



# **SOMPTING PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **HOUSING AND ESTATE DESIGN GUIDE**

**DECEMBER 2020**

This document has been created by making reference to the documentation derived from the resident questionnaire, open days and public consultation feedback and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

It is a challenge for designers to take into account of future needs whilst drawing from the traditional features of earlier buildings and the richness of varied character and their settings. So, the purpose of this document, which is a part of the Sompting Neighbourhood Plan, is to foster an understanding of

1. How Sompting has changed over the years
2. What is important about Sompting to its residents.
3. What to retain, provide and create within future development in the parish.
4. To provide the basis for managing and enhancing the existing infrastructure.
5. To provide housing and estate design guidance, outside those already made within the Neighbourhood Plan, to assist developers, planning agents when deriving their planning applications, to create a concept acceptable to both the Planning Authority and the Parish Council.

What this document does not want to do is to stifle visionary developments through strict conformation of style but to allow development to reflect those desires.

### 1. How Sompting has changed over the years

Sompting is a relatively small village sandwiched as it were in a wedge between Worthing and Lancing and the South Downs in West Sussex.

Historically it comprises what were two villages: Sompting [or S(t)ultinges] and Cokeham (or Cocheham) as they appear in the Domesday Book. According to the Dictionary of Place Names the name derives from the Old English word “sumpt” or “sunt” meaning a marsh or pool. Other spellings of the village name are recorded Sumpting, Sownting, Sodempytng, Suntinges, Sumptinges, Sultinges & Souptyng.



Sompting is probably most known for its Parish Church set on the Downs overlooking the village and dedicated to St Mary. With its spectacular Saxon Helm tower (the only one of its type outside the Rhine valley in Germany) its earliest parts date back to 960AD but its architectural styles also encompass Anglo-Saxon to Jacobean.

In the 1930's Sompting was to be the site of an early form of the South of England show on the farmland east of the Marquis of Granby public house indeed the same site was even used by neighbouring Worthing Borough Council in the 1960's for its annual Donkey Derby.

The last barnyard in the village itself finally disappeared with the building of Barn Close, West Street.

There are three working farms in the Sompting Estate: Lychpole Farm with its buildings at Beggars Bush on the Steyning Road, Upton Farm with its buildings at Stable Cross at the top of Lambleys Lane, and Church Farm with a barn on Lambleys Lane.

Sompting Parish extends over a large area 10.35km<sup>2</sup> from nearly the Coast to the South up into the South Downs in the North. In its original state, there were few dwellings other than those tied with farming. There are two areas which currently have historical and old properties ranging from Grade 1 listing. These are in West Street and Cokeham Lane/ Lotts Road area. The Parish has suffered an un-natural conurbation North/South split due to the construction of the A27. Although this main road has assisted initially with traffic movement East/West, over recent years due to the volume of traffic and traffic control systems has caused severe traffic issues within Sompting, especially along the parallel road, West Street. Due to the A27, the amount of arable or pasture land on the South side has greatly been reduced with housing and commercial development. North of the A27 the farm and pasture areas are retained and worked with the housing development restricted to the Halewick area though considerable development has occurred to the east of this area.

A Conservation Area exists covering part of West Street and there is a SSSI within the Cokeham area (in the south part of the Parish). The north area of the Parish is now mainly within the recently formed South Downs National Park.

There is limited dense housing growth available unless more greenspace is developed. The District and Parish Council are joined together in resisting future infrastructure occurring in the open area to the west of Sompting which borders the administrative boundary of Worthing Borough Council. This was known as a strategic gap.

Sompting has seen a massive expansion in the years from 1960 with a number of housing developments seeing the disappearance of all the local nurseries, a large area of allotments and eventually its last working farm in West Street. It is therefore disappointing that further arable land to be used for development appears to be the only option.

Sompting now has properties of a considerable range of style and occupancy size. There are flats, maisonettes, bungalows, semi-detached, detached and terraced.

This guide describes the existing infrastructure appertaining to the following sections. Examples are given to indicate the style that development should follow.

## 1. Buildings

There are properties that still hold the history of Sompting through their design. Some of these are old but new properties have managed to carry the rural style. Flint facades are seen to be the main material used with newer buildings with a slate or tiled roof, although there are examples of a thatched

roof over a rendered exterior and wood cladded.



Any new development should take into consideration this rural style as it will replicate past buildings whether as a whole or in part of the façade. When considering the type of property to construct the developer should restrict the forming of flats where possible and it is recommended that they be no higher than three stories where possible. The careful use of existing roof space is to be encouraged to negate the need to expand outwards and use land unnecessarily but must be managed in proportion of size and change of street scene. This can be reflected in new development as well.

## 2. Walls

Boundary delineation throughout Sompting is made up of a variety of materials including : Brickwork.

- Stained timber boarding or fence panels.
- Brick and Brick/Flint



There are a number of flint walls around the parish, acting as boundaries.



Construction could be block faced with scalped flint or flint panels within brick piers.

It would be expected that any damaged flint wall forming the boundary of development will be repaired or replaced using the same material.



Developers should consider carefully property boundaries. These should not be fence panels due to the deterioration or life span of this material. Developers are also not to use post and wire and leave the property owner to form the boundary. Developers should consider the style of boundary

within their layout designs to produce a semi-rural boundary with a good life expectancy, perhaps even hedging. By using hedging, the developer will be encouraging an increase in diversity and inviting wildlife back to the area.

## 3. Roofs & Chimneys

The roof materials vary - examples are:-

- Slate
- Plain clay tiles
- Thatch

Many of the roofs are steeply pitched and have different levels of eaves varying heights and roof lines, broken up with chimneys and dormer windows.

There are gables and hips, valley tiles, hip tiles (half round) and hip bonnet tiles.



The Parish would encourage developers to reflect the style of existing properties surrounding new Developments to bring into the design other designs reflecting other properties around Sompting to produce a varied roof line and style and of the original Sussex. The design should not be of the 1960's i.e. all buildings the same.

Care must be taken in considering the height of roof lines and orientation of buildings hence roof lines not to obscure or reduce significantly any view across towards the South Downs either from the development or across the development from afar.

#### 4. Windows

Both sash and casement windows are common in the traditional parts of the village especially where windows on the first floor go right up to the soffit of the eaves. Ordinary wooden windows in existing properties have been changed to PVCu construction as are entrance doors. Although this is acceptable due to energy conservation and reduction of maintenance, it has given a variety of street scene views which can be detrimental.

It is suggested that following guidelines on energy conservation that the windows and doors are of PVCu construction but of a design which compliments the design or style of the property.

Where properties lie within a conservation area, developers must seek guidance and permission from the Local Authority on the design. The boundary of the conservation area is set out in the Adur District Local Plan.

#### 5. Carbon Emissions

The guide supports development which contribute to both mitigating and adapting to climate change and to meet targets to meeting the targets to reduce carbon emissions. Developers will be expected to show that measures are incorporated as set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH). All new housing developments should have a minimum energy efficiency standard equivalent to Level 3 of the CfSH. Developers must consult with the Local Authority on their current requirement. However, care must be taken of the finished visual impact for example the installation of roof solar panels.

## **6. The following items**

must be considered early in the design process and integrated into the overall scheme:

- Bin stores and recycling facilities
- Cycle stores
- Meter boxes
- Lighting
- Flues and ventilation ducts
- Gutters and pipes
- Satellite dishes and telephone lines

These items are all too easily forgotten about until the end of the design process. By considering them early, it will be possible to meet the following requirements

Bin stores and recycling facilities should be designed to screen bins from public view, whilst being easily accessible for residents. Bin stores must be placed in a position that meets the County Council's Highways standards

Meter boxes need not be standard white units; consider a bespoke approach that fits in with the materials used for the remainder of the building. Position them to be unobtrusive

Carefully position flues and ventilation ducts so that they are unobtrusive as possible. Use good quality grilles that fit in with the approach to materials for the building as a whole

Ensure that gutters and pipes fit in the overall design to minimise their visual impact.

Where possible all new cabling should run underground and consideration should be given to the siting of communication masts, television aerials and satellite dishes.

## **7. Trees**

Trees make an important contribution to the character of the local environment and, as such, are also protected in a conservation area. Any proposal to cut down, top or lop a tree in an area for development whether or not it is covered by a tree preservation order, has to give notice to the local authority.





The authority can then consider the contribution the tree makes to the character of the area and if necessary make a tree preservation order to protect it.

Developers when designing a layout should take this aspect into consideration. The layout should also give the appropriate consideration for the introduction of new trees of varying species whether in designated open spaces or alongside highways.

Sompting does have highway trees along its residential roads and the highways and the continuation of this provision should be seen to be incorporated within any design layout.

## **8. HEDGEROWS AND PONDS**

Old hedgerows have been “grubbed up” to make larger fields but those remaining are in reasonable condition. Hedgerows were fundamental to delineating field boundaries and were a source of nature conservation. Sadly over the years conservation of this nature has faded and wildlife has suffered.

This guide wishes for developers to preserve existing, re-establish deteriorated and introduce the use hedgerows for homes and gardens, open spaces all of which can alter the look and feel of the whole parish.

Surface water flooding is a problem in Sompting mainly from springs and runoff from the Downs. The Local Authority will require any developer to provide evidence on what measures are to be taken to reduce the effect of surface water flooding. This guide would also expect the developer to take every opportunity to provide safe flood preventative measures which enhances conservation. This can be achieved through sections of open ditches discharging into a controlled discharge pond. Also open spaces can have “dry flood areas” which allow flood water to be held when extreme conditions prevail.

## **9. Encouragement of wild life**

When arable or pasture land is taken for development, there is nearly always an effect on the existing wildlife. This guide would strongly recommend to developers that the house and estate design actually encourages the return and retention of wildlife. Some of the above guidance given already will do this but this guide would also encourage the placing of swift boxes under some of the eaves of properties with bird and bat boxes placed on trees within open spaces. Consideration should also be given to the ground level animals and insects through appropriate planting within open spaces.

## **10. Street Furniture**



The developer should address a quality street furniture design. Size, choice of material and colour all add to the character of the visual impact of the development. Lamp columns are a particular item where care is required. Although not strictly furniture, the presence of grass verges soften the edge between road and pavement and

adds to the visual impact as well. The introduction of grass verges would be supported.

The Council has a policy on the provision of bus shelters. The shelter is to be of wood and from the same manufacturer as the existing shelters.

## 11. Estate design

1. The overall context should be one of unity where houses blend into the surroundings using traditional local materials and avoiding the use of uniform lines. New housing should be in small clusters arranged around communal areas to facilitate communication between neighbours and interaction throughout the community.



Careful consideration should be given to the relationship and spacing of buildings within a development.

2. Variation in types and size of dwellings should reflect the existing mix and importantly local needs. The property design should not be solely commercially driven.
3. Due to the trend of increased number of cars per household, developments meeting all the other criteria stated already must also take this problem into consideration. On street parking is to be discouraged where possible.
4. Garages should be in keeping with the general building style and be integral or if not, within a compound. Ownership and funding for maintenance of the compound must be addressed.
5. If roofs are re-tiled the material should be of a similar material, colour and style as existing, unless that finish is not in keeping with the surrounding roofs.