

STROUD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

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Part 1 - Stroud Today

Brief Village History

Stroud Parish is young and dates only from 1995. This separation from Petersfield recognised the individual identity of the village, emphasised by the open spaces and the by-pass which separate the village from the town into which it was previously incorporated. It is a community of nearly 200 households, of which about 25 lie just outside the parish boundary. Notwithstanding these recent developments Stroud as a name is much older and there is evidence that people have lived here for at least 2000 years.

We know that land at Stroud was occupied in Roman times because to the rear of the cottages, almost opposite the Village Hall, was a substantial villa (excavated in 1906). The villa had a courtyard enclosing about 1½ acres surrounded by various outbuildings and dwelling areas, including mosaics and a typical Roman 'hypocaust' central heating system

We know little specific to Stroud in the Dark Ages following the Roman Empire, but we do learn from "Some Aspects of Langrish Life through the Ages" (Evelyn Hickox, 1986) that in Norman times Rothercombe was a separate Manor and that the common land, or waste, of Langrish was located between farmland of the Manors of Langrish and Mapledurham known as Stroud. Commons were usually inferior land, wooded and wet as the name Stroud (a marsh) implies. The Lord (of the Manor) surrendered part of this waste in 1571 to John Robynet for making bricks and tiles.

From the middle 1800's the landscape as we know it had begun to take shape, but the only dwellings in 1840 (according to a map of that date) were the Red House, Myrtle Farm, The Seven Stars public house, Rothercombe Farm and its cottages, Stroud Bridge Farm, the Pest House, Ash Barn and Freshwater House. In 1859 Stroud Common was enclosed. From 1894 until 1932 Rothercombe was in the parish of Langrish (as was the whole of present day Stroud west of the Seven Stars). A last remnant

of Stroud Common became Stroud Village Green, next to the Village Hall, in about 1970.

At the turn of the 20th century and up to the 1939-45 war we find Stroud was an industrial community with a large extensive working claypit and a brick and tile works. The clay was mixed in a pugmill with sand from the sand pits off Ridge Common Lane and clinker brought by horse and cart from Portsmouth. All this was located south of the A272, although earlier brick and tile making appears to have been on the north side of the road, opposite the present garage site.



By 1930, Stroud had expanded and new housing had appeared along Winchester Road and North Stroud Lane. Then, during the 1950's, the claypit area was filled with urban refuse and covered over, and since 1975 the present owners have been planting trees over the area. The largest single residential development took place just over ten years ago, when 15 houses were constructed, built partly on the northern extremity of the old clay workings.

During the Second World War Stroud was 'host' to a number of Italian prisoners of war who were accommodated in and around the Village Hall.

The Stroud Church of England Mission Church was built in 1897 and was enabled by the Nicholson Family. It resides in the ecclesiastical parish of Steep and Stroud, holds two Holy Communion services each month and is noted for the annual Harvest Festival and Carol Services in which the children of the village are much involved.

Settlement Pattern

Settlement originally developed in a linear fashion along through routes and, because pathways and bridleways did not converge naturally, there is no centre in terms of open space, or of dominant building/s. However, most regard the Seven Stars public house and the adjacent road junction as being the effective centre of the village.

The village now also comprises clusters of dwellings and one light service industry development. The largest settlement is found between and including Ramsdean Road and North Stroud Lane; indeed, approximately 75 per cent of all development, including the school, is south of the A272. The current population of the village is approximately 250.

The rural nature of the village lives through two working farms, both with farm houses in prominent positions within the village and two smaller holdings. In addition to these there are significant areas of stabling and paddock at the edge of the western settlement.

Except for four housing association properties on Lythe Lane, outside the boundary of the Parish, there is no social housing in the village. Recent surveys have not shown any specific need for, or even strong interest in the possible provision of such housing in the future.

Landscape Setting

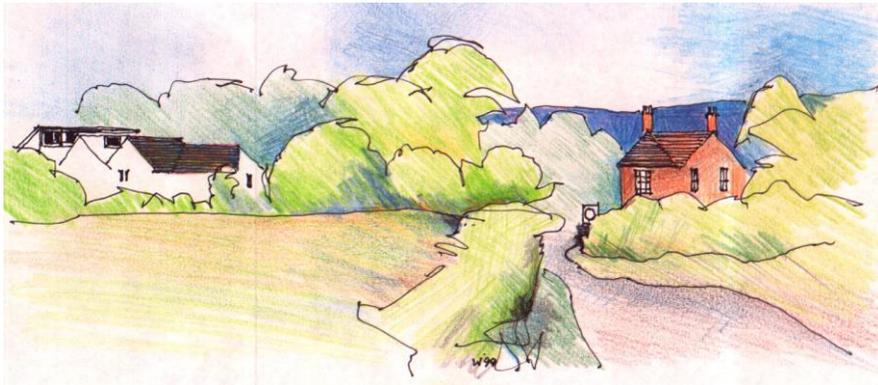
The village of Stroud straddles the A272 about a mile west of Petersfield. The parish of Stroud lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), between the north facing chalk scarps of the South Downs, rising to 889 feet, and the south-east facing Hangers, which link the South and North Downs, rising to 808 feet.



The South Downs are the major landscape feature providing a visual backdrop to the A272, Ramsdean Road and Ridge Common Lane which are through roads. They also dominate views from Finchmead Lane, North Stroud Lane and Rothercombe Lane.

The topography of the parish falls west to east, away from the clutches of the Hangers and the Downs, determining the direction of the several watercourses and the transition from heavier to lighter soils that reflect the

underlying geology of the area. These factors have then in turn determined the human land use, with agricultural practice varying from cattle and sheep rearing on the higher, heavier ground to arable cropping with short term rotational grass on the more easily cultivated lighter soils to the east. In broad terms this has resulted in a greater loss of hedgerow field boundaries in the latter areas and a progressively more open aspect to the village as one travels east.



There is a mixture of arable and dairy farmland with dairy predominating.

Development, which is predominantly housing, is set against the Downs or mature planting.

Because of our rich landscape, seasonal colour change is the most evident and dramatic visual characteristic.

Although very different, the entrances into the village from East and West along the A272 and down Ridge Common Lane are of particular aesthetic quality. Indeed, the panoramic view of the surrounding hills as one enters

Stroud from the Petersfield direction under a setting sun can be breathtaking.

Land use has largely determined the layout of our village and the landscape we see today. The factors we have come to value in the landscape; views, access, openness, enclosure, woodland, trees, wildlife, and simply our setting, have come about, for the large part, by how man has utilised the natural resources at his disposal.

The geology and hydrology also enabled the rise of the brickworks industry in Stroud. The main areas of settlement at the west of the village and at Ridge Common Lane relate to the brickworks both historically, with the building of workers cottages and, more recently, with redevelopment of part of the land vacated with the closure of the brickworks. These areas are more enclosed by woodland and hedgerow than the areas influenced by agriculture and non-developed land here is often used as paddock.

Stroud Wildlife

Stroud is very lucky in that it has ancient woodland and a field system bounded by hedgerows of considerable antiquity dating back at least to the medieval period.

Furzefield Copse is one of the glories of Stroud and in spring the woodland floor is awash with the multicoloured hues of Bluebell, Red Campion, Yellow Archangel and a host of typical English wild flowers long lost in other areas. Kiln Copse, partly in the northwest corner of the Parish is also an area of significant woodland. The hedgerows are varied, some outgrown, some trimmed, but almost all are old and contain a wide range of shrubs including Hazel, Holly and Field Maple (woodland species), Spindle, Dogwood, Hawthorn, Blackthorn and others. Almost all of the many hedgerow trees are Oaks but there are some Ash scattered about and other species occur in the older gardens. Few of these trees are old, but the large veteran Oak at the North of the village green is likely to date back 200 years.



Stroud Village Green and some of the paddocks around the school and the Seven Stars are also rich in wild flowers and are remnants of older grasslands that have not been extensively improved for agriculture. These flowers include Sneezewort, Ragged Robin, Greater and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Pepper Saxifrage and Burnet Saxifrage. Stroud is not rich in ponds although two have been excavated recently at New Buildings Farm and at the Seven Stars public house. Other ponds, such as that off North Stroud Lane appear to originate from the old clay diggings. There are garden ponds and these support frogs and toads as well as insects such as dragonflies.

Roe deer are abundant in the fields and fox is common; so too are grass-snakes. We have at least one badger sett within the parish and several others not far outside. Stroud enjoys a diverse bird population. Kestrels can be seen hovering over the village green, sparrowhawks are frequent

visitors, buzzards have bred in the locality and we have lesser spotted woodpeckers as well as green woodpeckers.

A specialist Parish Conservation Study is currently being undertaken that will record this aspect in far more detail.

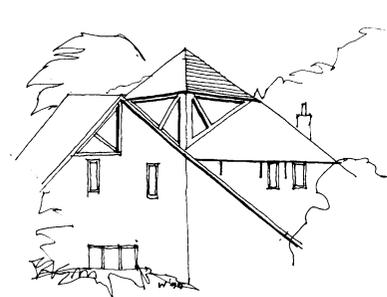
Building Form and Materials

The most distinctive buildings in the village are the early buildings listed above in the 'Brief History' section. Particular features are;

- Varying roof-lines
- Up to three stories with habitable space within roofs
- Robust porches
- Wide variety of window shapes and sizes
- Tile hung facades

Stroud does have recent buildings (such as 44A Winchester Road and the High House) which continue the architectural heritage but rework it using contemporary solutions appropriate to current lifestyles.

The existing Village Hall, erected at the end of the First World War, is distinctive both in its construction and its cladding. Its condition is poor and it is becoming an increasingly sad village landmark, unable to fulfil modern expectations.



Overall, there is no one style of building, constructional feature or material that dominates in the village.



Within the clusters of buildings which characterise the village there are some interesting roofscapes and constructional details, some of which are illustrated in the sketches and water-colours which illustrate this document.

Transport

Stroud is located close to a major junction between North/South and East/West highways and is two miles from a railway station with regular services to London and Portsmouth. It is served by buses, with some seven services each weekday to and from Petersfield and points West, although none after 6.30pm. Three bus shelters are provided in Stroud and the Parish Council maintains these to a high standard.

A well-established and well-maintained network of Public Footpaths radiates in all directions from the Village. It is a disappointment to villagers that the old east/west footpath from Petersfield towards Winchester was obstructed by the new by-pass in 1994.



The A272, regrettably now designated as a route for heavy commercial vehicles, runs through the village of Stroud. There is a major junction with the A3 trunk road from Portsmouth to London about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the East of the centre of the village. Given its importance as an East/West highway, the A272 is generally narrow and winding throughout its length. Although there is a pavement for pedestrians on the South side of the road through the village and for the two miles into the centre of Petersfield, it is narrow in places with overhanging hedges, intimidating to pedestrians and dangerous for children. A 40mph speed limit applies in the village, although a double-bend at the Eastern entrance to the village probably has more effect on checking the speed of traffic than the speed limit itself. Being so close to Petersfield, there is considerable interest in the Village in the potential for greater use of the bicycle as an alternative to the car. However, the heavy use of the narrow A272 by commercial vehicles acts as a major deterrent; most potential cyclists feel the road to be unsafe.

Ramsdean Road, which runs South from a point on the A272 adjacent to the Seven Stars and leads past Langrish School within Stroud, suffers congestion at the start and finish times of the school day. This is caused by inadequate parking facilities and manoeuvring space for the large number of parents who convey their children to and from school by car. Tailbacks also occur at the junction with the A272 at these times. Increased commercial traffic to Ramsdean adds to this problem.

The principal transport related problems in the village concern the sheer volume of traffic through the village on the A272, particularly the high proportion of heavy goods vehicles and weekend motorbike 'racers', and the excessive speed at which it travels.

Utilities

Electricity and telephone connections are universally available. Although the house to house distribution of electricity is mainly underground, the area distribution is by an above-ground network which does nothing to enhance the open views which are such a feature of the village.

Mains gas is not available in the village and Transco have made it clear that the only circumstances under which they would consider extending their network out from Petersfield would be if potential users in the village were to fund the full capital cost in advance. Having done so, any new user would be able to tap into the system after five years without making any contribution to that capital cost. Transco have no interest in taking commercial risks to expand their network.

The village is not attached to a cable network and is not aware of any plans to change this.



Key Features of Stroud

- Rich, diverse environmental heritage
- Very high quality landscape setting in AONB
- Long history; important archaeological site
- Immediate access to countryside
- Excellent road and rail links
- Clear separate identity; strong sense of community
- Good population mix (socio-economic, age)
- Settlement in distinct clusters
- Strongly defined entrances to village
- Distinctive buildings; farmhouses; groupings of cottages
- Public and working environments; School, pub, village hall, church, industrial grouping, residential care home for the elderly & farms drawing people into the village from outside
- Intrusive and increasingly busy traffic needing measures for improvement

Part 2 - The Future Development of Stroud

Future Building Development and Guidelines

Most villagers either work away from the village or, in increasing numbers, work from home. The businesses that currently occupy the one industrial site largely employ people who live outside the village. While villagers do not wish to lose the industry we have, there is very little demand for expanded employment opportunities within the village, other than through home working, and so any future development, other than within the current industrial site, is seen as being largely residential. There might be some scope for the use of redundant farm buildings for activities in keeping with a country village – perhaps bespoke units for the development of rural skills and crafts.

Although by no means universal, there is conditional support within the village for some further small-scale development. However, any such development must respect local character and be seen as improving the village and as enhancing the ‘feel’ of Stroud as a community. Above all else, the size and nature of any new development must be sustainable. The lack of any dominant style in the village as it is today provides a freedom to introduce some innovative and high quality contemporary architecture so long as it respects and contributes to the landscape and urban design framework into which it will sit.

Consideration has been given to the possible development of a more focussed village centre clustered around a new village green. However, development would need to be on a substantial scale to achieve such a result. This would entirely change the nature of the village and would be unlikely, in the present social climate, to bring any benefits. It would put at risk the character of the village most enjoyed by its residents – the open vistas.

However, the village could accommodate a small number of new houses provided that they respect the setting and context of the village.

The rate of any future development of the village should be tightly controlled and limited to what a relatively fragile community can readily assimilate. Care will need to be taken to avoid overwhelming the existing infrastructure whilst introducing mixed use development.

It is regarded as being crucially important that the undeveloped land between Stroud and the Petersfield By-pass should remain undeveloped. The views from the A272 are of particularly high quality in this area and the maintenance of the gap is also important to the maintenance of the hard-won separate identity of the village.

Specific Recommendations for consideration of any future development, including small-scale extensions to existing properties are;

- Develop in small clusters
- Buildings should be of mixed density
- All existing plantings should be maintained and, indeed, enhanced
- No buildings over three stories
- Buildings should be designed for low maintenance and low energy use
- Full cycle and footpath provision
- Easy access for the disabled
- Use natural features such as slopes and landmark trees to add interest
- Adjust rooflines to break up mass
- Consider spaces between development with equal care
- Designs should be flexible and adaptable. Also capable of modification and extension

Building Guidelines

- Encourage opportunities for quality contemporary architecture - this continues a planning policy established in last twenty years
- Maintain existing building stock using original or sympathetic materials
- Facades can be of brick, tile or render. In addition, innovative alternatives which demonstrate superior visual and technical performance may be considered
- Consider the overall facade when replacing windows and doors. Are they consistent and in context with their neighbours?



- Pay particular attention to major elements such as brickwork, roof, tiles & slates. Extensions and modifications to existing walls and roofs must match
- Extensions to individual houses should not alter existing building lines
- New developments should avoid 'pattern book' designs and should acknowledge local design references
- Design pallet of distinctive details for roofs, openings, junctions, walls and related external spaces should be developed

Landscape Guidelines

The local landscape is widely considered by its residents to be Stroud's greatest asset and special care will be needed to preserve and protect this. New proposals will need to show a full understanding of and sensitivity for the landscape framework.

Future land use should continue to utilise natural resources and continue the evolutionary processes that have shaped the landscape within the area, Any further developments must satisfy, both individually and collectively, a requirement for sustainability. Inserts of 'Brookside' style cul-de-sacs will not be acceptable.

With a thorough and realistic appreciation of what is liked/disliked and appropriate/inappropriate within our landscape setting, there is an opportunity to set guidelines for future development that do not lose or damage those things that are most valued.

A checklist should include:

Natural features

Protection and making best use of:

- Topography

- Watercourses
- Woodland
- Key trees and the hedgerow network
- Forthcoming Conservation Study Report to identify and address any specific ecological concerns

Encouragement of:

- Natural boundaries (hedgerow rather than fence)
- Integration of new indigenous plantings with existing framework (wildlife corridors)
- New naturalistic waterbodies and woodland

Avoidance of:

- Pollutants
- Unsustainable materials or technology

Visual features

Protection and making best use of:

- Views in and out of village to surrounding landscape

Encouragement of:

- Absorption within landscape
- Spatial interest (variety of openness and enclosure)
- Screening of poor views
- Framing of good views
- Directional aids (lining routes, announcing access points etc)
- Focal points (memorable features)

Avoidance of:

- Inharmonious scale, colour or materials

Land use and Social Infrastructure

Protection and making best use of:

- Working countryside
- Public access
- Mixed population (economically, age etc)
- Use by 'outsiders' (Industry, school, pub, village hall, church)

Encouragement of :

- Community
- Sustainability (economic, social and ecological)
- Public open space within any development
- Access for disabled

Avoidance of:

- Dormitory use
- Over-development

Improving Public Services and Facilities

Footpaths and Cycle-ways

There is a strong argument for extending and upgrading the local network of footpaths away from the main road, so that the principal clusters of buildings and the school will be linked by footpaths and cycle ways separated from vehicular traffic. The achievement of this objective would require the establishment of new rights of way.

There is strong demand for a cycle-way into Petersfield, but current proposals are limited to re-designating the existing footpath for dual use at some distant time. This would not be regarded as satisfactory without some widening and resurfacing of the existing footpath.

Public Transport

Although relatively well served by buses, Stroud does not enjoy a service which allows villagers to travel at all times of the day when there is a potential demand, particularly in the evening. Furthermore, the existing

service is of no use to rail commuters, who are forced to travel to the station by car. If the villagers are to be encouraged to leave their cars at home then the service will have to be considerably upgraded.



Traffic Management

Despite the 40mph speed limit, the traffic entering and accelerating out of the west end of the village is frequently travelling far too fast for safety, and policing of the limit is minimal; serious accidents, a number of them fatal, have occurred here. Speed limit enforcement is required and speed reduction mechanisms on this stretch of the A272, including overtaking restrictions and/or a 'gate' at the western entrance similar to those in South Harting and Selborne should be considered so far as trunk road regulations allow.

The congestion problems associated with the school in Ramsdean Road could be alleviated to some extent if a new village hall (see Recreation

section) with provision for more parking space is constructed on the adjacent site. Nonetheless, the A272/ Ramsdean Road junction should be a priority for improvement.

Utilities

Heating choices for households in the village are limited to electricity, bottled gas, solid fuel and oil, the first three of which are widely considered to have severe limitations. There would be considerable interest in the village if mains gas were to be piped in, but this is not going to happen if Transco continue with their current short-sighted policy. We now are beginning to enjoy the benefits of competition between energy suppliers. Maybe the Transco monopoly needs to be reconsidered.

Above ground electricity distribution is probably unavoidable on cost grounds, but Southern Electric will need to be more sensitive to the aesthetic impact upon areas of outstanding natural beauty.

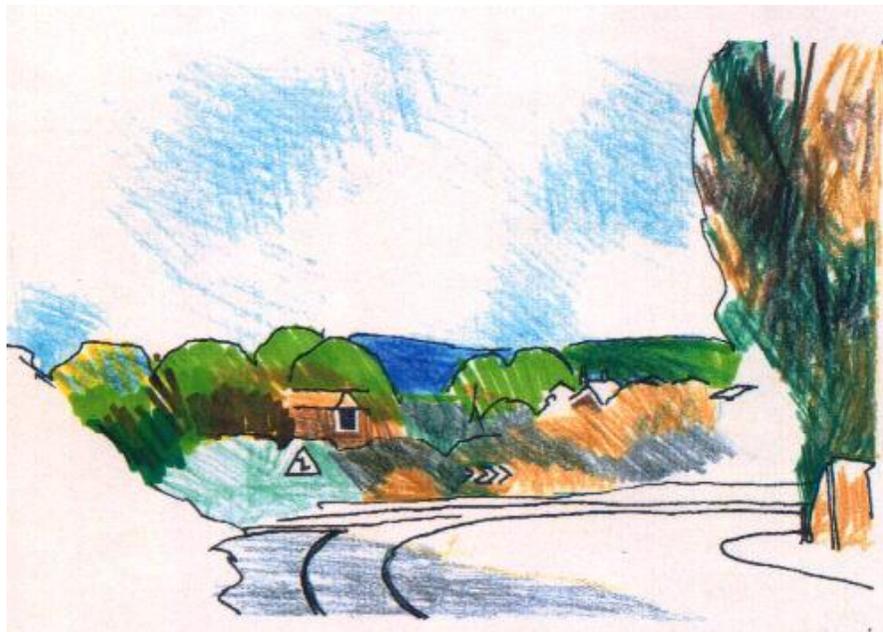
Any upgrading of the street lighting would need to have the minimisation of light pollution as a primary design requirement.

Recreation

A village hall is essential to Stroud, to provide a venue for a wide range of recreational activities. The existing building is at the end of its useful life and the construction of a new hall is a matter of the highest priority for the village. Outline planning consent has recently been given by East Hants District Council for a new hall on a site immediately South of the School. Because this site is being offered to the village as a gift from the landowner, it represents the only financially viable option. Furthermore, there are no contra-indications from the development criteria set out above. Support for this scheme is not unanimous but it is the best of many sites that have been considered.

Adequate sports facilities are and can be expected to continue to be available in nearby Petersfield. However, playground facilities for children

are limited. A small playground off Ramsdean Road is managed by the Parish Council, but many children choose to play mainly in the vicinity of their homes.



Conclusion - Village Vision

Stroud has a long history and possesses an important Roman archaeological site. It has a rich, diverse environmental heritage and enjoys a very high quality landscape setting in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We have a school, a pub, a village hall, a church and a residential care home for the elderly. Our population has grown and changed now to reflect a mix of professional and agriculture-based employment. We have a clear, separate identity with a strong and increasing sense of community,

notwithstanding the disadvantage of the trunk road that bisects the village. It is a dynamic and thriving place to be.

The Village Design Statement focuses on the characteristics that currently make Stroud an attractive and enjoyable place in which to live. The recommendations concerning the future of our village propose a balance between the benefits of our evolved past, the protection and enhancement of our immediate environment and a realistic view of the need for development. Stroud villagers care for their surroundings and for their quality of life and this is reflected in the amount of voluntary work that has been undertaken to;

- Create S.A.R.A.
- Obtain Parish Status
- Conduct surveys for Local Agenda 21
- Secure outline planning consent for new village hall
- Plan a Millennium tree planting

The Village Design Statement results from widespread consultation among residents. It is a working document, to be considered in conjunction with our 1999 Conservation Study and Agenda 21 Report, which clearly describes how we wish to shape the infrastructure, manage issues and improve the quality of village life in the new millennium, in partnership with potential developers and the relevant local and regional agencies and authorities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Particular thanks are due to David Wade who not only made a major contribution to the document itself but also produced all of the illustrations, to which he retains the copyright. ©

Thanks are also due to Evelyn Hickox for permission to quote extracts from her book 'Some Aspects of Langrish Life through the Ages'

STROUD VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT APPENDICES JULY 1999

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Maps of Stroud

Fig.1 Historical map 1810

Fig.2 Historical map (thought to be turn of the century)

Fig.3 Historical map 1932

Fig.4 Historical map 1994

Surveys compiled by Stroud Local Agenda 21 Initiative

Fig.5 Survey 1 Geology and Soils

Fig.6 Survey 2 Hydrology and Landform

Fig.7 Survey 3 Fields and Boundaries

Fig.8 Survey 4 Natural factors (Surveys 1-3) Combined

Fig.9 Survey 5 Historical Information

Fig.10 Survey 6 Current Land Use

Fig.11 Summary of Stroud ~1 from EHOC conference publication

Feb.1999

Fig.12 &13 Summary of Village Interviews 1997

Fig.14 &15 Summary of Primary School Session 1999

Fig.16 Aerial Photograph of Stroud