

A Village Design Statement for the Parish of Sidlesham, West Sussex 2006



The northern end of the parish with views of Chichester Cathedral and the South Downs

This document was approved by Chichester District Council Executive Board on 11th July 2006 as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

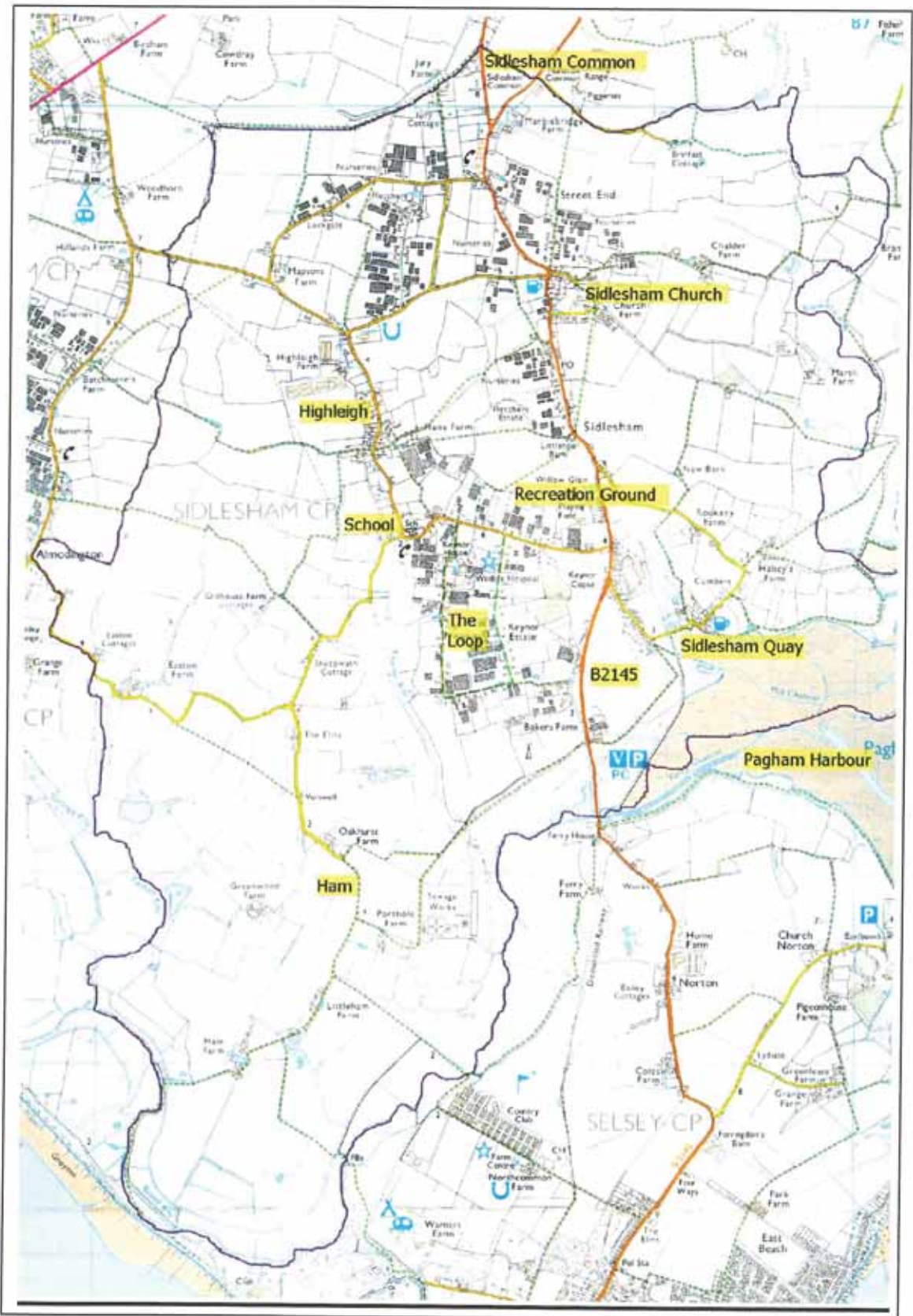
Preface

This Design Statement was initiated at a Sidlesham parish meeting in January 2003 and its history through to completion is recorded at paragraph 7.

Following approval by the parish council, it was forwarded to Chichester District Council in very early 2006. Aware of other work being undertaken, the District Council recommended that there be a short delay to allow for public consultation in March 2006 on two important draft documents – ‘Character appraisals and management proposals for the conservation areas of Sidlesham Church and Sidlesham Quay’. This would permit comparisons between the documents thereby ensuring that there would be no major conflict between them.

The Appraisals provide a very thorough and interesting description of these two conservation areas. While they do not contradict in any significant manner with the Specific Design Guidance at paragraph 6 of this Statement – which, of course, relate to the whole parish - it is important that planners are fully conversant with the guidance provided in the Appraisals before decisions are made concerning development within the Conservation Areas. The guidance is also very relevant to other sensitive areas of the parish.

Sidlesham Parish



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Parish boundary in blue

Sidlesham Parish 'Village Design Statement'

1. Introduction

1.1 Sidlesham is a large parish of some 6.5 square miles lying to the south of Chichester on the eastern side of the Manhood peninsula in West Sussex. With a southern border which touches the coast west of Selsey, it spreads 5 miles to the north to Sidlesham Common and has a breadth of up to three miles, reaching Pagham Harbour in the east.

1.2 The whole parish is notable for the wide, very flat, low-lying land, about half of which is below the 5 metres contour line. The maximum height is 7.5m. It has a significant coastal fringe, with extensive farmland composed of Grades I and II arable land and Grade III grassland. There are some excellent views to Chichester Cathedral and the South Downs to the



Views to the south west from the church tower stretching to the Isle of Wight relatively low rainfall.

north, and to the Solent and the Isle of Wight to the southwest. It has a high level of sunshine, and

1.3 Groups of buildings are clustered closely together in hamlets, which in turn are seemingly joined together by buildings widely spaced along roads. Exceptions to this are occasional buildings, often barns and agricultural dwellings, built to serve the agricultural and horticultural industries. In this flat landscape, the buildings occupy the strip immediately above the horizon, sharing it with natural features such as trees and hedgerows.



Buildings sharing the horizon with natural features

Buildings are therefore almost always softened visually by containment 'within the landscape', but more recently floodlights, mobile telephone masts and new build have appeared which do not settle into this landscape, either because of siting, scale, material or form and are, as a result, discordant.

1.4 The parish includes two Conservation Areas, one in the vicinity of the parish church of St Mary our Lady (known in the Local Plan as



Sidlesham Quay

Sidlesham Church), the other in Mill Lane (Sidlesham Quay), but it does not have any Settlement Policy Areas (SPAs). One third of Pagham Harbour (originally known as Sidlesham Harbour) is within the parish and is, among a number of designations, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar Site (international designation of importance), and a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). It is of major significance. A small Site of Nature Conservation Importance is established in the woodland at Keynor Copse found to the south of Keynor Lane. Off Jury Lane in the north of the parish, there is a Safeguarded Travelling Showpeople's Site, one of two such sites within Chichester District.

1.5 The people of Sidlesham view the B2145 Chichester to Selsey main

road as a major concern. Of the 470 homes within the parish, 85 (together with some industries) directly front onto the road while the noise and volume of traffic affects an even greater proportion of parishioners due to its



heavy volume of daily commuter and business traffic. This traffic can only increase as Selsey develops further. It is one of the busiest B roads in the country, with an average of more than 11,000 daily traffic movements. It is of note that many in Selsey do not appear to see Sidlesham as a village as they drive through. The road is relatively straight with limited groupings of houses along its length.

1.6 Environment Agency publications indicate a risk of flooding within the foreseeable future within the hamlet of Ham, as far north as the southern limit to Highleigh and affecting some of Mill Lane, due to the low-lying land in these parts of the parish.

Environment Agency Flood map 2005

Key: Blue – Flooding from sea without defences. Light blue – extreme flooding. Red – sea defences



2. History

2.1 This is well recorded in ‘Sidlesham – a look at the Past’ produced by the Parochial Church Council at the turn of the Millennium. In brief, the Romans are thought to have made a landing in 46/47AD at Pagham Harbour, and the Saxon Aella landed along the Keynor rife near the site of the present village school in 477AD. Street End follows the line of the Roman Road and there are the remains of a Roman villa at Birdpond. Sidlesham is named in the Domesday Book and the Normans built part of the present church in 1200AD, the earliest known building still standing today.



St Mary our Lady

2.2 Sidlesham will have been witness to much over the centuries. Marblebridge Farm, very close to the Roman Road uncovered in the 1990’s, was built in about 1500, while houses around St Mary’s church are known to date from the 1600s. The Old Poor House, close to Pagham Harbour, is built from timbers reclaimed from a ship, possibly from the Spanish Armada.



Church Lane from the church tower



The Old Poor House

2.3 Pagham Harbour has always been of significant importance to the area, notwithstanding that it became reclaimed land for agricultural use in the mid 19th century. A succession of mills was built on the harbour's edge from the Middle Ages, but the last mill ceased operations in 1865, and was dismantled at the end of the First World War to permit the bricks to be used in local construction. A huge storm in 1910 flooded the Harbour once more, and since 1954 its national and international importance has been recognised through an ever increasing number of designations, including SSSI, SPA, Ramsar site, LNR, Natura 2000 Site and European Marine Site.

2.4 Also suffering from the storm of 1910 was the Selsey Tram. Opened in 1897, it provided a questionable rail service from Selsey to Chichester until closing in 1935. Continuing to provide nostalgic thoughts, the route can be followed in places, and indeed the platform at Chalder still exists.

2.5 The motor vehicle has had a fundamental effect upon the parish. At the beginning of the 20th century, the parish was considered self-sustaining with employment on the farms and with shops and facilities within the area sufficient to support the inhabitants. By the beginning of the 21st century, very few are employed 'on the land', and there is no genuine shop, no post office nor a doctor's surgery. The inhabitants rely on Chichester, Selsey and the Witterings for their needs, generally using their cars rather than public transport, cycling or walking to reach their destinations.

2.6 A further significant change to Sidlesham came in 1934 with the establishment of the Land Settlement Association (LSA). Former farms at Keynor, Fletchers and Street End encompassing about 800 acres of the best agricultural land in the south were passed over to several hundred government-sponsored emigrants from the depressed industrial north who, preceded by the men folk on self build projects, were accommodated in the houses with the distinctive deep-mansarded or hipped roofs, still very prominent today.

3. Description of the Parish today

3.1 As would be expected of a largely agricultural and horticultural parish, the population is spread randomly across the area with no clear village centre. However, there are some very distinctive parts to the neighbourhood:

3.2 Conservation areas

3.2.1 **Sidlesham Church.** The Conservation Area of Sidlesham Church is centred on St Mary's Church set in a large churchyard that contains the parish war memorial, and is neatly surrounded by housing in Church and Chalder Lane to the north and Church Farm Lane to the south.

Church Lane in particular contains many buildings of character and considerable age dating back to the



Church Lane

1660s. These were initially homes for agricultural workers, but have subsequently been modernised internally. Thatch is prominent within this Lane, as are flint and stone boundary walls that add enormously to the character of the area but ensure the lane remains narrow without the possibility of pavements. Church Farm Lane, also a narrow single track lane, has two buildings of considerable character but is dominated by houses built since the Second World War. Many of these have a traditional Sussex hip roof and, overall, mature gardens now ensure that they fit in well within the area – albeit they are somewhat prominent when viewed from the

south. In the centre is a glebe field, leased by a local farmer from the Diocese of Chichester; this is an important feature of the parish and must remain open pasture. The church hall nearby plays a useful



Glebe Field

role, but its appearance could be enhanced as could that of the adjacent electrical sub station. The five-way junction on the sharp bend outside the Anchor Pub on the B2145 is a considerable traffic hazard; any road works to make this safer must



not adversely affect the entrance to this Conservation Area, dominated as it is by Challens Barn and the pub itself.

The Anchor Bend

3.2.2 Sidlesham Quay. Stretching along Mill Lane, past the site of the old mills, and beyond the harbour, this area contains a wonderful selection of buildings, including an old Methodist chapel now converted to housing, that clearly indicate the mix of individuals and trades that were built up when the harbour was the centre of activity.



Mill Lane

There is no specific or identifiable characteristic within the locality, but it is the relationship of buildings one to another and their enclosures, in the form of many stone and flint boundary walls,



a typical Sidlesham wall

that determines the character of this part of the parish. In particular, there are excellent examples of Mixen rock (taken from a reef south of Selsey), flint (cobble and knapped) and galleting with flint shards. The area also

contains some less architecturally desirable buildings which, due to the closeness of buildings, cannot be shielded by trees, but some recent re-development in the lane is sympathetic to surrounding properties and sets a good example for future building alterations. Much of Mill Lane lacks space for vehicles but to provide solutions would greatly degrade the neighbourhood. It is essential that any future development is sympathetic to this very historical area. Overall, Sidlesham Quay is well shielded from the north by trees but while providing open views to the south, it has a somewhat prominent appearance when viewed from the B2145.



Bungalows which do not fit ideally in Mill Lane

3.3 Highleigh. Essentially built along one road, it developed through the 18th and 19th centuries, mostly on its eastern side. These houses are sited at a higher level, and generally relate to the street with the frontage delineated by a wall set at the road edge. With one or two exceptions, development on the western side came later, and used Keynor rife as its boundary. Generally, houses are set back from this boundary probably to safeguard against flooding from the rife. Overall, this



A house set back clear of the rife and shielded by trees

hamlet contains many buildings of enormous character, yet has a far larger proportion of modern buildings of dubious design. However, much of the older part of Highleigh is enhanced by the rife and the numerous trees running beside the road, such that the whole area is attractive and has a sense of tranquillity, with many buildings partially hidden from full view by mature trees. It is an excellent



The rife, a bench and trees successfully remove the harshness of modern buildings.

example of what can be achieved by the planting of trees and hedges, not always replicated in other areas. At its northern end is both Highleigh Pound, a rare example of a parish pound used to confine stray cattle

when commoners' cattle and sheep grazed over unfenced common land (and rumoured to have been restored by French prisoners of the Napoleonic War), and a brick sheepdip believed to be well over 200 years old with rare brickwork and connected to a pond. Highleigh Fields is a new housing estate permitted as an exemption to replace a large turkey farm on a brown field site and is ideally situated well out of view. Traffic uses Highleigh as a 'rat run' from the B2145 to the western side of the peninsula.

3.4 LSA properties. Found in Cow and Chalk Lanes (also known as the Loop and classified as an Area of Horticultural Development (HDA)), Fletchers Lane, Street End Lane and on part of the B2145, these are very distinctive buildings which brought about a significant change to the parish when built on four-acre plots in the 1930s. This distinctiveness should not be lost, and every effort made to maintain the rooflines



An example of an LSA house

and the unique design features of the houses themselves. But they and their associated outbuildings can require considerable maintenance and updating. Chalk Lane benefits from the road lined



The Black Poplars on Chalk Lane

with many mature trees, particularly Black Poplars, and this provides a most attractive avenue which should be replicated wherever possible and practical. Conversely, Cow Lane has a cluster of four very dissimilar modern houses which add little to the general area.

3.5 Ham. Very much an agricultural area, properties are widely spaced and are of considerable character. In most cases, they date back very many years. But the risk of flooding should preclude any major development within the hamlet.

3.6 Remaining areas. Small areas outside those above include Sidlesham Common, the south side of Jury Lane, Rookery, Keynor and Manhood Lanes which have their own distinctive characteristics, albeit they lack the vernacular materials of earlier buildings, and were built at the time when



Manhood Lane and its central green

production methods and transport permitted cheaper options. Notable is Manhood Lane, an enclosed area around a central green and with one access to the main road. The mix of houses around the outside of this area relate well together, subtly changing to provide a variety of design. The area would, however, benefit from trees within the central green. Another option would be the provision here of a children's play area. Other buildings of architectural interest are Shotford Cottages, the properties just south of these on the eastern



Gorse Terrace

side of the B2145 (as long as construction material is common to all), Gorse Terrace (on the B2201 at the northern part of the parish known as Sidlesham Common) and the Cymen Ora cottages (next to the school). Notably, all are two storey buildings with high-pitched clay tiled roofs. The

school itself in Keynor Lane was founded in 1875 and, as can clearly be seen by differing designs, was enlarged both in 1908 and again in 1936. Also notable but for less complimentary reasons is the new Sports Hall and office block added to the school in 2003. Providing a most valuable asset to the parish, the Sports Hall nevertheless can only be described as out of place architecturally. Decision makers must weigh most carefully cost versus design when considering



The new school sports hall

any future structure of this nature and demand, even if costs are involved, appropriate land-scaping to soften the harsh nature of a building. Also within this area is the Recreation Ground, ideally situated at the population centre of the parish but hidden from general view. It was bought by the Parish Council in 1956 with a covenant that it be used for no purpose other than a sports field or recreation ground. Now the home of Sidlesham Football Club and the Sports and Social club, there is much potential for further sports and recreational facilities, together with a new 'village hall' to serve all the parishioners.



The Recreation Ground with Sports and Social Club and football pitch to the left; also showing are floodlights, mobile phone masts and telegraph poles visible over much of the parish

4. **The Future**

4.1 **Future development.** There are currently no plans for any significant development within the parish. While acknowledging the pressures on local authorities to find land for further housing, the majority of the population strongly supports a 'no new build policy' because:

4.1.1 This is a rural location with much of it at risk of flooding. The report 'Going Dutch on the Manhood Peninsula' dated 2001 strongly states that no building at less than 5 metres above sea level should be permitted.

4.1.2 There are very limited facilities (no village shop, no doctor's surgery, etc)

4.2 **Buildings of special interest.** Nothing must permit the destruction of existing buildings or structures of interest and importance which are attractive in their own right or which contribute to the character and

appearance of the parish. Current planning law protects buildings and structures listed as Grade I (St Mary's Church) and II but there are also other buildings whose destruction or alteration would be detrimental to the



The stone bus shelter

area. Notable are some ex LSA houses so far little modified but which have historical value. Other possible examples are the Anchor Pub, the Old Poor House, and the stone bus shelter at the northern end of the parish. It is for consideration that the Parish Council identifies suitable buildings and structures and produces a local list, in co-operation with current owners, which should be forwarded for inclusion as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This would

not necessarily affect the permitted development rights of a dwelling but identifies the importance of the building or structure to the area and therefore the need for extra care in any future development. Annex A provides the criteria for inclusion on the List.

4.3 Affordable Housing. There is much support for the provision of a small number of affordable houses within the parish for those people who have a direct connection with the area. By 2005, house prices had reached such a level that it was difficult for first time buyers to purchase. Similarly, essential workers, the elderly who may have lived all their lives in the parish and wish to stay, and children who have been brought up and wish to remain, find buying into the housing market difficult. But the provision of small numbers of affordable houses is unlikely to increase the population sufficiently to make the parish self-sustaining.



Affordable housing at West Dean College, West Sussex in a design suitable for Sidlesham.

With thanks to Hastoe Housing Association

5 Design Guidance for the future

“Change is constant. The way we embrace it defines our future”. HM The Queen.

5.1 Sidlesham is a rural parish, even though a large percentage of its inhabitants commute daily to Chichester and beyond. It contains buildings that are hundreds of years old with many fine examples of knapped flint villas through to others of modern construction. Therefore, new buildings and alterations should take account of the location and its local distinctiveness. The parish cannot be described as having any one significant characteristic, but has examples of changing building styles which have produced an eclectic and interesting mix.



This

or this?

5.2 Such development should not necessarily preclude modern ideas or materials, especially where they are environmentally beneficial, but always provided that the end result is in keeping with Sidlesham being a country parish of some historical significance. The mundane, mass-produced or standardised approach often found in suburban locations is not appropriate. Neither is the use of experimental, incongruous and poor quality design or material.

5.3 A positive approach should be made to the use of renewable energy. The parish lies in an area of good sunshine levels and, in particular, the use of solar power, heat pumps and photovoltaic cells is encouraged, though their siting should be sympathetic to neighbouring properties. Large wind-generating equipment is considered to be too obtrusive for this area but small units for individual houses should be considered. The sinking of deep, large tanks for the collection of rain and ‘grey’ water for non-drinking and non-cooking purposes is encouraged to aid the conservation of water.

6. Specific Design Guidance

6.1 The following specific points either enhance, or are in addition to, the policies clearly stated in the Chichester Local Development Document Core Strategy Submission Document dated May 2006. For any development within the two conservation areas, additional important guidance can be found within the 'Character appraisal and management proposals' for the conservation areas of Sidlesham Church and Sidlesham Quay also produced in 2006.

6.2 Sidlesham should continue to have no Settlement Policy Areas. Such policy restricts new housing to sites classified Policy Liv3, Meeting Affordable Housing needs in Smaller Settlements. Policy Sus6 is also relevant though the argument to develop any green field site must be very strong indeed.

6.3 Future development is to be of high quality and Policy T1s1 rigorously adhered to. Should any developments of significant size ever be authorised, the 106 agreement (a section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that requires developers to provide benefits to the area) should, after consultation with the parish, be utilised for the benefit of the parish, even if the benefit itself is not within the parish boundary.

6.4 Any development must be sympathetic to its neighbours in design, space and material, and must enhance the area as a whole. Within the historical parts of the parish, it is essential that the nature, characteristics and limitations of the area be understood so that changes are appropriate.

6.5 The density and form of development should be sympathetic to the surrounding area.

6.6 Where development is permitted remote from other property, two storey buildings with pitched roofs of at least 40 degrees with the use of plain clay tiles are encouraged. Sussex Hip is also very strongly encouraged. Traditional extended eaves and verges (tiles over a gable and without boxed eaves and barge boards) are preferred to flush designs and the building should blend into the landscape.

6.7 Bungalows or new buildings with low-pitched roofs are not supported. Such buildings are generally not sympathetic to a rural setting.

6.8 Flint and local stone, ideally topped with thatch, will always be viewed favourably. But, with the availability of such materials now limited, or if costs necessitate otherwise, traditional brick and tile of a soft colour should be used. Bright or painted brickwork, or rendering, fascias and bargeboards, or any other material which highlights the building within the rural setting, would not normally be supported, unless in unobtrusive colours. Soft edging and good use of form is called for rather than harsh juxtaposition of inappropriate materials.



Even white makes a building stand out

6.9 The layout and grouping of houses requires careful planning. Uniformity, but with subtle changes in design rather than material, is required. Houses at a different angle to their neighbours, forward of the building line or not parallel to the road can appear out of place and affect the symmetry of the whole.



A well laid out entrance to a small housing estate

The entrance to such groupings should preclude access by vehicles at speed, and should provide a 'welcome' to the area through a well defined, but safe, access.

6.10 Important views noted in the 'Character appraisal and management proposals' for the two conservation areas must be maintained.

6.11 Dormers should be small in scale, pitched and not flat; the use of low (flush) roof-lights should be considered as an alternative.



Dormers and a Sussex Hip (but inappropriate eaves)

6.12 The size, location and design of conservatories are important and must take into consideration the style and materials of construction of the properties they adjoin.

6.13 Extensions to houses must be subservient to the main roof and in keeping in scale, design and material to the original.



A good example of extensions and suitable windows

6.14 The choice of windows, particularly replacements, should follow traditional patterns, with balanced lights, consistent with sight lines and the use of multiple rather than large single panes.

6.15 Garages must be of a design and material in keeping with the main house. If not attached, they are to be beside or behind the main house as individual units, and not grouped together in the case of a multiple development. Outhouses and sheds are to be of brick/stone and/or timber with a pitched roof. If metal buildings are unavoidable, every effort must be made to reduce the visual impact.



A modern metal shed whose visual impact will be improved when the trees and bushes have grown

6.16 The removal of mature trees, walls and hedges for the benefit of development should not be permitted. Tree Preservation Orders must be respected.

6.17 Conversely, the provision of boundary walls and hedges (excepting Leylandii) are strongly encouraged as is the planting of traditional British trees such as oak, beech and ash (as opposed to exotic alternatives) which must have the space that allows them to grow to maturity. New development of any size must consider the provision of landscaping to soften the visual appearance of the buildings, especially on roadsides.

6.18 Close-boarded fencing other than as a temporary measure is not encouraged. Hedging is preferred as a permanent feature and should take security and the safety of children and animals into account.

6.19 Storage tanks. Tanks should be screened from view either by hedging or shrubbery.

6.20 Driveways. Gravel or landbased crushed gravel is encouraged rather than brick, concrete or tarmac. Gates should give a rustic appearance and be of timber supported by timber or small brick pillars attached to flint and stonewalls, or abutting hedges. Large brick pillars and brick walls are not encouraged.



A partially hidden gas tank and gravel driveway providing a pleasing look

6.21 Drainage. As the landscape is very flat, all ditches, culverts and rifes require regular maintenance. It follows that any development must ensure ponds, ditches and rifes in the vicinity remain fully effective.

6.22 External Lighting. Should be simple, attached to buildings and provide a general soft light to the area which respects the privacy of neighbours and minimises light pollution. Mock street and high-powered lighting is not normally necessary.

6.23 Power, telephone lines and other cabling should be placed underground wherever possible.

6.24 Street furniture and traffic signage. These need to be kept to a minimum commensurate with safety. Those that are permitted must be kept clean, functional and clear of hedge growth.

6.25 General signage. The rural setting is not suitable for the modern illuminated and 'flashy' sign. Signs advertising a business and house name boards should follow rural lines, be on a single vertical surface, simple in design and not be over-large or illuminated. Signs must be restricted in number, and those of a temporary nature left in position for no more than one week.

6.26 Renewable energy. Every development is most strongly encouraged to include at least one energy or water saving measure beyond those contained within statutory regulations.

6.27 House names. Property owners are strongly encouraged to maintain original house names. With a parish dating back over 800 years, the names of many properties indicate past activity and provide a fascinating and useful link with history. Once changed, that link may disappear for ever.

7. **Parish Consultation.**

7.1 The Design Statement was initiated at a Parish Meeting held in January 2003 at which 64 parishioners were in attendance. Subsequently, organisations within the parish including primary school and the Women's Institute were invited to partake. In April 2003, a web site went live at www.sidlesham.org.uk which has contained all agendas and minutes of the Steering Group's meetings, together with the initial draft of the Statement. This was advertised through the Parish Magazine in May 2003 and by the Chichester Observer. Sample questionnaires were distributed within a part of the parish in April and May but the response was disappointing. A trailer was used at the Church Fete to advertise the Statement and elicit suggestions, and this proved successful.

7.2 Circumstances dictated that little action took place from late 2003 until early 2005. Subsequently the draft was rewritten, and the consultation stage commenced in April 2005. Builders, estate agents, architects together with those listed by Chichester District Council received copies (totalling about 30) while the parishioners were invited to comment through the website, an article in the Parish Magazine and at the Annual Parish Meeting in May 2005. Responses were received through until early August.

7.3 Following thorough consultation with the Parish Council from September to December, the document was completed in early 2006 and passed to Chichester District Council for adoption. Following a short delay to ensure compatibility with the 'Character appraisal and management proposals' for the two conservation areas being produced during the first half of 2006, it was approved by the Executive Board on the 11th July 2006 as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Annex A

Buildings of Special Interest

1. The criteria for the selection of buildings or structures of character not already listed Grade I or II are:

1.1. Buildings of outstanding design, detailing, appearance or special interest because of the use of materials.

1.2. Buildings that are extremely good examples of traditional or established style, or unusual type.

1.3. In special cases, buildings or structures which contribute towards the local villagescape or have important historical associations, or usage which adds to the character of the parish.

1.4. All buildings must be largely intact and not adversely affected by later extensions or alterations.

1.5. Preferably, although not exclusively, they should make a positive contribution to their surroundings or the street scene.

2. The above equate well to the perceived criteria required for "Positive" housing referred to within the 'Character appraisal and management proposals' for the two conservation areas of Sidlesham Church and Sidlesham Quay.