

# Lurgashall



## Design Statement

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## **Introduction**

This Design Statement has been prepared by residents of the Parish of Lurgashall to distinguish and express elements in design and features of their environment which they believe to be important to retain in order to protect the character of the Parish. The Statement is aimed mainly at providing guidance to supplement the policies of Chichester District Council contained in their Local Plan 1<sup>st</sup> Revision, April 1999 and to assist in the planning of any future developments in the Parish. The Statement will require review if and when the Local Plan is further revised. It also relates to other issues of concern to the Parish which are not currently addressed by the Local Plan or by planning regulations. It reflects the views of residents, local government officers and local businesses as well as a cross-section of local people from different occupations.

The Statement was drafted by a representative team following a well-attended Design Workshop held in the village on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2002 at which relevant features of the Parish were illustrated and opinions gathered. Copies of the 13<sup>th</sup> draft of the Statement were circulated for comment to the District Council, to consultees nominated by the Council and to representative businesses in the Parish. There was a public presentation of the draft on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2004 at which further opinions were sought and both the Presentation and the draft were made available on a Lurgashall web site. The draft was finalized, taking into account all comments received, and a Statement of Consultation was prepared for submission to the District Council. The Statement was adopted by Chichester District Council's Executive Board on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2004 as supplementary guidance to the First Review Chichester District Local Plan adopted April 1999.

In the past there have sometimes been planning issues which have resulted in unsatisfactory or inappropriate development in the Parish as seen through the eyes of its residents. These imperfections will not disappear with the advent of a Design Statement, but there is a chance that they will be reduced by a clear explanation from the Parish of what is considered acceptable. If the statement makes this clear it will have succeeded, since the local planning authority will have been given a yardstick by which to measure its own actions.

Throughout its deliberations the Design Statement team has been guided by the advice of the Countryside Commission in its publication '*Village Design*' and by help and advice of the Planning Department of Chichester District Council and from the West Sussex County Architect. It was particularly struck by the assertion that "design statements are not about whether development should take place, but about how it should be carried out, so that it is in harmony with its setting and makes a positive contribution to the local environment". In our statement we have tried to bear in mind the maxim that we would be concerned with "managing change, not preventing it".

## **A Brief History of the Parish.**

It seems likely that about a thousand years ago Lurgashall was no more than a clearing in the dense forest that then covered the Lower Weald. The distinctive triangular shape of the Green at the centre of the village may derive from clearing operations by the earliest settlers anxious to establish grazing for their animals. The cottages, houses and other buildings round the Green have taken the place of the huts which our ancestors built on the perimeter to ensure that nobody encroached on the precious grazing.

The name Lurgashall is thought to be Saxon in origin and may come from the name of a reputed Saxon chieftain, Lutegar, who used the settlement, then an isolated and self-sufficient farming community, during his travels along the Roman road between London and Chichester. The village church dates from Saxon times.

The remote village was not mentioned in Domesday Book, but following the Norman conquest it was allocated to River Manor and the Manor of Diddlesfold, which no longer exist.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century land was enclosed and sheep farming began. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century Lurgashall was a prosperous place, and some of the more substantial houses of that period remain today. The inn, dating from 1537, was given its present name of Noah's Ark in the seventeenth century.

From earliest times the Wealden forest, with its abundance of fuel, water and easily accessible ore, had been the site of a thriving iron industry. Lurgashall mill pond may well have played a part in this as a "hammer-pond", and it is thought that the iron founder William Yaldwyn may then have been active in the area in producing iron, especially in the large, and probably illegal, "bloomery" near the mill pond. He built Blackdown House in 1640 and became one of Cromwell's generals in the Civil War. It is thought likely that some of Lurgashall's satellite settlements – Hillgrove, Roundhurst and Dial Green – may also have started as sites of iron-foundries.

Glassmaking was another prevalent local industry as the appropriate materials - clay, ironstone and water were readily available together with timber for the kilns. The only remaining link is that Jobson's Lane was reputedly named after one of the glassblowers living in the parish at that time. There is also a small area in one of the fields at Lower Roundhurst Farm said to be the last vestiges of a glassmaking site.

During the Civil War a Puritan Rector was installed, resulting in considerable damage to the church. However, following the Restoration, Lurgashall recovered to prosper in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Many houses were gutted to provide proper central chimneys and upper storeys for sleeping, with the open-hall ground floors divided into separate rooms.

The poet Alfred Tennyson also built a house on Black Down in 1868 – Aldworth – and his wife founded a school at the nearby settlement of Roundhurst. Neither that school nor the one in Lurgashall have survived, having closed in 1923 and 1951 respectively.

Lurgashall is no longer an isolated farming community, although it still gives the impression of being on the way to nowhere. The Green retains its characteristic triangular shape and the asymmetrical design of its houses. The art historian Nikolaus Pevsner described it as "glorious", and there is no doubt that it would be recognisable to our ancestors as the quintessential and unspoiled Sussex Lower Weald village that they knew.

## **Parish Setting and Composition**

Lurgashall, with its population of about 600, lies in the centre of the Haslemere, Midhurst, Petworth triangle on the northwest borders of West Sussex and southwest Surrey in the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (currently designated to become part of the South Downs National Park in 2006). Covering some 1800 hectares (4770 acres) of the northwest corner of the Low Weald, it comprises a mixture of gently undulating agricultural and broadleaf wood land.

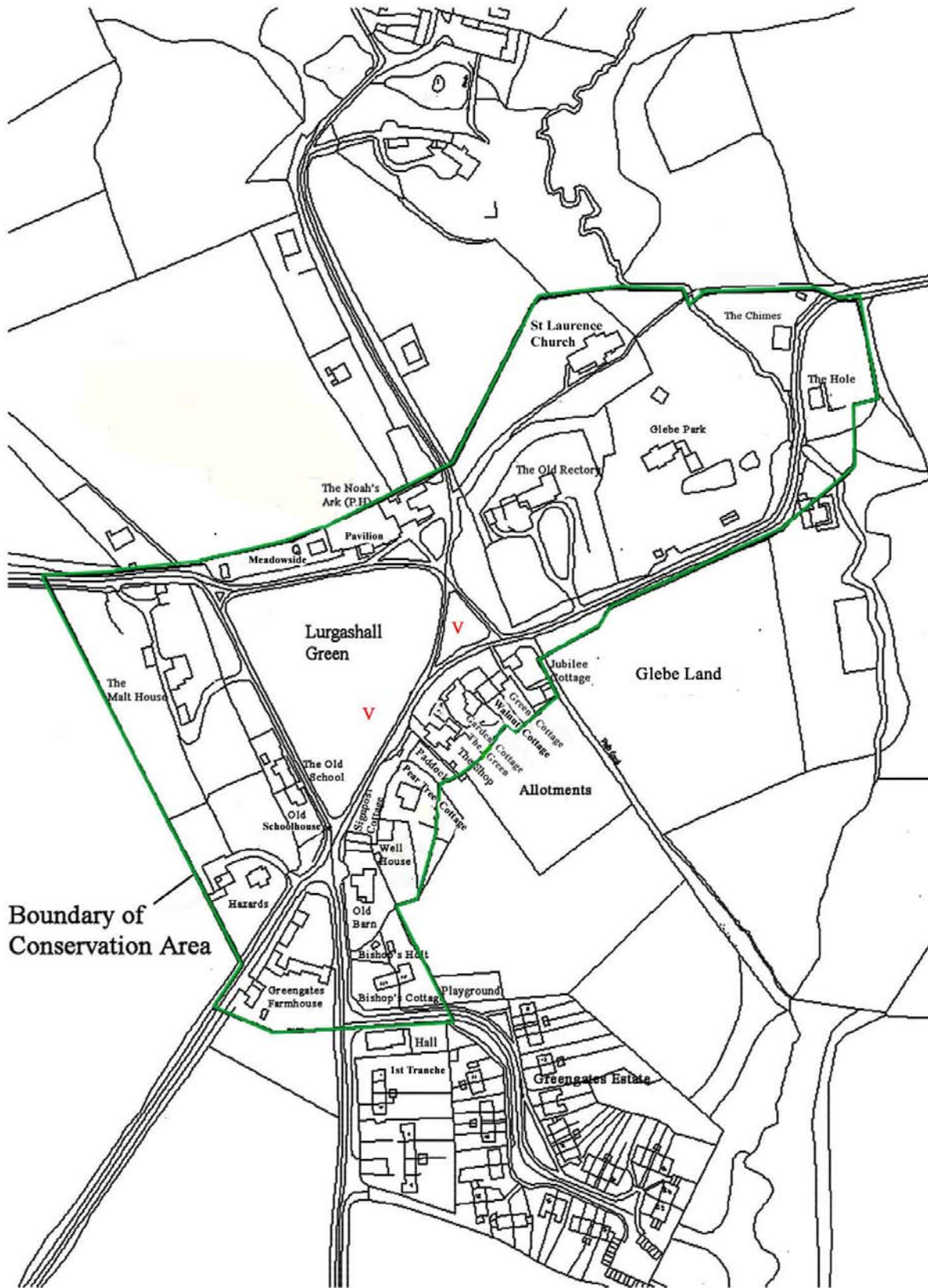
Black Down (280m [900 ft] and the highest point in Sussex), consisting of 250 hectares (617 acres) owned by the National Trust, is an important area in the northwest of the Parish and is part of the Lower Greensand belt that surrounds the central Wealden Basin. Unlike the low-lying clays, this terrain produces a contrast in vegetation, where conifers, rhododendrons and heathers grow in abundance.

The River Lod runs through the southwest section of the Parish into Mill Pond (formerly the site of Lurgashall Mill, now resited at the Weald and Downland Museum in Singleton), before joining the River Rother three miles to the south. There are many small streams criss-crossing the Parish and a number of ancient ponds.

The village centre with Church, Shop, Public House and traditional triangular village Green and its surrounding cottages, is included in the Conservation Area shown on page 5. The original green was probably larger, encompassing the site of the Old Rectory and Glebe Park. There are several satellite settlements, each with its own Green or area of common land for grazing, perhaps established to cater for later arrivals in the area – for example, iron-smelters, glass-makers, charcoal-burners, shepherds. The form and location of many of the old buildings in the Parish are related to their past function in servicing the community, such as forges, wheelwrights, bakeries, malt house and farm buildings.

The hamlet of Hillgrove lies to the northeast, and that of Roundhurst sits on the lower slopes on the eastern end of Black Down. Other small groups of houses are to be found at Dial and White's Greens. There are nine Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in the Parish – Black Down, Lurgashall Mill Pond, Tanland Copse, Upper Barn Hanger and Mire Hanger, White's Green, Windfallwood, Quell Wood, Quellwood Common and Dial Green. The location of these is shown on the illuminated map on the back page.

The existing activities and land usage in the Parish are summarised in Appendix 1.



## Lurgashall Village

## **Existing Buildings**

Houses and cottages dating back several centuries abound in Lurgashall. Architectural styles and materials vary between timber-framed, tile-hung, stone-built and brick-built. Local building materials from Saxon times to the present were mainly timber – mainly Wealden oak, Lower Greensand and Horsham stone and Wealden clay tiles and bricks, manufactured locally.

With modest and varied roof heights, and front to back dimensions determined by earlier methods of construction and materials, buildings surrounding the Green are absorbed by the landscape and the surrounding high ground, leaving the impression of conscious continuity, almost of timelessness. H S Roots noted that in 1900 that “wherever you looked through a space between two buildings you could see the green fields and the trees beyond”. Most houses are well set back from the road, reflecting past use of space in front of the houses for keeping livestock, wood-stacks or gardens.

The heart of the village is approached by any of four narrow lanes which open up onto The Green, with its cricket pitch (where cricket has been played for over 200 years), cottages, shop and pub. The vernacular architecture, which can be found throughout the Parish, is typified here in the houses and cottages, with their gardens, clustered on and around the Green. These are mostly bounded by low stone walls, picket fences or hedges.

The Church of St Laurence and the sandstone Old Rectory are situated to the east of the Green. The church today still shows signs of Saxon and Norman architecture, as well as later additions of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The “Pilgrims’ cloister” along its southern side with its Horsham stone roof, was said by E V Lucas in his 1904 book *Highways and Byways in Sussex*, to have been built “for the accommodation of remote parishioners who therein ate their dinner between morning and evening service”. It is now used as a vestry.



The Vestry

In the churchyard stands a memorial to thirty three parishioners who gave their lives in the two world wars.

On the north side of the Green is the Noah’s Ark public house built mainly of old brick and stone with tile-hung elevations. Nearby is the cricket pavilion (formerly the forge) and Meadowside, brick built, with adjacent granary.



North side of green

On the south side of the Green is the village shop and a cluster of cottages in a variety of styles, mostly brick, some tile hung.



South side of green

There is a group of timber framed whitewashed cottages, formerly 4 cottages and now a pair.

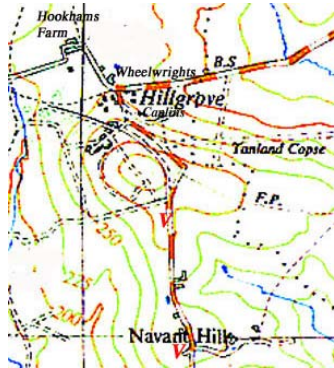


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To the west of the green are the Old School, the Old School House and the Malthouse.



In Hillgrove notable among the old buildings are Hookhams Farm, Wheelwrights and Caplins.



Hookhams Farm

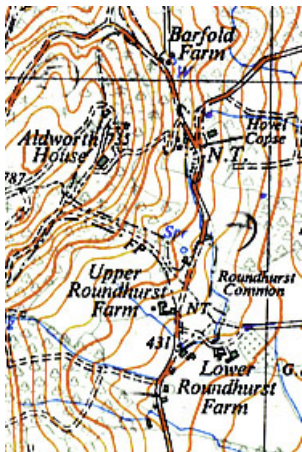


Caplins



Wheelwrights

In Roundhurst, Upper Roundhurst Farmhouse contains fine examples of moulded dressings



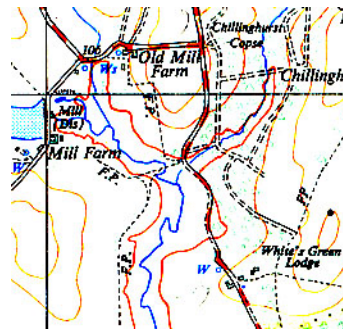
Old Manor Farm

There are a number of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the settlements around Dial Green and Windfallwood Common.



Houses in Dial Green

There are other settlements at White's Green and near the Mill pond.



White's Green

Most buildings on Lurgashall Green are listed, as are many houses and outbuildings in outlying parts of the Parish (see Supplement available from the Parish Council.). Their architecture is sympathetic to the Sussex countryside and should be referred to in future planning considerations.

- *If period buildings are modified or demolished without the prior agreement of the Planning Authority they should be required to be restored in the original form. (Refer to the Listed Buildings Legislation.)*

**Architectural Details**

*The following illustrations depict some examples of features that should be retained in future buildings or modifications in the Parish where relevant.*

**Walls**

Walls are:-

local sandstone – some with noggins - often with brick quoins and string courses.



Wealden clay brick in shades of red, grey and brown.



Frequently upper elevations are clad in clay tiles in similar colours.



Timber-framed houses abound.



**Roofs**

As well as gabled roofs, hipped & half-hipped roofs are common. A local feature comprises a gabled roof at one end, with hipped or half hip at the other.

There are a number of catslide roofs.



Roof pitches are commonly steep (of the order of 60° to the horizontal). and eaves to many are no more than 4m. above ground level. Roofs are mostly clad with hand-made local clay flat and bonnet hip tiles. Similar tiling has also been used on elevations. Modern pantiles and slates, which are not indigenous, can be found in the parish. There are slate roofs to some Victorian or Regency buildings.

**Chimneys**

Chimneys are generally brick built, many with elaborate corbelling.

Some are capped with stone slabs on corner piers (sometimes referred to as ‘Sussex hood’ chimneys) but others have clay pots of varied styles and colours.



There are examples of buttressed chimneys and step-gabled chimneys.

