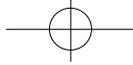




LOXWOOD VILLAGE

DESIGN STATEMENT

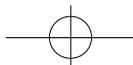


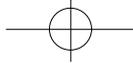


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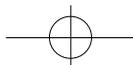
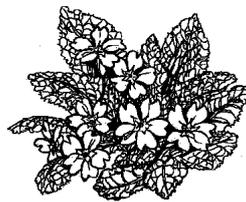
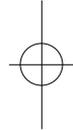


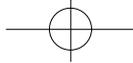
LOXWOOD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Prepared by the Loxwood VDS Steering Group
Published by Loxwood Parish Council
July 2003

Index

Section 1	Introduction	
Section 2	Introduction to the Village	
Section 3	Relationship between the Village and Countryside	
Section 4	Settlement Form	
Section 5	Buildings and Spaces in the Village	
Section 6	Building Details	
Section 7	Highways	
Section 8	Summary of Recommendations	
Appendix I	Listed buildings in Loxwood	Back fold
Appendix II	Other buildings and spaces needing protection	Back fold
Appendix III	Protected trees in Loxwood	
Appendix IV	List of local brick works	
Maps 1&2	Loxwood Parish & Village showing features listed in Apendices I,II & III	Front fold





1. Introduction

What is a Design Statement?

The Loxwood Village Design Statement describes the Parish as it is in 2002 and emphasises the qualities valued by most of those who live and work there. The statement has been produced by the Loxwood Village Design Statement Steering Group with inputs and help from many Loxwood residents, so that local knowledge, ideas and views can contribute in a positive way to the future of the village.

The aim is to enhance the quality of Loxwood's local environment. Any future development and change of the buildings, spaces and views should be based on a considered understanding of the village's past and present.

What is it for?

Loxwood, like most villages, has seen progressive change over the years. This process of large and smaller changes will continue. Loxwood will experience further developments and many minor adjustments to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths, trees and hedges that will alter the look and feel of the village.

This Statement is therefore addressed to:

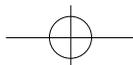
- Statutory bodies and public authorities
- Planners, developers, designers and architects, builders and engineers
- Local community groups
- Household and businesses

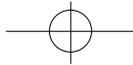
How does a Design Statement work?

This Statement has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in accordance with PPG12 and procedures by Chichester District Council Executive Board on 8th July 2003. Its recommendations will be taken into account when planning applications are addressed. In this way it will support the Local Plan as it affects the Parish of Loxwood and assist in the work of the Parish Council. This document will influence and be updated in line with Local Plan Reviews.

Note: Reference to Map & Appendices

Numbers quoted in the text in [] in squares on the map refer to numbered items in Appendix I Numbers quoted in the text in () and in circles on the map refer to items in Appendix II.





2. Background to the Village

The village of Loxwood, probably named after a Celtic or Saxon God called "Lokka" or "Loxwa", lies just inside the West Sussex border on the B2133, some 13 miles south of Guildford. Originally it was part of the ecclesiastical parish of Wisborough Green but, since there is no mention in the Domesday Book, the origins of these border villages are difficult to establish. However, Drungewick Manor was a feature in 1256 when it was a much-used retreat of the Bishop of Chichester. In the fifteenth century it was decided to erect a "chapel of ease" in Loxwood, on the site to the west of Church Cottage [41], the oldest building now standing in the village. Loxwood became a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1873 and a civil parish in 1937. Today, the village is in the administration of Chichester District Council. Schools in the village have had close links with the Church with the 1876 Vicarage Hill school (17) being replaced by the new school in Nicholsfield in the 1950's.

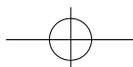
Until 1757, the main road through the village ran along the Green Lane (45), now a bridleway behind the village post office. It then turned down today's Station Road, into Brewhurst Lane (48) and on over the River Lox. Another road Nep Lane (47) by Little Pancake cottage, connected Station Road to the Onslow Arms. In 1757, however an Act of Parliament created a turnpike road from Alfold Bars (or "gate") to St Mary's Gate in Arundel, to form the modern road system.



Green Lane - Old Guildford Road

The most productive industrial period of Loxwood's history was the 15th to the 17th centuries. Firstly, iron, was worked in and around the village, driven by an Act of Parliament in 1581 which prohibited new iron works nearer than 22 miles from London, 14 miles from the Thames and 12 miles from the coast. The Act was intended to put a limit on timber cutting in those areas. The iron workings were outlasted by the glass making which operated over the whole period. Huguenots founded a factory at Hog Copse (today we know it as Pigbush Lane) and, by the 17th Century, vessels and window glass were made in Sidney Wood. (Sydney, Australia was named after the Sydneys of Sydney Farm). Regrettably no physical remains of this industry are believed to exist in the village.

In 1813 construction began on the Wey & Arun Junction Canal. It was designed to link London with Portsmouth and so avoid the transport of munitions for use in the Napoleonic Wars through the Straits of Dover. By the time it opened in 1816, however, the Duke of Wellington had prevailed and the original requirement for the canal no longer existed. It was used initially to carry commercial produce but the railways soon made the canal redundant and business declined rapidly from about 1840 until it closed in 1871. The canal remains a major feature of the village and many



A significant contribution to the life and economy of the village for over 100 years was made by the Dependent Brethren, led by the South London evangelist William Sirgood, who arrived in Loxwood in 1850. Not only did they provide a focus of religious following through the Spy lane Chapel but, in due course through diligence and hard work, they came to own a significant proportion of the farms, cottages and retail outlets in the village. Their Combination Stores in the village centre lasted the onslaught of the supermarkets until the early 1980s, but many of the businesses which flourished in Loxwood, serving a relatively immobile population had declined in the early 1960s.



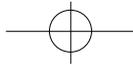
From the early 1980s, however, the village has experienced resurgence in local commerce from the influx of new residents and the general growth in the economy of the South East. Whilst a considerable number of residents are commuters, to Horsham, Guildford, Crawley, Gatwick Airport, Coastal Towns within approximately 30 miles radius of the village and some travel to London, significant employment exists within the village. These range from retail outlets such as the Post Office stores, a butcher (dealing with local farmers), hairdresser, flower and dress shops, to small businesses. Including car servicing, bespoke kitchens, builders, plumbers, electricians, gardeners, fencing contractors, tree nursery, window cleaners, soft furnishers, driving tuition, and the two public houses that virtually mark the boundaries to the village. A significant employer is the Local Medical Centre and Doctors Surgery while, a modern trend, a growing number of people work from home.

The village's amenities include the modern Medical Centre, the Sports Centre and North Hall which provides a base for community societies and functions, while caravan and other clubs use it for many weekends during the year. Loxwood attracts many other visitors who come to enjoy the peace of its countryside, the canal, wildlife and the local pubs.

The evolutionary development of modern Loxwood has been achieved whilst retaining its many historical buildings in and around the village, the quality of the farms, and the beauty of the countryside. Currently having a population of around 1900, 21st Century Loxwood pays testament to a community that demonstrates a continuing stewardship of a village which has quietly thrived for over a thousand years. May it do so for another thousand!

Principal Historical Features, which should be retained protected and enhanced to maintain the village character. These are found in Appendices I & II and are shown on the map.

1. *The line and setting of the Wey & Arun Canal (See Policy R5 of Chichester District Local Plan First Review). The setting can be described as the flood plain of the river to the south of the canal and the fields (43) Shaded Green on map, which stretch from the north bank. Any development in these areas would seriously impact on the canals rural & historical setting.*
2. *The associations of the Dependent Brethren*
 - *Chapel (22)*
 - *The "Combination Stores" (6)*
 - *Some of the workers' houses e.g. 1-4 New Houses, (21)*
3. *The track of the old roads through the village (45)*
4. *Church Cottage and the site of the old church [41]*
5. *The old village school on Vicarage Hill*
6. *Many old houses and farms dating from the fifteenth century onwards (eg. many of the listed buildings shown in Appendix I)*



3. Relationship between the Village and Features in the Countryside

Loxwood has developed along about two and a half miles of the B2133 from Alfold Bars in the north to Fitchfold in the south. The remainder of the Parish consists of open farmland with isolated or small groups of houses interspersed. High ground protects the village on the North, South and East sides while the small Loxwood stream drains through the centre of the village into the River Lox at Brewhurst.

The village is surrounded by mixed farmland of cereals, beef cattle and sheep as well as significant patches of commercial woodland. A number of individual farms and other larger dwellings, interspersed with old indigenous trees and hedges, provide a varied patchwork landscape. An extensive network of foot and bridle paths, including the Wey South and Sussex Border Path, connects the countryside to the village enabling easy access to it on foot for all residents. The restoration of the Canal is providing a major environmental and scenic asset to the village in the form of a beautiful and tranquil linear park offering recreation for residents and visitors alike.

Most of the buildings in the village are small in scale and, generally are built on the lower ground. This, together with those properties at the village edge having good-sized plots with extensive growth of trees and hedges, helps to merge the village into the countryside.

The local land is essentially neutral/acid clay and sandy soil supporting many native trees like oak (of which many are over 200 years old), crab apple, blackthorn, hawthorn, spindle, field maple and the scarce wild service tree. The variety of habitats created by the fields, trees, hedges and water courses, provide homes for a good mix of small birds, hawks, little owls, barn owls, tawny owls and nightingales. Also represented are many British mammals including five species of bat, a wide variety of insects including the glow-worm and reptiles with the slow worm in evidence. The river/canal corridor supports a large number of wild flowers with some uncommon species such as soft shield fern, lesser centaury and cowslips. Such a variety of wildlife close to habitation can be attributed partly to the amount of open space within the village, while the limited street lighting encourages the nocturnal species.

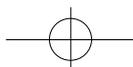
Recommended guidelines:-

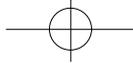
Aim: To maintain Loxwood as a semi-rural village, closely integrated into the local countryside.

- 1. The landscape and wildlife habitats around the river and canal should be maintained for the enjoyment of all.*
- 2. The course of the Canal and its environment (43) should be protected to facilitate eventual restoration and the development of a linear park. Any new development local to the Canal should not reduce the quality of its environment. (See Policy RS of Chichester District Local Plan first Review)*
- 3. Development at the village edge should not be conspicuous from the surrounding countryside. In particular care must be taken to avoid building on the higher ground to the east and south of the village*
- 4. Large buildings and small plots should be avoided at the village edge to maintain the close merging of village and countryside*
- 5. Care should be taken to preserve the wild life habitats to ensure wild life remains close to the village and that the network of wildlife corridors is maintained and enhanced.*
- 6. The old Guildford Road (45), now a public bridleway, should be maintained in its "Green Lane" form and not become hemmed in by development to become a narrow path*



Old School





4. Settlement Form of the Parish

Loxwood Parish is formed from a number of distinct communities. It is the disposition of these groups of buildings and the interaction of open spaces, trees, roads and footpaths that give the village its rural atmosphere and uniqueness.

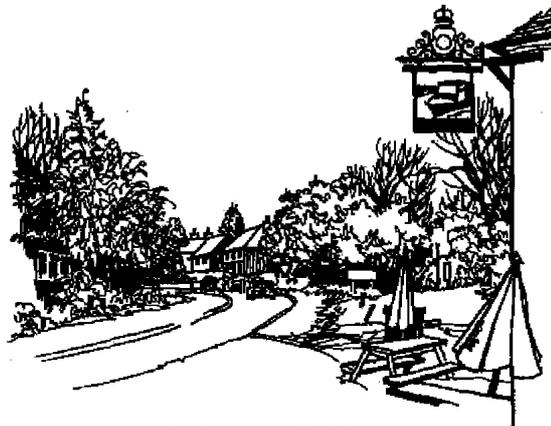
The main part of the village lies along the B2133 with a centre built north of the River Lox. There are outlying hamlets to the north on the Surrey border at Alfold Bars and south towards Wisborough Green around Fritchfold Farm (16) and at Round Street. The rest of the Parish extends to several farms and scattered houses with a further group of dwellings along Drungewick lane.

In the village centre there is the bus stop and a few shops grouped by the village pond. The Post Office (4), with its general store provides an essential focus and valuable amenity for the village. The Onslow Arms pub [22], together with the river and Canal crossing are other significant features in the village which are attractive to both residents and visitors alike.

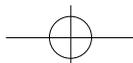
Housing development over a long period of time has essentially gently in-filled many of the spaces that existed within the original village layout and led to a variety of building styles which have given the present village its unique characteristics. There has been limited volume house building, the largest being Nicholsfield where an estate of 40 council houses was built in the 1950's, followed by others in Spy Lane and its side roads, Farm Close and Loxwood Farm Place. A new estate of 30 houses of various sizes (Willets Way) was built (2001/02) between Farm Close and Station Road.

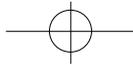
The impression that remains, however, is one of an un-crowded environment where open spaces are visible from most locations in the village and the buildings sit comfortably within their plots. Typically this impression is observed in the buildings encountered at the three entrances to the village. The Victorian/Edwardian houses (35) with the Sir Roger Tichborne Pub [9] to the north, the spread of houses and farm at Fritchfold in the south and the little cottages [42] (18) (19) at the eastern entrance in Station Road all provide that essence of the village which resonates elsewhere in Loxwood.

There are very few commercial buildings other than farms, pubs and the shops at the village centre and a few other isolated buildings such as the telephone exchange, the Country Store and Medical Centre. Other commercial activity tends to be operated within domestic style premises.



Onslow Arms High Street





Loxwood's rural charm derives from the informality in the positioning of the buildings. The shape and layout of houses have altered over time, reflecting an evolutionary development process. Except in some recent developments the building line along roads is not uniform. Part of the village character for example comes from some old buildings which had earlier specific business use, and are very close to the road. Whilst today this would not be appropriate, neither would a rigid adherence to a uniform building line as it would detract from the rural atmosphere.

Development has still allowed significant spaces to remain, and so reduced any tendency to urbanisation. These spaces take the form of small fields or paddocks, the plant nursery, ground surrounding North Hall, or large gardens. Some of these spaces contain an extensive growth of trees or bushes that help to give the village its rural appearance. The general locations of specific trees with Preservation Orders and providing village amenity are shown in Appendix III and on the map. The use of hedges as screening is a very distinctive feature of the village.

The higher ground surrounding the village affords many attractive views that are an important element in setting the character of the village. The views from the top of the hill at Fritchfold (41) and down towards the river and Canal, and from the footpath along the ridge to the east overlooking the village from behind Spy Lane and down Merry Hills (42) are of particular note. Any development in the village should be considered in the context of the potential adverse impact on those views.

There is a very valuable set of local paths or 'twittens' which link various parts of the community to key village services such as shops, church or pub. Enhancing these village pedestrian byways would add to the life of the village.



Twittens

Recommended Guidelines:-

Aim: To keep the impression of Loxwood as having an un-crowded environment, with open space visible from most locations in the village.

- 1. Limiting building in the intervening spaces should preserve the separation of the main village from the smaller settlements at Fritchfold (16) and Alfold Bars. This would avoid over two miles of ribbon development.*
- 2. The system of pathways or 'twittens' through the houses should be continued and extended within any new developments but constructed to minimise their use for antisocial behaviour.*
- 3. Indigenous trees or groups of trees should be preserved wherever possible to sustain the wooded appearance of the village. Protected tree groups are listed in Appendix III and shown on the map.*
- 4. Within any development, spaces should be left in the village, particularly at the roadside, to reduce the effect of urbanisation. Likewise the settings of historic buildings, whether individually or in groups, should be protected from becoming overwhelmed by new developments. Listed and other historic buildings are shown in Appendix I & II and also on the map*
- 5. The settings of the two pubs[9] [22] merging into the natural feature of river, woods and fields should be maintained to provide a relaxing atmosphere for rest and recreation.*
- 6. The preservation of the views into and over the village should always be considered in all development proposals. Those of particular importance are listed in Appendix II and shown on the map (41) (42) (43).*

