

East Dean and Friston

(Inset Map No.11 - Mapsheet)

Introduction

19.7.1 East Dean and Friston together form a relatively large settlement which straddles the busy A259 coast road, four miles west of Eastbourne. The village is essentially residential in character with a range of facilities. Due to its attractive appearance and setting near the coast, the old village of East Dean is also a popular tourist destination. The current population is estimated at 1,600 persons.

19.7.2 The Council aims to maintain the attractive residential character of the village, at the same time conserving its historic environment and rural Downland setting.

Environment

19.7.3 East Dean and Friston are set in a landscape of very high quality, lying within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Also, this stretch of coast up to the A259 lies within the Sussex Heritage Coast. Friston Forest, an extensive Forestry Commission plantation, extends to the west, and Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters Country Park are located further south.

19.7.4 The old village of East Dean, to the south of the A259, lies in a fold in the Downs. It has developed around an attractive village green, where a number of 18th Century listed buildings typify the traditional appearance of Downland settlements. The special architectural and historic character of this part of the village has been recognised by its designation as a Conservation Area. Environmental improvements to the Conservation Area, particularly improved landscaping and the resurfacing of footpaths around The Green, will be promoted.

19.7.5 In contrast, Friston, which extends onto the Downs north of the A259, consists mainly of a large private residential estate, started in the inter-War years but not completed until the 1970's. The elevated position of this development means that it is widely visible from the surrounding countryside, although the impact of much of the estate on the landscape is mitigated to some extent by its low density, well-treed character.

Development Boundary

19.7.6 In order to protect the high environmental qualities and outstanding landscape setting of the village, it is important to resist further outward encroachment of development into the surrounding open countryside and to restrict inappropriate

intensification of development in the historic core, the low density areas of particular character and the more rural fringes.

19.7.7 The development boundary is defined to the north of the A259. It tightly envelops properties fronting the east side of Old Willingdon Road and existing residential development on the Downlands Estate. The scatter of dwellings either side of the Jevington Road have been excluded in view of their more sensitive rural fringe location where further intensification of the built form would be considered unacceptable in landscape terms.

19.7.8 Around the edge of the Downlands Estate, the boundary generally follows the rear garden boundaries in order to contain development to the existing line of dwellings and prevent any encroachment into open Downland. The more extensive rear curtilages of the properties at the end of The Brow and Peakdean Lane have been specifically excluded, however, in view of their prominent location at the head of the valley and the need to prevent any outward expansion of the built form beyond the existing settlement pattern.

19.7.9 Properties south of the A259, including the historic core of East Dean, are excluded from the development boundary as it is considered that there are no real further opportunities for new development without detracting from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, the overall rural qualities of the area or its mainly open Downland landscape setting. Existing open areas, most notably The Green and The Horsefield, together with adjacent orchards and gaps between development, make a particularly important contribution to this character and provide valuable visual links with the Downland beyond.

Housing

19.7.10 Recent residential development has largely taken place on infill sites. Some additional housebuilding within the development boundary for the village may be appropriate, subject to satisfying normal planning requirements. Future development opportunities will be limited to infilling, the redevelopment of existing sites and the conversion of buildings to residential use.

Old Willingdon Road and Western Downlands Estate

19.7.11 Old Willingdon Road and the western part of the Downlands Estate are characterised by large

detached properties set in spacious gardens with mature landscaping. They are situated on a ridge-top, well above the level of the remainder of the village, and the houses fronting the Old Willingdon Road in particular enjoy wide-ranging views across the surrounding countryside. It is considered that the character and location of these residential areas are such as to justify particular care when applications for development or redevelopment are submitted within it. A low density housing policy is therefore put forward to ensure that new development is only permitted where it maintains the essential characteristic features of the area, e.g. the size, position and site coverage of buildings, frontage widths, trees, landscaping and boundary treatments.

19.7.12 The houses on the western part of the Downlands Estate are mostly two-storey and set back from the road frontage, often following a common building line. Plot sizes vary and a number of dwellings are open to the road with very little screening, while others have dense hedges of laurel or privet. The character of the area depends in large part upon the spaces around the buildings and the formal layout of the estate is reflected in the gardens, which are generally landscaped with well-kept lawns and a high proportion of ornamental or flowering trees.

19.7.13 In contrast, the residential development fronting the Old Willingdon Road has a more rural character due to its particularly low density and its location on the edge of open countryside. The narrow road and informal grass verges and hedges also contribute towards this character. Property frontages are generally much wider than those on the western part of the Downlands Estate and while most of the houses have a west-facing aspect, their position within each site varies. Due to their ridge-top location and lack of tree cover, the houses fronting Old Willingdon Road tend to be prominent in the landscape and are often visible over a wide area.

19.7.14 All proposals for new development and redevelopment within the Old Willingdon Road and western part of the Downlands Estate will be expected to have regard for the features described above, and development which would be detrimental to the character of the area will be resisted. Since the individual characteristics of each site and the particular merits of each scheme will be of fundamental importance when determining planning applications, it is not considered appropriate to set down specific standards relating to plot sizes, building heights, etc. However, over and above other policies in the Plan, a general indication of the matters which will be taken into account when considering development proposals within the policy area is given below:-

VB7 The Council will protect the established low density character of the Old Willingdon Road and western Downlands housing policy

area, as defined on the Proposals Map, and proposals which adversely affect that character will not be permitted. Planning applications for new residential development on sites within the policy area will be determined with reference to the following criteria:

- (1) the form, scale, site coverage and siting of the proposed development should reflect the character of the adjoining buildings and the spaces around them, existing building lines and characteristic frontage widths;**
- (2) the proposed development should not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features which contribute to the spacious, low density character of the area;**
- (3) the proposed frontage and other boundary treatment should have regard for the established character of the area. Hedges will normally be the most appropriate form of enclosure and new walls will not be acceptable;**
- (4) the proposed development should not have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding countryside.**

Within this policy area, the distinctive very low density character of the residential development fronting the Old Willingdon Road is recognised, and any development proposals must respect this particular character and the high quality landscape setting.