cottage are both examples.



Fig 5. Holmwood Cottages

On the northern side of Main Road, at the western edge of the village sits an attractive late Victorian terrace of cottages dating from 1880, Holmwood Cottages. Again, built from local red brick and roofed with red clay tiles. The roof ridge runs along the axis of the terrace with symmetrical gables to the front. The properties have ample garden to the front with a single driveway at the western end to parking and garaging at the rear. The casement windows are set off by stone lintels. There are six prominent chimney stacks arranged along the ridge emphasizing the symmetry of the building.



Fig 6. Cocks Farmhouse

At the western end of the village the most prominent property is the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Cocks Farmhouse on the north side of Main Road, a Georgian red brick farmhouse. The front façade is symmetrical with a central ground floor Doric porch. The red clay tiled roof has gable ends to each side and chimneys buttressed against the centres of the end walls. The property sits behind a red brick wall backed by hedging. The entrance to the property is through a drive to the east. Behind the front façade the property extends to farm buildings and garaging.

The Old Forge is an attractive two storey dwelling with red brick and tile hung elevations and with both slate and plain clay tiled roofs. Windows are timber and leaded casements. There is adequate parking and garaging behind. The property sits squarely next to the footpath with a boundary hedge which continues eastwards and also provides the boundary for its neighbour, Ash Cottage.



Fig 7. The Old Forge

As previously mentioned, Ash Cottage is an example of a classical Georgian country house, built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, over the site of an older dwelling dating back to 1480. It is Grade 2 Listed. The front façade is composed of three bays and is symmetrical about a central front door with Georgian sash windows either side on the ground and upper floor. The roof is hipped with chimneys on either side. There are extensions to the rear. The house elevations are painted brick and the roof is red clay tile. The house is situated at a slight angle to the main road as is the adjacent Ash Cottage Barn. The build line is approximately 10m with the aforementioned hedge at the boundary. Ash Cottage Barn is an interesting single storey timber frame cottage, with diamond leaded windows and herringbone red brick panels. It was originally built as a barn from the remains of the earlier 15<sup>th</sup> Century cottage at the same time as the Georgian Ash Cottage was built. The bay windows are a later addition dating from when the building was briefly used as an antiques shop in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



Fig 8. Ash Cottage Barn

Further east Elm Cottage is a rambling and extended L shaped cottage. The property was originally two cottages now knocked into one dwelling. It presents a gable end to the Main Road, an unusual ridge orientation for properties in the area. The tile hung side elevation is set hard up against the pavement edge. The roof is a mix of slate and plain clay tile with brick elevations.



Fig 9. Elm Cottage



Fig 10. The Oast House and The Kilns beyond

Along a small lane to Bentley Garden (Grove's) Farm near to Elm Cottage are two oast houses, which represent part of the agricultural heritage of Bentley as a hop growing area. The two dwellings, although both have similar origins, they are of different styles. The Oast House includes two circular towers with conical red clay tile roofs and is the older of the buildings. Beyond it is The Kilns, built in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It has twin square red brick towers and square slate roofs. The Oast House has

been modified into its current form but it is not clear whether both circular towers were, in fact, ever used for beer production.

Moving east towards the centre of the village all dwellings remain on the north side of Main Road. Staceys is a late Victorian gable fronted property in red brick with a tile hung first floor and red clay tile roof. The gables display a mock Tudor timber framework and to the side a square concave cupola, which appears to be a later addition to the original gable end. The building includes ornate rectangular chimney stacks. Staceys is bounded by a red brick wall, a common feature of properties along this part of Main Road. The building is set back some 20m from the bounding wall and has ample parking and garaging to the rear and in front. Although an attractive period building it does have a suburban air. The building today is divided into three residencies: Staceys Upper, Lower and Mews Whilst to the west, on the same site is Stacey's Cottage.



Fig 11. Staceys

To the east of Staceys are Greystones and Tanners, both with farm origins and both Grade 2 Listed. Greystones is a converted barn attached to Tanners, which was itself a malt house. Both have been extended and modified over the years. The timber framed Tanners dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. It presents Flemish Bond brickwork with the front façade displaying Georgian sash windows on the ground and upper floors and hipped dormer windows on the eastern end of the building where the roof pitch is steeper. The hipped dormers are echoed in Greystones. The late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Greystones has Malmstone elevations. Windows are all casements, some are leaded. Greystones includes a striking recessed semi-circular front entrance. Both properties are set back from the boundary wall by some 40m. The boundary wall itself is made from local limestone with red brick piers and capping in front of Tanners and flint capping in front of Greystones.



Fig 12. Greystones



Fig 13. Tanners



Fig 14. Ganwells Cottage

Moving east, Ganwells and Ganwells Cottage are two further Georgian dwellings. Ganwells, a Grade 2 Listed building, is mainly 18<sup>th</sup> Century with Regency detailing and mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century roughcast rendered exterior. There is internal evidence of much older origins; old tie beams suggest pre 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Ganwells exhibits a parapet front façade. Originally five bays, with sash windows on both ground and the upper floors, symmetrically arranged about a central front door. At the eastern end is an extension with a ground floor square bay window. The property is painted brick with a red clay tile roof and prominent chimneys. Ganwells Cottage is a red brick structure with a half hipped red clay tile roof. The front façade is symmetrical around a central front door with casement windows on both sides. There is an extension to the west, almost the same size as the original property in a similar style, although the eaves are lower and the upper floor has two dormers to the front. Both properties are bounded by a tall red brick wall. The dwellings are set back some 30m from the boundary.



Fig 15. Ganwells



Fig 16. Cedar Cottage

To the east of these properties is Cedar Cottage, also Grade 2 Listed, a classical Georgian two storey house, with a symmetrical three bay front façade and sash windows. The low-pitched hipped roof is slate with chimney stacks at either end. The building extends to the rear and the main entrance to the property is through a porticoed front door to the side of the building. There is garaging to the rear of the main house. The building is bounded to the road by a red brick wall backed with beech and holly hedging, respectively, on either side of the main entrance to the drive.



Fig 17. Holly Cottage

Beyond Cedar Cottage stands a terrace of two storey Victorian cottages, The Pollards. The first, lying in line with Cedar Cottage some 15m from the boundary to the road, is Holly Cottage. This dwelling is more ornate than the rest of the terrace with bowed window lintels and keystones in a symmetrical front façade. The property includes chimneys to either end of the shallow pitched slate roof. The adjoining cottages, comprising nine dwellings, are subservient to Holly Cottage with a slightly lower ridge line and plainer windows. The roofs of all dwellings are slate with prominent red brick chimneys. Gardens are to the front of the cottages with sheds, garaging and parking to the rear accessed through a drive between two of the cottages.

Immediately east of the Pollards there is a second terrace of five cottages: Southview Cottages. These attractive cottages are smaller and set closer to the Main Road. However, a recent renovation has introduced some disproportionately tall dormer windows to one of the cottages. The boundary for the Pollards and Southview Cottages is mainly low red brick walls with some picket fences.

Southview cottages are the last residential buildings to the west of Bentley Crossroads. East of the crossroads marks the start of the village centre. The first house, Linden Cottage, is adjacent to the crossroads. It is a white painted brick Georgian two storey house, with red clay tile hipped roofs and a prominent chimney stack. The property has a semi-permanent red brick wall boundary topped with a tall conifer hedge.



Fig 18. Linden Cottage viewed from Hole Lane



Fig 19. Clive Cottage

Further along the road is a small Georgian cottage, Clive Cottage, with a symmetrical front façade of two canted ground floor bay sash windows, separated by a central front door. The upper floor has two further sashes above the bays. The building is white painted brick with red clay tile roof and chimneys at either end of the central ridge. The build line is

just over two meters with a low red brick wall boundary and a parking space to the east of the cottage.

Next door is Quinta Cottage, a larger property set back 5m from the open boundary to the road. The original cottage includes three bays on the front façade, similar to the neighbouring Clive Cottage. However, the ground floor and upper window, whilst being sashes have Gothic arched lintels, as does the central door frame. The central part of the building is finished with a stucco render and brick dentil eaves. The building has two later subservient, symmetrical wings in red brick, with small paned casement windows and similar eaves design. The roofs are red clay tiles with prominent chimneys at either end of the main ridge. The ridges have a sawtooth crest and ceramic finials.



Fig 20. Quinta Cottage

Bentley Lodge, the nursing home in the centre of the village, is a remnant of the substantial Elm House with its associated grounds, outbuildings and stables that once occupied the site. The house has been substantially altered and extended in recent years. The building is white painted brick with red clay tiled roofs. The roofs are both hipped and include a front facing gable. Windows are mainly casement.



Fig 21. Bentley Lodge, formerly Elm House

The Coach House and Stables beyond Bentley Lodge are part of the original Elm House estate. Now converted into residential the building shares the original brick boundary wall with Bentley Hall. The most striking feature of the



Fig 22. The Coach House and Stables

building are the half moon windows indicative of its utilitarian past. The building sits next to the pavement with a plain gable end facing the Main Road and is constructed in red brick with a slate roof.

East of the Coach House is a terrace of three Grade 2 Listed Georgian dwellings, Limehouse Cottages. It becomes clear on closer inspection that the first two cottages were originally a single house, with a front façade not unlike the nearby Clive Cottage, though plainer, with a slightly subservient extension on the eastern end. The cottages have painted stucco walls, with sash windows; the ground floor casement window in the extension is likely a replacement. The building has a red clay tiled roof with chimneys at either end of the ridge of the original house, the western chimney being larger with a more ornate crown.



Fig 23. Limehouse Cottages



Fig 24. The Star public house

The Star public house is a Victorian house with a three bay front façade with chimneys at either end of the ridge. The building appears to have had several alterations during its history, the most obvious of which is the extended ground floor bay on the eastern side of the front porch. The windows have arched lintels with accentuated keystones. The quoins are also accentuated. On the ground floor the front façade includes a Venetian sash window: This is a triple window design with two outside windows and a central box sash. It is similar to the sashes in the Victorian extension to the Old Rectory across the Main Road. The building has painted stucco walls and a slate roof with prominent chimney stacks with stepped crowns at either end of the ridge. At the eastern end of the building is a ground floor extension with red clay tiled roof and a parapet front.

The Star extension abuts the adjacent Grade 2 Listed Star Cottage with a complex overlapping roof. However, the front façade of the cottage exhibits a

familiar symmetry with single Georgian sash windows on the ground and upper floors, either side of a central front door. The property is built in red brick with a red clay tile roof, although there are several courses of slate at the eaves, and prominent red brick chimneys at either end of the ridge. The cottage has a small front garden, some 6 or 7m deep, with a red brick boundary wall and white picket gate. The front façade is a mixture of three Victorian sashes on the upper floor



Fig 25. Star Cottage

and smaller paned casement windows on the ground floor.

Further east, still on the north side of Main Road, is Red Lion House, a former pub now used as offices. The building is Grade 2 Listed and features a red clay tile roof with tile hung gable ends on the front pitch and a red brick chimney on the ridge at the eastern end. The roof is cross gabled with three gables extending behind. The walls are cream painted stucco. Whilst there is some symmetry to the front façade the porticoed front door is offset to the east and the upstairs central sash is also offset. There is a concreted frontage to the building. The build line is 4m.



Fig 26. Red Lion House, a former public house

Before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century travelling from the west along Main Road building has been entirely on the north side of the road. The only exception being the Crooks Farm Cottages on the western edge of the village. However, beyond Red Lion House there are several pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century dwellings south of the road. This suggests that, whilst the land remains relatively flat, drainage is better; present day footings excavations indicate that geologically recent river terraces of poorly sorted flints occur sporadically on the south side of the road.



Fig 27. The Old Rectory

The first of these pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century dwellings south of the road is The Old Rectory, on the eastern corner of Rectory Lane. The original property was built in 1780 as a classical two bay Georgian property facing south towards the River Wey; the kitchen was to the cooler north side of the house facing the Main Road. The original house featured a low angled slate hipped roof with chimneys at either end. Walls on the south façade are lime rendered and scribed, painted off-white, the other facades are more utilitarian; painted red brick. The entrance to the property is through a closed porch on

the western side of the building. The property was extended in the Victorian period, between 1840 and 1870. Although the Georgian hipped roofs were maintained, later windows were larger paned Victorian sashes, several of these are in the Venetian style, similar to those in the Star public house, as previously mentioned. On the northern side of the property, adjacent to Main Road, there is a coach house built of red brick with a clay tiled half hipped roof and Victorian slate roofed sheds. The boundary to the road beyond the sheds is a 2m high iron stone wall with red brick capping which runs the length of the garden.

To the north, set back from Main Road, and now what is a footpath to School Lane, is the Grade 2 Listed Grafton Cottage. This is another classical Georgian House with hipped red clay tiled roofs. The front façade has Georgian sashes with a central Doric porch front door and prominent chimneys.

Also built on the south side of Main Road is Pond Cottage, appropriately opposite the pond. It is a comfortably proportioned property in a rural, farmhouse style, with a half hipped tiled roof and a front facing gable end on the eastern side of the building. The walls are white painted stucco with small paned casement windows. Unusually the property has garaging integrated into the western half of the dwelling, which adds to the rural style. The build line is some 30m from the road.



Fig 28. Grafton Cottage

Beyond Pond Cottage and the Recreation Ground on the south side of Main Road is Bay Tree Cottage. The two bay, painted brick front façade Georgian sash windows on ground and upper floor with a parapet coping.

Behind the parapet is a red clay tiled pitched roof with prominent chimney breasts and stacks at either end of the front ridge. The rear the dwelling has a cross gabled extension. The western gable end has a tile hung upper floor. The building is set back 4m from the boundary red brick wall. There is parking and garaging to the west of the property.



Fig 29. Bay Tree Cottage



Fig 30. Tavistock Cottage

The garden of Bay Tree Cottage extends to the east of the dwelling and beyond the boundary is Tavistock Cottage, which is another classical Georgian dwelling. The front of the building, set back a similar distance from the road as Bay Tree Cottage, has a similar symmetrical frontage; Georgian sashes on ground and upper floors, although Tavistock Cottage has the classical low pitched slate hipped roof. The property originally had a central front door, but

this has been bricked up and the front door moved to the eastern side of the property, integrated into an extension to the side of the original structure. The extension follows the hipped roof style. There is separate garaging to the east behind the drive with a similar slate pitched roof. The walls are scribed lime mortar in style and painted off white. Chimneys are again at either end of the original hipped roof. The boundary is a black Saxon railing fence.

Leaving the village towards Farnham there are several dispersed cottages on the north side of the road set some distance back, including Chestnut Cottage, Greenfield Cottages, a terrace of cross gabled red brick, red tiled dwellings, and on the south of the road is a terrace of two white painted stucco gabled ended cottages, Rose Cottage and Avenue Cottage. For both these, and Greenfield Cottages, there is off road parking but no garaging.

The final two properties at the eastern end of the village are Welches to the north of the Main Road and, accessed by a long drive, now south of the Bentley by-pass is Marelands, which is Grade 2 Listed. These are both fine country houses in the Georgian style.



Fig 31. Welches



Fig 32. Marelands

### ***Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, up to the Second World War there appears to have been little residential building. A notable exception is at the western end of the village on the Pax Hill Drive where there are three Arts and Crafts style houses built in 1907. They are black timber framed with herringbone red brick panels. Windows are leaded casements. The roofs are red clay tiled, cross gabled, with the upper floor within the roof space. Some of the chimneys are quite ornate; The Lodge has four interlocking diamond stacks. The build line is approximately 8m from the Drive and there is off road parking and garaging.



Fig 33. Pax Hill Drive

Prominently located at the village crossroads, and characterising the entrance to the village from the south, stands the Bentley War Memorial Hall. It was built in 1923 on a site presented by Thomas Eggar in memory of the men who died in the 1914–18 War; the centrally mounted memorial plaque was extended to commemorate the fallen of Bentley in the 1939-45 war.

The front façade is symmetrical presenting a red brick elevation on the ground floor with tile hung upper floor and clay tiled roof with central cupola.



Fig 34. Bentley War Memorial Hall

### **Post Second World War**

From 1945 through to the Millennium, there were a number of additions to the historic village. The building was in-fill and maintained the linear style, which characterises the historic village. Much of this building was east of the crossroads in the centre of the village.

Three houses were built along the Main Road during the 70's, north of the Old Rectory; Trimmings, Tices and Kittyshawe. These replaced several existing cottages which were demolished. They each have a suburban style with a mix of hipped and gabled roofs and dormers. They were built in red brick matching the traditional. Roofs, however, use a brown tile rather than the traditional red. Windows are small pane casements. There is off street parking on front drives, but two of the dwellings converted their integrated garages into addition living space. The build line is between 8 and 12m across the three dwellings.

On the south side of the road, two houses were built in the 70's between the Old Rectory and Pond Cottage. Both attempted to adopt a Georgian style with hipped roofs and symmetrical front facades. However, the roofs used heavy cement tiles rather than slate compromising the Georgian look. Although one of these houses, Old Rectory Cottage, has recently been extended and renovated, replacing the original roof with a more traditional slate roof. Neither dwelling has a chimney. The build line is 30m. and both have garaging in front of the properties. They have limited rear gardens, similar in scale to the adjacent Pond Cottage.

Opposite the School Lane junction on the south side of Main Road, three further houses were built during the 90's. These replaced two small single storey cottages, which were damaged by fire. The first of the houses is a rather austere brown brick building, The Haven, with dark brown casement windows and grey tiled gable ended roof with dormers to upper floor windows. Garaging is to the rear of the property. The other two are built as a detached pair with deep eaves to the front and dormer windows to the upper floor. They are built in similar brown brick with brown half hipped tiles roofs with a single chimney in each. Garaging is integrated into the dwelling, however, with one of them the garaging has been converted into living space and a separate barn style garage has been added in the front drive. The build line of the three dwellings is around 30m and maintains the scale of older cottages in the area. Again the rear garden is limited.

Also in the late 1990's Blackthorn and Rosehip Cottages; a semi-detached development was built on the north side of Main Road infilling open land between Crocks Farm Cottage and the Old Forge. The building features a large front facing gable at the western end adjoining a hipped roof with shed dormer windows to the upper floor. The building is tile hung on the upper floor including the gable, tiles are red, with red/brown brick work on the ground floor and roofed with clay tiles. The front doors have shed porticos



Fig 35. Blackthorn and Rosehip Cottages

and there are chimneys at either end with external chimney stacks. Windows are insets of three narrow casements. The build line is approximately 5m and there is limited garden to the rear. There is no garaging but off-road parking is provided to the eastern side of the dwellings. The building presents a rural air and fits well with adjacent older properties.

**Post Millennium**

There have been several developments in the historic village since 2000. Some better than others. In the former category is Holmes Field Court. The development was built on the site of the farmyard at Crocks in 2014 and is an imaginative development which picks up the vernacular of the previous farm buildings. One of the original buildings, the oast house has been renovated and converted into three dwellings. Other buildings in the court reflect the historical theme of the site without straying into



Fig 36. The renovated oasts houses at Holmes Field Court

architectural pastiche. Red brick, weatherboarding and tiles have been used in the elevations with and brown clay tiles and slate for roofing. Roofs have gable ends predominantly,



Fig 37. Holmes Field Court

although there are some examples of half hipped roofs. Gardens are limited but this reflects the style of the restricted area of the development. There is parking and some oak barn carports have been included, which add to the farmyard style.



Fig 38. Poplar Cottages

Poplar Cottages, opposite the Star public house (on land formerly owned by the Star), is a terrace of four cottages built in a Victorian style. There is a regular spacing of doors and windows with the front ridge parallel to the main road.

However, the terrace is cross gabled with rear facing gables to each dwelling. The rear gables include windows and a second storey in the roof space. The ridge line is noticeably higher than adjacent buildings, most obviously the neighbouring Police House. This

is clearly to accommodate the additional living space on the second floor but makes the building incongruously tall for the location given its intended style. The terrace is constructed from mixed red brick with slate roofs. The front doors include attractive gabled porticos with finials. The build line is 3m to a front low brick wall and picket fence. There is no garaging but off-road parking is available to the immediate west of the terrace.



Fig 39. Trimmings Close

South of Poplar Cottages is a small development of eight dwellings, Trimmings Close. The development was built between 2017 and 2018. The properties are two storeys and built in three terraces: two along the access road and one across the end. The access itself is through the Bentley Industrial Estate, which aesthetically provides a poor setting for a residential site. The site also represents a backlands development, which is out of character with linear design of the Main Road.

Properties are a mixture of brick or white painted rendered elevations, but all with slate roofs. Two of the dwellings include gabled, square box bay windows, which have no precedent in Bentley. There are features such as the upper floor full length plain windows beneath dormer inserts in the eaves, which are again out of character with existing design in the village.

Sycamore, Mulberry and Hornbeam Cottages is a terrace of three cottages, similar to The Poplars and the neighbouring Red Lion House, with the same cross gabled layout; each dwelling has a gable extending to the back. However, the terrace is more in keeping with the scale of the adjacent properties: the roof line is slightly lower than Red Lion House. The terrace is built from red brick with a red clay tiled roof. Doors and windows on the front façade are arranged symmetrically and the front eave line is level with the tops of the upper casement windows. The building does not include chimneys, which is a strange omission given its attempt to replicate an older style. The build line is 4m providing small front gardens to each cottage bounded by a red brick wall with picket gates. Parking is available to the rear of the property.

The Boundary and Outfield was built in 2018. The Outfield is a development of three detached executive houses, more suited to a suburban setting. These large dwellings are too closely spaced for a rural situation: Dwellings of similar size in Bentley are less densely sited and set in larger gardens. The dwellings also have a common drive entrance, again suburban not rural given their size. The dwellings have a mixture of cross hipped and gabled roofs, with dormers to some upper floor rooms again either hipped or gabled. Materials are uniform throughout the development; brown brick and red roof tiles with some tile hung gables and bays. Two of the dwellings have suburban style bay windows. Each property includes an external chimney breast and stack to the side. The frontages are mainly paved each with a drive to integrated garaging. The boundary is mixed hedging.

The Boundary is a development of two semi-detached cottages, which has a more rural air, mainly because they are smaller properties. The building is cross gabled with two front facing gables providing a symmetry about the centre of the front façade. The windows on both floors are small paned casements. There are no chimneys to the dwellings. Building materials are the same as those used in The Boundary; walls are brown brick ground floor and tile hung upper floor, and red tiled roofs. The dwellings have a common paved drive but no garaging.



Fig 40. The Boundary (foreground), The Outfield (beyond)

### ***Summary of the Historic Village***

Unsurprisingly, the Historic Village includes a mix of periods and styles reflecting centuries of development. The dwelling densities, building lines and property gaps are, therefore, extremely variable. However, there are some common, or reoccurring, features to the built design and it is reasonable to say that much of the built heritage of the Historic Village sits comfortably. Building materials such as red brick and red clay tiles are a constant, with slate appearing from time to time during the Victorian period. Whilst there are a number of buildings that include Malmstone as the main building material, flint has been rarely used as a building material in Bentley.

Chimneys of varying degrees of decoration are present on most buildings and certainly a feature of older properties. They are commonly sited at gable ends. Roof ridges are more often than not parallel to the front of the properties. The front façade of many properties present symmetrical fenestration with central porches, although extensions to the sides of the original building can sometimes hide that symmetry. Boundaries are often red brick walls between 1 - 2m in height.

Whilst some recent developments such as Holmes Field Court and Blackthorn and Rosehip Cottages have contributed and enhanced the rural character of Bentley. There have been

several less successful additions: The density and design of the three houses forming The Outfield, opposite Bentley Recreation Ground, are out of character with Bentley and its rural setting; the Trimmings Close development is poorly sited and design is, again, questionable.

## 2. School Lane and Hole Lane

School Lane is defined as much by its green spaces as its buildings. North of the Main Road, the lane forms an eastern boundary to the village. Towards its northern end, where it joins Hole Lane, it is also characterised by the open land behind properties on the west of the lane. The old lanes, School Lane and Hole Lane are both narrower and have footpaths and road markings only at their southern ends where the housing is denser.

Although School Lane today begins in the south at the junction with the Main Road, adjacent to the village Pond and Recreation Ground, the original route north appears to be what is now a footpath that runs in front of Fox Hall and joins School Lane near to the village school. The land bounded by the footpath and the lane comprises, the Common, the Pond and Carter's Meadow to the north. This lane and Fox Hall fall within the Bentley Conservation Area, although the land immediately north and east of the School Lane is outside the area.

The Grade 2 Listed Fox Hall is an early 18<sup>th</sup> Century stuccoed house which was remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The south facing front façade has symmetrical windows reaching almost to ground level about a central Doric porch. The roof, with its three Victorian dormer windows, is slated with dentil eaves and fascia, scalloped bargeboards. Four massive chimneys rise above the hall through the middle of the house with another two at the west end.



Fig 41. Fox Hall



Fig 42. Brook Cottage

The terrace of cottages beyond Fox Hall are know is Alleyne's Cottages. The cottages were originally a barn. The end cottage, now known as Brook Cottage, has been extended sympathetically and presents a half hipped gable end to the footpath; the build line of the terrace sits perpendicular to the footpath. The terrace has a central ridge and is roofed in red clay tiles with red brick elevations. Beyond the cottage gardens is garaging and parking accessible from the northern of the footpath.

Towards the top of the footpath there is a modern property of 1970's design, Ashgrove House. It sits comfortably in its plot but is more suburban than rural in design. Joining School Lane proper there are two properties of Victorian origins. These are Pepperstitch and School House and sit opposite one another on the

west and east of the lane, respectively. Pepperstitch, with a double gabled frontage and a build line approximately 4m from the lane, has been extensively extended and renovated in the past 20 years. However, it retains its rural character. It includes parking and off-road parking.

School House was built in 1892, some fifty years after the school opened, as detached accommodation for the headmaster. The house features Gault brick quoins and over window herringbone panels, with Clunch walls and Victorian sashes. Steeply pitched, cross gable ended slate roofs with scrolled barge boards and finials, and a matching front porch. The roof includes three elegant twin diamond chimney stacks with kissing crowns. The property is set back from the lane and includes ample parking and garaging.

Immediately to the north of these properties is the junction with Eggars Field to the west and Bentley Village School to the east. North of the junction School Lane narrows with hedges on either side bounding the curtilage of properties. There are several properties on the west side. A single story cottage, Loxwood. Followed by two architecturally dissappointing dwellings; Little Acre and Broadacre. The latter is a seventies construction, the former was built in its garden during the ninties. There have been several attempts to make Broadacre a more attractive property, including adding artificial grey wooden cladding. However, it is something of a lost cause.



Fig 43. School House



Fig 44. Yew Tree Cottage

Beyond Broadacre is Yew Tree Cottage. An attractive two storey painted brick with red clay tiled roof with a ridge parallel to the lane. The roof supports two solid red brick chimneys at the ridge. The location of the southern most chimney suggests that the property gained a substantial southern extension earlier in its life and in recent years the dwelling has been further extended to the south. There is also a single storey extension to the north.

Opposite Yew Tree Cottage stands The Glebe House. The low pitched cross gabled property has something of a suburban air. Although a lean-to porch is roofed with traditional red tiles, the main roof is tiled with incongruous interlocking barrel tiles. The elevations are light red to yellow brick, with shuttered casement windows.

Beyond The Glebe House is a development of recent three properties. The first two are large, two storey timber frame constructions with cross gabled pitched roofs that present a rural cottage vernacular. Although perhaps different from the local vernacular in their use detailing, proportions and colour (ref. Neighbourhood Character Study for EHDC, Dec 2018).



Fig 45. Honeywood

The third cottage, Honeywood, to the north, is a more traditional construction with red clay tiled cross gabled roofs, half pitched gable ends and dormers. The property is two storied with tile hung upper floor elevations and red brick below.

Returning to the west side of School Lane are Denmark Cottages a pair of farm labours. A two storey painted brick single ridge building parallel to the build line with a shared large central chimney stack. Windows are casements. The cottages have been re-roofed at some stage in the recent past with a roll profile interlocking concrete tile. Both front doors have gable ended porches, the northmost includes attractive bargeboards.



Fig 46. Critchells

Beyond these cottages is Critchells, a recent build in the garden of Broadhatch Cottage. The property sits well and maintains the linear style of School Lane and the design of its older near neighbour. The property is cross gabled with a half-hipped gable on the front elevation. The elevations are orange brick with dentil detailing in the gable ends and around the chimney crown. The roof is brown clay tile and the ground floor front includes a timber arched veranda.

Broadhatch Cottage, on the corner of School Lane and Hole Lane, has been substantially renovated in the recent past with extensions and significant changes to the roof line but have maintained its rural character. A two storey cottage with red brick elevations and modern casement windows. The building includes a distinctive curved wall which follows the profile of the junction of the two lanes. The roofs are brown clay tiles. One of the eastern gables includes a prominent chimney breast and stack.



Fig 47. Broadhatch Cottage



Fig 48. The Old Parsonage

On the east side of the junction of School Lane is The Old Parsonage. It sits some distance back along Hole Farm Lane and is bounded by a tall brick wall to the road. The building includes three two storey bays each with hipped red tile roofs. Two of the three bays extend eastwards forming the bulk of the property. The Old Parsonage has clearly been extended and renovated at various times in its history. Most elevations are brick, however, the north elevation towards the rear is Malmstone with brick quoins and cills.

Opposite The Old Parsonage is Bailey's Well Cottage. The property was originally a three bay single ridge dwelling with red brick elevations and red clay tile roof. There are chimneys at both gable ends. The property has been substantially extended in recent years with an adjoining parallel ridge to the north.

Also on the north side of Hole Farm Lane, beyond Bailey's Well Cottage, leaving the village, is Pamplins. This extensive property sits behind brick and stone walls and hedging. The western half of the property is thatched and the eastern half is a clay tiled roof. Both wings are built in red brick. It has a cottage at the front entrance leading on to a gravel driveway with timber frame garages and stabling.



Fig 49. Bailey's Well Cottage

Hole Lane beyond School Lane marks the rural edge of the village. Indeed, the northern rural edge includes the open fields south of Hole Lane: There is a distinct rural gap between the main village to the south and a cluster of dwellings to the north, around St Mary's Church.



Fig 50. Pamplins

Returning to Hole Lane there are several dwellings dispersed along the lane. Directly above the junction with School Lane is Old Bailey's Farm. Apart from the old farmhouse the site also includes an old barn converted to residential accommodation.

West of Old Bailey's Farm are several notable properties. These include Shelties, a two storey cottage with Malmstone elevations and red brick quoins, similar to those seen in The Old Parsonage. Windows are leaded casements. The roof is clay tile with a chimney at the gable end the other end is hipped. The cottage is extended to the north, doubling its original footprint, with a similar roof.



Fig 51. Shelties



Fig 52. Inwoods

Further along the lane is Inwoods. This Georgian building dating from the 1750's is built in red brick with slate roofs. There are three roofs with valleys between. The third element viewed from the entrance is hung with tiles from the roof line down. Originally two farmworkers' cottages now it forms one dwelling.

At the western end of Hole Lane, one, confusingly, arrives at Hole Lane. This incarnation of the lane runs from the Bentley crossroads north towards Bury Court and Glade Farm. Opposite the junction is the Jenkyn Place estate, although the house and entrance is further north, adjacent to Church Lane.

### 3. St. Mary's Church

As described in earlier, Bentley has effectively developed in two parts; one around the Main Road, or old A31, and the other around St Mary's Church.



Fig 53. Little Jenkyn with Jenkyn Place beyond

It is more fitting to describe Jenkyn Place as part of the settlement clustered around St Mary's Church, although the gardens of Jenkyn Place extend south into the main village. The Grade 2 Listed house itself, with origins dating back to 1086, is obscured from public view although it is a large two storey red brick construction with a further floor lit by dormer windows set in clay tiled hipped roofs.

To the north of Jenkyn Place and from the main gate are a number of cottages belonging to the estate, including Little Jenkyn. The cottages are a mixture of slate and clay tile gabled and half hipped roofs with red brick quoins and Malmstone elevations. The house and Little Jenkyn are bounded by high red brick walls. The wall to the south of the main house along Hole Lane forms an impressive retaining wall emphasising the depth of the sunken lane.

Jenkyn Place sits on St. Swithun's or The Pilgrims' Way and Church Lane follows this route to St. Mary's Church. On the south side of Church Lane is John O'Pease Cottage, which dates from 1640, although the dwelling was extended in Victorian times. The two storey cottage is a similar style to the cottages at Jenkyn Place, with Malmstone elevations and brick quoins and a clay tile roof.



Fig 54. John O'Pease Cottage

Closer to St. Mary's Church, to the east side of Church Lane as it turns towards the south, is Well Cottage. This red brick building dates from 1650 and sits adjacent to the lane in well designed gardens. A southern extension was added in the 1980s in keeping with the style of the original cottage, also in red brick and with a clay tiled, half hipped gable ended roofs. The roofs include neat, unobtrusive dormers to light the upper floor rooms.



Fig 55. Well Cottage

Between Well Cottage and St Mary's is Church Cottage. The cottage sits just south of St Mary's Church. It is a two storey property with red brick ground floor and tile hung upper floor and includes multipaned casement windows. It was extended at one point on the north side with a cross gable roof. The roof is clay tiled. During the early 2000's it was subject to a "roof lift" on the rest of the property to accommodate a more substantial upper floor. The eave line was raised and the roof pitch lowered. Dormers were added "flying" above the extended windows. A very awkward extension. There has been a subsequent oak frame and glass extension to the south, which is more sympathetic to the original cottage.



Fig 56. Church Cottage

## 4. Post War development – Babs Field, including Longcroft

### Babs Field

Babs Field was built just after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War as a council house development to help with the housing crisis at that time. The housing provided was, and remains, fairly homogenous in terms of design and size. The dwellings were built on generous plots. By modern standards the plot sizes of many of the houses would be considered quite large with a few covering more than 800m<sup>2</sup>. In total Babs Field covers an area of approximately 2.5 hectares giving a housing density of 16.8 houses per hectare, considerably less dense than neighbouring Longcroft. The building line to the pavement is approximately 12m and the gap between properties is 4m. When built, the south side of Babs Field had 2 bungalows and 20 semi-detached houses and to the north there were 20 semi-detached properties. In more recent times many of properties have taken advantage of the available space to extend with single story, but often two storey extensions. The roof form is mainly hipped and building materials are red brick and clay tiles. All houses that have not been extended have 3 front windows plus 2 side windows. Interestingly, all the houses have shared chimneys.

The road is a cul de sac by design with the entrance to Babs Field from Hole Lane to the west. It has two spurs about three quarters along the road which are shared by 10 houses. These houses do not abut to the road and do not have their own driveway for a car. Probably due to most houses having more than one car, parking has become a problem despite all houses having their own parking space. This has resulted in almost continuous on-street parking.

Access can also be gained by foot via two paths at the end of Babs Field. One is a very short pathway that gains access to Eggars Field and the other heads north to Toad Hole Lane.

Babs Field is not within a Conservation Area and it does have street lighting.



Fig 57. Babs Field



Fig 58. On-street parking in Babs Field

### Longcroft

Built in the 1990's Longcroft is the redevelopment of 11 houses from Babs Field which were knocked down and replaced with 20 new properties. These properties provide council housing and, unlike Babs Field, none are in private ownership. Of the 20 dwellings three are bungalows; 1 is a detached bungalow and 2 are semi-detached bungalows. The remaining 17 houses are all



Fig 59. Longcroft

two storey semi-detached properties. Longcroft is accessed from Hole Lane and the road itself can be described as having 2 cul de sacs. Longcroft is not in the Conservation Area.

The dwellings have an average plot size of about 250m<sup>2</sup>. The land area of Longcroft measures about 0.72 hectares and the density of the development is 27.7 houses per hectare.

The building line for each property is about 6m and the gap between properties is approximately 4m. The clay tiled roofs are gable ended with some dwellings presenting half hipped gables. The elevations are local red brick. All the houses have 3 windows in the front elevation with porches of various styles. None of the houses have chimneys.

None of the houses in Longcroft has a garage but each house has an off-street parking space. It has an open design for the front gardens and so there is a complete lack of fencing of any kind. Finally, Longcroft does have street lighting and is not within a Conservation Area.

## **5. Post 1970's – Eggars Field, Broadlands, Bonners Field, Oakway**

### **Eggars Field**

The first phase of Eggars Field was completed in 1981 having been started in 1980. The economic circumstances which existed at the time of this development were totally different to that of the previous large development in Bentley, which spawned Babs Field 30 years earlier. The first phase comprised 23 properties, to which 3 further houses were added in 1985. The first phase stretched from the junction with School Lane and was just over 200m in length ending as a cul de sac by the footpath to Babs Field. The second phase of Eggars Field was completed in 1989 extending the existing road west another 100m. A further small development of 3 houses was added in 2012 after the demolition of a house that predated the development.

Eggars Field is not within the Conservation Area and it does have street lighting.

The first phase of construction included 11 detached four bedroomed houses, 3 three-bedroomed chalet style semi-detached houses, 4 two-bedroomed semi-detached houses, a block of 4 one-bedroom maisonettes and a 3 bedroomed bungalow. The



Fig 60. Eggars Field, Phase 1

design of development allowed for 3 large green areas with dwellings built around these open areas. The three houses added in 1985 included 2 four-bedroomed detached houses and a 4 bedroomed bungalow. The total area of this phase was 1.68 hectares giving a density of 15.5 houses per hectare. Eggars Field catered for new owner occupiers moving into the village. Plot sizes and gardens were reasonably compact and the building line was between 5 and 10m. The gap between properties is between 2 to 3m. Boundaries to the road were generally open, although over the years hedges have grown up in front of many properties.

Apart from the maisonettes, which have garages in a block slightly away from their properties, all properties have a driveway and a garage; the largest of the 4 bedroomed houses have double garages.

The roof type of all the houses is gable ended. The 4 bedroomed and 3 bedroomed houses all have dormer windows and as do the 2 bedroomed houses. The building material used is the local Selbourne red brick and clay tiles. The 2 bedroomed houses have a tile hung fascia and only the 3 and 4 bedroom properties have chimneys.

The second phase of Eggars Field were all two storey dwellings. It included 2 four bedroomed houses, which are detached, 16 three bedroomed semi-detached houses and 3 two bedroomed terraced houses. Dwellings in this phase were more or less built in a linear pattern.



In terms of brick type and roof structure the second phase mirrored the building materials used in the earlier phase. All the houses have roofs with a gable end and some have a tile hung fascia. None of the properties have chimneys.

Three further houses were built in 2012 and consist of 2 five bedroomed semi-detached houses and 1 four bedroomed house.

Fig 61. Eggars Field, Phase 2

All the houses have garages with a driveway. The second phase covers 0.795 hectares and the building density is higher compared to the earlier phase with 30 houses per hectare. This increase in density was partially due to the elimination of green areas in this phase.

### **Broadlands Close**

As part of the second phase of building in Eggars Field Broadlands Close was included to the south, infilling the land between Eggars Field and the Business Park. The development was a mix of two storey dwellings with several single storey properties. It is built as a cul de sac with a small spur to the west.

In detail, Broadlands Close includes 8 four-bedroomed detached houses, 4 one-bedroomed semi-detached bungalows, 8 two-bedroomed terrace and semi-detached houses, 3 three-bedroomed semi-detached houses and 1 three-bedroomed detached house.



Fig 62. Broadlands Close

The building materials used are the same as in Eggars Field with some houses having a tile hung facia. All the houses have dormer windows and all have a garage and a driveway. The garages for the terraced houses are slightly removed from the houses.

The area of Broadlands Close is measured at 0.74 hectares giving a density of 31 houses per hectare. Accordingly, the building line is no more than 10m and the gap between properties is between 2 and 5m.

### **Bonnors Field**

Bonnors Field was built east of Hole Lane in the 1990's and includes 38 dwellings. The development falls outside the Conservation Area. There is a combination of detached and terraced two storey accommodation. The architect made a real effort to bring a rural character to the development through design and selection of materials. However, little of the architectural heritage of Bentley is captured in either, which leaves a feeling of the development being slightly displaced.



Fig 63. Bonnors Field

Dwellings on the north side of the road are a mixture of; red brick ground floors with tile hung upper floors and gables; full yellow, almost a London Stock, brick elevations with red brick lintels; and flint panels with red brick quoins and lintels. Roofs are gable fronted some full, some half hipped. The flint panelled properties have used red clay roofing tiles whilst the others have been roofed with roll profile interlocking concrete tiles.

On the south side of the road are three spurs. The central includes terraces of smaller cottages, whilst the outer two include detached properties. All are in a similar style to those on the north side of the road.

Most of the housing presents almost directly onto the pavements and has garaging and off-street parking. There is no boundary fencing to the front of dwellings apart from some small hedges and shrubs. The Bonnors Field site measures 1.65 hectares giving a density of 23 houses per hectare. There is street lighting along the road.

### **Oakway & Hole Lane**

Oakway is a 1960's close style development of six properties to the west of Hole Lane and is outside the Conservation Area. The dwellings are chalet style with the eave line at the top of the ground floor. The gable ends are tile hung above ground



Fig 64. Oakway

floor brick elevations. Roofs are roll profile interlocking concrete tiles. There is garaging and off-road parking, although some garaging has recently been converted to living accommodation. Oakway is a light and open development and in this respect it maintains a rural air. However, no aspect of the built heritage of Bentley has crossed into design.

Along Hole Lane, from Bentley War Memorial Hall, there has been residential infill building during the 1990's and since. Three cottages opposite the hall carpark have fitted in well with the rural character of the village. The cottages are cross gabled with front facing gables and half hipped gables to the side. Elevations are either a full brown brick with contrasting red brick lintels or the same with a tile hung upper storey. Roofs are brown clay tiles and each property includes a front facing dormer. Each has a buttressed chimney stack to the side. All have off-street parking with integrated garaging, although one of the dwellings has converted the garage to living accommodation.



Fig 65. Hole Lane cottages, close to the crossroads

## 6. Somerset Field

Somerset Field was developed between 2016 and 2017 as an estate of open market and affordable housing. In total the estate includes 37 dwellings. The site is located to the west of Hole Lane opposite Babs Field. The access road then runs around a central green space with two small lanes, Wheat Close and Hop Gardens, providing access to further houses. Houses are all two storey and a mixture of detached, semi-detached and maisonettes.



Fig 66. Somerset Field

There is a uniformity of design across the estate which is reasonable itself, however, the design is bland and reflects little local character. Where attempts have been made to add interest with variations in materials, the selection of material has been out of character; the use of flint in elevations, for example, is a lazy choice, not local to Bentley. The architects should have selected Malmstone.

The layout of Somerset Field is open, which connects well with the adjacent agricultural land. Plot sizes are between 1500 - 2000m<sup>2</sup> and the housing density is approximately 12 dwellings per hectare, which is considerably lower than even Babs Field. However, it should

be noted that the density is far from even with dwellings interspersed between larger open spaces.

All properties face onto the access road with the gap between properties being only a few metres.

Roofs are either hipped or gable ended either front or side facing which provides some variation. Roofs are clay tiled or slated and elevations are either fully brick or half tile hung. Some properties include chimneys although most do not.

Fenestration is regular with little variation and presents a bland street scene.



Fig 67. Somerset Field property with flint elevations

All properties have off-road parking for at least one vehicle. Garages are built to the side of many properties with maisonettes have an allocated parking space in a communal area. The boundaries between dwellings are mainly hedges where they exist. To the rear houses have demarcated gardens bounded by higher hedges or brick walls. Street lighting is present throughout the estate through regularly spaced lamp posts.

In summary, the built design of Somerset Field is rather bland and uniform, although some of the open market properties have more character. However, there is little that reflects the existing design characteristics of Bentley. The layout of the estate, although low density compared to earlier developments such as Eggars Field, is more typical of a modern suburban style rather than reflecting the local rural character of the existing village. Somerset Field, therefore, stands incongruously outside the village rather than a development that feels integrated. The close style road design further isolates the development.

## Summary

The village of Bentley has largely maintained the settlement pattern established many centuries ago, with an extended linear form along the route of the old A31. Building has taken place mainly on the better drained northern side of the Main Road. The gap between the main village, which has evolved along the Main Road, and the settlement around St Mary's Church dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century to the north has also been preserved. The northern rural edge of the main village, south of Hole Lane, marks the boundary between the Gault Clay on which most of the village is sited and the Lower Greensand to the north, traditionally better agricultural land. Future building should not disregard this geological and topographic fact otherwise a significant characteristic of the village character will be lost. The views to the south, the north and along the valley have also been largely preserved within the settlement pattern and these again should be preserved in any future development.

From the early dispersed farms and labourers' cottages, through the in-fill building of the Georgian and Victorian periods, to the more recent post war period, building has largely remained cohesive with similar materials and architectural styles. A high proportion of architectural features such as windows, chimneys and boundary walls have been retained. Where older properties have been extended or modified the work has been sympathetically accomplished in the most part: the proportions of the original buildings have not been distorted and matching materials have been used.

However, some original features have been lost, replacement windows, in some cases, have been less than sympathetic to the original, and some porches and dormer windows have been less than kind to the host property, Southview Cottages and Church Cottage are examples.

More recently there have been several developments that have enhanced the local vernacular, most notably Holmes Field Court. This is a positive example of how future development in Bentley can add housing and contribute to the local rural character. At the same time there have been a number of recent developments that, whilst the build quality is very good, are completely out of place with local character, these include the executive homes built at The Outfield, the Trimmings Close residential development and Somerset Field. Whilst we welcome the new residents, the built design or layout of these projects has been poor and should be avoided in the future.

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