

Cuckfield Village and Brook Street Design Statement

Supplementary Planning Document



Written by the Cuckfield Village Design Group

CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 COMMUNITY
- 3 LANDSCAPE
- 4 SETTLEMENT
- 5 BUILDINGS
- 6 HIGHWAYS
- 7 STREET FURNITURE

Appendices:

- A Contribution from Holy Trinity School,
- B Map of Conservation Areas
- C Map of Countryside Designations,
- D Map of Brook Street
- E Questionnaire and Results

Acknowledgements

The Village Design Group would like to thank the following for their help with producing this Design Statement:

1

INTRODUCTION

What is a Village Design Statement?

The Cuckfield Village Design Statement is a document developed, researched, written and edited by the people of Cuckfield, which describes the distinctive character of the Parish of Cuckfield and the hamlet of Brook Street, its buildings and the surrounding countryside. The aim is to ensure that any further development and change will be based on a real understanding of the village's past and present and will contribute positively to the future of Cuckfield and enhance its special nature.

How it was produced

A group of volunteers have produced this Village Design Statement with the support of, but separate from, the Parish Council. Public consultation has included public workshops and exhibitions, the production and distribution of a questionnaire to find out those aspects and qualities of Cuckfield and Brook Street that residents value the most and want to preserve for the future.

The VDS in the planning process

The Cuckfield Village Design Statement will be adopted by Mid Sussex District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and forms part of the Mid Sussex Local Development Framework. A Supplementary Planning Document is a material consideration that has to be taken into account when determining planning applications for development. It is intended to provide helpful guidance for developers, applicants and other parties involved in the development process, and is consistent with the policies contained in the Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004).

*Views looking south
towards the South Downs
National Park*



2

COMMUNITY

Brief history of Cuckfield and Brook Street

The origins of Cuckfield, or Kukefeld (a clearing in the wood) as it was originally known, date back to before Saxon times and the earliest recorded date for a church here is 1092, though the present building dates from the 13th century. Cuckfield was a busy centre with a market charter first granted in 1255. By 1327 there were 30 householders registered and numbers grew steadily as the iron industry, amongst others, brought prosperity to the area. There are houses here that date back to the 14th century and the mediaeval centre of the village can still be seen, with a clear line of sight from Ansty, though the other areas have been built on now. As the town grew so did the facilities for its people with the first school founded in 1512 and then by 1738 the establishment of a workhouse in a former tavern called The Bull in Ockenden Lane. The names of the houses there now reflect that heritage though the workhouse itself moved to a new site in Ardingly Road in 1845 and then, after being used as a hospital prior to and during WWII, became the major hospital for the area which continued in those ancient buildings until 1991.

The advent of the coaching trade in the 1700s brought many new people and the associated trades to Cuckfield. The inns and taverns flourished. The fare from London to Cuckfield was half a guinea and the then Prince of Wales, later George IV, stayed regularly at the King's Head. The Talbot was expanded and refurbished in 1830. This was Cuckfield in its heyday but sadly, the re-routing of the London to Brighton road via Handcross, the building of the railway in neighbouring Haywards Heath and eventually the advent of the motor car meant drastically reduced traffic through Cuckfield and the coaching trade gradually died away with the last mail coach coming through in 1905.

The Queen's Hall was built with money raised by subscription in 1897. At that time Cuckfield was the predominant centre for the area. There were Baptist, Congregational and Wesleyan Methodist Chapels as well as the parish church. There were well over 20 shops which could provide all the necessities for life for the approximately 2,000 inhabitants of the town. There were two state schools and numerous private ones. The secondary school at Warden Park was built in 1956 but primary age children remained in the original Old School buildings next to the church until 1991 when they moved to a new school in Glebe Road.

There has been great expansion in recent years and many of the large houses around Cuckfield are now gone but their names have been perpetuated in the roads for the houses that are now built on the land. Leyton Lea, The Knowle, Hatchlands etc are a reminder of Cuckfield in the past and of course we still have some of the wonderful examples of former glory with Cuckfield Park, The Old Vicarage, Mill Hall, Ockenden, Tentercroft and Horsgate House to name but a few. Some are still family homes, some flats or converted for other use. Long may they last to remind us of Cuckfield's important role in the local history of Sussex.



CUCKFIELD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Brook Street

Heading a short distance north from Cuckfield along the Balcombe Road is the small rural hamlet of Brook Street. Originally a Saxon settlement spread out amongst the various streams forming tributaries to the Ouse which gave easy access to water. There are remains of a small stone bridge crossing one of these streams that could be of the Roman period.

Today there are about sixty homes many being timber-framed, Listed, period properties dating back to the 16th century. Examples such as Taylors Farm, Brook Farm, Tanyard Farmhouse and Lower Sparks Farm were all working farms on the Borde Hill Estate and are private, residential homes. There are also a smaller number of mid-20th century detached properties with large gardens situated along the west side of the B2036,

Brook Street lies within the protected High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is predominately working farmland, with sheep and dairy cattle on the tenant farms such as Sidnye Farm, Lullings Farm and Great Bentley Farm which together constitute a substantial proportion of the 2000 acre Borde Hill Estate.

The community has a couple of its own “secret” societies. The ‘Brook Street Apple Society’ which every autumn collects apples from surrounding areas to produce its own special cider brew and holds its annual cider party the following summer. Also the highly fictitious ‘Brook Street Rowing Club’ which holds its annual dinner in one of the village pubs around Christmas.

There is a small commercial element within the hamlet comprising two small servicing and bodyshop garages and the Chapel Art Gallery which has recently been established with the disused Brook Street chapel.

Brook Street is in the civil parish of Ansty & Staplefield, formally known as Cuckfield Rural Parish and, in order to maintain its individuality, a new village sign was erected last autumn.

Cuckfield today

Cuckfield is a popular village. Its position surrounded by Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) but close to Hayward’s Heath, Gatwick and the M23, its picturesque and thriving village centre and its good local schools have made it one of the most sought after villages to live in West Sussex.

The 2001 census of population for Cuckfield recorded 3,266 people living in the village. Around 45% of the village population are between 30 and 60 years of age, reflecting the nature of Cuckfield as a partly commuter village. The village also has two popular schools, one primary one secondary, which attract many young families to the village.



CUCKFIELD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Cuckfield is a self contained village however with a number of thriving retail businesses that bring people into the centre to shop. There is also one major hotel – Ockenden Manor – and a number of smaller B&B premises. Cuckfield is also home to numerous small local businesses from chimney sweeps to graphic design agencies. To the south of the village are two organic farms with onsite shops which supply to the local areas

There is a strong sense of community in Cuckfield with many active social and cultural societies. There are also facilities for all to play football, tennis, rugby and cricket. For the young a Skateboard Park was constructed in Whiteman’s Green in 2008. Cuckfield also has a monthly market run by Cuckfield local, part of the transition initiative, which are also helping the village become environmentally sustainable. The successful Cuckfield Museum is housed in the Queens Hall and is open 3 days a week. It is enjoyed by tourists, schools and local people.

Development pressures in Cuckfield and Brook Street

The popularity of Cuckfield has meant that it has been particularly targeted by developers, and concerns are high in the village about the amount of development that might occur within the next five years. There is a sense of developers targeting every possible location with no overall sense of how the village might wish to develop.

In particular, if all the developer’s plans in the north of the village are approved then there will be a large influx of development over a very short period of time which will cause an imbalance in the character and structure of the village.

The village believes that any developments should be small scale and gradual to allow them to merge with the village, as has happened in the past. Large scale new developments will destroy the very character of the village which makes it such a pleasant and sought after place to live.

Our vision for Cuckfield is for it to continue to grow and thrive and embrace new business and design that will benefit all in our community whilst maintaining its rural feel and setting.

Our priority for Brook Street and the High Weald is to conserve and enhance the area of outstanding natural beauty. This is a designated Countryside Area of Development Restraint in the Local Plan, and it is important that its special character continues to be protected.

Community guidelines

C/1 Developers and planners should consult the Village Design Statement which reflects the views of the community

C/2 Developers, planners and public authorities should take relevant local advice concerning facilities (including education, sport and local transport) to be provided as a result of new development

3

LANDSCAPE

Cuckfield occupies an elevated position on the southern slopes of the Weald to the west of Haywards Heath, surrounded by attractive countryside. A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex completed in 2005 identified Cuckfield as located in the High Weald Fringes Landscape Character Area. This is a long band of countryside running east to west comprising of the densely wooded southern flanks of the High Weald.

Cuckfield is unusual in that modern development has not encircled the settlement, and as such it has a unique 'hourglass' shape. This special relationship between the medieval centre and countryside must be protected, as significant development along approach roads or major infilling in the central pinch, would spoil this historic setting. Residents' feel that this shape is about the urban extrusion into the green spaces, rather than green areas intruding into the urban extent.

To the north, Cuckfield borders on the High Weald and is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this includes the Lower Adur Ouse Watershed. To the south there are views right across the Low Weald to the South Downs National Park. The hamlet of Brook Street nestles in the lower part of the valley before it ascends again to the village of Balcombe.

Cuckfield's setting allows for some extended viewpoints both into and out of the village. These viewpoints are extremely important to the village character and this was reflected in the results of the questionnaire where 99% of respondents supported this statement.

Most of the land surrounding Cuckfield is outside the built-up boundary and is covered by countryside protection policies. Landmark buildings such as Cuckfield Park and Borde Hill are Listed Buildings and are subject to national planning regulations that seek to preserve and enhance their settings.

The High Weald is a unique area with rolling hills and sunken lanes. The small field patterns can be seen with trees and hedgerows. The area is also a watershed between the tributaries of the Adur and the Ouse Rivers. It consists of a patchwork of ghyll woodlands, streams and ponds against an agricultural backdrop.

There are working farms in Brook Street and to the south and west of the village where there is an abundance of diverse animal life that contains otters, bat colonies, deer, badgers, snakes, toads, great crested newts and a wide variety of woodland and farmland birds.





Views on opposite page and above looking south towards the South Downs National Park

Views from the Cuckfield Golf Course looking across the High Weald in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Drainage patterns

Cuckfield is situated on the end of a sandstone ridge which runs east-west from near Horsham towards Haywards Heath. This ridge is the watershed between the two main river systems in the region – the Sussex Ouse and the Adur.

The Ouse rises near Lower Beeding (Horsham) and runs east into East Sussex, flowing just to the north of Cuckfield and Brook Street where it has formed into a wide valley. It then turns south and runs through the South Downs at Lewes towards its discharge into the English Channel at Newhaven.

The Eastern Adur rises at Ditchling Common and flows westwards towards Henfield, where it turns south through the Downs and flows into the Channel at Shoreham. The Adur is joined by several incised tributaries through the Weald, one of which rises in the Cuckfield area.

The ridge determines the drainage patterns in the area. The boundary between the catchments runs along the Warninglid Road to Whiteman's Green before turning south-east through Cuckfield approximately along London Lane and through the grounds of Warden Park school to the A272 and towards the Princes Royal Hospital. North of this line the rainfall drains into the Ouse catchment; south and it joins the Adur.

To the north of Cuckfield, numerous small streams flow directly towards the main Ouse watercourse. To the east, the Scrase Stream rises through springs draining into ponds along Ardingly Road (Winchester Lodge and at the Hanyle Lane junction in particular) and flows through fields and Blunts Wood towards Haywards Heath, where it joins the Ouse. To the west, several streams spring along the ridge from Warninglid to Whitemans Green and converge to the south of the Cuckfield (draining New England Wood and the lakes in Cuckfield Park), before flowing towards Burgess Hill and onwards to the main Adur at Twineham.

The varied geological strata of the High Weald (of which Cuckfield is on the edge) dictate the spring line and rate of rainfall run-off. The clays are impermeable and the ground becomes easily waterlogged. Adjacent to these are sands, which are much drier underfoot with rainfall recharging the natural aquifers. At the boundary of the two is often where the spring lines form.



Open Spaces

These spaces are a mix of private and publicly owned land. Many of these are available for all residents to enjoy and play a very important role in preventing coalescence with neighbouring Haywards Heath. Wildlife corridors are not proposed as mitigation for loss of core habitat but essential to preserve native species, fragile ecosystems and animal welfare. The importance of the corridors within the landscape as a visual amenity as well as a place for walking is also widely recognised.

- **Land to the south of Cuckfield**

The views both into and out of the Cuckfield from the south have remained unchanged since medieval times and provide the unique setting of the village which, unlike so many other areas, has not become encircled by modern development.

- **Land adjacent to Riseholme at Tylers Green**

To the southeast of Cuckfield there is open countryside that has kept Cuckfield separate from the surrounding town of Haywards Heath. This very important Strategic Gap (and Countryside Area of Development Constraint, as noted in the Local Plan) incorporates Blunts and Paiges Wood and the North and South Meadows, vital space that helps to preserve our fragile ecosystem.

- **Land between Ardingly Road and Hanlye Lane**

This is a network of open fields with numerous well-used public footpaths running through the area towards Haywards Heath, Borde Hill Millennium Wood and Blunts Wood nature reserve. There are far reaching views across the Weald to the South Downs ridge and the fields make a valuable contribution to the open landscape and rural feel of this northern part of the village. This area forms part of the Local Plan Strategic Gap between Haywards Heath and Cuckfield and is vital to retain, to maintain space and wildlife corridors between the two settlements and into the Ouse valley to the north.

- **Land between Hanlye Lane and Haywards Heath**

This is the north east gateway and forms part of the original strategic gap that prevents coalescence with Haywards Heath. It is an area of valuable countryside and a wild life corridor, with pockets of ancient woodland and a habitat for many protected species.

- **Cuckfield Park**

The grounds surrounding the Elizabethan mansion house to the south of the village are used for a variety of activities, including the village cricket club and, by permission of the current owners, for the annual bonfire and autumn Village Show.

Public Open Spaces

- **Whitemans Green Playing Fields** are a major sporting facility for the wider area and are used for football, rugby, cricket and athletics. Residents value this green space highly and its open views are enjoyed by all.
- **Worsley Memorial Recreation Ground** was given to the village by Mrs Worsley in 1920 as a memorial to her husband and all men of Cuckfield who fell in the war. It is used by the local Football Club and has an enclosed children's area, paddling pool and tennis courts. It is also used for the annual Cuckoo Fayre and other social events.
- **Cuckfield Churchyard and Cemetery** has glorious views across to the South Downs. This is an area for quiet contemplation but also the starting point for several walks into the surrounding countryside
- **Whitemans Green, Glebe Road and Courtmead Road Allotments** are in much demand by residents as there is a new surge of interest in 'growing your own'. These three sites all contribute to the open feel of the village and are an important resource for the community
- **New England Wood** is an ancient woodland of significant importance, managed by New England Wood Trust for the people of Cuckfield. The Wood is carefully managed by volunteers who maintain the woodland on a regular basis.

The vistas that are important to the character and attractiveness of Cuckfield and merit special attentions are illustrated on the internal and external view plans on the following pages.



Landscape guidelines

- L/1 All new development in or around Cuckfield or Brook Street must recognize the importance of its unique urban shape and position on a ridge of the High Weald, surrounded by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (north and west) , Strategic Gap (east) and unique, unspoilt medieval setting south of the church.
- L/2 New development should minimise the impact on and from the landscape by preventing damage caused by reducing or blocking the wide views and open spaces of the area. Well considered landscape architecture will be used rather than the reliance on vegetation to simply screen buildings.
- L/3 Rural space within the village must be maintained to ensure the distinction in character between the built-up areas and the open countryside
- L/4 The approach roads from Haywards Heath run through an important area of countryside and this must be protected to retain the separate identity of Cuckfield by preventing coalescence with Haywards Heath, and sustain the existing wildlife corridors.
- L/5 Public open spaces are important to the health and well-being of the community and must continue to be available for use by all local residents and new development should provide adequate open space suitable for informal recreation
- L/6 Buffer zones on the perimeter of any new development are an important safeguard for the wildlife conservation of the area and must be incorporated into the design of all new development.
- L/7 All stake holders should work together to conserve, manage and enhance Cuckfield's natural heritage, including all hedgerow habitats, woodland areas, landscape and small green spaces and extend community woods and create community orchards
- L/8 Landscape design advice should be obtained for the planning of open spaces and planting should be of appropriate native species to retain the landscape character
- L/9 Where new public open spaces are created, sufficient financial resources must be obtained through the development to ensure the long term care of the area
- L/10 Any new development should fully adhere to Sustainable Drainage Systems principles, encompassing swales and ponds, to prevent any additional run-off causing flood problems downstream. Groundwater movement in the development vicinity shall be fully understood so as not to affect the multitude of natural springs.

4

SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Cuckfield has a unique shape which has developed over many centuries. The ancient heart of the village, near the church, retained a small population until the 19th century when houses were built north along the London Road and Broad Street. It is notable that little recent development has occurred to the south of the church and therefore this area retains its early character. There is a feeling of space with the many trees, green verges, hedges and open front gardens that is a fundamental characteristic of the village and reflects its position in relation to the surrounding countryside.

The village has eight distinct zones from south of the village going north. The zones are entwined with many footpaths linking these areas:

The Conservation Area of Cuckfield and Broad Street
 The High Street (north) including The Copse
 London Road and Brainsmead
 London Lane (including Glebe Road)
 Ardingly Road with Bylanes, Chapelfields and The Highlands
 The Conservation Area of Whitemans Green
 Brook Street

The Conservation Area of Cuckfield linking in with Broad Street: The centre of Cuckfield is based on a medieval street pattern. The buildings are closely grouped together in blocks and terraces characteristic of medieval origins. Rising from South Street northwards gives the High Street its distinctive character and there are attractive views up and down its length. Extending eastwards is Courtmead Road, a 1930's development of detached dwellings by local architect Harold Turner. It is quite different in character to the rest of the conservation area, containing low-density housing with wide verges and attractive landscape to create a spacious and secluded environment. The whole area has been protected from losing its historical character as a Conservation Area. Broad Street runs due east from the High Street. Part of this road is flanked by trees and the gardens of Courtmead Road which give it a more rural feel.

Houses within the Cuckfield Conservation Area



The High Street (north) including The Copse: Going north the High Street passes the Queen's Hall, built for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and meets London Road at the junction of London Lane where the 200 year old Rose and Crown Pub stands with its distinctive Wealden hung tiled frontage. There is a wide grassed area fronting Barrowfield; this development retained the view from the main highway into the landscape beyond. Other developments, such as Leyton Lea and Ledgers Meadow, allow a view into the development itself. The Copse is a recent development of some sixty houses. Unfortunately the views into the development, or wider views beyond to the open countryside from the High Street have been blocked by the layout of the housing - something that could have been avoided by



CUCKFIELD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



The Copse



Brainsmead



London Road



Whitemans Green



The Old Chapel, Brook Street

more careful landscape architecture. However, once inside the development, the open green at the centre of the housing is very pleasant and much used by the residents.

London Lane (including Glebe Road): Glebe Road is a mix of terraced buildings originally built as social housing in the 1930's but it is also home to Holy Trinity Primary School and to the busy Health Centre.

London Road and Brainsmead: London Road links the High Street to Whitemans Green. Over the past fifty years there have been several other smaller developments of mainly large executive housing. These have open frontages which give the landscape a sense of space. The redbrick pavements are seen on the west side all the way to Whitemans Green. The road is clear of signs and there are no road crossing areas. At night the area is dimly lit in accordance with the low carbon and light pollution policy. Brainsmead, with older, mainly smaller properties, also has green verges and a sense of space. Many of these older developments have large open landscaped front gardens with trees.

Ardingly Road with Bylanes, Chapelfields and The Highlands: Up to 70 years ago there were only a scattering of houses heading towards the Victorian workhouse (subsequently the hospital) and the area was dominated by farmland on both sides of the road and Longacre Farm is still present today. However, in the past 30 years there has been significant building in this area with the creation of Bylanes, Ruthven Close and some in-filled houses along Ardingly Road – though farmland continues to line the road and forms part of the eastern Strategic Gap. The most recent large development is at Chapelfields. Built in the mid 1990's in the grounds of the hospital subsequent to its decommissioning, the houses are a mixture of detached, semi-detached, and terraced properties, a collection of different styles with open frontage. The Victorian Workhouse building, is a very distinctive landmark which has now been preserved and converted internally to flats. The Highlands Cottages, dating back to early 19th century, have far reaching views of old oak trees and hedge lined fields across to the Balcombe Viaduct and Brook Street. Winchester Lodge is a landmark building on a large plot where Ardingly Road bends to the north. It provides significant character to the area. Horsgate House is an imposing building with architectural and historical significance, situated along Hanlye Lane and easily identifiable on top of the ridge. It is within the Court Meadow School complex but is understood to currently be unused. The building should be preserved within any future development of the site.

Whitemans Green: Whitemans Green was designated as a Conservation Area in 1989, once a separate hamlet but now merged with Cuckfield. The area is characterised by the wide roads and open spaces with far reaching views to the north and south. At the back of Whitemans Green there is a mixed group buildings closely packed together including the 15th century Vidlers Cottage and Inholmes Cottages that were constructed for labourers working the fields in the 19th century. During the 20th century the gardens of some of the old cottages were sold for development. Although this area is crowded with buildings it is not seen from the road. As you leave northwards a row of houses on the left links the area to Brook Street

Brook Street: On the right hand side are a series of large, detached houses with green frontages. Opposite are the open fields of the High Weald. In Brook Street itself there has not been any significant development, only a few houses have been built along Sparks Lane. All buildings have been in keeping with the Wealden style. Further down in Brook Street is a collection of Listed timber-framed 16th century buildings such as Taylors Farm, Taylors Barn, Brook Farm, Northlands and Tanyard Farmhouse. Along Sparks Lane is Dove House (Victorian), Lower Sparks Farm and Collins Farm.

Settlement guidelines

- S/1** It is essential that existing views both into and out of the village are retained
- S/2** Views into and out of the development from the public highways should be incorporated into the design when planning a new development.
- S/3** Development should be adapted to the site not the site adapted to the development.
- S/4** Any new development should have open plan aspect and the landscaping should reflect the established tree, hedges, green verges and large front gardens as seen in other developments throughout Cuckfield
- S/5** Future housing developments should be distributed on smaller sites rather than one or two larger strategic sites
- S/6** Development density should match, or be lower than, the local vicinity, so as to not create an imbalance of housing characteristics.
- S/7** All trees and hedgerows are to be preserved outside of private dwellings and large areas of green are to be preserved between developments to enhance the rural feel of the area.
- S/8** Vistas are to be created into and within any newly developed areas
- S/9** Infill or extensions to existing buildings should maintain gaps which provide views out of the village
- S/10** A mix of housing types, sizes and likely ownership should spread evenly across all new developments
- S/11** Communal green spaces within new development should be central to the site and accessible to the wider village by good footpath and cycle links.
- S/12** The planting of rows of high trees close to buildings should be discouraged and boundary heights should not be excessive so as not to breach a viewpoint.
- S/13** Parking should be arranged adjacent to properties. Large tarmac parking areas in the centre of new development are unsuitable and out of keeping with the area.
- S/14** Gardens are an important feature of existing properties and make a significant contribution to the well-being of householders. The design of new development should seek to maximise this personal space.
- S/15** Any plans to increase usage or to add new built facilities at Whitemans Green, such as a football stadium, would be out of keeping with the surrounding countryside. Such development would obstruct the views to south and alter the character of the landscape
- S/16** New developments should face the main highways, rather than positioning back gardens onto them
- S/17** The number of house storeys shall be appropriate to the vicinity within the village. Outside of the village centre, above 2 storeys is not appropriate as it matches little other existing architecture.

5

BUILDINGS

Cuckfield includes almost every style of domestic architecture from its medieval origins to Georgian, Victorian and 20th century design.

The appearance and character of the Cuckfield Conservation Area owes much to the variety of architectural forms, styles and materials represented by its buildings. Buildings that have been adapted over the years to meet rising standards of comfort and the changing economic base in the village. The pre-15th century buildings are all timber-framed and this type of building can still be found in some of the 17th century buildings. Sandstone being used in the larger houses. The 18th century saw an increase in brick built houses and this continued to be the main building material thereafter.

Victorian architecture is also well represented from the large, detached, dwellings such as Mill Hall at Whitemans Green and the terraced cottages found along London Lane. There are also fine examples of Edwardian buildings including houses along Ardingly Road and in Broad Street. Within the 20th century the developments reflect the passing of the decades with a variety of different styles, many of which mirror the characteristics of the older buildings with hung clay tiles and Georgian style windows.

A wide variety of traditional details are employed not only in the Conservation Areas but throughout Cuckfield including hipped and half hipped roofs, sash windows, chimney stacks, panelled and plank doors. Some of the buildings are also finished in render or painted brickwork predominantly white or cream in colour. Wealden clay tiles are used for roofs and to great effect for tile hanging using a variety of patterns including plain, bull nose, club and fishtail. Mathematical tiles are used occasionally. Horsham Stone is also used for roofing particularly on pre 1800 buildings.

This diversity in building styles contributes greatly to the character of Cuckfield and it is important that this diversity is retained when new development is planned.



CUCKFIELD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



BUILDING GUIDELINES

B/1 New buildings should reflect the characteristics of the locality and avoid pattern-book design, using materials sympathetic to Cuckfield's built environment. They should encompass a mix of styles and details from the various eras, taking inspiration from the best of existing local buildings

B/2 Design of new development should be high quality, innovative and interesting, using local materials wherever possible.

B/3 Street lighting should be of an appropriate style and should be low density to avoid pollution. Where possible environmentally friendly lighting should be used

B/4 All development, including peripheral remedial work adjacent to any new site, should require all cabling of power and telecommunications to be subterranean rather than on new overhead poles. All television signals should be distributed underground from a single location on the development, rather than each dwelling incorporating its own.

B/5 Small extensions to existing dwellings should be of the highest quality materials and compatible with style of building

B/6 New development boundaries should be hedged with indigenous species or constructed from materials in keeping with the neighbouring properties, rather than high, close boarded timber fences.

B/7 Any close boarding fencing used should only be to maintain privacy between dwellings.

B/8 All new housing should include environmentally friendly utilities such as rain water harvesting for toilet and garden use, and solar panels for water heating and electricity generation.

B/9 New development should include fibre optic cables for high-speed broadband facility

B/10 All shopfronts within the two conservation areas have interesting decorative features that contribute to the character of the area and these should be retained. Signs and advertisements also need to be carefully designed they should reflect the character of the building. Hand painting lettering is preferable. No neon or internal illuminated box fascia.

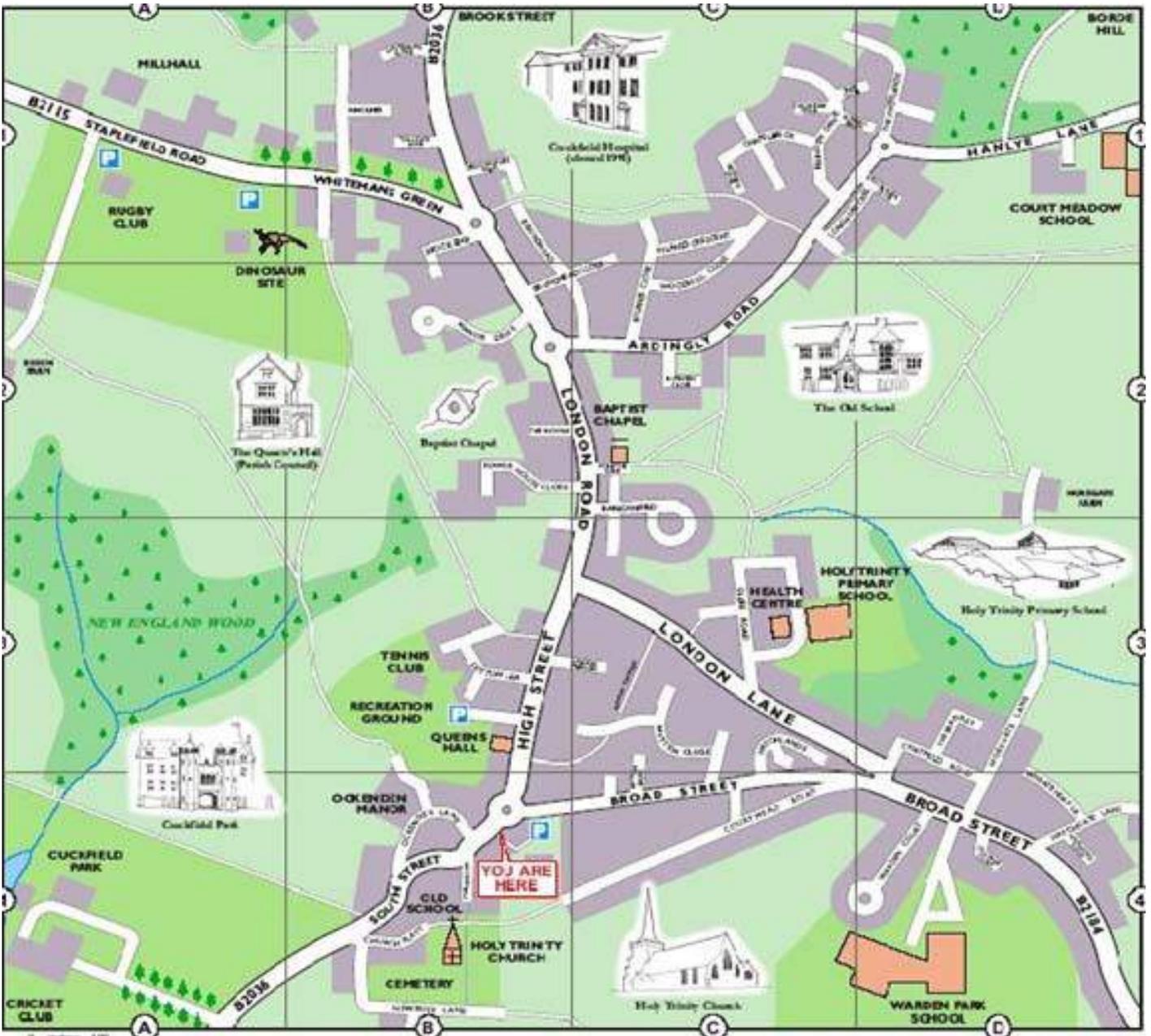
B/11 All communal living areas, terraced dwellings and commercial places should make provision in accessible and unobtrusive location for the storage of wheelie bins and bicycles.

B/12 Communal garages of open style or with doors are to be designed in durable local materials and in sympathy with the character of the area.

6

HIGHWAYS

Cuckfield is accessed primarily via the B2036 which runs through the village. The B2036 to the A272 and the A23 from the south and to the M23 to the north. The other main links to Cuckfield are the B2114 from the northwest at Whitemans Green, the B2184 from the southeast at Broad Street and Ardingly Road/Hanlye Lane from the northeast. Although the village is bypassed to the south, a lot of traffic still uses the B2036 route from Burgess Hill through Cuckfield.



MAP OF CUCKFIELD SHOWING SCHOOL AND FOOTPATHS/TWITTENS

- 1 Warden Park Secondary School (1500+ pupils);
- 2 Holy Trinity Primary School (300+ pupils);
- 3 Courtmeadow Special School (90+ pupils);
- 4 Cuckfield Playgroup (80+);
- 5 Next Step Nursery;
- 6 Busy Bees Nursery;
- 7 Nursery at Whitemans Green;
- 8 Football, Rugby & Athletics at Whitemans Green (800+ participants);
- 9 Football at Recreation Ground

CUCKFIELD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Cuckfield has three schools, four pre-schools and three sports clubs which all generate additional car and pedestrian traffic.

Traffic calming has been a priority for the community over many years. Through the 'Safe Routes to Schools' scheme, efforts have been made to improve the safety of children walking to school and to encourage more to do so. In particular, there is a need to make London Lane safer for the many pedestrians which use the very narrow pavement.

The network of footpaths and twittens is important in providing more direct links between different areas of the village. Nonetheless at peak times there are large numbers of school children and parents on the school access roads. London Lane has been particularly problematic as the pavement is only continuous on the north side and narrows considerably past the entrance to Glebe Road. Given the restrictions for improvement, a scheme to change drivers' perception in order to encourage them to reduce speed and encourage awareness of pedestrians was implemented. This included removing some sections of the centre white line, marking out edge of carriageway lines 0.75 metres away from the edge of the pavement to provide a buffer pedestrians and changing the tarmac to a more rural looking surface. Pedestrian crossing points have also been introduced in Ardingly Road and also London Lane linking up the twittens and footpaths.

The Cuckfield Parish Plan of 2007 has as one of its main aims a commitment to slow traffic down and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Where possible this should be achieved by changes to road surfacing and markings to reflect a more rural environment and with clearly defined crossing points for pedestrians, as well as by reducing the prominence and proliferation of street signage and furniture. It also aims to encourage the development of interlinked cycle lanes and footpaths suitable for all users.



Pavements

The High Street and London Road are characterised by their low kerbs and brick pavements. Cuckfield is well served by its wide pavements and verges and it is only in the latest developments that this has changed. Pavements and verges play an important part in encouraging residents of all ages to walk more, particularly those with mobility issues. They also help to foster a sense of openness and space which is a characteristic of much of Cuckfield.

Parking

Parking is an issue within the village, particularly in the shopping centre and at Whitemans Green when the sports fields are in use. Staggered parking is used in



CUCKFIELD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

the High Street and Broad Street to slow the traffic down without reducing parking spaces and there is a car park off Broad Street with both longer term and short term parking restrictions. There is a car park behind the Queen's Hall for the use of visitors to the recreation ground. Despite an increase in the provision of car parking spaces at Whitemans Green, cars are still parking on the pavements and roadside which can cause a hazard for local residents. Parking hazards can be exacerbated where new developments do not provide adequate off road parking (driveways and garages). On road parking, particularly in new developments, should be avoided as it conflicts with the Parish Council's aim of making the environment safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

Public Transport

There are hourly bus services that connect Cuckfield with Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Brighton from the north and south of the village. A less frequent bus service runs in the day to Crawley via Handcross and Horsham. Improved services, particularly in the early morning, school exit times and in the evenings for commuters would encourage usage and reduce the reliance on private motor cars.

Footpaths and Twittens

Cuckfield has a well established network of footpaths and twittens linking various parts of the village. It is important that these long established medieval street layouts, with the many twittens and footpaths should be maintained as an important asset to the village that should be increasingly valued as use of cars for local journeys is set to reduce. Any future developments should ensure that this interlinking network of paths is incorporated and enhanced to provide access for all potential users. It is also important that paths are accessible for disabled users.

Cyclepaths

More cyclepaths are needed and, where possible, should be developed to encourage off-road use. Again, this needs to be developed into links to other parts of the village. A bridleway through Blunts Wood provides a shorter link to the mainline station in Haywards Heath. Improved lighting and the provision of a cycle track adjacent to the footpath would encourage more to use it.

Highway Noise

Highway noise pollution is significant within the village, particularly in rush-hour, as Cuckfield is a major 'rat-run' through to Haywards Heath and beyond. This has been exacerbated by the use of tar and chip resurfacing in many stretches. Where resurfacing has utilised 'whisper' tarmac, noise pollution is significantly cut, and this approach should be spread throughout the village when maintenance is undertaken.





Highway guidelines

H/1 Roads in all new developments should be designed first and foremost from a pedestrian and vulnerable road user perspective

H/2 Road surfacing and markings to reflect a more rural environment, designed to slow traffic and reduce noise with clearly defined crossing points for pedestrians, will be encouraged

H/3 Cycle ways need to be developed to provide safe and pleasant routes for everyday travel around the village

H/4 Improvements should be made to the Blunts Wood path including improved lighting and the provision of a cycle track adjacent to the footpath

H/5 Adequate off road parking (driveways and garages) should be provided on all new development. On road parking, particularly in new developments, should be avoided

H/6 Public transport services need to be improved and promoted particularly in the early morning, school exit times and in the evenings for commuters

H/7 Pavements and verges are integral to the existing streetscene and should be incorporated into the design of new development. Pavements should reflect the existing style, pattern and materials used throughout the village (particularly the brick paving)

H/8 New developments should continue to provide pedestrian links to the different areas of the village

H/9 Established rights of way and the High Weald Trail must be protected and maintained, and enhanced where possible.

H/10 Where possible access for disabled users, including users of motorised buggies, should be incorporated into both new and existing footpaths and cyclepaths

H/11 Landowners should be encouraged to increase access to open areas close to the village built boundary

H/12 The Highways Authority should utilise the latest surfacing technology when maintenance is undertaken, to improve safety and reduce noise pollution.

7

STREET FURNITURE

Street furniture in and around Cuckfield has been carefully set out in relation to its function and is sensitive to the character of the two Conservation Areas. Red Post boxes have been retained and add to the history of the village. The design of the swan shaped streets lights, in the village centre and along London Road also reflect the history of the place. They produce a low energy light thus reducing light pollution.



The village pubs have been at the centre of village life for many years and are where the local societies meet to debate local concerns. The Talbot held one of the most famous meetings regarding the relocation of the railway to Haywards Heath. Today, they carry on the tradition and play an important part in supporting the election of the Mayor of the Independent State of Cuckfield each year. The pub signs must be retained as they are important part of village history.



Street furniture guidelines

- F/1 Existing red mail boxes and free standing boxes should be retained.
- F/2 Period character lamp posts should be retained and new development should use lamp posts of swan necked style
- F/3 All litter bins and dog bins must be of the same design and situated at appropriate locations.
- F/4 Bus shelters to be located in appropriate areas and to blend in with surrounding area.
- F/5 Local finger post direction signs should retained and refurbished, rather than replaced, when maintenance is undertaken