

Until the 20th century however the original ribbon shape remained and can still be seen in the dry stone walls that line the road. Then the village extended again, this time out of the valley and into the high country along Rhyls Lane. Here the new liking for regularity prevailed and houses were built at an almost equal distance from the road, in similar sized plots facing the view.

The last 50 years have brought about another change: the large family-house. These occupy tree-planted gardens in Back Lane and all but complete the link between Rhyls Lane and the Dene. A single field and the Common make a visual divide. The demand for family houses also brought more building along West Overton Road. Rookery Meadow began as a cul-de-sac with houses evenly spaced along its north side. This has now given way to long front gardens and separate or shared entrances. At Glebe Meadow the shape of the block dictated irregular placing of houses at a higher density than hitherto.

Building on Rebbeck's Meadow and Old Beasants resulted in two mini cul-de-sacs and Rebbeck's Meadow departed from the one-house deep pattern that had prevailed hitherto.

Some new farmhouses appeared in the open countryside.

Together these changes have greatly altered the settlement pattern but despite them the feel of the place is still linear. The village of the mind still lies along the road that passes the pub and the school.

BUILDINGS

Lockeridge contains some 130 dwellings. The sarsen stone cottages, with their thatched roofs, sited all around the village, are our main "attraction"; they are either left rough-hewn or painted (originally lime washed as weather protection). These buildings are our earliest tradition and should be protected and preserved.

Lockeridge House, built around 1700, is also a fine example of our heritage in a prominent position, and is currently being beautifully restored, together with its grounds.

The village contains good examples of Victorian "Estate" architecture (as used in Savernake); some built of dressed sarsen, some of Wiltshire red brick with sarsen banding. Many of these, including the school, are the work of Charles Ponting, the Meux Estate architect, in the 1870's. It was at this time that Lockeridge expanded from a hamlet into a village, as Sir Henry Meux instructed his architect to site his estate office (Gypsy Furlong) and estate yard (Yardacre) here, and to build houses for the villagers, a school and a pub. Ponting himself sensibly lived in Lockeridge Down, one of our most beautiful houses.

The result is a pleasing mix of 17th century (or earlier), 18th century and 19th century styles set confidently in the main street and West Overton Road. The hamlet had become a village but we are still part of Overton (now West Overton) Parish, so we have no church, and even our Gospel Hall is long gone and converted to a residential annexe.

Once we reach the 20th century, much greater variety occurs. First, solid brick-built council housing - many now being extended and altered - started the move up towards West Woods in the 1930's. Further modern council housing and some infilling of the main street then took place with no great attention to harmonious design, but the surviving sarsen stone and Meux Estate houses still provide the dominant features. In the last 30 years, Back Lane and Rhyls Lane have been in-filled with widely-differing styles, now mostly mellowing with time and good gardening.



West Overton

LANDSCAPE

WEST Overton is a small downland village four miles west of Marlborough, just south of the A4.

The village consists of about 150 houses set in the upper Kennet Valley on the edge of the flood plain. To the north the village is bounded by the water meadows and withy bed of the Kennet, which lie between the village and the Bath Road. Downland pasture and arable fields rise to the south.

The western edge is defined by the barns and house of Manor Farm and the eastern, on rising ground, by the Church of St Michael and All Angels which punctuates the long line of trees in the belt.

Each approach, from north, south, east and west is dominated by the church and the tree belt together with the field (Rings Close) which is headed by the yews of the church yard and terraced by the remains of East Overton.

The views into and out of the village are defined by the proximity of dwellings to farm land.

Particularly important are the views of the church looking up the village street, also those across Rings Close (protected from development), across the water meadows and fields surrounding the village and the views across countryside to the village itself.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Seen from Overton Hill to the west and from Wyman's Hill to the south it is a small compact settlement with many homes adjoining open countryside.

The main street runs east-west with a great variety of housing along its length, most of which is set back from the road with gardens. Some new development is to be found not only infilling along the road but, on a larger scale, in Closes to the south, which also contain vital amenity play areas. Rings Close forms the village boundary to the east side, giving this area a green and rural aspect with all the buildings set among the fields and a few houses grouped round the Church. The village boundary at present allows for the countryside to



'come in' to the village. This gives desirable country views not closed off by dense building to the majority of the inhabitants.

BUILDINGS

The buildings of West Overton include a wide variety of architecture and styles, ranging in date from the early 16th century through the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries with "half timbered" elevations from 1903 alongside Tudor cottages. This gives the village character; its very heterogeneity is interesting and appealing to its residents.

The Village Shop and Post Office form part of a Victorian terrace at the west end of the main street and the church at the other end of the village is also a large Victorian re-build of a much earlier building. Clustered around it are some 16th century sarsen stone



and brick houses with thatched or tiled roofs; the Old Manor beside the Church has 16th century origins. The earliest houses down the hill in the village are also of sarsen stone. Later some are tile hung, others brick, others again are rendered and painted above the stones. A feature consistently repeated in the stone buildings is the brick edging surrounding windows and doors. Bricks are generally russet or rich variegated red. Some brick houses have diamond patterns in contrasting bricks as decorative features. One of the most striking stone buildings is The Grange, a terrace of four houses in the centre of the village, with a rendered upper floor on which have been painted mock-tudor beams.

West Overton House is a fine 18th Century building, with 19th Century additions, previously the rectory, standing at the north eastern end of the village. It is rendered and painted on the front. Other period houses are of sarsen or brick, the larger ones being the farmhouses: Manor, South and North Farms are particular features of the village. The sarsen element of South Farm House probably dates to the 17th century. This was partly rebuilt in brick about 1800 with the addition of a north wing. The front windows date from the later 19th century. The sarsen barnyards which lay to the south of the house, across the Lockeridge Road were demolished in the mid 1970s. Manor Farm House, brick built with a slate roof, dates from about 1820, replacing the medieval manor house which had stood on the village street. It faces north, away from the village and the garden is enclosed by a high brick wall. The "model" farmyard which once accompanied the house has for some years been replaced by modern buildings. Of similar architecture to Manor Farm, though possibly of slightly earlier date, North Farm House and its buildings lie away from the main village, north of the A4. Some of the thatched barns of the early 19th century model farmyard survive and are currently undergoing restoration. The layout of the original yard has been retained with the construction of replacement buildings. In the valley north of the main farm are the remains of two other barnyards, Piggledene, which still has a fine dry stone sarsen wall, and Down Barn, though little of the latter survives. Adjacent is Down Barn Cottage, recently restored, the last of the cottages which once stood in the valley.

Most of the 20th century housing is in the centre and south of the village. The earliest council development, built in the late forties, is in Knights Close: cream painted rendered houses with distinctive porches. Peacock is a small development of about ten houses built in the 70s of brick and tile with dormer windows. This was closely followed by Southfield in the mid 70s, composed of terraced brick 'town houses' laid out with gardens front and rear. The 1990s has also seen new building in West Overton on individual plots with houses of brick and tiling or clap boarding and bungalows with dormer windows. Roofs in the village are generally thatch or tile but there is some slate.



General Recommendations

Right:
Social housing at Wymans Field, West Overton, designed to reflect the local vernacular. Its proportions sit well in the landscape.



Below:
Built in the 1960s this one room extension to a traditional thatched cottage uses the proportions of older farmyard buildings.

Bottom:
Functional simplicity.



DEVELOPMENT

- Large scale development is to be avoided as it would change the social character and settlement patterns of each village.
- Density is fairly high and there are virtually no opportunities for further development except for infilling, the replacement of existing dwellings or the re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings: but the congenial loose relationship between buildings and spaces within the villages would be spoilt by ruthless infill. Sites should be laid out to allow for open spaces and tree planting. Landscape proposals should be included for new sites and those where mature trees will be sacrificed. Any resulting additional car parking should be off street.
- Any new development should be in scale and appropriate to the character of its village.
- Low cost housing should be dispersed throughout the parish community, as far as land availability allows, in order to avoid segregated estates.

DESIGN

This statement is not an attempt to stifle innovative design or to give future generations the impression that our own had nothing to say for itself beyond an indiscriminating nostalgia.

The essence of good design is simplicity, a strong outline and a respect for its function and surroundings. This is timeless.

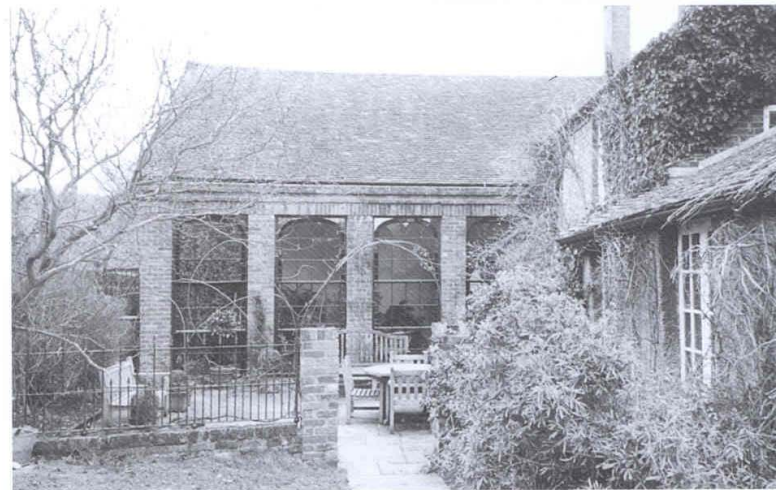
- Groups of houses should avoid a uniformity of design, scale and plot size. The aim should be to avoid a modern estate appearance. Small variations of detail on otherwise similar houses do not prevent this. They give a token individuality and a fussy appearance. The buildings that give our village their character predate the pattern book house.
- When our first houses of sarsen and thatch were built the height needed on the upper floor was found under the steep pitch of the roof - the pitch required for water to run off thatch. Later when slate and plain clay tiles became available the roof pitch was again dictated by the materials. To be weatherproof it had to be 40 degs or more. Economy dictated that the eaves (the plate height) should be kept as low as was practical. The depth of the plan was likewise dictated by economy and the need to span it without unnecessary roof height. These are the proportions we still think of as traditional. Modern roofing materials allow for a lower roof pitch which in turn makes a bulkier

building possible. Superficial attempts to overcome the problem give the “box with bits on”.

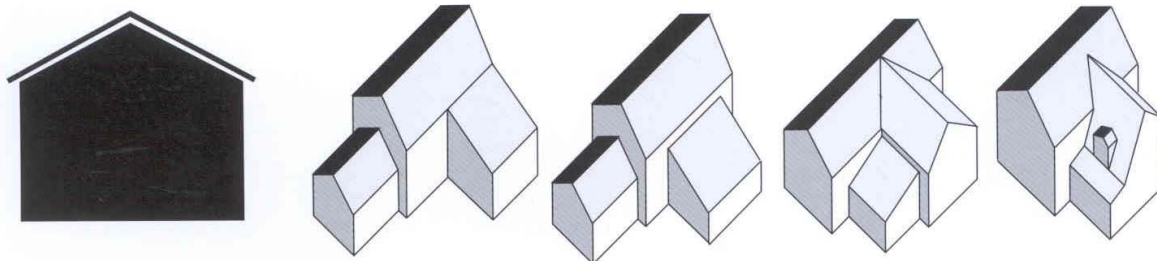
- To achieve proportions that are at home in our landscape it is best to keep the plate line low, the roofing materials traditional - plain clay tiles or slate - and to stick to a narrow linear plan form, with modelling to the roof if need be.
- The modern double garage, whether detached or built in, creates a design problem, having square proportions very different from traditional ones. A pair of doors breaks up the bulk better than a single wide span. Doors may be better placed under the eaves than in the gable end. Garages may be sited back from the house front or placed with screening in mind.
- Where “period” detailing is used to achieve harmony it should be restrained and local in character. The mixing of styles or historical references in the same building is to be avoided. Detailing should be an intrinsic part of the structure not a pastiche.
- Existing buildings with no local characteristics, or imported ones, should not be cited as a precedent for building more of the same.
- Care should be taken that extensions are in proportion to the original building and built of sympathetic materials and design. The same should apply to repairs and maintenance. Many successful extensions can be seen in our villages.
- Conservatories should be planned and located with consideration for the overall village character. They should not outstrip the main building in size and grandeur.



A recessed garage with harmonious roof pitch and separate doors breaking up the side wall.



A 1970s conservatory melts into the background behind its early C19th house



KEEPING IN SHAPE

One of the factors that can make houses in the countryside look ‘wrong’ is the relationship between the walls and the roof. In the classic vernacular profile, the roof can account for as much as half the height. When the floor plan is overlarge (above left), the house looks ill-proportioned. The other examples, adapted from the Suffolk Coastal Design Guide, show how scale and proportion can be preserved in combinations of smaller units.



Above: *Modern and sympathetic,*
 Left: *Flemish bond*
 Below: *Portland cement*
 Bottom: *Traditional lime mortar*

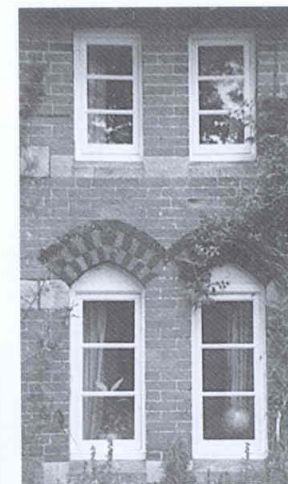


- The variety of brick and tile now available makes it possible for future building to reflect local materials. A multiblend or orange red brick, or even a mix of these, can be used. Flemish bond is traditional. Blue/black slate is most common. A tour of the village with a camera will prove invaluable when instructing an architect or builder.
- The style and materials used for replacement doors and windows should match those of the original building and openings should be in correct proportion to the facade. Chunky UPVC windows do not replace the original designs successfully. A wide variety of windows in other materials is available. Many allow for double glazing, and a local style can be chosen. Again a tour with a camera is recommended. Windows should be set into their reveal to give interest to facades - though there are some exceptions still visible on original period buildings.
- Building sarsen can still be found but it is expensive and faced blocks are scarce. Only in very exceptional cases should original buildings and walls be quarried to provide it. Where it is used attention should be given to pointing. Modern cement can look brutal especially if left proud. Lime mortar is making a comeback. Coloured with well chosen sand it makes all the difference. Only natural dug materials should be used. Other colourings are not suitable. Buildings originally constructed with lime mortar should always be repointed with it whether sarsen or brick. Consult a specialist for listed buildings.
- Chimneys vary throughout the villages and some are beautifully appropriate to the buildings they serve. New chimneys should respond to local patterns and be in keeping with the proportions of their buildings and adjacent ones.
- Some advice given by a local architect:
 - Unsightly clipped roof ridges are no longer necessary. With modern ventilation membranes we can return to the plain ridge tiles of the past.
 - Rainwater goods are available in traditional styles.
 - Fascias, gutters, soffits and barge boards should be considered in the overall design.
 - Verges with undercloaks give a more substantial look.
 - Soil vents should be discreetly placed.
 - All venting through the house and "trickle windows" should be subject to design considerations.

STREETS AND LANDSCAPING

- Minor routes, informal spaces and grass verges should retain a rural appearance and their upkeep should be sympathetic to birds and other wildlife. Where road safety is not an issue grass should be left uncut until after the wild flowers have seeded.
- Appropriate natural materials should be used where possible for the resurfacing of unmade and unadopted roads. Large areas of hard surfacing are to be avoided. Formal pavements are not wanted.
- Street lighting is seen as being adequate and any increase in density of lighting would be regarded as undesirable. Sodium lighting is disliked.
- Benches and litterbins should be chosen and sited with care.
- Glare from security lighting should be minimised.
- The burying of all cables is extremely desirable even though it is appreciated that it may well be an expensive option for existing cables and poles. The appearance of some of our streets and some of the views looking down and across the villages are spoilt by the plethora of cables, poles and transformers. New buildings may be able to put utilities underground. Meters, utility boxes and tanks should be sited or painted to blend with the background.
- Signing in general should be kept to a minimum and not be obtrusive. Use wood where practicable.
- Indigenous and orchard trees are preferred to exotic species. Care should be taken over their location for planting and maintenance, to enhance rather than obstruct views, including those of the wider landscape. Cypress can seem dark and overpowering if not kept well trimmed back.
- Hedges of indigenous varieties are particularly suitable where the building line interfaces with the surrounding countryside. In the wider landscape landowners are encouraged to maintain their hedging and the beech belts.
- Social housing in all villages could be softened by landscaping. Planting between the houses and the open countryside would help integrate housing groups into the perceived village area by creating a stronger settlement definition beyond them.
- Farm style 'five bar' gates blend well with the countryside.
- The character and interest of existing rights of way should be maintained.
- Encouragement would be given to passive and harmonious control measures to lower traffic speeds on the narrow streets and lanes through the villages, such as well positioned road narrowing devices. Speed limits and controls on the A4 through Fyfield are constantly sought. These would enormously enhance the safety and quality of our environment. However, an excess of painted roads, bright signs or intrusive cameras would not be desirable within the villages.

A rural appearance



RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY LOCKERIDGE RESIDENTS

- To preserve the nestling character of the village, high roof ridges and houses on the skyline should be avoided.
- Any proposal which would affect the frontage of the High Street should be particularly carefully considered in terms of scale and harmony. The existing stone walls, hedges and pollarded trees unify its disparate building styles and should be retained. It does have the added protection of a Conservation Area.
- Other streets and lanes, usually with houses set further back, have natural 'landscaping' to help soften and harmonise differing designs; it is therefore vital that these gardens are not used for development of new dwellings.
- Telecommunication towers should be dismantled as soon as technology moves on. New uses should not be found for them just because they are there.
- When the mobile unit housing the nursery school has proved its usefulness there will be an opportunity to build a handsome replacement worthy of its central position.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY WEST OVERTON RESIDENTS

- The open views on approaches to the village should be maintained.
- The village phone box should be maintained in its present style and condition and it should be kept in good working order as a village service.
- The sarsen stone bus stop and walls of brick and stone should be treated as a feature of the village.



West Overton bus stop and telephone box

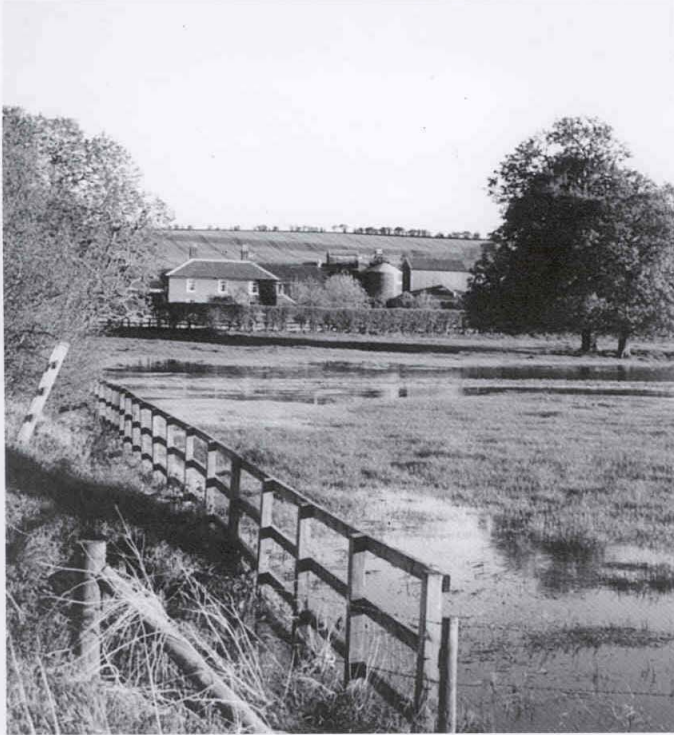
RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY FYFIELD RESIDENTS

- Dangerous and limited access from the main road should always be borne in mind.
- The importance of keeping Church Lane as a cul-de-sac, so keeping out extraneous traffic, cannot be over-emphasised.
- It would be of great benefit if the privately owned central field could be landscaped as a village green with recreational facilities and provide an opportunity for future generations to replace the lost heart of the village.
- The open area between Fyfield House and the river must be kept undeveloped.
- The church and churchyard with its trees and walls provide a link with the past and should be kept unchanged.

This statement has been written to reflect the community priorities of our three villages and as Supplementary Planning Guidance to Kennet District Plan.

Some of the points raised will seem relatively slight in planning terms but they are none the less part of the village scene. Things like security lighting and hedge planting are best resolved by neighbourliness and a quiet word. In reply to a questionnaire asking what we appreciated about our villages some of us replied simply "the friendliness". Above all it is intended to reinforce that friendliness and to help us see our property as others see it, not in isolation, but as part of a treasured whole.

Let's keep it rural ...



How our Design Statement was prepared

IN late 1997, Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council agreed to back the production of a Village Design Statement to cover the three villages of Fyfield, West Overton and Lockeridge, that are within its domain.

A committee of four was formed using the existing Planning Committee structure: the Chairman, plus the three current 'village representative' councillors. It was agreed to adopt fully the procedure suggested by the Countryside Commission information pack (CCP 501).

- Posters were put on the village notice boards, in the pubs and shop; all households (over 300) were circulated explaining the objectives of the project and inviting people to participate.
- The resulting 30 volunteers were invited to a 'briefing' meeting, and three village groups formed to organise workshops.
- During the workshop period almost 100 helpers were involved and each village group hand delivered information and/or questionnaires to every household. Kennet District Council (KDC) officers and our District Councillor were kept informed of our progress. Jeff Bishop of BDOR Ltd kindly sent further advice.
- The work produced at this stage culminated in small exhibitions held in the Churches and at the Lower School, Lockeridge; all the resulting comments were noted. The Chairman gave a talk to the Lower School and an article reviewing progress was published in the Parish Magazine.

- The original committee now became 'the Design Team' including villagers not on the Council who contributed pieces of particular village detail or general background information. Drafting of the text began.
- The first text draft was completed and circulated to: the Countryside Commission, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, Wiltshire County Council (Structure Plan Group), our District Councillor and KDC Officers and every single person who had contributed over this initial period - some forty households commented on the text.
- A number of consultative meetings later, the second draft together with photos was displayed at the Kennet Valley Hall on a Saturday, followed by a mid-week evening exhibition in West Overton Church; 75 villagers came and left more comments.
- Formal discussion started with Kennet District Council officers and our District Councillor with a view to gaining Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- The final draft was displayed at the Parish Millennium Pig Roast, a popular event attended by 200 people.

NB

A Village Design Statement file containing unpublished material, including many photographs, correspondence etc is to be kept by the Parish Clerk.

Below: *The second draft on display in the village hall.*



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