

Rudgwick Parish Design Statement

Establishment of the Steering Group

The Rudgwick Action Plan Steering Group completed work on its Plan in 2006. The same group, with one or two changes in personnel, became the Parish Design Statement Steering Group, and then undertook to develop a Design Statement for the parish. At the outset we studied a number of Design Statements for other areas both local and further afield. The group also referred to the Natural England website for general background papers on the concept and purpose of Design Statements and their development over time.

The Group had members of the Parish Council on it from the outset. Members of Rudgwick Preservation Society (RPS) and other independent members also contributed to the Group. The opportunity for new members was always open. Moreover, the meetings we had were also open to any member of the Parish community to attend. However, this did not produce as much interest as hoped. Meetings were held monthly in the Jubilee Hall, Church Street. Occasional attendance, and email advice, was provided by our link person in Horsham District Council; the Group is grateful to Patrick Griffin for his help. 'The Rudgwick Magazine', delivered free to all households monthly, proved an excellent channel of communication throughout the Design Statement process.

Scope and Process

By the AGM in Autumn 2007 the group had completed initial surveys, most on foot, and taken hundreds of photographs. When touring the Parish Areas (explained below) we had the opportunity to walk and talk with interested local residents. The direction we would need to take emerged only slowly. We took detailed note of the results of the professionally conducted parish-wide Action Plan questionnaire, which had a 44% return.



The scope of work in a parish with the structure of Rudgwick required an understanding of the distinct settlements and physical areas of our large parish. Frequent recourse was made to sub-committees as the detailed work on Parish Areas developed. Out of this came posters we could display when we called a parish consultation meeting. This was held on 5th November 2007 in the Village Hall, Bucks Green. Attendance was much greater than anticipated and very gratifying for the Steering Group.

In addition to being able to read, comment on and discuss the Area posters, members of the public were able to see our first ideas on what constituted appropriate styles of building frontage and street scene for the parish as a whole.

These were placed around the Hall as displays on which visitors could vote for those styles they liked, according to the Area in which they lived, whilst members of the Steering Group circulated and offered explanation and encouragement. The Steering Group then formally introduced themselves and explained to visitors what we were doing, and what we hoped the outcomes would be, with an opportunity for questions and feedback. The results of voting and written comments by visitors were later analysed to inform the future writing of the document, particularly the design policies.

We nevertheless overran our self-imposed timescale as the task was proving more complex and time-consuming than originally envisaged. It had become clear that Rudgwick had such variety of settlement within it, that the need to discover the identity of Parish Areas was crucial to an understanding of historical design and style of building as well as development of settlement layout. We also discovered that there were overriding design criteria that applied to the whole parish, supported by the considerable common ground between residents of Areas in the survey referred to above.

There was a rich seam of information available to us from sources such as the book by Diana Chatwin, *"Timber-framed Buildings in the Sussex Weald, the Architectural Heritage of Rudgwick"*, (RPS, 1996), and from other work undertaken by members of RPS over the years. Whilst we were influenced by traditional design features in our policies, we were very concerned to emphasise the later Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian styles making up the varied frontages and street scenes. We were also keen to seek out modern design, though the shortage of really good recent examples in our parish was of some concern, and led to some constructive debate. It was difficult to identify a way forward, except by encouraging avoidance of pastiche and, of course, encouragement of excellence in the future.

We also found the leaflets produced by West Sussex County Council Landscape Land Management Guidelines for Sheets LW3, LW4 and LW6 (using areas also characterised in HDC Character Area 121 *"The Low Weald"* and local areas I1, G3 and P1), which cover Rudgwick parish, inspirational in developing our own Landscape Guidelines for Rudgwick as a whole. A talk by Esmund Turner of WSCC had fortuitously been given to residents at the Annual Parish Meeting of Rudgwick Parish Council in Spring 2007. The resulting Landscape Guidelines are a special feature of our Design Statement. In addition we had been guided by another WSCC initiative establishing a number of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, mainly ancient woodland in need of protection, in several of the Parish Areas. Our Design Statement is thus a document for the countryside as well as the built environment.

In deciding how to present the material we had gathered, and the guidelines and policies we had agreed, we were able to peruse several other Design Statements, the most influential being the one adopted for the Parish of Amberley, 2006.

Whereas most of the writing of the sections of the Rudgwick Design Statement was done by individuals or sub-groups of the Steering Group, the collegiate approach was adopted in meetings where we appraised critically each and every paragraph and illustration systematically, leading to a very strong common style and accuracy of presentation.

This led to the printing of the Draft Design Statement by HDC in Autumn 2008. A copy was delivered to every household in the Parish, and further copies were made available in local shops and public places, namely Rudgwick Primary School, Rudgwick Medical Centre, Secretts of Rudgwick, The Co-operative Food shop, Rudgwick Sports and Community Centre, and Rudgwick Parish Office. In addition to asking for responses by letter distributed with the document, announcements continued to appear in 'The Rudgwick Magazine'. A consultation period ensued leading up to a second parish consultation

meeting in the Village Hall, Bucks Green on 3rd November 2008, almost a year to the day from our previous meeting, and even better attended by this time nearly 100 residents. A letter from the Chairman had been published prominently in the West Sussex County Times the preceding Friday to remind residents of the meeting. After presentations by the Chairman, and Patrick Griffin, HDC, questions and comments from the floor were taken. These were recorded by the Secretary, during a vigorous but never acrimonious debate.

In addition, responses were invited from the outset of the Consultation Period by email and letter. A number were received, including some from members of the public who wished to elaborate on the points made at the meeting. All responses were collated and systematically considered in detail by the Steering Group, and alterations or additions to the wording of the Design Statement were made, if appropriate. Where necessary advice was sought and obtained from Patrick Griffin, HDC. Further corrections, amendments and updates were made to the text as the Steering Group reflected on the document's overall quality and the ethos of the views expressed. The page order was thus significantly amended. We now feel the Design Statement represents the majority view of residents. The Design Statement should be read alongside the existing Development Plan Policies when new development is being considered.

Resumé of Consultation

1. Open invitation to residents to attend our meetings - not very successful.
2. Meeting with residents on Parish Area walkabouts, particularly well attended by residents of Lynwick Street and Tisman's Common.
3. Parish consultation meeting on 5th November 2007 - well attended, with representative sample responses to Parish Area displays collected, voting on embryonic policy ideas, together with good rapport between Group members and the public.
4. Distribution of Draft Design Statement to all households with a period of consultation resulting in responses by letter, email and particularly a second parish consultation meeting on 3rd November 2008, attended by nearly 100 residents who made many comments and asked many questions.
5. Meetings and email communication with Patrick Griffin, Horsham District Council.

A summary of responses and our decisions is appended below.

Rudgwick Parish Design Statement Steering Group

February 2009

Appendix **Comments Received and Action Taken on the Draft Design Statement**

Listed in order of receipt, summarised as necessary.

| ID | Comment | Action |
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| 1 | There is little arable land in The Haven (p16), thus it is not a key sensitivity. | Not accepted, but reference to particular Parish Area deleted. |
| 2 | Excellent & comprehensive; visual material not up to standard of text - a. Maps out of focus. b. Annotate photos, and on maps, arrows to location. c. Annotate satellite images to relate to text. | a. Accepted, new maps commissioned. b & c. Partly accepted, decision taken at an early stage that no images be labelled, but settlement photos on p.3 now named, and satellite images sharpened up. |
| 3 | Thank you! It helps to save what is important; you identify Rudgwick's appeal. d. P5, para 7, 'Health practitioners' is clearer than 'health visitors'. e. P7, para 5, 'Council and Housing Association homes - offering rental or partial ownership' is clearer than 'affordable homes to rent'. | d. Accepted. e. Partly accepted, emphasis changed. |
| 4 | f. P5, third to last para, suggest 'hourly bus services' in line 1; and line 3, 'services are infrequent early morning and evening which may deter some'. g. P5, second to last para, invert sentence order to put Downs Link sentence before organisations sentence, as the details of walks are separated from organisations. h. P9, 1st para, dislike the wording defining stricter area for The Haven. Should refer to it as 'centred on'. i. P17, 4 th bullet from end, 'establish native screen planting.... avoiding cupressus leylandii'. j. P18, second to last para, typo: remove superscript ¹ P23, list of members -one is indented single space! | f. Partly accepted, emphasis changed. g. Accepted. h. Accepted. i. Partly accepted, addition of 'native'. j. Accepted. |
| 5 | Congratulations on progress & meeting. k. Can the Design Statement influence external appearance of commercial/light | k. Partly accepted, and a new section added on p23 to influence developers both within and |

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| | <p>industrial/agricultural buildings too?</p> <p>l. Good lighting in key areas is okay (not sodium lighting), existing lights should be properly maintained, trees lopped as appropriate. Have to carry a torch!</p> <p>m. Agrees with p19, policy 3 - if a case/defence made by architect for cutting edge pioneering aesthetics that fits into context & position, in preference to more conservative design; 'new' is not sufficient; new materials that do not look particularly different or out of character and do the same or a better job are okay.</p> <p>n. Wind turbines etc can be covered in policy 29, p22.</p> <p>o. The Steering Group should follow up the document by examining the planning process through its stages once this document is adopted.</p> <p>i. Specifically, will all new plans be expected to address how the design meets the criteria - policies (and guidelines) - in the opinion of the designer/architect, or, will HDC and RPC be expected to interpret the plans and make their own conclusion as to whether the plans conform to Design Statement?</p> <p>ii. Will failure to meet criteria be grounds for rejection?</p> <p>iii. Will planning inspector at appeal have to take the Design Statement into consideration?</p> | <p>outside the standard planning process.</p> <p>l. Noted, and passed to the Parish Council for action.</p> <p>m. Noted, does not require any changes.</p> <p>n. Noted.</p> <p>o. Noted, but this is addressed in the statutory planning process. All stakeholders may make their own interpretation of the guidelines and policies in this Design Statement, subject to decisions made by the Planning Committee of Horsham District Council, or if necessary, on appeal.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Well organised & informative meeting. Thanks for your time and energy.</p> <p>p. P22, policy 35, was raised at meeting, in respect to dark areas, e.g., church to chapel.</p> <p>q. Pavements are uneven (and can't be seen in poor light). Council needs to improve lighting or maintain pavements.</p> | <p>p. Not accepted, as the questionnaire for the Action Plan provided the majority view on which Policy 35 is based.</p> <p>q. Not accepted, as outside the scope of a Design Statement.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Has now got a better understanding of our aims. Policies should apply most strongly to Conservation Area, with a more liberal attitude beyond.</p> <p>r. 'Forced' to have a flat roof on extension by planners. His house he thinks is one we would not approve of, though he is proud of his front garden. He hopes we would not object if his successor family members changed the flat roof.</p> | <p>Not accepted. No distinction can be made in Design Statement policies between areas or locations within the parish. The Conservation Area is however subject to more stringent controls under existing policies. The phrase</p> |

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| | <p>s. Policies 1-9 and 14-15 and 22-37 are reasonable.</p> <p>t. P20, policy 11, is not agreed with entirely - it depends on situation of house, e.g. in a hollow, or surrounded by tall trees or tall neighbouring buildings, or if laid well back from road - a third storey, especially if not as large an area as the whole house can be attractive, and is preferable to a flat roof.</p> <p>u. P20, policy 13, is acceptable in a Conservation Area, but not in country lanes like Lynwick St</p> <p>v. P21, policy 16, why should native species be 'planted where possible' throughout the whole of Rudgwick? He has planted 5 araucaria araucana (monkey puzzle tree), which has special associations from working abroad, from seed he brought back.</p> <p>w. P17-21 acceptable in Conservation Area only.</p> <p>x. Concern about access and extra traffic in development like Windacres Farm, especially at Junction of A281 and Church St, and rat running through Lynwick St to avoid this. Wants a roundabout on Church St A281 junction.</p> <p>y. Does not like the protruding kerb at the Church St mini-roundabout - should be on the opposite side to slow downhill traffic, and ease movement uphill larger vehicles with/without trailers.</p> | <p>'where possible' in v. is clearly advisory. Specific planning matters are outside the scope of this document.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Excellent and informative Statement. Agree with <u>all</u> your points. Concerned about creeping suburbanisation in countryside, inappropriate frontages, and conversion of outbuildings to residential, loss of tranquility/noise intrusion. Particular concern about motor bikes, trail bikes & quads in rural areas</p> | <p>Partly accepted, in so far as the points made are within the remit of a Design Statement..</p> |
| 9 | <p>Enjoyed reading Draft and congratulations on its detail and hours of work it represents.</p> <p>z. P5, third para from bottom of 1st col, the church is Listed grade 2* , not grade 1.</p> <p>aa. P7, 1980s, Orchard Hill constructed 1980-1</p> <p>bb. P7, 1990 & 2000s, Foxholes had 41 dwellings permitted not 42.</p> <p>cc. P7, 1990 & 2000s, Churchmans Meadow had 35 dwellings permitted. The 'playing field' is in fact a 'public open space'.</p> | <p>z. Not accepted, after fact checked.</p> <p>aa. Accepted, amended.</p> <p>bb. Accepted.</p> <p>cc. Accepted, amended.</p> <p>dd. Accepted, amended.</p> |

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| 10 | <p>dd. P9, col 2, top, should read: <u>Bury St Austen's</u>. [representing views of The Haven Preservation Society] Thanks for not inconsiderable effort. It will perform a very useful function for the development of the parish.</p> <p>ee. P19, policy 8, disagree with timber framing being used sparingly. No particular building material should be singled out. It is environmentally friendly and affordable, widely used in the past, and has its place in The Haven.</p> <p>ff. P19, policy 3, there is a place for modern design and new materials. All building design should be of high standard, and modern buildings should not be singled out as having to be better than any other form. In The Haven modern architecture could have its place as long as it is sympathetic to its surroundings.</p> <p>gg. The Design Statement should not limit the diversity of design within our area causing too much uniformity of development, of particular concern for affordable housing, where it is common for a number of very similar properties to be constructed closely together. 'Better development contains diversity'. Over-riding design criteria should be development 'sympathetic to its surroundings'</p> | <p>ee. Accepted, amended to encourage high quality.</p> <p>ff. Partly accepted, as most policies already encourage high quality design and materials. As modern style of architecture takes many forms it is appropriate to encourage a particularly high standard of design and materials to avoid poor quality or unsympathetic intrusions into the countryside or built environment of our parish.</p> <p>gg. Noted, but the planning of new development is outside the scope of this document.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Congratulates the Steering Group in pulling it together, an Herculean effort.</p> <p>hh. More reference to aspects of design other than materials and building style on which the statement is top-heavy, i.e., orientation, position, scale of new development.</p> <p>ii. Street scene should cover -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Respect for building line ii. 'Embargo' on backland development (unsociable/destroys rural outlook) iii. Visual impact of infill development iv. New building height/scale in keeping with adjoining properties. <p>jj. Inclusion of the above points would enable ruling against development which</p> | <p>hh. Not accepted, in general, for the same reason as gg. above.</p> <p>ii, i. Accepted. Design and layout of new development should relate sympathetically with its built surroundings. Added to Policy 15.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Not accepted. A Design Statement may not create new development policy. There is no current policy to prevent this. iii. Accepted, as this is one of the main reasons for writing a Design Statement, and most Policies will be relevant to infill, both |

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| | <p>otherwise might pass on grounds of materials, water sustainability, facilities etc. The report up to p 14 would seem to be against development in order to protect the character of the Conservation Area.</p> | <p>large and small in scale. iv. Accepted, in Policy 11. jj. Partly accepted in respect of building line and height, but not in respect of refusal or acceptance of particular planned development.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Re Wey & Arun Canal. There is nothing in the DS to say restoration should be encouraged but plenty of phrases could be quoted by those against on p16-17. the DS should be clearer on this. Proposes that the canal be exempt from Land Management Guidelines regarding engineering solutions and the use of concrete, as a farm bridge would then be allowed.</p> | <p>Partly accepted, as the guidelines strictly apply to the natural environment, e.g. rivers and streams. However, clarification in respect of sustainable criteria being applied specifically to canal restoration has been added.</p> |
| 13 | <p>Farm buildings not discussed, but the large size and hard standing areas in association with structures not requiring planning permission, is an issue, and in addition non-listed old buildings may be demolished without anyone knowing, when they are out of sight of roads and not seen as suitable for conversion. Example quoted of 200-300 year old stone-built cattle yard replaced with modern barn. The Design Statement should 'watch over our agricultural heritage'.</p> | <p>Partly accepted, and changed as stated above in submission ID 7.</p> |
| 14 | <p>Strong support for changing the balance in favour of modern design and materials, against pastiche. Supported from the floor at meeting.</p> | <p>Partly accepted as stated above in ID 10 gg.</p> |
| 15 | <p>Density of development has a great effect on character of an area. We have made great play of this on pages 2 and 4 (more generally in emphasising open countryside), 9-11 in context of character of hamlets, 16 as a key sensitivity, 17 as a guideline. Should it also be a policy on p 22?</p> | <p>Noted, however, a Design Statement cannot create planning policy. By making play of this we hope we might steer developers away from too great a density for particular surroundings.</p> |
| 16 | <p>Worried about our lack of references to businesses. Do not make it more difficult for businesses, especially agricultural. Concerned at some of our guidelines, e.g., hedges are being replaced and woodland well managed.</p> | <p>Partly accepted, and changed as stated above in submission ID 7. Guidelines are for future management of the countryside by all landowners; as stated on p16, current management is rated 'good'.</p> |
| 17 | <p>Suggested in view of the conflicting suggestions expressed on the night that the way forward might be to take issues raised and examine the whole document afresh from several</p> | <p>Accepted, and was done in our final review of the document.</p> |

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| 18 | <p>perspectives.</p> <p>Raised the timber-framed issue taken up by The Haven Preservation Society (above).</p> <p>Also raised the issue of sustainable energy development e.g., of wind turbine(s) and felt the meeting wanted us to be more forthright about planning issues with regard to turbines, which led two further speakers to refer to -</p> | Accepted, in change to Policy 8 (timber-framed buildings). |
| 19 | solar panels, | The second guideline on p17 and Policy 29 with respect to high structures, Policy 9 with respect to solar panels, and the ninth guideline with respect to micro-hydro, does not actually restrict the development of sustainable energy providing it is in the context of a PDS as set out on p1 of the document. Whilst it is difficult to predict and provide for the future direction and pace of change of this technology this Parish Design Statement is in favour of a sustainable future for Rudgwick. |
| 20 | micro-hydro. | |
| 21 | Supported buildings no higher than 2 storeys. | Accepted, in Policy 11. |