

WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER STATEMENT

The legal background

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 also requires authorities to review their areas from time to time to see if further designation or alteration to existing designations is necessary.

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) deals in some detail with the assessment and designation of conservation areas in section 4, and the adopted planning policy documents for the Island contain sections relating to development within such areas.

Character

This small group appears very little influenced by modern times, and could quite easily still exist in the Victorian era. It is an enclave of peace and quiet, separated from the 21st century by a few fields, and the buffer provided by those fields is vital to its existence. The buildings themselves are individuals which adhere to a hierarchy relative to their size, but follow no other rules.

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

History of development

A church was noted in the Domesday book but was rebuilt by Nash in c1804. When Queen Victoria came to the Island the church was partly dismantled and rebuilt to designs influenced by Prince Albert. The almshouses were added to the group later during Queen Victoria's reign.

Setting

The cluster is set between the A3021 Newport – East Cowes road and the Medina River. There are views down to the river, but there is no evidence of the main road either visually or aurally. The surroundings are pure countryside giving the group a quiet and isolated feel, even though it is so close to developed areas and a busy road.

Materials

The local stone was used for earlier structures including boundary walls, and the church which, although having early origins, has been much altered and rebuilt. The 'Victorian' buildings make use of bricks made from local clay which are of a warm red colour. Roofs are either of slate or clay tile.

Height, mass & form

The notable comment regarding height, mass and form in this area is that there is absolutely no consistency. The characteristics of each building relate to its place in the hierarchy of the group with the church as the dominant feature.

Typical details

Again there is nothing which can be described as typical in this area save for the 'Victoriana' and decorative ethic associated with that period on those particular buildings. Overall the buildings are reasonably true to the period from which they date, though some modern insertions (plastic windows) have diluted the authenticity a little.

Paving

Informality, simplicity and the advance of grass sum up the paved landscape here. The simple blacktop road is the major area of paving, with its edges crumbling into grass verges. The almshouses have some brick paths, but for the most part, paths are an original hard surface which has been overtaken by grass.

Trees and open space

The area has plenty of mature trees both within and around it, many of them set in ancient boundary hedges and banks. There are, of course, yews in the churchyard. Open space flows through the area linking it to the open country which surrounds it. The buildings are set in spacious plots, well back from the road, so there is no sense of being in a village, simply of passing through a group of buildings in the countryside.

Sound and smell

No smells have been associated with this area. In terms of sounds, the significant point is the silence. Birdsong and the occasional vehicle do interrupt the peace, but for such an accessible area, it is notably peaceful and quiet.