

Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Design Guide



July 2017

Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Draft Design Guide

Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide is informed by consultation with residents, interest groups, Herstmonceux Parish Council's Building Development Committee and reference to Wealden District Council (WDC) Design Guide. The WDC guide is available on the Wealden web site www.wealden.gov.uk

Copies of the records of the meetings with residents and interest groups are available on the parish web site www.herstmonceuxparish.org.uk

Herstmonceux Parish

The predominantly rural parish of Herstmonceux is located in the south-eastern area of Wealden. It contains the settlements of Herstmonceux, Cowbeech and Windmill Hill. The northern part of the parish is located within the High Weald AONB, the southern tip falls within the Pevensey Levels RAMSAR site and site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It also contains a number of areas of historic woodland.

There have been a number of small developments in the parish in the past ten years. In addition, outline planning applications for developments at Lime Cross (70 dwellings), Lime Roughs (40 dwellings) and George Collins (17 dwellings) have received Outline Planning Approval from Wealden District Council.

Wealden District Council is currently reviewing the Wealden Local Plan. The Issues and Options consultation in 2016, proposed a minimum of an additional 120 dwellings in the parish. However, the proposal for any additional dwellings over and above the Outline Approvals detailed above, has been removed in the Supporting Documents and the Wealden Local Plan Consultation Document dated 3 March 2017. To access the WDC Consultation Document and Supporting Documents please go to www.wealden.gov.uk

Building Design

In line with WDC's Design Guide but taking into account the parish environment, the design of buildings is of major importance for any development within Herstmonceux Parish. Small developments of up to three dwellings should conform as far as possible, whilst retaining some individualist design. Development may be inevitable but it is expected that careful consideration is given at the Full Planning stage and Reserved Matters when considering the 'look' of the development in question.

Points to be considered in preferred style of building to include: -

- A mixture of materials which would match those of the existing parish - plain tiles, slates, stock brickwork, some black and white featheredge boarding and possibly a small amount of flint work and rendering (in suitable locations away from trees).

- House design to be traditional for the area whilst incorporating modern materials. To include steeply pitched roofs of differing styles, Sussex style windows and good quality detailing.
- A variety of designs within the site.



Typical 'Sussex' design showing mix of design and materials.



Example of two-storey flats incorporating mix of materials including flint.



Development in chalet bungalows suited for residents wishing to remain in the parish and wishing to downsize.

A recent development within Herstmonceux which is in keeping with its surroundings is located in the centre of the village. The development is a mix of terraced houses, flats and chalet bungalow dwellings.



The Old Trug Shop, Gardner Street, Herstmonceux - one-bedroom chalet bungalows with small private area at rear backing on to communal garden area.



Terraced cottage style properties showing attractive front aspect to main road.



Second half of development on the road, showing flats and access road to bungalow development at the rear.

In conversation with one of the residents of the terraced chalet bungalows at the rear of the development it was said “... *I am extremely happy here, love it and very glad to be able to live in such a nice development*”.

In contrast, the following pictures are examples of the type of another recent development built in the parish which did not adhere to original detail of the plan or the above preferred styles of build. Eventually it bore little resemblance to the original plans and is a development which should not be repeated as shown by the pictures below.



North Lodge, Hailsham Road, Herstmonceux.

The site is on the approach to village showing buildings which are not in keeping with styles opposite. There is excessive and inappropriate use of rendering which is now unsightly due to algae growth. This could have been prevented by a finish that includes preventatives. The property frontage is not suited for its environs and approach to historical village.



Further detail of site, which shows inappropriate style of build, exterior finish and services equipment taking out parking space. Parking occurs in the bus stop and on the pavement as shown overleaf.



Parking issues at North Lodge.



Inappropriate use of materials and design of dormer windows impacting on the outlook of North Lodge. Frontage of houses not finished off with suitable demarcation boundaries to pavement area.



Detail of degraded rendering and services equipment impacting on frontage outlook. Also, lack of suitable provision for bins.

Comment and concerns regarding the design aspects of the buildings on this development are as follows: -

- The overall appearance is completely out of keeping with the surrounding houses and village materials which are mainly brick and tile, or slate. This is such a prominent location at the approach to the village centre and a different selection of materials would have been more appropriate.
- The use of rendering in this location near trees is unsatisfactory, generally it is now covered in algae and already looking shabby. The vertical blue stripes on some of the properties is totally out of keeping.
- The 'box' dormers are out of keeping and look 'cheap and nasty' and not a suitable window style.

The following pictures are examples of the preferred models of design for consideration for housing developments within the parish.



'Sussex' style terraced housing with sensitive mix of materials used and style of exterior finish such as tile hung and weatherboarding.



Terrace of cottage style properties using a local material i.e. flint and typical design feature of tile hung exterior.



An example of sheltered housing in local area showing the cottage style window and roof detailing.



An example of a housing association development in the local area.



The same development showing the houses fronting the road.

Site Layout

The design of the layout of any development sites within the parish is vital. Herstmonceux Parish Council is particularly keen that the following site layout aspects are not part of any sites: -

- Straight wide estate roads.
- Repetitive designs, straight rows of houses etc.
- Cheap or unsuitable building materials which do not match those in the village.
- Alien design details such as box dormers etc.
- Three storey buildings or 3 or more levels of blocks of flats etc.
- Exposed sub-stations or other obtrusive services detailing.

Comments and concerns regarding site layout with respect to North Lodge show poor layout of this site as follows: -

- The siting so close to the main A 271 road is unsatisfactory.
- The frontage appearance of part walled, part open, is very poor and with no enclosure of the frontages of some has led to unsightly display of bins and other domestic material. This is potentially dangerous as children and pets can run straight out onto the busy road.
- There is inadequate bin storage, bins are frequently left out all week.

- There is inadequate car parking provision, cars and vans are parked on the main road and verges. This creates traffic hazards on this already overcrowded road.
- No attempt has been made to straighten the unsightly leaning telegraph pole or to re-site the mobile phone mast and its associated metal box, both of which add to the messy frontage appearance.

The preferred style of layouts should include: -

- Layouts based on Home Zone principles as per Wealden Design Guide, giving pedestrians priority rather than vehicles; curved lines in the road layouts.
- Tree planting, where possible, and some strategic green spaces.
- Traditional walls, fencing and street furniture.
- Layouts to Secured by Design standards.
- Proper provision for off road car parking and for keeping bins out of sight.
- Development of suitable scale and design to suit the above for the elderly and of similar quality for the affordable houses.

The following photographs are examples of site layout with particular reference to Home Zone principles referred to above.





The following pictures are further examples of 'Sussex' style of housing, incorporating a mix of styles and materials.





Developments and Infrastructure Provision

There is a need to address all aspects of infrastructure with regard to design and especially those directly concerning any future developments within the Parish.

Comments and concerns raised by residents: -

- Inadequate school provision.
- Inadequate car parking provision.
- Lack of sufficient sports and leisure facilities.
- Potential for businesses.
- Traffic Management.
- Drainage.

School

Residents are concerned that the school is not able to cope with current demand. Some children from the parish attend schools in nearby villages and towns.

For example, the below follows a response to Herstmonceux Community Facebook page for comments: -

"....one thing in terms of infrastructure is the school. No point in building new homes etc. when the school is full and despite an appeal my partner's son has to start year one in Hellingly! A porta-cabin at least to alleviate this issue until more permanent development can begin at the school. I live in West End and this seems like poor planning presently (not your exact dept I know) let alone before new chimney pots go up".

Therefore, any future developments will inevitably bring in a large influx of children with which the school will be unlikely to accommodate.

Car Parking

There are major issues around the parking outside the school during term time peak hours. There are also difficulties with parking for residents and visitors in Herstmonceux village centre car park which is often used for long-term parking by school staff and staff from local businesses. The provision of an alternative site for car parking at Herstmonceux Recreation Ground needs to be reviewed. This would create essential, additional parking particularly if Herstmonceux is to be further developed as a Local Service Centre.

There are other issues around parking within the parish where green spaces such as grass verges are being destroyed and antisocial parking in Gardner Street causing serious issues for parishioners trying to use the pavements.

Any future developments in the Parish must provide adequate parking to prevent additional pressure on the existing parking and to make the facilities, services and tourist opportunities inviting to visitors.

Sports and Leisure Facilities.

It is hoped that the proposed development at Lime Cross Recreation Area can proceed in the near future. (NB Herstmonceux Parish Council was informed on 3 March 2017 that the owners of the land adjacent to Lime Cross Recreation Area, will gift a strip of 20 metres of land to Herstmonceux Parish Council to extend the football pitch. This will provide adequate land, at the front of the site, for the proposed development of bowls clubhouse, bowling green, football changing rooms and Scout Hut. Investment in this project has already been made by the Parish Council and the proposed development is supported by residents.

The re-siting of the Bowls Club would free up the existing site on Herstmonceux Recreation Ground. Herstmonceux Parish Council will review the site if/when it becomes available.

There has been great interest in improving the existing leisure activities, as noted in engagement with local groups through the Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan information gathering process. This also applies to a long term view of providing facilities for cycling and walking within the parish. Long term, from a health perspective, it could also be instrumental in providing an alternative to the car in getting to and from immediate neighbouring parishes.

Businesses in the Parish

As part of the long-term development of the Parish and to provide employment opportunities for local people, Herstmonceux Parish Council supports the provision of suitable buildings for small business units and start-up units.

It is noted that some previous manufacturing sites have been developed with housing in mind and not as replacing the employment opportunities being lost. A local resident commented:

“... I moved to the village because I had a job with a local manufacturer in the village but lost my job when the site was sold for houses and have had to look for work out of the village, spoiling the reason for moving in the first place.”

Traffic Management

Traffic management is an integral part of development within the parish. Residents have expressed concern at the speed of traffic through the parish. New accesses onto the main traffic bearing roads should not increase danger to either road users or pedestrians. West End is a particular issue, with traffic regularly using the pavements as part of the highway.

Drainage

The surface water discharge from the existing developments has been a problem in some areas of the parish as the water enters the sewage system.

There has also been a significant problem, for many years, with sewage overflows in Victoria Road, Windmill Hill. The main sewage pipe along Victoria Road needs upgrading/replacing to solve the sewage overflows. All sewage from the parish discharges along the pipes in Victoria Road into the Southern Water Treatment Works at the Rocks, Windmill Hill.

Herstmonceux Parish Council has consulted with Southern Water on a number of occasions and the Council has been advised by Southern Water that information about the programme of work to resolve the problem will be available in the near future.

Conclusion

Any development in the parish should be in accordance with the policies laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan for the District. This currently comprises of the 2013 Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan and the saved policies of the adopted 1998 Wealden Local Plan.

The consultation by Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan Survey, meetings with individuals, clubs, groups, societies, businesses has informed the Design Guide that the following design points should be taken into consideration on all future development applications.

Subject to assessment of viability, all development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of the following: -

1. Ensuring that the design and layout of the development achieves a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements.

2. Respecting or enhancing the character of the site and its surroundings in terms of its proportion, form, massing, density, height, size, scale, materials and detailed design features.
3. Ensuring development of and in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings conserves, preserves, reflects and enhances the historic asset and the historic environment in accordance with their significance.
4. Ensuring development safeguards, respects and enhances the natural environment, the biodiversity, landscape and wildlife corridors and the countryside.
5. Ensuring that the layout and design takes account of the potential users of the development to provide safe, convenient and attractive links within the development and to existing networks for people with disabilities and restricted mobility, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
6. Providing vehicular access and parking suitable for the development's use and location. All parking should conform to the standards in the East Sussex County Council Guidelines.
7. Ensuring that the development does not cause an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of occupiers of existing or proposed nearby properties.
8. Incorporating sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy efficiency and water efficiency.
9. Ensuring appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials.
10. Incorporating sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change.
11. Encouraging the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology, as appropriate.
12. Ensuring that adequate infrastructure, services and community facilities are, or will be, made available to serve the development.
13. Ensuring that site layout and building design helps to provide a safe and secure environment in line with Secured by Design Guidelines.
14. If possible, all new developments should be connected to fibre landlines to improve access to Broadband services.

The data obtained informs Policy 11 of the Draft Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan:

Policy 11: The Design of Development in the Parish

All development proposals will be required to demonstrate that their design is in accordance with the provisions of the Wealden Design Guide in relation to the Low Weald Character Area and the Herstmonceux Design Guide prepared for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Herstmonceux Parish Neighbourhood Plan requires all development proposals to demonstrate that their design has positively responded to the Herstmonceux Design Guide by: -

1. Ensuring that the design and layout of the development achieves a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements.
2. Respecting or enhancing the character of the site and its surroundings in terms of its proportion, form, massing, density, height, size, scale, materials and detailed design features.
3. Ensuring development of and in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings conserves, preserves, reflects and enhances the historic asset and the historic environment in accordance with their significance.
4. Ensuring development safeguards, respects and enhances the natural environment, the biodiversity, landscape and wildlife corridors and the countryside.
5. Incorporating, where appropriate, biodiversity, landscaping and public and private open spaces and supports the creation of wildlife corridors.
6. Ensuring that the layout and design takes account of the potential users of the development to provide safe, convenient and attractive links within the development and to existing networks for people with disabilities and restricted mobility, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
7. Providing vehicular access and parking suitable for the development's use and location. All parking should conform to the standards in the East Sussex County Council Guidelines.
8. Ensuring that the development does not cause an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of occupiers of existing or proposed nearby properties.
9. Incorporating sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy efficiency and water efficiency.
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12. Encouraging the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology, as appropriate.
13. Ensuring that adequate infrastructure, services and community facilities are, or will be, made available to serve the development.
14. Ensuring that site layout and building design helps to provide a safe and secure environment in line with Secured by Design Guidelines.

If possible, all new developments should be connected to fibre landlines to improve access to broadband services.

Herstmonceux Parish Council notes that residents consider that design is an important factor in the future developments in the Parish. The Council will continue to work in close partnership with local authorities, building developers, housing associations, service providers, in all aspects of development.