

The Parish Design Statement



Wargrave Parish Council
Spring 1999

Wargrave Parish Design Statement – Notification of Amendments (August 2009)

This note serves as an amendment to those planning policies within the Wargrave Parish Design Statement that have been updated or replaced since its adoption. Subsequent notes will be issued as Wokingham Borough Council continues to progress with its Local Development Framework. New Regional or National Guidance will also be included within these amendment notes.

Local Plan policies which are still valid:

None

Local Plan policies which are no longer valid:

None

Local Plan policies that have been replaced by Core Strategy Policies:

None

Policies that have revised numbering in the Core Strategy:

None

WARGRAVE PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT

MANAGING CHANGE

This Parish Design Statement has been inspired by a great deal of hard work by many people. Its aim is to provide a platform for the views of the community and Planning Guidance that is acceptable and can be adopted and implemented by the Wokingham District Council.

Wargrave is not just the village but a Parish covering a wide rural area. Across the Parish there is a great variety of activities from agricultural to commercial, residential to industrial in a range of dwellings, offices and factories from the quite substantial to the more modest.

From the wide range of opinions expressed at our meetings and consultations, one theme that binds us to a common cause has emerged. There is the unanimous desire to retain the character and diversity of this lovely Parish in every facet ensuring it remains a desirable place for all the inhabitants as we enter another century and start the new millennium.

PURPOSE

This document is intended as Supplementary Planning Guidance for use by the District Council Planning Officers and Committee Members, the Parish Council, statutory bodies such as The Environment Agency, property developers and individuals wishing to develop or extend their premises.

Bullet points indicate the policies in this Supplementary Planning Guidance which the Parish Design Team, in consultation with the residents, consider essential for the management of change and the protection of the Parish of Wargrave.

The map insert in centre pages indicates the position of some of the areas mentioned in this text.

HISTORY

Set in a Parish that is essentially rural in character Wargrave is a Thames-side village with an attractive church built on a picturesque village green. The village contains a manor house and many listed buildings and properties with long histories. The Rivers Loddon and Thames form the western boundary of the Parish. Crazies Hill lies to the north, and to the east along the historic Bath Road, are Hare Hatch and Kiln Green.

The village is set within a framework of trees. Mature hedgerows mark many of the ancient field boundaries whilst parts lie within the flood plain.

By the time the Domesday survey was completed in 1086 Wargrave - or Weregrove from the weirs on the rivers and surrounding groves of woodland - was well established with around two hundred and fifty households.

The first small village was sited around Mill Green near the Church but by 1225 Wargrave was a borough with its own bailiffs and jurors and the 13th century village was re-sited along the High Street as burgage plots with back lanes on both sides.



Mill Green and Lutyens War Memorial

Growth continued into the 17th and 18th centuries and by early 19th century settlement had also spread east to Victoria Road. Development in Wargrave has left the historic layout of the village centre essentially untouched and Wargrave has one of the best-preserved archaeological records in Berkshire.

BUILDINGS

Wargrave does not have a single generic style of building therefore the community's wishes with regard to future infill or new development cannot be prescriptive for the whole village. Focus must be aimed at respect for neighbouring buildings, locally established trends of development and the desire to enhance the environment.

Guidance as to infill development, extensions, replacement buildings and landscape alterations is based on the fact that residents have chosen to live in the area and wish to retain the established style, density and landscaping of their immediate neighbourhood. Proposals that challenge this assumption such as incongruous materials or forms of buildings, the enclosure of previously open landscaping and over-development of a site will be strongly discouraged.



High Street

Conservation Area and Surrounding Roads

This area covers the centre of the village and extends from Station Road on the south side to encompass part of Willow Lane and Wargrave Manor set in extensive parkland to the north. The Conservation Area contains some of the oldest buildings in the village. No architectural style dominates but recurring features include brick and flint detailing to elevations and part timbered

buildings with deeply pitched rooflines made popular in late Victorian and Edwardian times. Many of these buildings are listed.

The community regards the preservation of the Conservation Area as the highest priority. The design of any new building in this area should match the general high quality. Proposals for change in these sensitive areas should

- ◆ **maintain the scale and harmony of the existing buildings**
- ◆ **pay special regard to the setting of listed buildings**
- ◆ **resist the intrusion of inappropriate signs, fascias, satellite dishes etc.**

Bordering the Conservation Area, Station Road was constructed to preserve the tranquillity of Church Street, Mill Green and St. Mary's Church by providing vehicular access to the station. Most properties are set in large gardens, bounded by walls, fences and hedges and provide a gentle transition between the village envelope, the flood plain and the Green Belt.

Proposals for infill development in these large gardens should be resisted and extensions should match the general style of the property.

A local builder, WH Easterling, contributed many well constructed houses in the early 1900's - predominantly in School Hill, Braybrooke Road and East View Road using local bricks from the Star Brick Works at Knowl Hill. The architectural style of these is consistent.

- ◆ **proposals for extensions or additions should maintain the general scale of existing buildings, together with the use of matching materials**

Victoria Road and Adjoining Roads

Once a footpath and now a busy thoroughfare, Victoria Road has groups of terraced houses built during the 19th century. There are some good examples of the detailed brickwork used extensively at the time. Plots of land between the widely spaced groups of houses have been filled with a mixture of properties reflecting the designs popular at the time of building.

There is little off street parking and proposals for further infill, replacement buildings or for extensions to existing buildings should



Victoria Road

- ◆ include adequate parking arrangements
- ◆ maintain the general style of enclosed front gardens
- ◆ match the existing style of adjacent properties
- ◆ where double hung sash windows remain, any replacement should be with windows of a similar design

More Modern Developments

Several large housing developments have been added since the Second World War. These have been carried out with a consistent design philosophy maintained within the boundaries of each development.



Highfield Park

Much of the architecture is neo-Georgian in style with brick elevations whilst elsewhere the style popular at the time of building prevails. Many of the houses are of wood frame construction. Some properties have walled, fenced or hedged boundaries while others were designed to have open plan landscaping of front gardens.

There is little scope for infill in these areas and proposals for extensions should

- ◆ respect established plans of landscaping
- ◆ respect the established neighbourhood styles
- ◆ have regard for the capacity of the plot and the effect on neighbouring properties



Ridgeway

Loddon Drive

An unadopted road set in the flood plain, Loddon Drive runs between the A4 and Wargrave Station crossing the River Loddon at Bridgeman's Bridge. Architecturally, the only common factor between the dwellings is their raised foundations. Many were intended only for weekend use and have subsequently been rebuilt and extended. There is a mixture of timber and brick constructions.



Loddon Drive

- ◆ environmental concern for the flood plain has led the Local Planning Authority to refuse the creation of new dwellings and this is supported by the community
- ◆ it is also desirable to control the growth of boat moorings, boathouses and other garden structures

Willow Lane



Fidler's Bridge

Willow Lane is built on an island between the Hennerton Backwater and the main channel of the River Thames. Properties comprise private houses, a farm, Henley Sailing Club (the oldest on the River Thames) and a commercial boatyard. Almost all the properties have direct frontage onto the river or the backwater. Access is over an ancient and attractive low bridge. This bridge, along with the other private bridges, permits passage for small craft only. A public footpath from the lane joins the towpath and leads to Wargrave Marsh. In severe winter conditions the lane floods and therefore many of the houses are built above the expected levels of floodwater.

Much of the lane is in the Conservation Area and proposals for replacement buildings and extensions must

- ◆ maintain the scale and harmony of the existing architecture
- ◆ ensure that there is no net increase in the 'Raised Footprint' in order to protect the flood plain and existing properties

The road bridge is regarded as an essential feature, which gives character to the neighbourhood and must be retained in its present form.

School Buildings

The four schools in the Parish all have buildings that either because of age or construction are deficient in one or more respects.



- ◆ when work is undertaken it should aim to deliver a coherent set of buildings on each site that will reflect the high expectations of the community
- ◆ a 'patch and mend' approach is undesirable



Buildings in the Green Belt

There are a number of listed buildings and significant houses spread across the Parish most of which are set in their own grounds. Small groups of houses form their own communities and some building takes the form of ribbon development along the roadsides. There are also larger groupings of houses such as those in Crazies Hill, Hare Hatch and Kiln Green which are not part of a recognised settlement. These range from substantial dwellings to small cottages.

Development in these rural areas is curtailed by Green Belt policies. Almost no new building is allowed apart from limited extensions and alterations to existing properties, change of use of redundant buildings to domestic or business premises and permitted development relating to agriculture or horticulture.

Diversification can bring employment and enterprise into the Parish and assist in the retention of existing farms but where buildings are converted attention must be paid to the style and settings of the original.



Spring Meadows Business Centre

- ◆ **building in the Green Belt is often very visible and additions where permitted should be constructed in matching materials with great emphasis being placed on the existing style**
- ◆ **the use of recycled materials should be considered so that any resulting changes blend into the surroundings as much as possible**
- ◆ **Landscaping is important in blending new buildings into the natural surroundings**

The residents wholeheartedly support the Green Belt policies and any attempt to build on green field sites should be very strongly resisted.

Development on the A4

The A4 is one of the country's historic highways with many old coaching inns and milestones visible along its length

- ◆ **buildings and settings affecting the road's history should be safeguarded**
- ◆ **the hedges and green surrounds of the A4 should be preserved**



The Old Forge, Kilm Green

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS

Car Dependency

Wargrave has a high car ownership. The village road system is pre-car which leads to traffic and parking problems. Our principle aim must be to improve road safety and accessibility and to reduce traffic speeds and volumes.

Traffic Within the Village

Improvements to traffic management in Wargrave could

- reduce pollution**
- reduce travel costs**
- make environmental improvements**

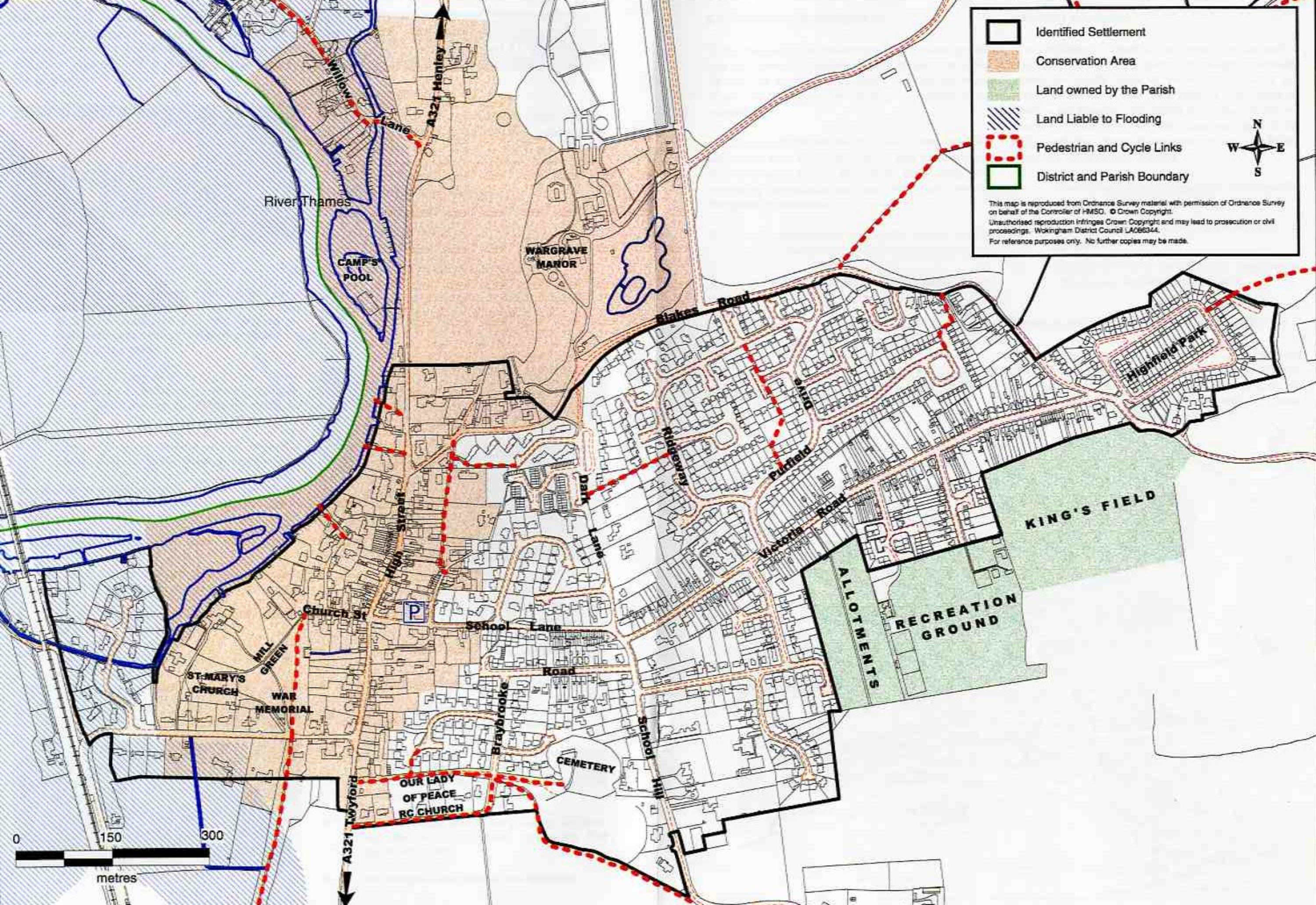
In residential areas traffic and parked cars cause congestion which is not safe or convenient for vulnerable groups. Relatively small changes would encourage short trips to be made on foot or by cycle.



High Street

It is a matter of great concern that vehicles approach the village at high speed. The historic High Street and narrow approach roads are congested morning and night by large volumes of traffic. This traffic is inhibiting to businesses and dangerous for pedestrians. Despite the weight restriction very large and heavy vehicles continue to pass along the High Street.

- ◆ **improved signing and road narrowing visual 'gateways' are desirable**
- ◆ **a consistent, enforced 40 mph speed limit should be applied on the A321 except through the village where 20 mph and 30 mph speed limits should apply**
- ◆ **consideration should be given to extending the 30 mph speed limits on the approach roads**
- ◆ **the weight limit should be enforced**



Identified Settlement

Conservation Area

Land owned by the Parish

Land Liable to Flooding

Pedestrian and Cycle Links

District and Parish Boundary

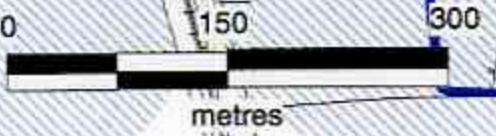
This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wokingham District Council LA060344.
For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

N

W

E

S



Cycleways and Footpaths

Traffic free paths for pedestrians and cyclists provide safe and convenient routes and are to be encouraged. Greater use of the paths available in Wargrave would benefit the community by reducing the number of car movements.

The Sustrans 'Safer Routes to School' project is fully supported as is the continuation and expansion of the National Cycle Network. Preserving and improving the existing pathways and cycle ways of Wargrave is desirable.

- ◆ safe pedestrian and cycle access should be essential to any new development
- ◆ 20 mph zones around schools would be desirable
- ◆ traffic calming measures around some of the junctions is essential
- ◆ current parking restrictions should be upheld and pedestrians given priority

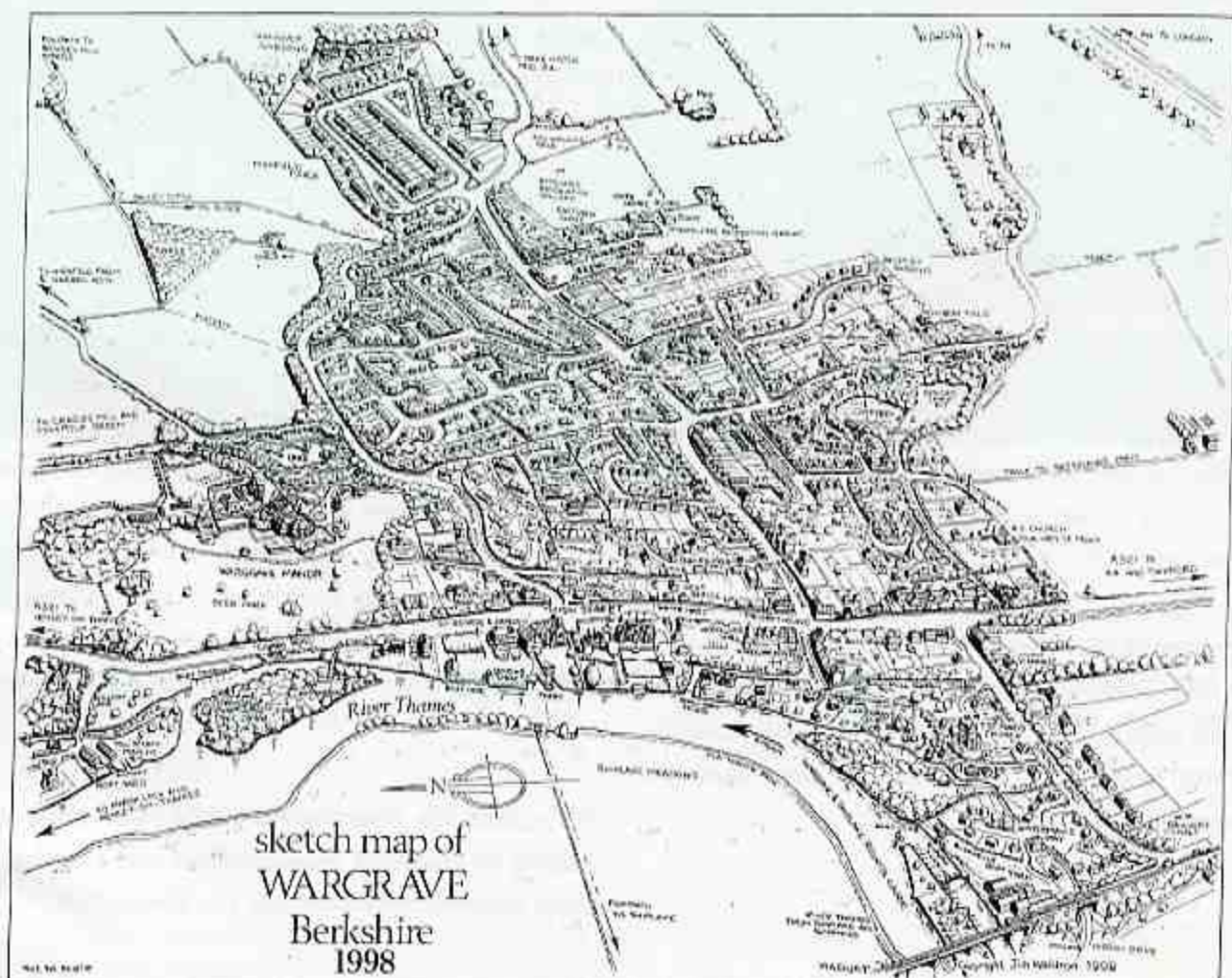
Public Transport

The continuing increase of car ownership has led to the decay of public transport. The village is currently served by hourly buses to Henley and Reading and hourly trains to Henley and Twyford connecting to London and Reading. High Street bus stops and the station are remote from the most populated parts of the village and only weekly buses leave Victoria and Blakes Road for Woodley and Reading.

- ◆ co-ordination and expansion of the public services should be encouraged
- ◆ better public travel information is required
- ◆ improvement in security for parking at Wargrave Station is essential

Transport for the Elderly and Disabled

Voluntary services such as the Hospital Car Service and the Volunteer Centre cater for the elderly and disabled as does the jointly funded Readibus 'Dial-a-Ride' bus service tailored to demand and provided for those unable to use ordinary public services.





The River at Wargrave

Consultation has shown that local people feel very strongly about protecting the green spaces that enhance their quality of life. This concurs with the overall strategy of local government to have sustainable development whilst conserving the best of our existing environment.

Wargrave is a countryside community surrounded by the Metropolitan green Belt and bounded by the Rivers Loddon and Thames. The rivers, flood plain and Setting of Settlement areas to the west incorporate two archaeological sites.

Green Belt and Areas of Special Landscape Importance (ASLI) lie to the north and east with a number of wildlife heritage sites and the flood plain. Green Belt and Setting of Settlement areas lie to the south with some areas of flood plain.

Recognising that some change and development in the rural economy is necessary, our over-riding concern is nonetheless to protect the openness and the natural wealth of green spaces that surround Wargrave.

Existing planning policy and guidelines relating to these categories of countryside should be sufficient to ensure that they are protected from inappropriate development but the history of encroachment cause us to seek firmer assurance that planning policies will be more rigorously applied in future in order to protect the rural character of Wargrave.

Green Routes

The A321 from Henley to Wargrave and The A4 Bath Road from Tag Lane to Knowl Hill are designated 'Green Routes' in the Parish of Wargrave. It would be desirable to extend these more widely to Wargrave's approach roads as a means of protecting them from development whilst recognising their environmental and historic value. All the approach roads to Wargrave are to a degree countryside roads or lanes, relatively little developed and visually attractive but under continual threat.

We expect the Planning Authority to be more dismissive of proposed developments encroaching on these approach roads within the Green Belt.

Footpaths/ Bridle Ways/ Cycle Networks in the Green Belt

The countryside around Wargrave is well served with a web of attractive footpaths and bridle ways which are generally well marked. These should continue to be well maintained and their use encouraged.

- ◆ **The Berkshire Cycleway runs through the Parish and we support the intention to link this with the National Cycle Network and the Safer Routes to Schools**
- ◆ **The Wokingham District Council Health Walks initiative is fully supported in the Parish**



Rebeka's Well

Farmland

Twenty five per cent of the population of Wargrave Parish live in the rural area outside the village envelope most of which is designated as Green Belt and ASLI.

- ◆ **The current consensus between the community and Planning Authorities is that farmland should not under any circumstances be developed as housing estates or industrial sites**

River

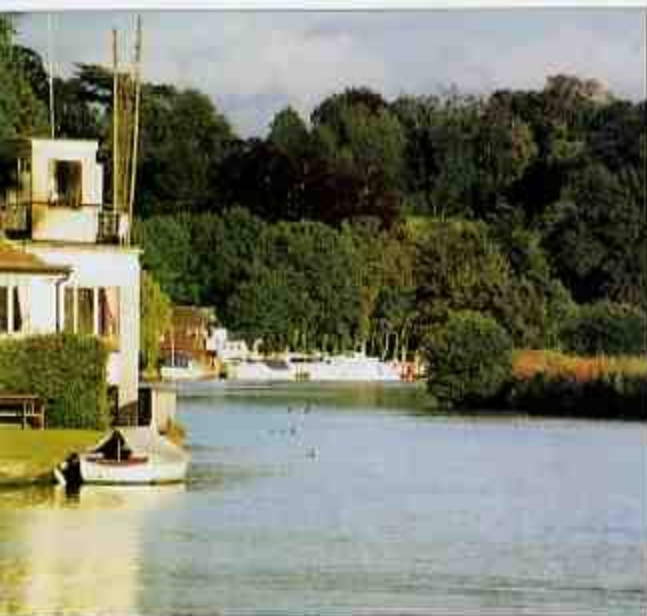
The Rivers Thames and Loddon are a major feature of our countryside although our predecessors sadly allowed the community to lose much of its public access to them

- ◆ **protection of the limited access to the rivers is important to the community as is the visual amenity and the peaceful environment surrounding the Rivers Thames and Loddon.**

Riverside Facilities

Because the River Thames marks the District County boundary, protection of the river environment requires good co-ordination between Wokingham and South Oxfordshire District Councils. The River Thames is worthy of protection from intrusive development along its banks in the Green Belt.

- ◆ **we would encourage the planning authorities and the Environment Agency to use their powers in this regard**



The Thames at Wargrave

Towpaths

Upkeep of towpaths and banks rests mainly with the private landowners but one area on the River Thames in Wargrave is owned by the Environment Agency at Lashbrook Moorings'

- ◆ **the Agency should be encouraged to keep it in good repair**



Lashbrook Towpath

Moorings

The Environment Agency discourages additional public moorings in the Wargrave area of the Thames.

- ◆ **the policy should be continued**



A Riverside Mooring

Wargrave -Shiplake Pedestrian Bridge

The majority of people in Wargrave would value a pedestrian access across the River Thames between Shiplake and Wargrave

- ◆ **this remains an aspiration for the future**

Slipways and Access

Wargrave has five public rights of access to the River Thames for pedestrians and small boats

the jetty at Ferry lane owned by the Parish Council

the right of way and slipway between Barrymore and Ferry House

the right of way over the George and Dragon public house car park

the right of access at Camps Pool

footpath access off Willow lane

Wargrave Boat Club has river access for members

- ◆ all accesses should be preserved and maintained
- ◆ any opportunity for improved car parking should be taken
- ◆ improved signing is desirable

Navigation and Flood Defence

The Environment Agency has statutory responsibility for maintaining a navigation channel for river craft along the centre of the 'fairway' or main channel of the River Thames. It is understood that there is no statutory right of navigation except on designated rivers. The backwaters are therefore not regularly maintained. The Hennerton Backwater is in danger of blockage and silt-



Slipway

ing up and will shortly no longer afford access even to small craft.

- ◆ this loss of river amenity to Wargrave would be undesirable
- ◆ increased risk of flooding caused by deterioration in this backwater should be avoided
- ◆ the Environment Agency should be pressed to address these issues and establish a programme of regular maintenance



River Pollution

It is important to Wargrave that the sewage treatment plant avoids polluting our river environment.

- ◆ the fact that the current operator of the plant is not a statutory planning consultee is of concern
- ◆ the Environment Agency should set and enforce standards to maintain good coarse fisheries and allow the passage of migratory fish

Noise Pollution

Part of the charm of rural Wargrave was that it was beyond the noise generated by London Airport. The growth of air movements at Heathrow has increased background noise level and this will continue to grow if Terminal Five is developed.

- ◆ additional noise generated by helicopters landing in or near the Parish and the increase in private, low level flights of light aircraft is disruptive to the community and should be resisted
- ◆ in conjunction with other local authorities the enforcement of noise abatement measures should be pursued

Recycling

We fully support the District Council's environmental initiatives such as bottle banks, clothes and paper banks and kerbside recycling.



Recycling



The Loddon Lily

Nature Conservation

Wargrave is a site where the Loddon Lily (*Leucojum Aestivum*) grows. The unspoiled bank side and wetland habitats between the Hennerton Backwater and the River Thames are a valuable wildlife habitat in this highly developed area.

- ◆ one of the wildlife heritage sites between the River Thames and the Hennerton backwater should be extended to protect the Loddon Lily
- ◆ wildlife habitats must be protected

Hedgrows are a unique record of vegetation and are 'motorways' for many species. These must be preserved and protected.

- ◆ replanting should be undertaken where practicable
- ◆ native species of trees that provide the correct food and habitat for insects and birds should be planted and protected

SUMMARY

History has shown that change is inevitable. The buildings of new homes, whilst not acceptable to all, has brought more people to live in Wargrave. To protect and enhance village life changes must be managed according to the wishes of the majority of the residents.

Within the village envelope extensions and developments must

- ◆ match the existing buildings in the vicinity in terms of scale and size
- ◆ use materials that are similar or that will complement the existing buildings
- ◆ retain hedges and trees where possible and respect established plans of landscaping
- ◆ provide or retain off street parking
- ◆ take account of the existing infrastructure and seek to improve on it
- ◆ make provision for affordable housing where appropriate

Within the Green Belt residents will oppose development with the exception of extensions to existing properties and the conversion of unused farm buildings, where most of the above conditions will apply.

Sustainable development for Wargrave will not be brought about by significant increase in the number of houses but rather by controlled infilling, careful improvement of the infrastructure and the preservation of green spaces.

Acknowledgements

The Parish Design Committee thank the many people who have contributed to this *Statement*. These include members of the Parish Council, Wargrave Residents Association and individual contributors. We are grateful to Wokingham District Council for their co-operation and to Rural Action in Berkshire for a grant towards this project.

We are publishing *Wargrave and the Third Millennium* which draws together the unedited contributions and includes topics outside the remit of the Wargrave Parish Council *Parish Design Statement*. This document contains aspirations for the future development and provides valuable reference material to assist in regular reviews of *The Parish Design Statement*. Further information may be obtained on the WPC e-mail: wargraveparishcouncil@btinternet.com or from any member of the Wargrave Parish Council.

Whilst every care has been taken to verify the facts in this document any mistakes inadvertently made will be remedied in future reviews.