

Parish of
Amberley
Design
Statement





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How PADS was prepared

This design statement was developed in consultation with the entire parish through a series of exhibitions and questionnaires to ensure that all views, local knowledge and ideas have been brought together for the benefit of the parish as a whole. A draft copy and a questionnaire were delivered to each household in the parish; the results were independently analysed, and a few adjustments made. The whole consultation process has shown strong support by the community for the principles and the details of PADS.

Acknowledgements

The PADS Steering Group are indebted to both Horsham District Council and Amberley Parish Council for their advice and financial support.

We are grateful to the many contributors and active supporters (nearly 40 in all) without whom it would not have been possible to produce this Design Statement, and to the many residents of the parish who have attended PADS events, expressed their views, and generally encouraged us.

Our thanks are also due to Michael Cook Associates for some illustrations.

The Parish of Amberley Design Statement was formally adopted by Amberley Parish Council on 11th May 2005 and endorsed by Horsham District Council on 30th March 2006. The Planning Guidelines in this design statement have been widely endorsed by the local community. They will be taken into account by Amberley Parish Council and Horsham District Council when local planning applications are assessed.

PARISH OF AMBERLEY DESIGN STATEMENT

Introduction

The Parish of Amberley Design Statement (PADS) describes the civil parish in 2005 and emphasises the qualities valued by those who live here. It has been produced by Amberley residents so that local knowledge, ideas and views can contribute in a positive way to the future of the parish. It is intended to be a practical tool capable of influencing the design of developments in the area. It should help both new developers and householders wishing to make changes to draw up more appropriate plans and so get them accepted more easily. It is used as a guide by Amberley Parish Council when they comment on planning applications, and by Horsham District Council in considering and deciding on these.

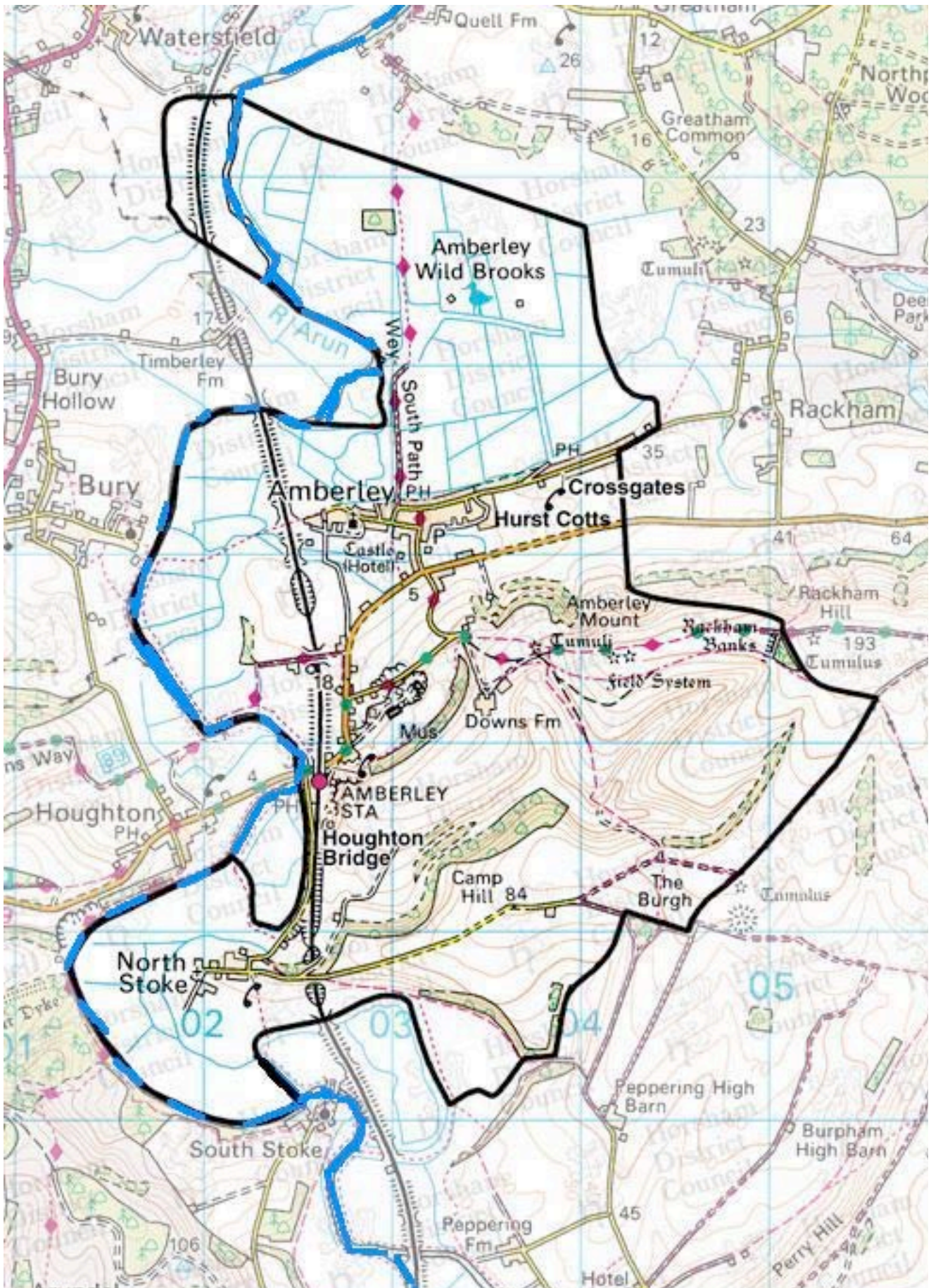
Everyone can benefit from good design; there is no intention to preserve Amberley in a time capsule. PADS acknowledges that change is inevitable and its concern is with good design. It does not wish to stifle true originality - though careful thought should always be given to the relationship between tradition and innovation. It strives for a sustainable future for Amberley. If we all understand the character of the parish then we can all play our part in helping to preserve, protect and develop it in the most effective way.

At the end of most sections you will find a list of Planning Guidelines. These are based on residents' verbal and written comments, including responses to the survey for the Amberley Long Term Plan. Those that feature here have been accepted and approved by Horsham District Council as suitable for inclusion in a Design Statement intended as a planning tool; some other suggestions, especially those relating to the community rather than the built environment, have had to be omitted as inappropriate in this context.

PADS applies to the whole Civil Parish of Amberley, the area for which Horsham District Council consults on planning applications with Amberley Parish Council. This includes North Stoke, Houghton Bridge, and Amberley village right up to the far end of Crossgates. Where this booklet refers to 'the parish' it means all these places.



The Parish of Amberley



The Makings of the Parish

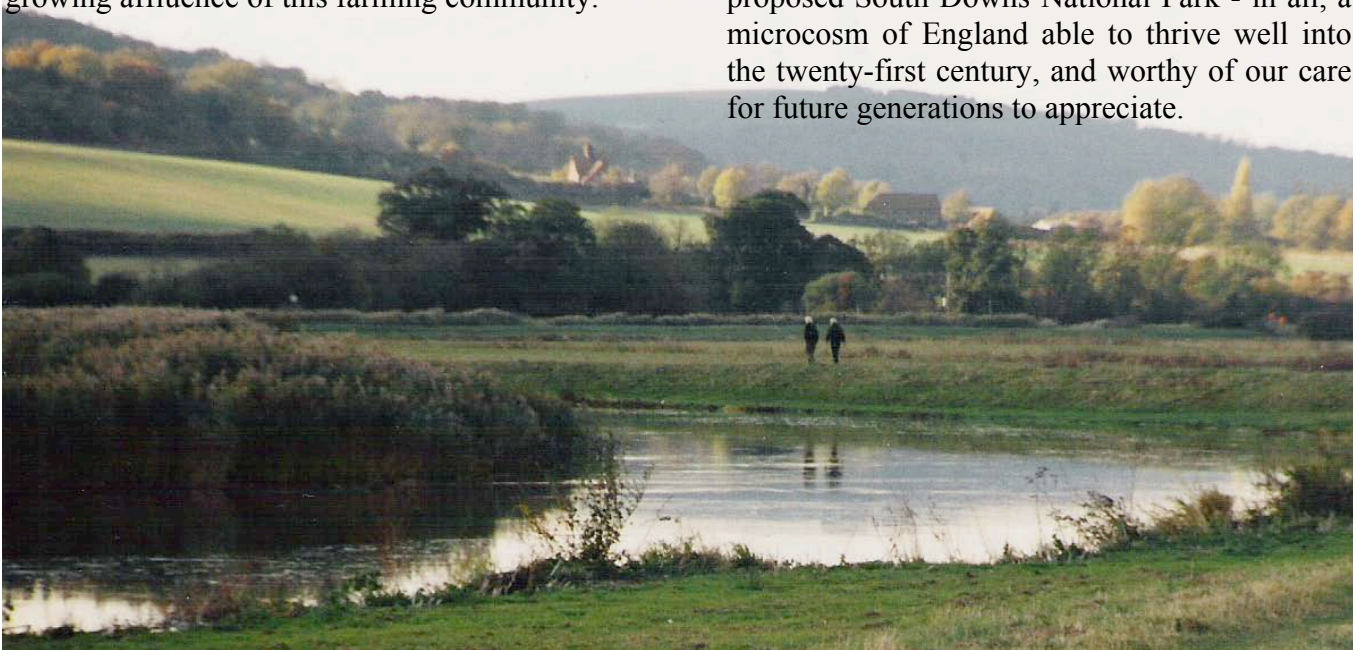
The Parish of Amberley is dominated by the South Downs, which rise here to over 190 metres (630 feet). They may have been the site of the area's earliest settlements, for traces of Bronze Age huts have been found on Amberley Mount. The other major influence has been the fast-flowing River Arun, still tidal at this point. Much of the parish lies very near to sea level, and the Amberley Wildbrooks on the river's floodplain have helped to shape its identity.

The most isolated community in the parish is North Stoke, which has remained agricultural in its activity. The tiny settlement with its thirteenth century church lies in an idyllic setting in a loop of the River Arun. The village of Amberley, 'the Pearl of Sussex', developed eastwards because of natural barriers: the Downs to the south, the River Arun to the west and the Wildbrooks to the north. It sits on a low ridge of Upper Greensand rock, often referred to as Amberley blue stone. In 681 the lands of Amberley and Houghton were given to St Wilfrid when the local king converted to Christianity, and the manor appears in the Domesday Book under the name of 'Aumberlie'. Both St. Michael's church and Amberley Castle, a fortified manor house built for the Bishop of Chichester, were erected in the early 1100s. Gradually the population grew, and the many houses that survive from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries attest to the growing affluence of this farming community.

Houghton Bridge lies at the crossing of the river Arun. The bridge itself, built of stone in the medieval tradition, was completed in 1875, and replaced an earlier one constructed in 1440. The local quarrying of chalk for lime-burning and cement began commercially in the 1840s, and the nearby railway was laid in 1863. Before this chalk was loaded onto barges at Houghton Bridge for transport to the sea, or via the Wey and Arun Canal into the Thames. Thanks to chalk from the Downs and peat from the Wildbrooks, the early prosperity of the parish continued.

With the advent of rail transport from London, the area began to be 'discovered'. The 1920s were the heyday of artists in Amberley. Four of their ten studios sat beside Church Street along with humble dwellings, sheds, and farmyards. These incomers helped to ensure the survival of some of the older cottages, partly by buying them up and renting them to local people.

The Amberley Wildbrooks were saved from drainage in the 1970s by an energetic local campaign, and are now a Site of Special Scientific Interest and an internationally important Ramsar site. North Stoke and the old centre of Amberley village are both protected by conservation area status. Today the parish lies in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and is within the boundaries of the proposed South Downs National Park - in all, a microcosm of England able to thrive well into the twenty-first century, and worthy of our care for future generations to appreciate.



The Parish in its Setting

Throughout the parish there are open views to the Downs, the River Arun or the Wildbrooks. The landscape is rural, with arable crops near Amberley village, and water meadows between the communities of Houghton Bridge and North Stoke. The fields on the alluvial plain regularly flood in winter and are used as seasonal grazing for cattle.



Most of the parish can be seen from the South Downs Way National Trail from Eastbourne to Winchester, which runs along the top of the scarp slope south of Amberley, descending at High Titten to meet the River Arun. There is a footpath leading westwards out of Amberley behind the castle and along the riverbank to Houghton Bridge, where it joins the South Downs Way, and a range of other tracks run up onto the Downs or link different parts of the parish. Two in particular are important to the local community: the unadopted footpath running from the Millennium Green across fields to School Road, and the Croft, that links the old centre of Amberley to the B2139,



providing a short cut to Houghton Bridge and the station. Another long distance footpath, the Wey-South Path, enters Amberley village from Mill Lane and proceeds northwards across the Wildbrooks to the hamlet of Greatham, offering on the way views back up to the houses of Amberley and Crossgates perched along the edge of the escarpment. These are especially visible when the trees are leafless, and have grown considerably more prominent in recent years as a result of tree felling, decking, painted rendering and heavily glassed extensions that reflect the light.

The linear alignment of Amberley can also be seen clearly from the Downs, with building clusters in the old part of the village, and at Hurst Cottages, Hurst Close and Crossgates. The roofs of thatch, tile and slate harmonise with the natural colours of the local environment including the surrounding countryside. This harmony is greatly enhanced by the softening effect of the hedgerows and trees scattered throughout the area.



Planning Guidelines

1. Views into and out of areas of the parish make a significant contribution to its overall character, and should be both preserved and respected in the design of new development.
2. Buildings along the southern edge of Amberley village and along the escarpment edge to the north should not be obtrusive in size, style or brightness and colour of materials.
3. Footpaths and bridleways should be kept open and in good repair.
4. Native flora and fauna should be protected. Hedgerows and trees should be well maintained; when they die they should be replaced with similar native plantings. Trees along much of the escarpment are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs); elsewhere they may be managed, but should not be removed. In addition, within the two Conservation Areas, six weeks' notice in writing must be given for any work on trees (and failure to comply can lead to fines); the local planning authority can advise on exemptions. This includes all trees on the section of escarpment within the Amberley Conservation Area.
5. Planning permission will usually be required for decking along the escarpment, not only in the Amberley Village Conservation Area but also up to the parish boundary beyond Crossgates; advice is available from Horsham District Council Planning Department. Further developments of this nature are discouraged; they should certainly not extend over the slope.
6. Where possible existing or newly planted native trees should be used to screen new development: details should be agreed in advance, and checks made to ensure that new planting takes place and is maintained. Screening by native trees is also desirable where existing developments have a negative impact on their surroundings, for example the various flood protection works at the caravan site at Houghton Bridge, where an appropriate management plan for the site as a whole could greatly enhance its appearance.



How the Parish Developed

Although there has been some infilling between Amberley and the various hamlets, the parish remains in essence an unspoiled rural community surrounded by farmland. Most farm and other buildings have now been converted to residential use; Drewitts Farm on Church Street currently has planning consent for four houses, and when these are built they will occupy the site of the last remaining farm on an Amberley street.



The earliest surviving houses in Amberley village are aligned along Church Street and Hog Lane, following the medieval pattern of a rectangle with extensions. Georgian and Victorian buildings are interspersed between the cottages in Church Street, the High Street and the Square, with more modern twentieth-century houses mainly in School Road and East Street. These older buildings are a varied mix, but most are modest and straightforward. Though far from being alike, they look well together; however some newer properties in the village are disproportionate in scale.



On the B2139 near the Amberley turning, there is a short run of simple twentieth-century houses on each side, which also extends for a

little way up Mill Lane. From this point westwards lie a few scattered buildings, but neither these nor the small cluster at High Titten disturb the very rural (though much travelled) character of the B2139. Houses in the Houghton Bridge area of the parish are aligned along the roads, with views of the river and open fields, but up at North Stoke most buildings still stand isolated from each other, framed by undulating countryside.



There are two major areas of more recent development in Amberley. The earlier, half a mile to the east of the old village and separated by open fields, is known as Crossgates. Semi-detached houses built on the south side in 1924 are set back from the road, well spaced, with long views across fields to the Downs. Originally council housing, most are now privately owned. On the north side, on the edge of the steep ridge overlooking the Wildbrooks, are houses of varying size and individual design that were built mainly in the twentieth century for private purchase.



West of here lies a stretch of road with the character of a narrow country lane, bordered by trees and wildflowers and with dramatic views

to both the Downs and the Wildbrooks. This links Crossgates to Hurst Cottages and Hurst Close, a mix of former council housing, housing association and private houses and bungalows built between 1948 and the late 1990s. From these properties, and visible between them, extends a superb vista of fields below the South Downs.

While the majority of privately owned dwellings in the parish are occupied throughout the year, some serve only as second or weekend homes. This has helped to inflate property prices, and has reduced the availability of housing stock for local purchase and occupancy. Local consultations have identified a need to develop low cost housing to keep the parish a mixed and vibrant community.

Planning Guidelines

7. The buildings of the parish fit comfortably into the significant natural features, creating a sense of balance and harmony. In order to maintain this effect, it is important that any new project should follow existing settlement patterns.

8. The re-development of disused buildings and brownfield sites should take priority over plans to build on greenfield sites, save in exceptional circumstances.

9. The spaces around and between existing buildings offer much valued views out to the surrounding countryside: they should be retained, and echoed in any new development.

10. The open character of the land east of the entrance to Amberley (from the B2139 to the southern boundary of the school) allows views towards the older part of the village, and should be respected.

11. Further development on the boundaries of the built up area should be restricted to smaller buildings, in order to soften the transition to open ground and retain the 'soft edge' and uneven character of the existing settlement pattern.

12. The characteristic mix of houses in the parish should be maintained by restricting the size of new buildings and encouraging small pockets of low-cost housing for local people.





Buildings of the Parish



Individual Buildings



The oldest surviving houses in Amberley village probably date from the sixteenth century. Most are low, with the curves of their thatched or tiled roofs repeating the long rolling line of the Downs. Some sit high above road level, either behind front gardens with retaining walls, or on plinths with steps up. In this area of the parish, a number of farm buildings, stables and former shops (some with large front windows remaining) have been converted to private dwellings. Past history is shown through the names of buildings - The Old Brew House, The Malt House, The Old Bakery and The Old Bakehouse.



Converted farmhouses and smaller cottages blend together timelessly; some large dwellings have been divided up, some small ones merged to provide larger homes; some are now approached only by alleyways because they formerly stood in farmyards. In old Amberley the juxtaposition of different styles and periods makes for a varied range of roof heights and

building materials, whereas buildings at North Stoke are unified by their extensive use of local flint.



At Houghton Bridge the old tollhouse still exists, as does an older Georgian house that was part of the Arundel Estate, but most of the cottages are Victorian.



Many old buildings throughout the parish reflect a process of decay, renovation and improvement over the centuries, with evidence of 'new' introductions. Wells and privies were replaced when mains water supply was introduced, but a number can still be seen in the village, reminders of a less comfortable way of life. What cannot always be provided is a garage or other off-road storage space for cars: in the older parts of the parish, increasing car ownership in families has brought with it increasing congestion caused by resident parking.



Extensions and conversions continue to take place to reflect changing needs and lifestyles. There were once at least nineteen barns in the Parish, most of which have been converted to private dwellings. Many of the conversions retain the original style and form of a barn with the large door openings, although few still have their former thatch.



At Houghton Bridge the building first erected as a catholic church and then converted to provide a schoolhouse, has now been converted again, to three private dwellings. Some changes are difficult to detect as they have been well designed to blend in with the original building, others are successful because they respect their setting.



Several of the semi-detached houses on the south side at Crossgates have extensions built at the back or side of the property, porches at the front and replacement windows of different styles. However, the buildings remain in scale with each other, forming a harmonious whole.



Although a handful of properties still retain their original lean-to conservatories, many more have had conservatories added. Some designs and constructions are more sensitive than others, and not all enhance the old buildings they are attached to.



As well as conversions and extensions, new building also continues, especially where garden and orchard land has been sold. While some of these houses are distinctive or have made their mark by introducing new styles and materials, few relate in scale or character to the dwellings around them. It is important that there should be more than a passing nod to the village as it is now, and an appreciation of how it has evolved over time.

Planning Guidelines

13. Individual houses should vary, but blend with each other and with the countryside through their use of traditional local materials. The key approach should be unity, not uniformity.
14. Any alterations to old buildings throughout the parish should follow the principles set out in the Conservation Area leaflet.
15. Conversions and extensions, including conservatories and garages, should respect both the character and scale of the original structure, and the surrounding landscape.
16. New buildings should vary in size and shape, but be in scale with neighbouring properties and the spaces around them. Planning applications should give clear information on shape, footprint, and height of elevation in comparison with adjoining properties, and include a perspective drawing showing this relationship.
17. Applications should preferably also be accompanied by a landscaping proposal or design statement to show how the new building or extension would be integrated within the existing scene.
18. New or innovative designs should be welcomed, so long as they respect and complement the materials and scale of neighbouring buildings. They should be appropriate, not over-elaborate, yet exciting and something to be proud of – however modest.
19. The use of existing garages should be retained especially where there is no off-road parking, and the provision of adequate off-road parking within the curtilage of any new development should be encouraged. Garages should be behind properties and accessed away from any communal areas.



Innovative and traditional designs using local materials





North Stoke Church



Amberley chalk pits

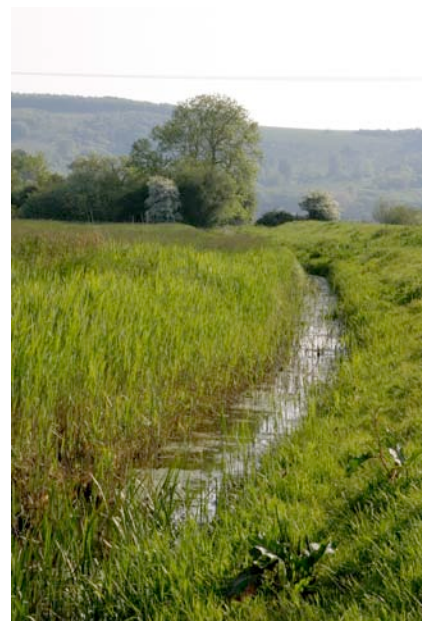
The Parish of Amberley



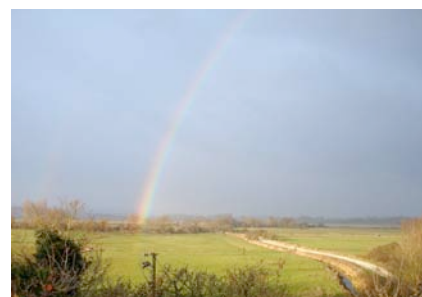
The River Arun at Houghton Bridge



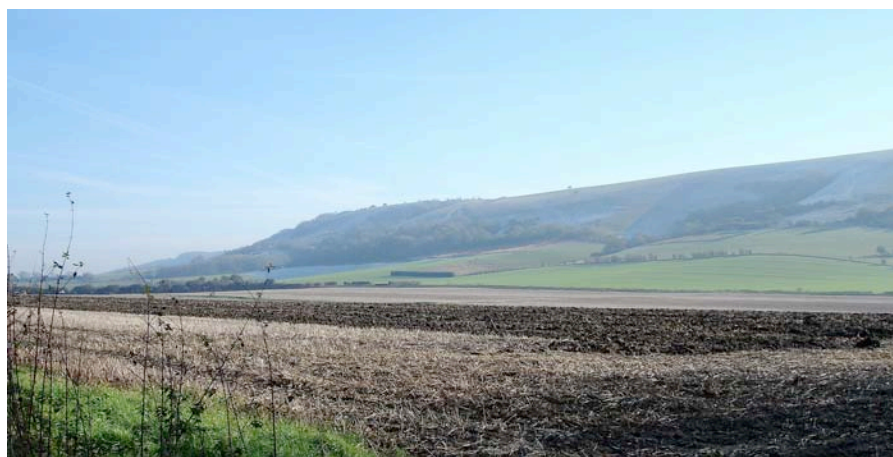
View from Amberley Mount



Amberley Wildbrooks



The Millennium Green



The Downs from Crossgates

Materials and Architectural Detail

Almost everywhere in the parish, buildings are surrounded by informal vegetation; their colours blend, natural materials predominate and many have the patina of age. Nothing is too bright or brash; the general effect has even been described as ‘tattiness’, but not in a derogatory sense. These features help the houses of different styles and dates to blend, and together with the range of architectural detail, present a challenge to anyone embarking on a new building, or changing an old one. However, Amberley is fortunate in having skilled local craftsmen available.

The stone walls of Amberley village are one of its main characteristics, and provide a warm sense of enclosure. Further south at North Stoke, with closer proximity to the Downs, much more use is made of flint; but in Amberley Greengault stone predominates. Lichen and other plants grow as the stone weathers, providing a range of subtle colours. Although plants like ivy and valerian can be destructive, others such as ivy-leaved toadflax and sempervivums do little damage. The walls are also important to a variety of creatures such as sunbathing butterflies and mason bees.

The earliest houses are timber framed with infilling of stone, flint or Greengault sandstone, or with rendered rubble and local brick, most of them thatched, so with steeply pitched roofs. These were followed by houses of solid flint or stone, often with brick quoins and brick-faced lintels, and more shallow roofs of tile or slate. In general stone is left in its natural state but rendering is painted. The historic houses set the scene for more recent developments; many new buildings blend in well because they have made good use of traditional materials and detailing.

Although the varied range of styles and materials has helped to give the parish its unique character, there are also some basic features that draw the individual buildings together and unite them to the surrounding landscape. Natural textures and soft but broken colour have already been mentioned; older houses often show a range of different materials where an extension has been added at a later date, for example thatch with a tiled catslide; and within so much variety of date and style, the long unbroken lines of large plain roofs predominate.

Planning Guidelines

20. The size, style and materials used for doors and windows should respect those of the original and/or adjacent buildings.

21. Natural materials and quiet colours should be used for repairs and new build, as they will blend best with existing buildings and the natural landscape. Harsh colours and prominent variegation in bricks and tiles should be avoided.

22. In general, window frames on older buildings should be of painted softwood or unpainted oak left to weather. Dark stains, exotic hardwoods and plastic are discouraged.

23. Local details as shown in the rest of this section are recommended

Listed Building legislation must always be observed. Note also that in the Amberley Conservation Area certain permitted development rights have been removed from all properties, not just the listed buildings: the painting of unpainted exterior natural materials, demolition of curtilage walls and alteration of windows or doors involving a new design or materials must not take place without prior planning consent.



a) Walls, mortar and pointing

Typical walls have flint or stone with brick quoins, rendering (painted or unpainted), cladding with plain red clay tiles or dark weather boarding, or unpainted brick in soft warm colours

Mortars for the repair of old walls

Modern hard cement mortar has proved to be unsuitable: it damages the stone, and does not 'weather' as readily as the lime based mortar used for the older houses and garden walls. This is softer than the stone, so is able to absorb seasonal expansion and contraction.

Advice on recommended mixes is available in specialist publications (see end). The mortar is allowed to dry for several hours before being brushed or ragged to seal it to the stone and prevent water from penetrating.

Warning: some local sands have a pink tone, but the use of lime can soften this.



Typical walls



To be avoided

Trowelled 'ribbon pointing' of flint or stone

b) Roofs and chimneys

Historically, the materials used for roofs have always dictated their form. Roof styles should still be appropriate to their materials, as well as to the wider setting. Thatch has either the square-cut style dictated by water reed, or the more rounded ‘tea-cosy’ shape of combed wheat, which needs to be netted; local ridge styles are simple. Where thatch has been replaced later by tiles, roofs remain steep; but purpose-built tiled roofs are more shallow, and slate shallower still.



Corbelling should be retained if a chimney has to be rebuilt



Roofs at Hurst Cottages echo both the shapes of the Downs and the catslide roofs of older houses

To be avoided

Large expanses of bland modern materials
Pyramidal roof-peaks without a ridge
Rooflines excessively interrupted by chimneys or dormers



c) Windows

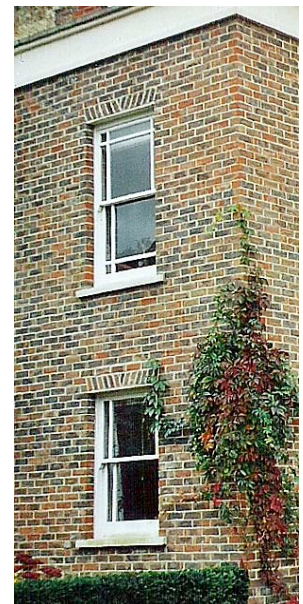
Amberley's windows show great variety, but most share the common feature of small rectangles neatly arranged with a proportioned grid of panes. Replacements should be in a similar size, shape and style, especially where symmetry with an adjoining house is called for.



Wood or metal frames with leaded glass



Pairs of wooden casements, old and new, with horizontal bar



To be avoided

Dormers are not original on older houses, and can add unwanted height to new ones. Large unbroken expanses of glazing should be avoided where visible from the road or in a distant view, especially from the Wildbrooks or Downs.

d) Doors and porches

The main characteristic of doors throughout the parish is that they are unpretentious. The older houses were originally built without porches, though many have now been added to provide shelter from the weather. However, they should not dominate.



Simple oak doors are left bare or finished with Danish oil

Planked or panelled doors may be painted, in neutrals or quiet colours. Some 19th Century doors have top glass panels



Porches are either enclosed, or wholly or partially open; those on old houses have usually been added, often in timber. Extensions to older houses often use a mixture of materials: this treatment retains the proportions of the original building.

To be avoided

Front doors or porches with large expanses of glass are inappropriate on old buildings.

The Street Scene



In the older settlement areas there are few pavements: roads are used to their full width with the surface undivided by kerbstones or markings. In places surface water is carried away by gullies or drainage ditches: there are nineteenth century culverts in Church Street and East Street, while a wider ditch holds the stream that runs along School Road.



Road margins are generally green, and natural materials predominate. In some places wide verges link the separate house plots and give an air of spaciousness, though at times their continuity of line has been destroyed by intrusive entrances or extensive areas of hard landscaping. Elsewhere the sense of enclosure



is strong, especially in the Amberley Conservation area, where it is the old stone walls that provide continuity. Most entrances here are modest in style, with small garden gates of iron or wood, and often with stone or brick steps; only occasionally does a more imposing access jar through ornate detail or overt security fittings.



Even the walled banks a metre or more high are softened with trailing plants and overhanging shrubs, while the ground at the base of house walls has a ragged fringe of growth that adds colour and interest for much of the year. Though apparently natural, this is often carefully tended and is much valued by residents and visitors alike.



Throughout the older parts of Amberley there are few garages; resident parking is mostly on the street. This does slow down through traffic, but it also leads to congestion.



Some more modern developments have off-street parking or on-road parking bays. The only area of the parish with controlled parking is Houghton Bridge, where yellow line marking has been found necessary because of the influx of summer visitors.



Street furniture is kept to a minimum, and many individual streets have no nameplates. A few signs give direction to places of particular interest to visitors, though some of these blend better than others with their surroundings.

The old-style red telephone boxes have been retained, and although there are some free-standing post boxes, a number are still in their original form set into walls.



Bus stops have been made as unobtrusive as possible, though some provide shelter and wooden seating; notice boards placed around the parish aid communication within the community.

In places the absence of street lighting has led to the installation of over-bright security lights, which some residents feel has intruded on their 'right to dark skies'. Telegraph poles with their associated tangle of wires too often interrupt the skyline, for although some re-routing to underground cables has taken place only a few areas have benefited. If eaves and chimneys too could be free of modern additions, there would be less to detract from the wonderful views of Downs, river or sheer chalk face that frame so many rooftops throughout the parish.

Planning Guidelines

24. New developments in the parish should have boundary structures that reflect local patterns. The sense of enclosure that exists in some areas should be maintained: existing boundary walls and hedges should not normally be removed, and parking areas and driveways should not cut into existing front gardens.

25. Entrance, garden and driveway gates should be understated and modest, and of timber or iron construction.

26. Road margins and surfaces should remain informal: the Local Highway Authority should ensure the preservation of their character, and avoid the urban appearance resulting from concrete kerbs and other inappropriate elements. Pavements are undesirable in older parts of

the parish, but would be acceptable in new developments, where any paving should be of natural materials and colours.

27. Traditional surface drains and culverts should be retained or re-instated, and care should be taken to ensure that they are not damaged by any new development

28. The green character of the roads should be maintained, especially the informal planting and ragged growth along verges and walls. No wholesale public spraying of verges should take place without prior approval by the Parish Council.

29. Appropriate natural materials should be used for resurfacing driveways and unmade roads; gravel is usually to be preferred to tarmac. Large areas of brickwork and other hard landscaping should be avoided in front gardens.

30. Drive entrances and visibility splays should be sympathetic to the rural character; the interruption of existing grass verges by driveway walls is discouraged.

31. Development should only be permitted if it does not lose any off-street parking, and ensures adequate additional off-street parking for the additional vehicles arising.

32. Street lighting should be kept to an absolute minimum to limit light pollution and a feel of urbanisation. Security lights should be discreet and should turn off automatically after a few minutes. Floodlighting is discouraged, and if used must not cause a nuisance to adjacent properties or road users.

33. Street furniture and signage, including road marking, should be kept to an absolute minimum and be discreet in colour and style, and of natural materials where possible. Exceptions are the traditional red post and telephone boxes, which should be retained. Commercial and house signs should be low key, as should other street signs. Where feasible road signs should be attached to existing structures.

34. The statutory authorities and service providers should liaise with the local planning authority and the Parish Council with the view to ensuring that any future installations, including street furniture, are in character with the parish. When renewing utilities, underground routing is preferred in order to reduce the number of poles and overhead lines, provided that this will not alter or damage roads, verges, or front walls. Domestic meter boxes, oil tanks etc should be hidden.

35. Where possible, external additions to roofs such as flashing cowls and large and obtrusive aerials are to be avoided, and TV and radio aerials should be sited within loft space.



The Parish Today

Amberley still has two working farms, as well as fields farmed by tenants of the neighbouring Springhead estate. In 2002 there were 264 households and 581 residents. Amberley First School is attended by children from the village and from neighbouring areas; these children and their families contribute significantly to the vigour and energy of the Parish.



Of the two churches, North Stoke Church has long been redundant, but is looked after by the Churches Conservation Trust and holds occasional special services and concerts. St. Michael's is now part of the United Benefice of the Wildbrooks Churches, whose Priest-in-charge is based in Amberley. The church hall is used for a wide range of community activities including a pre-school play group. The parish enjoys a range of public open spaces: the recreation ground and cricket pitch west of School Road, the Millennium Green at Hurst Cottages, and a small grassed area by the village pond at the end of Church Street. At Hurst Cottages there is also a small enclosed play area for children, and a football pitch lies south of here, accessed from the B2139.



In 1996, as Amberley Village Shop was threatened with closure when the building it was trading from was sold, residents enabled the purchase of a 999-year lease on suitable premises in a converted barn in the centre of the village. The shop, a general store with a sub-post office, is used at least weekly by 75% of households in the Parish, and provides a focal point for communication across the community. The former village forge is now owned by Amberley Welfare Trust. It houses a range of services including weekly doctors' surgeries run by practices based in Pulborough and Arundel.

The castle is now a hotel and attracts visitors and guests from far afield. Amberley has a working pottery that sells its wares and other crafts, Houghton Bridge a florist and gift shop. The chalk quarries went out of business in 1964 and their site has become the home of Amberley Working Museum, which exhibits working machinery and industrial and rural manufacturing processes.



There are three public houses in the parish, all of which serve food: the Black Horse and The Sportsman in Amberley, and the Bridge Inn at Houghton Bridge. Also at Houghton Bridge are the Boathouse restaurant, a caravan site and riverside tearooms. This area of the parish is vibrant during the summer; in winter, in spite of the busy road, it is a quiet, peaceful hamlet.

The parish enjoys good transport links. Amberley station, with regular train services to



London and Portsmouth, is invaluable to both commuters and travellers, while buses afford some local transport.

Two of the public houses and several private homes offer Bed and Breakfast, providing popular and valued rest places in friendly surroundings for some of the many walkers, cyclists and other visitors to the parish. There is also a small touring caravan site at North Stoke.

The beauty of the area still attracts a number of artists, both amateur and professional, either as visitors or to live here permanently. Current residents span the age groups; there is a rich mix of skills and trades, with people working locally and commuting. A significant number of

parishioners work from home, creating a measure of wealth for the community through trading locally; such activity has accelerated recently through the ability to communicate electronically. The parish has its own website, providing a range of information to both residents and the outside world.

In recent years the parish has carried out surveys and developed a three-year plan. These have resulted in a substantial regeneration and re-invigoration of the local community. A wide range of support and interest groups are now active in the parish, and the strong community spirit helps to maintain important local facilities, support residents and protect the environment.

Planning Guidelines

36. The changing needs of the community and parish must be met by the provision of appropriate amenities and infrastructure. The preservation of our existing facilities, including open spaces for leisure and recreation, is paramount.

37. Measures that support local businesses which rely on homeworking should be encouraged, providing they do not conflict with other design criteria.

38. In future, the needs of the car should be considered as less important than the conservation of the character of the parish; public transport facilities should be encouraged and expanded.

39. The village shop is important to the life of the parish; developments that might impede its viability should be strongly resisted.

40. Opportunities to promote low-key tourism should be encouraged providing they are of a scale and type appropriate to their location, and do not threaten existing community facilities through undue competition.



Where to go for further information

Local information

The Amberley Society, a preservation and social society for Amberley, distributes a **Welcome Pack** to new residents and holds the Amberley Village Archives.

Amberley Parish Council, which supports this design statement, holds public meetings every two months to decide policies. Horsham District Council sends copies of all Amberley Parish planning applications to the Parish Council for consideration and comment. The Parish Clerk's name is in the Wildbrooks Churches Parish Magazine. Parish Council notices are placed on **Parish Notice Boards**, which also display other information.

Planning information

A Guide to PLANNING APPLICATIONS in Amberley, Houghton Bridge and North Stoke

The Amberley planning leaflet gives information on when planning permission is needed, and advice on how to apply to Horsham District Council or make comments on applications.

Horsham District Council (HDC), Park House, North Street, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1RL
01403 215100 e-mail: planning@horsham.gov.uk

The HDC website www.horsham.gov.uk includes full details of all planning applications.

The Planning Department South Area (01403 215170) gives advice and help in progressing planning applications, and can supply advisory booklets (see planning leaflet for a list).

Amberley Village Conservation Area Leaflet

Copies are provided in the Welcome Pack (see above) and are available from HDC.

History

Amberley Working Museum, Amberley BN18 9LT 01798 831370

Preserves the working heritage of the South East including Amberley's lime kilns.

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0EU

01243 811348 www.wealddown.co.uk

Has a useful bookshop and runs building and conservation courses including special home owners' days.

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY 020 7377 1644

www.spab.org.uk Supplies technical pamphlets on subjects such as thatch and the pointing of old buildings; these pamphlets are also available from the Weald and Downland Museum shop.

The Churches Conservation Trust, 07958 409336 www.visitchurches.org.uk

Maintains North Stoke Church.

The countryside

Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woodsmill, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9SD 01273 492630.

www.sussexwt.org.uk Owns and manages part of Amberley Wildbrooks.

RSPB, Pulborough Brooks Nature Reserve 01798 875851

Owns and manages part of Amberley Wildbrooks. Has a programme of events and courses.

Wild Orchids of Sussex by David Lang ISBN 0 9533493 3 0. Includes references to Amberley.



Books about Amberley available from the village shop or Amberley pottery

Dear Amberley by Rev E. Noel Staines

Arnold Bennett and Amberley by James Hepburn ISBN 0 9539914 0 7

Amberley Church: A Critical Appreciation by Nigel Foxell ISBN 1 874320 54 3

