

BISHOPS CLYST PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT



October 2015

A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

for the Parish of Bishops Clyst

INTRODUCTION

This 'Village Design Statement' discusses the importance of design and sets out policies which should be taken into account when changes to the village are under consideration. The aim is to produce guidelines and policies that will protect and enhance that which we value from the past, and to encourage good design in new developments in the future. By these means we wish to establish an approach that will ensure an attractive and sustainable village environment.

There is no single, simple way of achieving good design but a key message is that new buildings should be considered in the context both of their immediate surroundings and of the parish as a whole.

In order to achieve this, good design should endeavour to create places, buildings or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well and will adapt to the needs of future generations. New developments should seek to reflect local character and should take into account the enhancement and creation of open spaces, safety, access and inclusion, efficient use of natural resources and should help to create cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.

More specifically building design would be expected to consider:-

Layout – the way in which buildings and spaces between them relate to one another.

Scale – the size of buildings in relation to those around them.

Detailing – the importance of smaller elements of building and spaces- windows doors, surface treatments etc.

Materials – what a building is made of.



It is intended that this Design Statement will be seen as a framework and guide for all physical changes within the parish. By agreement with East Devon District Council these principles would become an integral part of the planning process and would be used by the local community, householders, developers and statutory authorities when development, of whatever size, is proposed.

This document has been prepared at the same time as the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan and should be read in conjunction it. The neighbourhood plan deals with planning matters i.e.

generally what should go where and this document endeavours to deal with matters of design and appearance.

THE LANDSCAPE SETTING

The parish of Bishops Clyst is located in the valley of the River Clyst. It is bounded to the west by the M5 motorway and to the north by the A30 road to Honiton. The eastern and southern boundaries follow an irregular line across the agricultural land that rises from the river in an easterly direction.

In spite of the motorway and the more recent encroachment on the skyline of the rugby stadium the valley of the River Clyst remains a largely rural scene. This being due in large part to its role as a flood plain and consequent regular flooding. It provides a much appreciated agricultural green buffer zone between Exeter and the M5, and the remaining parts of the parish.



Clyst St Mary from the Old Bridge



Rolling agricultural scenery near Sowton village

The two villages of Clyst St. Mary and Sowton are located close to the river; Clyst St Mary on the east side of the river at the river crossing and Sowton a mile to the north on the opposite side of the river. Both have been rural farming communities with (some still working) farms at the edge of the villages.

Apart from the two larger properties of Winslade House (now the offices of Friends Life) and Bishops Court, the majority of the rest of the parish comprises rolling agricultural land, (nowhere much more than 25 metres above sea level) and the attendant farms. The Westpoint County Showground at Clyst St Mary now occupies some of this land.

Apart from field boundary hedgerows and trees related to habitation in the villages and the two larger properties, there is very little woodland. The small areas remaining are shown on the attached plan.

BISHOPS CLYST PARISH – THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Bishops Clyst is a rural parish, traditionally a farming community, focussed on the two villages of Clyst St Mary and Sowton. The 'architecture' of the older buildings reflects this rural character. Their design, apart from the one off set pieces such as Winslade Manor, Bishops Court and the two Churches, is essentially vernacular in style i.e. built in form, detail and materials in accordance with local traditions.

In more recent decades however, particularly in Clyst St. Mary, there has been significant new development, the design of which generally reflects the time of construction, but has paid little regard to the vernacular design of the buildings already prevalent in the area.

The following is an up to date assessment of the characteristics of the significant built up locations in the parish and provides an indication of considerations to be taken into account in the design of new developments in those areas. As a general principle these assume buildings of a design and character that reflect the existing but this is not to say that developments which adopt a modern design approach would be ruled out. Good modern design that satisfies the general criteria of scale detail materials etc. should not be discouraged.

CLYST ST MARY VILLAGE

This includes the 'core' area of the village taking in the Village Street, Frog Lane and Manor Park.

The original part of the village is the **Village Street** which once formed part of the 'Dorchester Road' and continued across the bridge and causeway over the River Clyst on its way to Exeter. A large part of the street comprises older, largely terraced cottages, generally with white rendered walls and slate roofs, several of which are listed. There is also the occasional later (c20th) insertion and public houses the Half Moon Inn and the Maltsters (now closed), as well as the delightful school building (c19th) and its later additions. Most properties front directly onto the road or pavement and this is an important factor in the retention of the character of the village street. At the top of the street is Rydon Motors; a standard garage building with a large car sales area, and the Village Hall constructed in the 1980's.



Typical terraced cottages fronting the Village Street



Village School

Design considerations:

- Any proposed demolition of properties in the village street should be discouraged.
- Any new development that might become necessary should respect the alignment of the existing street frontages as well as the design, materials and detail of the existing buildings.
- There should be an aim to improve pedestrian access particularly in vicinity of the Londis shop and Rydon Motors where there are no pavements at present.
- New road and footpath surfaces would be of great benefit in improving the environment of the village particularly in the wider "square" area outside the shop and the Half Moon pub.



Road junction "The Square" outside shop and pub – Old Bridge beyond

Along **Frog Lane** is a terrace of c19th cottages, a row of farm cottages plus later c20th bungalow additions on both sides. At the end of the street are Brockwells Farm, Newhouse Farm (now both converted to dwellings), and three recent dwellings on the site of the old mill. Materials used are mixed but brick and slate or tiled roofs predominate.



New houses at Old Mill



Brockwell's Farm



Frog Lane cottages



Newhouse Farm

Design considerations:

- Recent developments of the Old mill site and Brockwells Farm have proved successful in maintaining much of the character of the earlier buildings and of the street scene as a whole.
- Any new developments should follow these examples and continue to reflect the character of the older traditional buildings in the street.
- Demolition of these older buildings should be resisted as should the construction of any more bungalows in a post war 'house builders' style.
- The road surface urgently needs renewal and the opportunity should be taken to tidy up the kerbs/road edges when this is done.

Manor Park is a post-war development of terraced and semi-detached houses and chalet bungalows again in brick and with tiled roofs. The terraced houses at the bottom of the road form an attractive green space but otherwise this is a fairly standard suburban cul de sac with no acknowledgement of the old village street scene to which it is joined.

Design considerations:

- In spite of this lack of recognition of the traditional building style of the village it is considered that any new additions/alterations should reflect and maintain the consistency of the design of the houses in this development.



Manor Park



Open space

WINSLADE PARK

This commenced as a development of individually designed houses on Winslade Park Avenue but became in large part a development by one developer of detached houses and bungalows largely constructed in the 1960's/1970's. Thus it became a spacious low density development in large part constructed in a consistent style comprising the use of buff coloured brickwork, white painted render and grey concrete roof tiles.

The low plot density of this development has provided space for these houses to be fairly extensively modified and extended but it is fair to say that most of this work has been carried out in such a way that respects the appearance of the design of the original houses and has not been detrimental to the overall appearance of the estate.



Original development in Winslade Park Avenue



Later development in Clyst Valley Road



Typical house with little alteration



House showing potential for extension

Design considerations:

- The overall appearance of the estate as one of detached houses in a spacious setting with generous green verges and tree planting should be maintained.
- Extensions and alterations should continue to reflect the design and materials of the original houses.

WINSLADE HOUSE AND FRIENDS LIFE COMPLEX

The original manor house, Winslade House, of Clyst St Mary was converted into offices by the London and Manchester Insurance Company in the 1970s, with additional office buildings built at the same time and in following years. These have been built in different styles which reflect the time of their construction. These buildings are at present largely vacated as development proposals for residential use are being processed by the planning authority at the present time.

Adjoining this complex and to a degree surrounded by it is Clyst St Mary Church.

At the perimeter of the original park are two of the entrance lodges, the Red and White Lodges both on Sidmouth Road and both listed grade 2.

The proposals for this site are we understand the subject of ongoing discussions with East Devon District Council but some preferences can be set out here:-

- Existing 'green' land should be protected and open space and views to Winslade House protected and maintained.
- Development ideally should be restricted to “brown field” areas of the site i.e. car parks, sites of existing buildings etc.
- The location of the church should be respected and the surroundings be improved and the church integrated visually and spatially into any new proposals.
- The possibility of this site becoming a separate village centre should however be resisted and clear linkages – footpath/cycle paths – should be established.



Winslade House



Friends Life Offices (1970s)



White Lodge



Red Lodge

CAT AND FIDDLE RESIDENTIAL PARK

Outside Clyst St. Mary on the Sidmouth Road is a large mobile home park on land behind the Cat and Fiddle public house. It is low lying and unobtrusive in the gentle upper valley of the Grindle Brook, and with its back drop of trees has a low impact on the surroundings.

This should remain a mobile home park and any desire to increase the size and height of the homes should be resisted.



View of Cat and Fiddle from nearby fields



Typical view within site

SOWTON VILLAGE

The village is largely restricted to a single street which is now a long cul de sac. A lane which joins it used to provide another connection to the A30 close to the motorway junction but this is now closed.

In spite of the village's close proximity to the M5 and A30 it has generally retained its air of quiet rural charm. The approach to the village from the A30 passes the listed farm buildings of Star Dairy and Venns Farm and between them and the main part of the village are some modern bungalows. To the south of the road junction and the war memorial lies the main village centre which contains a number of listed buildings including the old school – now the village hall - and the church. At the southern end of the street is Sowton Barton still a working farm.

At the road junction is a lodge to Bishops Court and the start of one of the original driveways that leads to the original Bishops Palace of Bishops Court which sits on the hill above the village.

Prior to the granting of conservation status some late C20th infill has taken place in the village as well as new development on the edge of the conservation area. These are generally in a more modern style and do not reflect the local vernacular of the village, see also “Conservation Area” below.



Sowton Barton and Sowton Church



Village Hall and terraced cottages



Late 1960s houses



Venn Farm

OUTLYING AREAS

The remaining parts of the parish are largely rural with agriculture predominating.

Many of the farms that have served this area cluster close to the village settlements (as described above). Only three (Winslade Barton, Dymonds Farm and Shepherds Farm) lie in more isolated locations away from the two villages. The changing requirements for agriculture and the amalgamation of farming land has led to few of these still being working farms. Many have therefore been converted for residential use or other commercial operations.

In recent years, however, alternative uses have started to appear on some of this land particularly at the County Show Ground (previously Ivington Farm), but also at smaller industrial developments at Bishops Court, Langdons opposite the show ground, and small business units in Oil Mill Lane.

Design considerations:

- Conversion of farms for residential and other use to be sensitively carried out with a view to maintaining their rural vernacular character.
- The design of industrial and other commercial developments to respect the rural location in terms of scale, materials and colour.



Dymonds Farm



Little Bridge Business Park

LISTED BUILDINGS

There are Three Grade 1 listed buildings in the parish:-

The Old Bridge across the River Clyst



Bishops Court – formerly the Palace of the Bishops of Exeter



The Church of St Michael and All Angels Sowton



The parish also contains many other Grade 2 listed buildings and structures including **Clyst St Mary Church**, **Winslade House** and several farm houses and cottages in a vernacular style. A full list can be obtained by consulting www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/devon, or The Bishops Clyst Parish Plan & Design Statement revised in 2012.



St Mary the Virgin Church, Clyst St Mary

CONSERVATION AREA

The entire village of Sowton together with adjoining fields and paddocks is a conservation area. The special character of the village was recognised in 1976. There are 25 individually listed buildings within the conservation area.

The area is fully described in the Conservation Area document, published by East Devon District Council in 1999, and the subsequent review(s). These can be accessed via eastdevon.gov.uk. (conservation & listed buildings).

The Conservation Area should be protected under terms of all statutory obligations.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a general principle design policies should ensure that nothing is built that is detrimental to its immediate surroundings and the quality of the village as a whole. Specifically:

- The design of any new buildings and extensions should respect the scale and character of the area in which they are located.
- Similar roof pitches, windows and external materials to buildings in the immediate surroundings should be adopted.
- Such considerations apply to extensions and garages.
- Appropriate modern design would not be discouraged provided this local character is respected.
- Listed buildings should be preserved, and their setting protected, the setting often being an essential part of the building's character.
- The Conservations Area of Sowton should be strongly protected and any development in Sowton should respect the principles of the conservation and be designed accordingly
- Industrial buildings in the rural environment should respect this location particularly in terms of scale (i.e. size), materials and colour.
- The creation of attractive external spaces between and around new and existing buildings should be strived for. This would include gardens and an attractive and varied street scene.
- Surface and boundary treatments, on both public and private land are an important part of the quality of the village environment and should be given careful consideration.
- In new developments the principles and 'Secured by Design' (police design guidance for architects & developers) should be respected.
- Innovation to achieve low carbon sustainable design should be encouraged.

