

A photograph of a stone wall with several rows of irregularly shaped stones. In the foreground, there are several green plants with small leaves, possibly weeds or young plants, growing in front of the wall. The text is overlaid on the image in white boxes with orange text.

Fulking Conservation Area Appraisal

Summary of Comments to Questionnaire

February 2008

Issues and Options Consultation Exercise February – March 2008

In November 2007, the Council held a public meeting and an exhibition to illustrate the work that had been carried out on Fulking Conservation Area Appraisal over the preceding months. The public meeting was held in the Church Hall, the Street, Fulking on Thursday 12th November 2007. The exhibition was held in Hurstpierpoint Library, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint from Monday 26th November until Friday 7th December. The exhibition panels were also made available on the Council's website: www.midsussex.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

The exhibition included a detailed assessment of the character of the conservation area, suggested a number of changes to the boundary and provided some potential ideas for enhancement. Questionnaires relating to the draft management proposals were made available at all of the locations listed above. The deadline for the receipt of comments was Friday 14th December 2007.

This document summarises the comments the Council received to the questionnaire and sets out responses prepared by officers on behalf of the Council to the main issues raised. Wherever possible suggestions made by the public have been included in the appraisal document.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS TO FULKING CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1. Do you agree with boundary changes?

Yes – 5 No – 5

Additional comments

Respondent	Comments
Mr A Brooks	Originally thought that there might be some merit in including Clappers Lane – due to presence of Cabbage Patch, Knowle House, Brook House, Rose House and Rose Cottage – however, now believe that it is not suitable.
K. Watson	Feels that the conservation area should encompass the whole of the village, including Clappers Lane, properties to the east of the main street and properties to the north of the Shepherd and Dog
Mr C. Goodridge	The whole of the village should be included, from the cricket grounds up Clappers Lane, the properties either side of the road going west towards Poynings and the properties to the west between the Street and Perchings. Surely it is the village as a whole that needs conserving not just certain buildings?
Mr R. Corner	Agrees with the proposed changes and in addition, would like North Town Field and all land from Kent Cottage to Preston Nomands included.
Mr J. Sapsted	Land overlooking the conservation area, which effects the beauty of the landscape (i.e. Stammers Hill, the Nutshell and the new illegal stainless steel chimney.
Mrs C. Sapsted	Areas overlooking the conservation area should be included. For example, the Nutshell in Stammer Hill with the shed, stainless steel chimney and washing line totally destroy the beauty of the area.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	The boundary should be enlarged to include North Town Field, as the reservoir for the pumps and fountain are located under it. Clappers Lane should also be included as there are Art Deco pre-war farm cottages and Cabbage Patch (which is a c. 16 th Century cottage). The surrounding countryside needs protection, as development on this area would ruin the concept of the conservation area.
Dr A. Taylor	Include Clappers Lane – especially the southern end.
Mrs P. Rowland	No need to extend any further, certainly not Clappers Lane, as suggested at the public meeting. They [the houses in Clappers Lane] have no merit whatsoever.
Miss D.B. Bradley and Miss J. Money	The greater protection to the village is wholly good.
Mrs J. Vaughan	North Town Field should be included as it is a most valuable asset and provides not only a play area but a venue for village functions held annually, such as barn dances and theatre productions.

Question 2. What are the special features of the Conservation Area that contribute to its character and appearance?

Respondent	Comments
Mr A Brooks	Ram pump, pub, the many old buildings and the views.
K. Watson	I particularly value the various styles of architecture through the centuries, giving the village a unique feel. I also value the feeling of space within the village and therefore believe that the village should remain at its current size. This is part of its charm and character. I feel strongly that there should be no additional development, whether it be private or as part of an affordable housing scheme.
Mr C. Goodridge	Maintaining the small size of the village, including the sizes of the current properties. No additional housing should be allowed, as there is no infrastructure to support them and this includes affordable housing.
Mr R. Corner	Flint. Variety of house ages and styles. Setting – the setting of Fulking is important and development of adjacent areas would adversely impact upon the conservation area.
Mr J. Sapsted	The stream which Fulking was built around and which John Ruskin writes about. The South Downs, which overlook the village. The Shepherd and Dog public house, which is now the centre of village life. The Grade II listed buildings, which give the village its character.
Mrs C. Sapsted	The South Downs overlooking the village. The Shepherd and Dog pub with the adjoining stream. The many varied properties, in particular those Grade II listed, with their varied histories.
Anonymous	Most certainly the houses – different types, ages blend very well. The local farmers and landowners have also contributed over the years to the overall look of the village.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	Fulking is an old Sussex hamlet or rural village, which forms the main view from the Devils Dyke – the famous beauty spot. It is also possibly going to be in a national park. The whole village/parish needs conserving to protect it from development.
Dr A. Taylor	Older houses, thatched properties, cottage gardens and green space. Views between the properties to the countryside beyond.
Mrs P. Rowland	Flint walls. The backdrop of the Downs. The size of the village – compactness. The ability to see the Downs between the properties from The Street.
Mr R. Rowland	The many types of architecture. The special small size of the village. The North Town Field and in particular, the remarkably vibrant social life of the village.
Miss D.B. Bradley and Miss J. Money	The site alongside the Downs is vitally important but also the architectural quality.
Mrs J. Vaughan	Character and unspoilt nature of the area.

Question 3. Is there anything causing harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area?

Respondent	Comments
Mr A Brooks	The continuous extensions being added to all the dwellings.
K. Watson	The lack of off road parking for some properties is harming the view of the village in my opinion. There is definitely a need for additional parking. There has also been the addition of some large security gates within the Street, which have changes the 'open feel' of the village. Maybe planning permission should have been requested before installation.
Mr C. Goodridge	The influx of large 'security' gating which should not have been allowed and perhaps should be removed. Constant street parking, especially tradesmen's vehicles (vans), detract from the street scene far more than overhead wires and satellite dishes.
Mr R. Corner	MSDC Bins! Should have black bags instead. Phonelines – replace with fibre-optic cable from Poynings exchange to all Fulking houses (or at least those in conservation area). We're happy to be guinea pigs!
Mr J. Sapsted	The new plastic dustbins supplied by the Council should be replaced or got rid of. Parked cars and road signs should be reduced – 20mph limit doesn't work. Road humps would without detracting from the look of the village. Provide car parking outside the village. Better cleaning of gutters and drains to prevent flooding in the village.
Mrs C. Sapsted	The new plastic bins, which can't always be hidden like the smaller dustbins. Road sweeping and cleaning of drains to prevent flooding. This should be done by Mid Sussex District Council.
Anonymous	Ugly extensions that have not been thought through. Too many road signs.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	Any development will ruin the rural character. There is an illegal mobile home in Clappers Lane with temporary permission until September 2011, which should not be renewed, as it is in full view of Devils Dyke and could attract more development in that area.
Dr A. Taylor	The trend of extending properties – particularly this of high visual profile (i.e. visible from the street or the Downs).
Mrs P. Rowland	The new bins that can't be moved off the Street because they have nowhere to go. Speak to residents concerned and get them to sort it out with Mid Sussex.
Mr R. Rowland	Too many visitors and 'rat run' drivers in cars. Not nearly enough public transport. Gypsy caravan – Mid Sussex District Council will not enforce orders made by the Planning Inspectorate.
Miss D.B. Bradley and Miss J. Money	Too much parking!!
Mrs J. Vaughan	Large wooden gates - 2 houses have recently had these added to properties and does not enhance the appearance of the Street.

Question 4. Do you agree with Ideas for enhancement?

Yes – 9 No – 3

Additional comments

Respondent	Comments
K. Watson	Not totally! I believe owners do maintain the hedges etc. and the street scene overall is well presented. I do not see a need for improvement to the Backway, as this track is perfectly adequate for walkers and horses. I have no objection to masts, wires and satellite dishes, as they are a part of life in the 21 st Century. However, I do believe that if used, they should be positioned considerately and sympathetically.
Mr C. Goodridge	The Backway does not require improving as this could encourage cyclists to use it more often and at speed. It is primarily for horses and walkers and I have never experienced a problem with them.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	No car parks, as this would attract more traffic.
Mrs J. Vaughan	I think that the Backway is best left as a path for walkers and horse riders. Widening it would encourage traffic/cars to use it as well as parking, which is not wanted.

Question 5. Do you have any additional ideas for enhancement?

Respondent	Comments
Mr A Brooks	Car park and new village hall.
K. Watson	Additional parking – see comments to question 6. Consistency with planning consents within the village. Also serious consideration for large extensions to existing properties, as these will gradually change the demographics of the village. I value the village as the small community that it currently is.
Mr C. Goodridge	Parking restrictions in the Street. How else can the traffic flow be maintained? Properties with off-road parking should encourage visitors or tradesmen to use it.
Mr J. Sapsted	Restore the village Ram pump to working order. This was provided by John Ruskin and Henry Willett. Restore the original street light, which still exists.
Mrs C. Sapsted	Restore the village Ram pump to working order and restore the original street light.
Anonymous	Introduce 'Quiet Lanes' – Clappers Lane and the Street are used as cut-throughs. Quiet lanes would encourage walkers in particular.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	Better bus service. Double yellow lines just down by the pub on the bends but not down the main Street.
Dr A. Taylor	Cobbling the Street to slow traffic down.
Mrs P. Rowland	Limit new build except on brownfield and this should be affordable housing. Stop this constant desire to extend properties to make them larger and larger.
Mr R. Rowland	Total ban on new build houses except for affordable housing. Possibly introduce chicanes in the Street.

Question 6. One of the suggested ideas for enhancement is to provide additional public car parking in the village. Do you think there is a need for this and can you make any suggestions where additional public car parking could be provided?

Respondent	Comments
Mr A Brooks	Need yes. In the field on the south west side of the road next to the pub and a new village hall.
K. Watson	I totally agree that additional parking is necessary both of safety grounds and to enhance the overall street scene. As many of the properties to the west end of the village do not have street parking, I think this facility should be somewhere in the fields to the west of the Shepherd and Dog.
Mr C. Goodridge	If parking restrictions are put in place, residents without off-road parking at the western end of the Street could have a limited number of private spaces on North Town Field and public car park could be in the field west of the Shepherd and Dog and stream. The north end of Clappers Lane would also benefit with a residents car park in one of the adjoining fields.
Mr R. Corner	No – I don't think this is necessary. However, there needs to be a 'no parking' zone immediately outside the pub, as it is very dangerous. Also, outside entrance to North Town Field.
Mr J. Sapsted	The Shepherd and Dog Pub should extend its parking into the garden. Or into a field at either end of the village.
Mrs C. Sapsted	Not really. Obviously there are a lot of cars in the village when the pub is busy but they're not a permanent fixture.
Anonymous	I believe there is one person who would like further parking as it would serve his purpose. No I don't see how this would enhance the village. I think it would possibly detract and could encourage theft or vandalism.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	Car park would only attract more cars into the congested village. Visitors should be encouraged to walk, ride or catch public transport (the Devils Dyke bus could extend its journey to the Shepherd and Dog Pub).
Dr A. Taylor	Definitely not, this village cannot absorb anymore through traffic or attractions. More needs to be made of it being a walker's destination, especially from the Devils Dyke.
Mrs P. Rowland	No, there is no need to provide parking in the village – warning signs would be better. Only place you could make extra space would be on the hill, as you leave the Shepherd and Dog pub going west on the left hand side. Extend pull off area and make some organised marked spaces.
Mr R. Rowland	Absolutely not. There is no need for this and any suggestion of extending the parking facilities for the Shepherd and Dog on greenfield land should (and will) be resisted. A traffic notice warning of 'vehicles approaching in the middle of the road' would be adequate. Under no circumstances should double yellow lines be considered.
Miss D.B. Bradley and Miss J. Money	Yes.
Mrs J. Vaughan	Much discussion has been had regarding car parks. It's likely that it would spoil the village, so although it can be a problem, it's probably best left as it is.

Question 7. Any other comments?

Respondent	Comments
Mr A Brooks	Would like to see all extensions to houses stopped within the conservation area.
K. Watson	I have no issue with MSDC bins – far better to have these than the white bags of rubbish that can be town open by wild life, scattering the rubbish. I believe that one has to look at conservation for the benefit of future generations and thus plan extremely carefully to maintain the unique character of the village.
Mr C. Goodridge	Over development, including large extensions, and parked motor vehicles are destroying many villages. Not satellite dishes and the odd wheely bin. Conservation and enforcement from the planning department would help maintain the village's character. Who we are conserving it for - ourselves (residents), visitors or future generations?
Mr J. Sapsted	Plastic windows and door frames do not enhance the village.
Mrs C. Sapsted	Stricter guidelines for planning applications (e.g. extentions which spoil its originality and do not enhance the beauty of the village). A prime example is the Nutshell, Stammers Hill.
Mrs P.L.M. Robinson	The pre-historic sites down Clappers Lane, which is another good reason for it to be in the conservation area. If low cost housing is proved essential then this would be better in the north end of Clappers Lane/Holmbush Lane where there is access too the bus route and it is out of view from the Devils Dyke.
Dr A. Taylor	It's attraction is the peace and the fact that it is not built up. These features must not be jeopardised.
Mrs P. Rowland	Being a Parish Councillor it is very frustrating but it seems when we refuse a plan, MSDC pass it and if we say yes they say no! They seem to take no notice and not sure why they even let us consider plans!
Mr R. Rowland	Fulking is a very special place. The decisions of the Parish Council should be given greater weight by MSDC when considering planning applications.

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICER'S RESPONSE

As can be seen, views were expressed on a wide range of issues relating not just to the conservation area but also to the parish as a whole. Where appropriate the Fulking Conservation Area Appraisal will take these comments into account.

The main areas of debate are considered in more detail below.

Clappers Lane

In addition to the extensions to the conservation area proposed in the draft Conservation Area Appraisal, a number of respondents have recommended other areas that they believe should be included. The most commonly suggested area is Clappers Lane. This is the second most important road in the village running northwards from the Street for just over 2km and for most of its length it marks the eastern boundary of the parish. The justification most commonly given for including Clappers Lane is due to the presence of several historic properties along its route, the most significant of which is a property now known as Cabbage Patch. This quaint cottage dates back at least to the seventeenth century and is Grade II listed. Some of the other buildings mentioned by respondents include Knowle House, Brook House, Rose House, Rose Cottage and some pre-war farm cottages.

The Clappers Lane area has now been subject to further research and site visits. The officers concluded however, that this area does not have the special architectural or historical value necessary for it to be included within a conservation area. Whilst there are undoubtedly a number of buildings of merit along Clappers Lane, there is not the concentration of these buildings that is found within the existing conservation area. For example, there is a terrace of fairly standard mid-twentieth century former council houses at the southern end of Clappers Lane, which whilst being perfectly acceptable, do not warrant additional protection in this way. Cabbage Patch is listed and receives all the protection that accompanies that designation and the whole of Clappers Lane falls within the Countryside Area of Development Restraint and the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and therefore receives considerable protection already. Consequently, the District Council does not support the inclusion of Clappers Lane.

North Town Field

The other area that several respondents suggested should be included within the conservation area is North Town Field. This is the primary area of designated open space in Fulking and is located just outside the boundary of the conservation area adjacent to Old Thatch, on the north side of the Street. The field offers fine views north across the undulating countryside of the Low Weald towards the North Downs and contains a 'kickabout' area and children's play equipment. As some of the respondents have noted, this area performs a key role in the social life of the village and also sits 'on top' of the reservoir built as part of the village's unique water supply system at the end of the nineteenth century. The inclusion of the field is supported and it can be incorporated into the extension on the north side of the Street already proposed.

Including the whole village

A number of respondents argued that the whole village should be included in the conservation area. Some went further and recommended that the surrounding area should be covered to protect the setting of the settlement. These suggestions were largely made in the belief that it would restrict (or prevent) further development. Whilst this concern is acknowledged, it misses the point of conservation area designation, which is to protect specific areas of special architectural or historic interest. If large areas of the district were covered in this way then it would diminish their effectiveness.

Moreover, the whole of the Fulking Parish, both the built-up area and the surrounding countryside, is already afforded significant protection under the planning system. The whole of the parish falls within the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where the aim of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape is the overall priority. All proposals for development within the AONB are subject to the most rigorous examination and only those that comply with this aim will be permitted.

'Us and them'

There is a wider issue linked to the call to extend the conservation area to cover the whole village, which is that some residents feel that there is a 'them and us' divide within the Parish, based on the conservation area boundary. Whilst not wishing to ignore this issue, it is not considered appropriate to tackle it through a conservation area appraisal, which is aimed at protecting areas of special architectural or historical value. If the concern is that those areas of the parish outside the conservation area receive less attention, then this could be alleviated if the Parish Council produce a Parish Plan and/or a Village Design Statement, both of which should cover the whole parish. The District Council can provide further advice if the Parish Council wish to pursue either of these options.

Traffic and parking

The number of vehicles passing through Fulking (and the conservation area) has been steadily increasing over the years although there has not been a corresponding improvement of the road network. This has created some problems for the village, particularly at weekends when the number and location of parked cars can make it dangerous for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Interestingly, quite diverging views were expressed relating to how the traffic and parking problems could be resolved, with some respondents even questioning whether there was a problem at all. Certainly, the sharp bends within the conservation area and the presence of parked cars (occasionally on the sharp bends!) does seem to act as a form of rudimentary traffic control. As there is no clear consensus regarding either restricting parking in some areas (possibly through the use of double yellow lines) or creating a new public car park, it does not seem appropriate for the Conservation Area Appraisal to promote a particular option or to consider this matter in any detail other than to say it would support any future work that aims to improve the streetscene.

A number of respondents refer to the need to improve the local bus service. There is a community bus that provides a limited service for Fulking residents on weekdays, however, one of the suggestions was that a bus service could be provided to enable 'day trippers' to visit the village at weekends without having to bring their cars. This seems to be a reasonable suggestion and the District Council would support efforts to pursue this idea.

Extensions

Without going into detail about specific proposals, there does seem to be some concern amongst residents about properties being extended. Whilst it would be unrealistic to expect residents within the conservation area not to look at ways of improving their properties, the planning process should ensure that where significant extensions are proposed that they are subject to due deliberation, including consideration of their impact on the conservation area or indeed, the existing building (especially listed buildings). Once adopted, the Fulking Conservation Area Appraisal will become a useful tool in considering applications because it will clearly identify what qualities make the area special and how these qualities can be preserved, and ideally enhanced.

Of particular concern to some residents, was that some extensions block the views of the South Downs to the south or the Low Weald to the north, both of which are important features of the conservation area. Again, the adopted conservation area appraisal should be a useful tool in the future because it will clearly identify what features contribute to making the Fulking Conservation Area unique and should be protected, such as the views.

The Backway

As part of the exhibition material it was proposed to include the public bridleway known locally as the Backway within the conservation area to reflect its historic significance - at one time it was an important thoroughfare through the village. The bridleway runs along the southern boundary of the conservation area but its condition is variable. In some sections it is quite overgrown, only allowing users to pass in single file, whereas in other sections it has been improved sufficiently to enable vehicular access. It was therefore suggested that as well including it within the conservation area, steps could be made to improve its surface.

The concern expressed at the public meeting and in some of the responses to the questionnaire was that including the Backway within the conservation area and then improving its surface would result in motor vehicles using it as an alternative to the Street. This was not the intention – officers felt that some improvements would allow the Backway to be more easily accessed by those forms of transport that are legally allowed to use public bridleways, such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The Appraisal will make it clear that accessibility should be improved for those uses referred to above, whilst ensuring that cars and motorcycles cannot traverse along its entire length.

Rubbish bins

In July 2007, Mid Sussex District Council provided every property in the District with new wheelie bins for the storage and easy movement of both household rubbish and re-cycling materials. This has created problems in the Fulking Conservation Area because those properties without side entrances, particularly those that have little or no front gardens, have difficulty in storing the bins without them being visually intrusive. This is obviously a problem for properties across the district and the Council has been looking at possible solutions.

Some smaller bins are available but they obviously have reduced capacity. Another possibility is to use 'bin art' – images which can be stuck to the side of the bins to help them to blend in with their background. The District Council will continue to explore other options.

Other points

There did appear to be support at the public meeting for the proposals for repair the nineteenth century water supply system, including restoring the ram, although there were surprisingly few comments, either positive or negative, about the suggestion to provide a new Church (village) hall.