

# West Dean

## **VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT**

April 2009

# West Dean Village Design Statement

This Village Design Statement was formally endorsed by West Tytherley and Frenchmoor Parish Council at their meeting on 14th April 2009 and by West Dean Parish Council at their meeting on 13th May 2009.

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# Introduction

## What is a Village Design Statement?

This Village Design Statement (VDS) is a document to provide guidance for development or changes to West Dean and to influence the planning process in association with the Parish Councils, Wiltshire Council and Test Valley Borough Council. It is important to remember that West Dean sits astride the Hampshire/Wiltshire border and that, as a result, the Hampshire part of the village is governed by West Tytherley and Frenchmoor Parish Council and Test Valley Borough Council, whilst the Wiltshire part of the village comes under West Dean Parish Council and Wiltshire Council.

Residents, however, see themselves as part of a single community, regardless of the presence of an administrative boundary.

The VDS describes the character of West Dean by identifying those architectural and landscape characteristics most valued by its residents. Whilst the VDS does not aim to prevent further building in the village it gives the residents the opportunity to influence any new development. It encourages designs that will reflect the best of the building traditions, form, proportions, materials and details as they exist at present in West Dean whilst at the same time welcoming modern techniques and energy conservation and, importantly, preserving the much cherished open spaces.

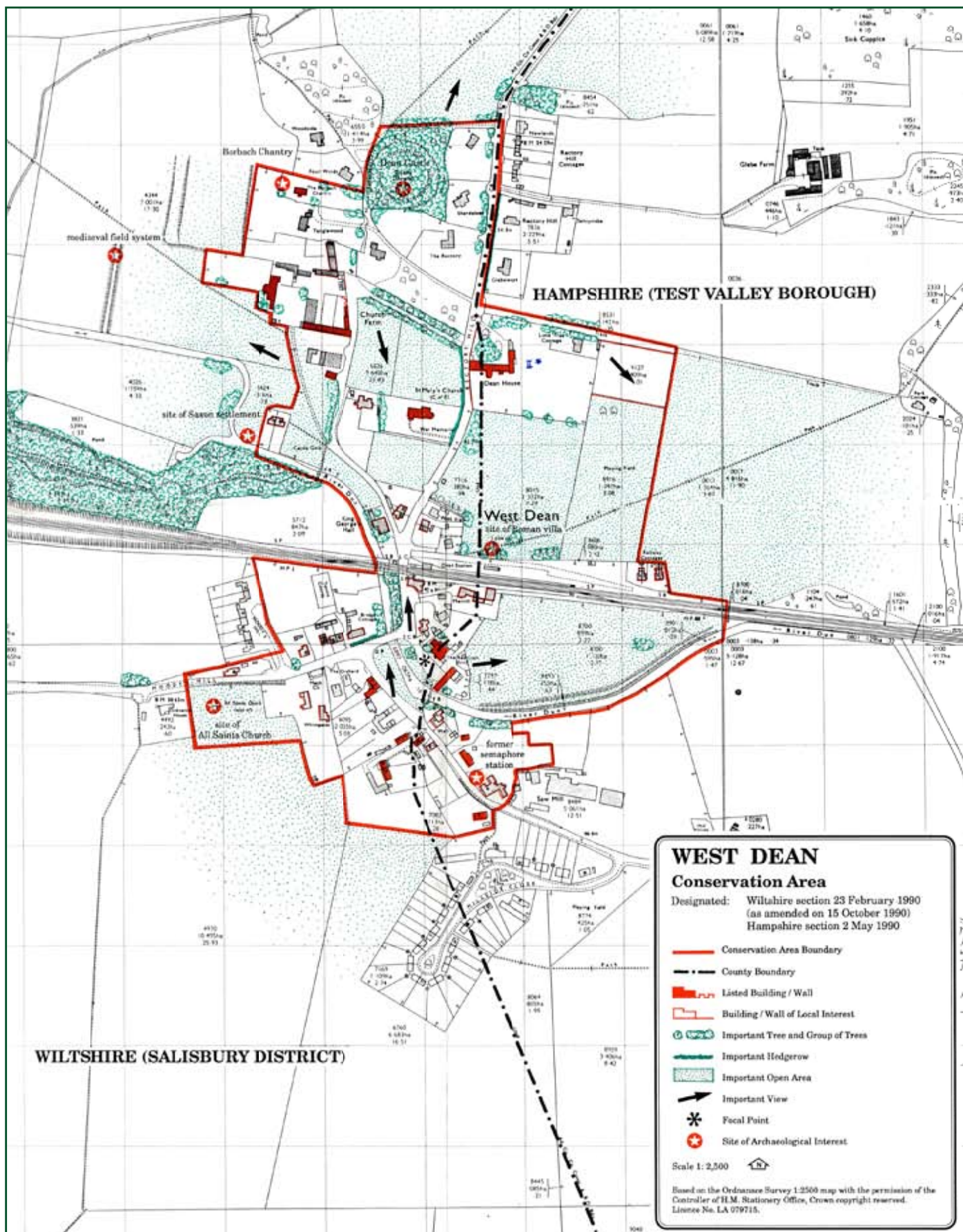


## How was it produced?

The process began at the West Dean Annual Parish Meeting in April 2008 when it was decided that a Village Design Statement should be prepared. A working group was formed and, at an annual village event in July where over 150 people were present, an information stall was set up and additional people joined the group.

A survey to elicit the views of residents and other stakeholders and to identify their concerns was undertaken in October 2008. A questionnaire was distributed to all 145 households and also to those who work at East Brothers and at Dean Hill Park. There was a 34.2% response and the results were analysed by the Working Group. A public meeting was held in early December 2008 to share the results with the village and to allow free-ranging discussion of the issues raised. The information gained from the survey and the subsequent meeting, together with current planning guidance, forms the basis of our Village Design Statement.

# Location





# History and Settlement

## History

Straddling the county boundaries of Wiltshire and Hampshire, West Dean is an ancient rural village, seven miles from Salisbury and the same distance from Romsey. Situated in a broad valley of the River Dun, the village developed below the chalk escarpment of Dean Hill, with the predominant chalk bedrock of the area giving rise to well drained turf, woodland vegetation and arable fields bordered with hedgerows and wooded outcrops.

The first historical mention of Dean was in the Cartularium Saxonicum for the year 880 and a listing in the Domesday Book of 1086 as 'Duene' or 'Dene', when Waleran the Saxon owned both parts of the village. However, nineteenth century excavations by the Rector, George Masters, an amateur archaeologist, revealed evidence of an earlier Romano-British settlement dating from about the fourth century A.D (now a Scheduled Monument), situated to the north of the railway station.

In the 1870s the Reverend Masters found remains of two large buildings, uncovering sections of painted walls, tessellated floors, hypocausts, baths and foundations, some of which he retrieved and recorded, before re-covering the site to preserve it.

In the grounds of the original Dean House near Church Farm and the Borbach Chantry there was a flattened and grassed knoll (now known as Castle Mound), used by the Evelyn family as a bowling green. It featured on maps as a circular shape and

has been described as an early Celtic fortified mound, but appears to be a Norman motte and bailey structure developed from a previous Saxon fortification (now a Scheduled Monument). Dean House itself was a substantial country residence owned by the Evelyns and their Pierrepont descendants, but gradually fell into disuse and was finally sold and dismantled in 1823. Village folklore claims that many houses subsequently built in West Dean contain some stone from the demolition.

As the village was divided between two counties, it originally had two ecclesiastical parishes - All Saints in Hampshire and St. Mary's in Wiltshire. In 1473 St. Mary's became the sole parish church, but was eventually demolished and then rebuilt on its current site in 1868. The graveyard and the Borbach Chantry, which dates back to the 1320s, remain as evidence of the previous church, and the Chantry contains monuments pertaining to the Evelyns and their families, as well as a Saxon coffin unearthed from the foundations of All Saints. There was also a Methodist Chapel in the village. It was built in 1860 and was situated in the garden of Whitegates adjacent to the road. The Chapel was closed in 1973. It was later demolished as it had fallen into disrepair but part of a wall is still standing.

In the eighteenth century the 'Bankrupt Canal' reached West Dean in an effort to link Salisbury and Southampton by water. Although some remains of the route and canal works can still be seen, the project was doomed due to lack of investment combined with the advent of the railway and most sections were never completed. The railway arrived in 1847 and the station is still in use today.

Until the middle of the twentieth century the Manor of Norman Court, named after himself by Roger Norman in 1334, owned much of West Dean. Over the centuries the estate devolved through various families and in 1906 was acquired by Washington Singer, a son of the sewing machine family, who lived there until his death in 1934. After his son was killed at El Alamein in 1942, the subsequent death duties forced the sale of the estate in 1945, when the majority of the land, homes and businesses in





Dean were auctioned and the West Dean that most of us know today began its post war life.

All listed buildings, sites of archaeological interest and open areas in the village are identified on the map on page 5.

## Population and Employment

The population of West Dean is around 300 with a mixture of families, single and retired people. In January 2009, the oldest person in the village was 96 and the youngest 2 months, with a broad range of social groups represented but not segregated.

Commercial activity and employment in West Dean can be broadly categorised into the following areas:

- East Brothers saw mill and timber yard
- Woodland industry
- Dean Hill Park light industrial estate
- Agriculture
- Stud farm
- Commuters by train or car mainly to Salisbury, Southampton and Winchester
- Self-employed people working at home or running businesses from home

East Brothers has been in existence in West Dean since 1882. They have three sawmill lines and an extensive stock yard. Products include flooring, decking, cladding, structural timbers, fencing timber, joinery timber, pallets and large section timber for civil engineering projects.

From the survey results, 19% of those who responded to the question about noise levels were concerned about land generated noise including the timber yard. It is recognised that East Brothers have done a great deal to minimise noise levels over the years.

Dean Hill Park was originally an MOD site. In 1938 the Ministry of Defence requisitioned more than 500 acres of farmland below Dean Hill to develop a Naval Armaments Depot, which remained in operation until its closure in 2004 and subsequent sale in 2006. Its purpose was to supply the Royal Navy fleet at Portsmouth and the huge chalk tunnels hewed into the hillside stored munitions and missiles.

The site was sold to the current owners in 2006. By late 2008, all former armaments storage tunnels had been let for long term storage and all buildings with the exception of the former Headquarters building had also been let. There is a wide range of tenants ranging from acoustic engineers to sculptors. The NHS also rents a large building in the Park.

Further details of the history of the site, its nature conservation value and current development may be found on the website link below:

<http://www.deanhillpark.co.uk>

# Landscape and Surroundings

## GUIDELINE

*The village's outstanding landscape and the views it affords should be protected.*



## Countryside

An outstanding feature of the village and its surrounding countryside is the wide variety of wildlife, quantities of wildflowers, and many hectares of woodland. Many of those who responded to the questionnaire commented on the value of the countryside around the village and the need to preserve it and the important open spaces. The farmed land is a mix of arable and pasture with managed woodland and a stud farm. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs – a national designation) and a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC – a county level designation).

The village is set in exceptional landscape. The wooded escarpment of Dean Hill bounds views to the south. There is an apparently unbroken sweep of woodland to the north from the Grimstead and Whiteparish roads and adjacent footpaths. The parish was therefore included in a Special Landscape Area by Salisbury District Council which impacts on planning applications.

## Bentley Wood SSSI

The 1700 acre wood, mostly within West Dean Parish, was notified as an SSSI in August 1985. It is particularly noted for woodland butterflies, many of which have suffered marked declines in Britain, for which it is now one of the top sites in the country.

Around 100 species of bird have been noted in the wood. Notable mammals include dormice and five species of bat. Fungi are numerous; 920 species were recorded up to 2007 and new finds for South Wiltshire are still being discovered. The flora of the wood is also diverse and includes many species found only on woodland sites. They have survived despite extensive felling and replanting in the 1950s.

## The Brickworth Down, Dean Hill SSSI and Dean Hill Park

The SSSI demonstrates the succession of chalk grassland through juniper scrub to yew woodland and is the best example of this transition in Hampshire and Wiltshire. The excellent open downland supports an extensive range of wildflowers including a variety of orchids. In addition to the yew, the woodlands comprise ash, oak, and beech with an interesting ground flora, which includes white helleborine and bluebells. The SINC is described as agriculturally unimproved grassland. In Dean Hill Park a very active conservation group has recorded around 250 plant species and work is ongoing. Plant species identified include 10 varieties of orchid and the rare red hemp-nettle, a Red Data Book species.



On Dean Hill Park land, between its western fence and the Whiteparish Road, is an outstanding wildflower area. A public footpath traverses this land and this is the only place in the village with public access where wildflowers can be seen in such profusion.

## The Village

The River Dun runs through the centre of the village bounded by flora-rich banks. Fauna in and near the river is increasing. The water voles in the centre of the village were flooded out by a succession of high river levels in recent years, though they have now re-established. Nationally the water vole population has declined dramatically.

Providing banks and cover to aid fauna repopulation is desirable.

The river habitat, together with suitable nest sites, draws swallows and housemartins. Bats and hedgehogs live in the village centre; foxes and badgers visit it by night; roe and fallow deer come to the fields and gardens around the village; hares are seen from time to time. The substantial size of many of the present gardens enables areas suitable for slow worms, snakes, frogs, toads and newts to be maintained without difficulty. There is also abundant bird life, including some relatively rare species.

### GUIDELINE

*The flora and fauna in the area should continue to be conserved and protected.*

*When considering any future development, the appropriate density and plot size are factors to be taken into account, in particular any applications for development in areas previously used as garden.*



# Village Amenities

Over the years West Dean has lost many amenities previously enjoyed by the community. The School was closed, followed by the one and only shop and then the Post Office. More recently the only public house in the village was closed. It should be noted that there is no piped gas supply or mains sewerage to the village (although a small sewage plant in Dean Hill Park remains to serve former MOD properties). All other properties therefore require their own septic tanks.

## The Church

St Mary's Church is an integral part of village life.

The numerically small congregation belies the broad extent to which the church contributes to the life of the village. With excellent acoustics and access for disabled people, it also provides the community with a venue for concerts and a small meeting room

A significant proportion of the local community participate in maintenance of the buildings and grounds, in the fund-raising and supporting social events. This both builds community and maintains a resource for everyone in the village.

## The Village Hall

Since the closure of the pub, the Village Hall has become the main focal point of social activities in the village. The Village Hall Committee organises regular social events, which are greatly enjoyed by villagers and their guests. In addition there is a thriving mothers and toddlers group, Pilates classes and, during the winter months, the Over 60s Lunch Club which all make use of the Hall.

## Dean Hill Sports and Social Club

Originally associated with the MOD activities, this members-only club in Hillside Close is much valued by those who use it. Membership is available for anyone who wishes to join and the club now brings an additional benefit as meeting place for young people.

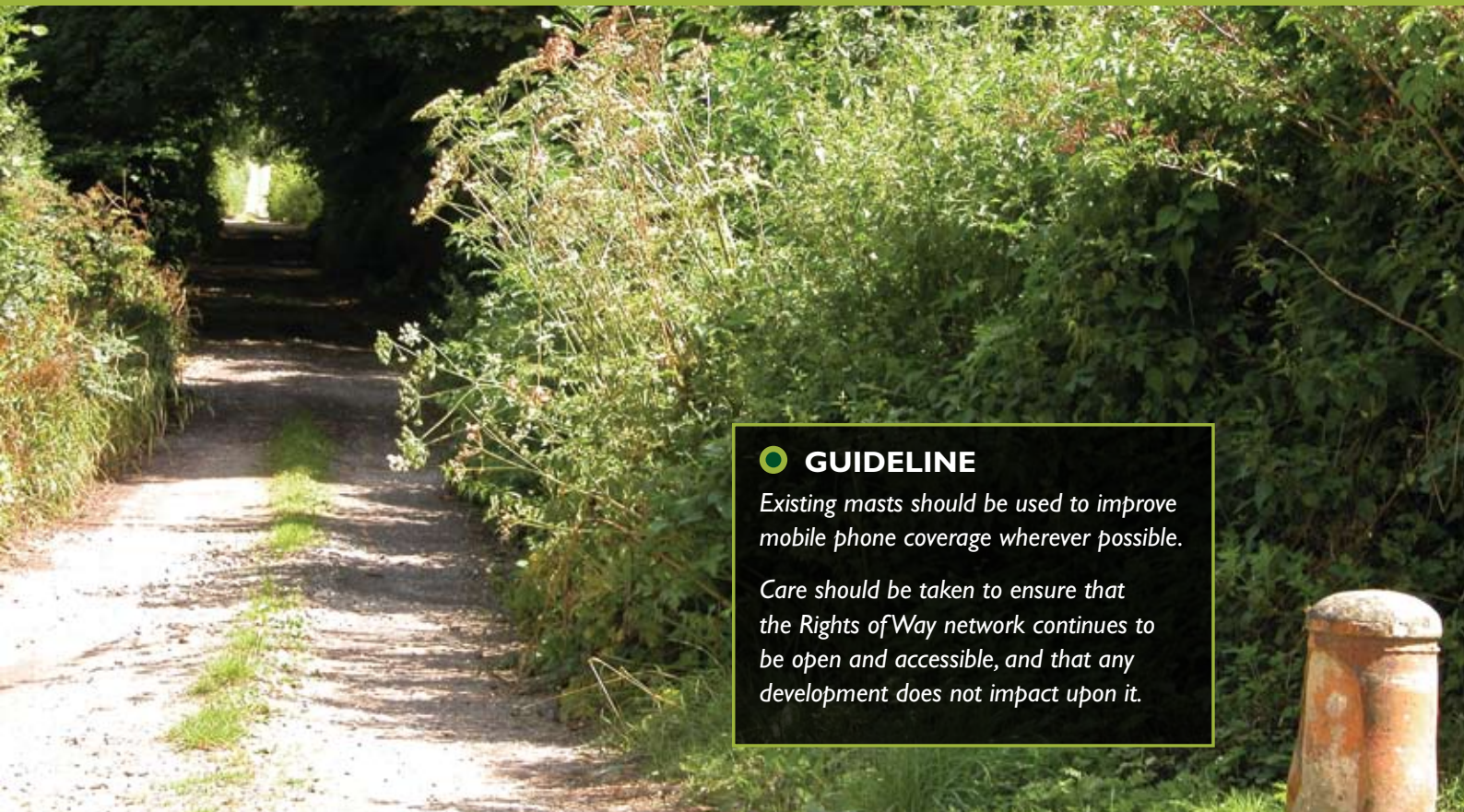
Both the Village Hall and the Sports and Social Club are used for private functions.

## The Recreation Ground

There is a well-used recreation ground with a football field and swings, a slide and a Wendy house.







### **GUIDELINE**

*Existing masts should be used to improve mobile phone coverage wherever possible.*

*Care should be taken to ensure that the Rights of Way network continues to be open and accessible, and that any development does not impact upon it.*

## Village Green

This amenity is well used by residents and visitors, and 96% of those who responded to the question on the Village Green commented that it was essential to preserve it.

## Telephone and IT Connectivity

Some villagers working from home are hampered by a low quality telephone service, currently provided by BT, due to old wiring and the distance from the Lockerley exchange. Consequently, the village experiences slow broadband internet download speeds.

Improved telephone service is likely to contribute to additional job opportunities and to continuing residence of younger people working from home in the village. Although improved broadband service is Government policy, early action is very desirable.

## The Public Call Box

In spite of no longer accepting coins, the existence of the telephone box for emergency calls is considered vital by many villagers. This is particularly so as mobile telephone coverage is limited in the village.

## Rights of Way

West Dean has many rights of way, which are greatly valued by villagers. 9 footpaths, 7 bridleways and 3 by-ways are in the Wiltshire part of the village and a further 2 footpaths are in Hampshire plus a third which is currently under consideration by the Hampshire County Council Rights of Way section.

Today they are used for recreation rather than communication between parishes and are a valuable resource. In a number of places they can be linked to form an attractive circular walk giving superb views. As traffic density on the roads increases they provide safe routes for recreation and enjoyment of the local environment. 91% of those who responded to this question thought it essential to preserve the current footpath network.



# Traffic and Transport

West Dean is entered on and transected by country lanes. It benefits from a regular train service, and from scheduled bus services connecting it with Salisbury and Romsey.

## Road Traffic

The narrow lanes in the village are used by traffic ranging from heavy commercial and agricultural vehicles to bicycles. Pedestrians also have to use the roads because there are no footpaths. Whilst many of the HGVs pass through the village others are servicing Dean Hill Park and the sawmill.

19% of those who responded to the question about traffic were concerned about the volumes of traffic. 56% were concerned about the speed of road traffic (especially HGVs) and the danger this poses. Problem areas identified were the hill to the sawmill and Hillside Close, by the church and the riverside village green where many residents and visitors walk or cycle and children play. The village is located on the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route No. 24.

As pedestrian access was seen as very important, suggestions from respondents included an extended connection of footways or footpaths.



## Public Transport

Public transport is of vital importance to those who commute out of the area for work, education or other reasons. The railway is well used and valued by respondents. The bus service is especially valued by older people and by children going to school. Those commuting into the village for work also use public transport, and is especially important to the businesses located at Dean Hill Park.





## Street Lighting

The limited number of Victorian-style street lights located in West Dean is in character with a countryside village. The majority of those responding to the question on the retention of night skies did not wish to see an increase in street lighting. A number of residents also thought that home security lighting should be discreet.

## Parking

Narrow roads provide few parking spaces, and the railway station has no dedicated spaces. 90% of those who responded to this question commented that no development should be permitted which would result in more on-street parking.

### GUIDELINE

*In considering new developments, the volumes of traffic, particularly HGV traffic, should be taken into account. Every effort should continue to be made to ensure that traffic adheres to speed limits. Opportunities to develop facilities for cyclists and pedestrians should be encouraged.*

*Noise should be minimised to acceptable levels in order to maintain the tranquillity of the village.*

*Public Transport services are critical to the sustainability of the village and should be maintained as far as is practicable.*

*Street lighting should not be increased from the present level and home security lighting should be discreet.*

*New developments should meet parking standards and additional on-street parking discouraged.*



# Development and Planning



## Conservation Area

Salisbury District Council adopted the West Dean Conservation Area on 23rd February 1990 (with amendments on 15th October 1990) and by Test Valley Borough Council on 2nd May 1990.

The boundary of the Conservation Area is drawn around the historic core of the village and includes not only buildings of historic interest but also natural landscape features such as groups of trees and open spaces.

It extends from the Castle Mound (Motte) in the north to Tower House in the south, and east to west from Church Farm to the Railway Cottages.

The key to maintaining the character of West Dean and maintaining its environmental quality lies in retaining those features that contribute towards its unique identity, and ensuring that any new development is sympathetic in character. Key features are:

- The clustered nature of the settlement core.
- Outlying elements linked to the core by hedges, tree belts and attractive open spaces.
- Important open areas and views out of the village on its fringes.

- The focal point formed by the village green area in front of the former Red Lion public house (now Red Lion House) beside the River Dun.
- The tradition of red brick as a local building material.
- Local landmarks formed by St Mary's Church and Red Lion House.

The Conservation Area Policies aim to preserve and enhance the special character of the village. They are complementary to existing land use and countryside policies in Salisbury District Council and Test Valley Borough Council. The designation of a Conservation Area automatically brings into effect certain additional planning controls which include:

- Limitation on normal permitted development tolerances.
- Restrictions on demolition of buildings and structures.
- Restrictions on felling and other tree work.

(The full text of the West Dean Conservation Area Policy is contained in a booklet obtainable from Wiltshire Council or Test Valley Borough Council. These extracts are re-produced by permission of the two Councils.)



## Future Development

Most of West Dean comprises buildings of a traditional style, largely in brick and tile. As owners of the village, the Norman Court Estate influenced designs and construction materials. A limited number of bungalows and houses followed in the last century, together with three larger developments, one at Hillside Close (semi-detached 1950s style designs for employees of the MOD working at Dean Hill Naval Armaments Depot) and others at Moody's Hill and Rectory Hill (Local Authority social housing).

The presence of Dean Hill Depot's safety zone prevented significant development from the late 1930's until 2006 when Dean Hill Depot was de-commissioned and came into private ownership.

Apart from agricultural concerns, industrial/business development is limited to East Brothers sawmills (a long-standing and significant local employer), and the small industrial/office units now housed in former MOD buildings at what is now Dean Hill Park.

The village and its surrounding area have evolved in a way which gives it a unique character, particularly as ribbon and infill development is largely absent. Residents are determined to preserve this, but at the same time recognise that a limited degree of new building for housing and employment will help to sustain village life.

In terms of affordable housing, a Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2008, identified a need for a small number of 2 or 3 bedroomed houses, and bungalows for elderly residents (not more than 5).

### GUIDELINE

*All developments should respect the character, setting and tranquillity of the village.*

*It is important that the mix of property types, sizes and tenures is sustained in order to preserve the current social diversity of the village.*

*Developments of housing should be at a density appropriate to the site and its surroundings.*

*Developments should respect the fact that West Dean is one distinct community, which unusually is under the control of two Planning Authorities.*

*Incremental developments, where continued extensions to a building are sought should take account of the cumulative impact of the increase in size from that of the original building.*

*Construction of substantially larger buildings to replace existing buildings which are demolished should be avoided where it would be more visually intrusive or out of scale and character with its setting and surroundings.*

*Development should take account of relevant constraints (e.g. floodplains) and be avoided in inappropriate locations.*

*Observe the principles currently proposed by Wiltshire Council and Test Valley Borough Council in their Local Development Frameworks, in relation to the intention to provide for the needs of the rural area whilst protecting the overall rural character, and achieving sustainable communities.*

*The composition of new residential development should take account of the housing needs of the local community. Affordable housing should be informed by Housing Needs Survey results.*

*Observe the policy framework to protect Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, and, in the case of development adjacent to a Conservation Area, ensure that it would not detract from the character, appearance and setting of the Conservation Area.*

*Existing designated open spaces are considered to be of vital importance and should be protected from any inappropriate development.*

# The Design of Buildings

## General Design of Buildings



There is a variety of different building styles and ages in the village and the diversity is much valued by residents. The majority of buildings were built before the twentieth century but some have been

successfully extended using methods which 'blend in with existing materials' e.g. the church extension with matching bricks, mortar and stone mullioned windows.

## Materials



Buildings are mainly constructed from brick, occasionally painted or rendered, with some timber framing. Mortar is generally lime with interesting textural additions of flint or gravel.

Flint has been used for the church and for boundary walls, and wood for many outbuildings and extensions.

## Roofs and Eaves



Roofing materials are mainly slate and old hand made tiles with some thatch, often pierced by

dormer windows. Corrugated iron is found in barns and outbuildings.

## Walls and Boundaries



A variety of materials and styles is visible: capped cob and brick walls, hedges and wooden fences. Leylandii hedging and close board fencing are

thought inappropriate, traditional mixed hedging being preferred.

## Windows



Windows are an attractive and important feature of West Dean. We have many sash windows, old wooden casements and some arched windows.

Residents have been careful to preserve the originals and avoid obvious UPVC replacements as much as possible.

## Specific Points relating to New Buildings

77% of those who responded to the question about building and designs felt that new builds should blend in with “old West Dean” and 87% of those who responded thought that extensions should blend in with the ‘traditional West Dean style’ which

is greatly valued by residents. Off-street parking and adequate space around buildings should be retained. The conservation area including the village green should be preserved unchanged. Gardens and views out of the village are much valued.

### GUIDELINE

*New buildings and extensions should continue to develop the styles that have evolved historically in West Dean.*

*Traditional building materials should be used to blend with the style of the village. Red brick, tile, slate and thatch are traditional materials.*

*Rooflines should be kept in proportion to existing properties.*

*Window styles should be in keeping with local traditions and compatible with achieving low rooflines. Flat roofed dormers generally should be avoided.*

*Appropriate space and gardens should be retained around properties, where part of the character of the locality.*

*High value is given to important views out of the village which should be protected.*

*The central cluster nature of the village settlement, should be maintained avoiding ribbon development.*

*The position and orientation of new houses should be varied to avoid uniform rows.*



**This Village Design Statement was prepared by  
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The Group also thanks all those villagers who

- took photographs for this Village Design Statement, whether or not the photographs appear in the final document
- completed the questionnaire
- attended the public meetings
- acted as critical friends in the editing process.

Designed by [www.acanthus-colour.co.uk](http://www.acanthus-colour.co.uk)

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