

# Stillingfleet



## Village Design Statement

*Supplementary Planning Document*

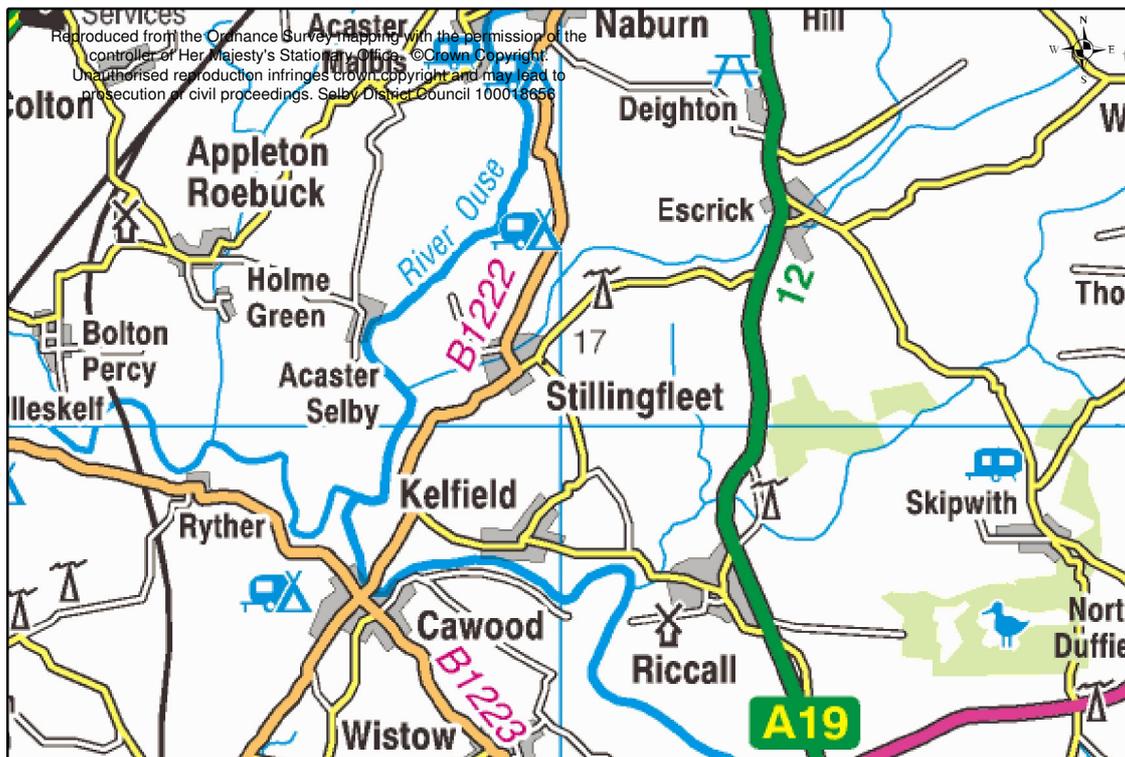


*December 2009*



Purpose of a Village Design Statement	1	To Provide a record of local distinctiveness by describing the unique qualities and character of the village.
The Stillingfleet Village Design Statement	1	
Map of Stillingfleet	2	To identify the key features and characteristics of the local natural and built environment to be respected and protected from the impact of inappropriate development.
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*Location Map*



Stillingfleet Location Map

0 750 1,500 3,000 Meters

## Purpose of a Village Design Statement

### Purpose of a Village Design Statement

1.0 Our villages all occupy a unique position in the surrounding countryside, and have evolved over hundreds of years to suit the needs and circumstances of the people who lived there through the ages. As a result of this, we are naturally drawn to the elements that make our own village different from others, and those things that make it unique.

1.1 More recently, volume house building and standardisation has failed to reflect both the subtle and obvious elements that create this local distinctiveness. Coupled with this, political ideology, personal tastes and cultural changes have all played their part in the design of buildings. It is now recognised that local distinctiveness is vital in helping to integrate new development and in creating sustainable communities. This can be achieved through an understanding of local character, and ensuring that this understanding is shared with anyone considering development.

1.2 A Village Design Statement (VDS) is such a method. It is intended to explain the *context* or *character* of the village so that anyone who is considering any form of development in the village - no matter how large or small - can do it sympathetically. The VDS covers relatively straightforward work such as replacing doors and windows as well as more significant work such as building extensions and complete new buildings. It sets out the elements that make up *character* in order to improve the quality of design in any new development.

1.3 The description of local character in this VDS is not intended to be prescriptive - new development should not be designed to "look old". Instead the VDS should be used as inspiration to design new modern development that is respectful to its surroundings. In this context, that means using the appropriate building materials and architectural styles, and respecting the importance of spaces, building orientation and size. Overall, new development should look new, and should not slavishly copy the old buildings. However, new development should "fit in" with the *context* of the village.

1.4 The VDS is written so that all developers can avoid lengthy discussion in the planning application process, as the design context is clearly set out from the beginning. Where design is not respectful to the village, the VDS can be used as evidence to justify the refusal of planning permission.

1.5 Therefore the Local Planning Authority welcomes early discussion with anyone considering undertaking any work so that a consensus can be achieved, and local character can be maintained.

### Stillingfleet Village Design Statement

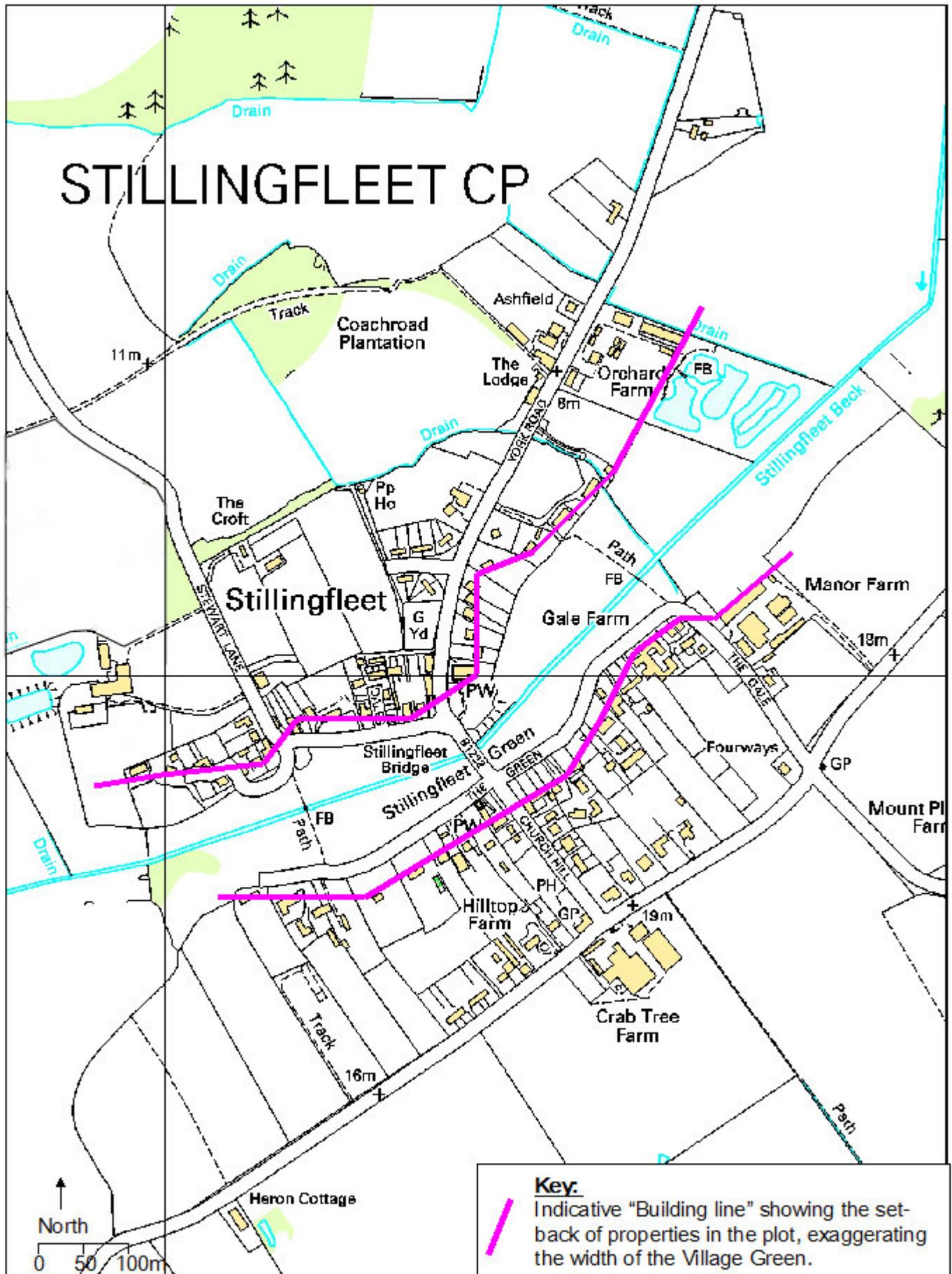
1.6 Stillingfleet village is a small rural community that retains much of its agricultural layout, with long thin burgage plots and traditional Yorkshire houses set around a central green. The position of the church and bridge create a "chocolate box" appearance that has not been subject to large scale suburban type development.

1.7 It is the layout and overall appearance of the village, not necessarily any specific architectural features that is to be maintained via the VDS. Therefore it concentrates on the layout and street scene and reinforces the aims of Stillingfleet's existing Conservation Area.



**Above: Stillingfleet in the 1947 flood (looking north to All Saint's Church across the stone bridge)**

# Map of Stillingfleet



## **Summary of Design Characteristics**

The list below summarises the important elements that help to define the village. Successful development will utilise these points to blend seamlessly in to the existing built form.

- Defined building lines following the contour of the valley, facing the green.
- Significant tree planting.
- Low density with significant gaps either side of buildings
- Long rectangular plots at right angles to the roads
- No two neighbouring units are the same,
- Maximum of two storeys
- Houses are wider than they are tall, often double-fronted.
- Largely unadorned by architectural details
- Brick dentil course under the eaves.
- Rough-faced hand made red/orange brick, but colours vary between buildings so that no neighbouring properties are the same
- Traditional gables of around 45 degree pitch
- Varying shades of red and orange pan tiles.
- Eaves face forwards towards the street,
- One or two short chimneys with one or two round clay pots at the apex of gable walls.
- Eaves and ridge heights vary to prevent a regimented line
- Front roof pitch features no windows.
- Elevations are balanced with evenly sized and spaced windows,
- Side opening or sliding sash windows in white timber with multiple panes of glass.
- Modest arched brick headers and stone cills
- Doors are timber with a small white decorative surround.
- Existing trees and hedges form a significant part of the village
- Wide roadside verges, large gardens and large gaps between houses
- Boundaries in well-tended hedges of native species
- Entrances onto the village green should be open or have timber gates of modest proportions.



## An Introduction to Stillingfleet

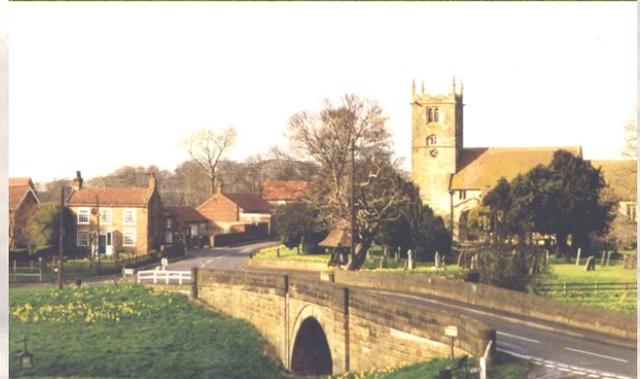
2.0 Stillingfleet, or “Steflinge fled” appears in the Domesday book where it is described along with neighbouring Moreby by reference to their ploughs and villanes. Over the centuries, woodland was cleared and the low-lying marshes drained to create arable farmland, but Stillingfleet’s unique identity remains.

2.1 Stillingfleet nestles in a shallow valley running east-west on the north side of the Escrick moraine, the band of higher land that crosses the Vale of York between the River Ouse and River Derwent.

2.2 Despite some 20<sup>th</sup> Century development outside its historic core, the greater part of the present village lies as it did in the middle ages, strung out along the dry margins on the valley above the “fleet”. Stillingfleet is unusual in that much of its character and charm derives not from its individual buildings, but in the way that those buildings sit in a natural landscape.

2.3 It is the layout and overall appearance of the village, not necessarily any specific architectural features that is to be maintained via the VDS. Therefore it concentrates on the layout and street scene and reinforces the aims of Stillingfleet’s existing Conservation Area (see over for details of the Conservation Area).

2.4 The narrow roads mean that the streets are relatively free of parked cars. In order to continue this important visual aspect, the maximum parking standards should be applied to ensure that the streets remain free of cars.



**Top: The Village Green. Middle: Individual houses in wide plots. Bottom: The classic Stillingfleet view of the bridge and church**

## In 1902, Edmund Bogg described Stillingfleet:

*“Seen from any point it is indeed a beautiful village with its spreading green of nearly twenty acres, through the centre of which flows the fleet, a small stream; near its margin the cottagers’ cattle graze, locks of geese gabble, and the children romp and play at pleasure. Around the skirts of the green red-tiled and rustic thatched-cots nestle in orchard and garden. The grey church tower, like a noble coronet overtopping the trees, puts the crown on this charming scene – truly a model English village.”*

# Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in Stillingfleet

## VDS and Conservation

3.0 The village has a designated "Conservation Area"; a planning tool similar to Listing a building, except that it covers a larger area. Conservation Areas are designated in an attractive historic area where there is a demonstrable character that it is "desirable to preserve or enhance" in the national interest.

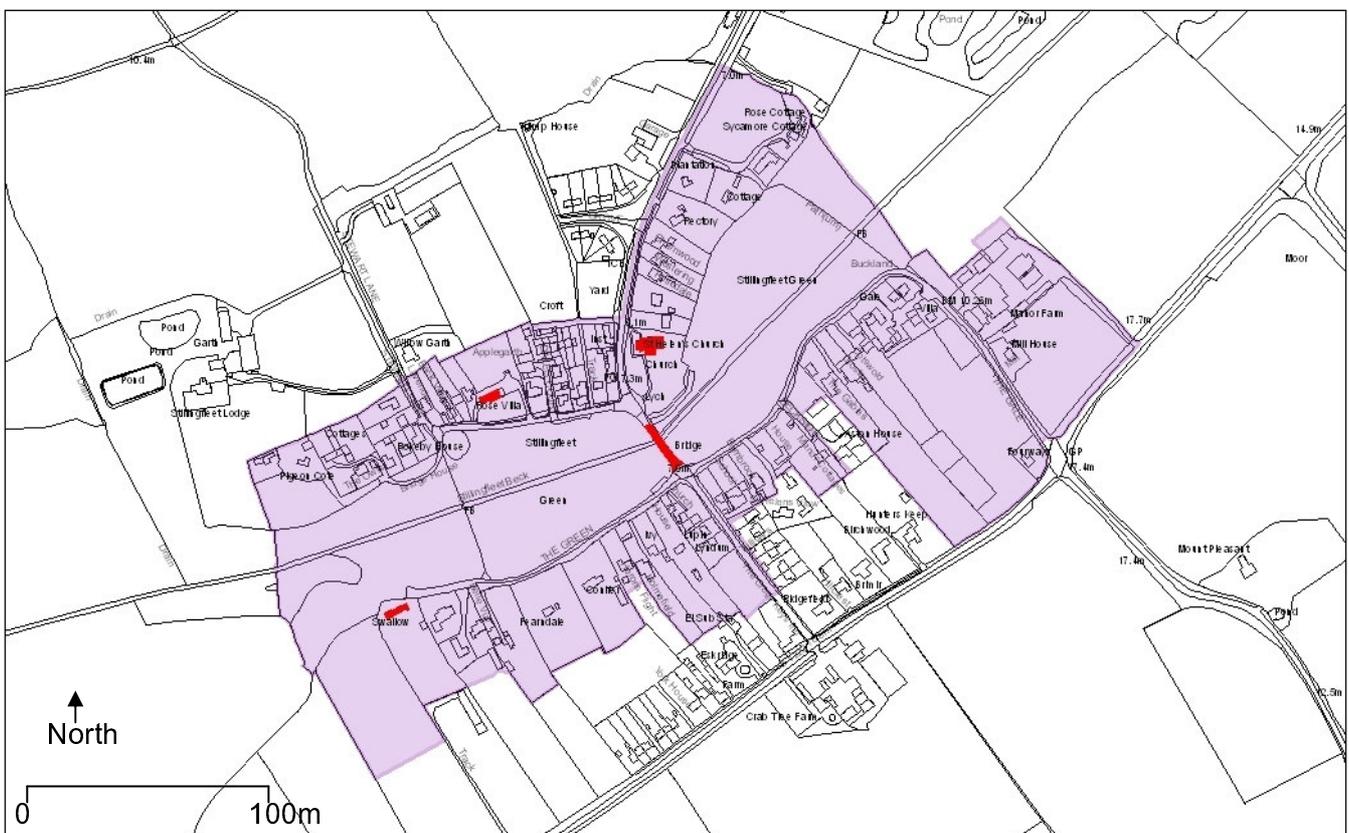
3.1 The aims of the Conservation Area are similar to those of a VDS, but is undertaken using different planning legislation. Conservation Areas are concerned with historic environments, with an emphasis on managing change progressively, maintaining the historic fabric and layout. The Conservation Area designation is set out in a different policy and ultimately carries more weight than the VDS SPD (see hierarchy in appendix 1).

3.2 The VDS on the other hand is less focussed on the historic aspects. It often covers more modern areas and considers

those aspects that make up the existing character, which may not be so squarely focussed on the historic elements. It considers those aspects that may not be of concern to the national interest, but are important to local people.

3.3 There is clearly a crossover of the two mechanisms, particularly where much of the village's character is derived from the historic environment. But the two mechanisms can work alongside each other to help to improve the quality of new development.

3.4 A map of the village's Conservation Area is included in the VDS purely for information. For more information about Conservation Areas, contact Selby District Council Development Management service on 01757 705101.



Stillingfleet CONSERVATION AREA (purple)  
LISTED BUILDINGS (red)

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### **Layout and access**

4.0 Stillingfleet is a village that owes its special character to the geography of its rural setting. The village is split in two by the “fleet” or stream that runs through its middle, flanked by a wide village green that acts as a flood plain. Houses are built on the gentle slopes of a shallow valley in defined building lines following the contour of the valley. The building line (shown in pink on the map on page 2) is strong and siting development in front or behind it would upset this line. The gentle slope of the valley is particularly important to the character, and to artificially raise or lower it would be detrimental to the street scene. Dwellings face the green to give an extremely attractive appearance, unique in the District.

4.1 The valley is enclosed on either side by houses, and despite its low density of development, there is a continuous screen due to the significant tree belt that frames the view. This gives a sense of enclosure to the village and to break through this “wall” would be to artificially extend the community.

4.2 The village is built at a low density with significant gaps either side of buildings, which forms much of the character that is to be preserved. Erosion of this pattern, or indeed of the long rectangular plots via in-filling will be detrimental to the village.

4.3 The roads in Stillingfleet are narrow which adds greatly to its rural feel. Parking on the road is not possible because of the narrow highway, and parking on the Green is prohibited by the parish Council, however the large plots should ensure that on-street parking is not necessary.



**Above: A native hedge separates the house from the village green. Below: The village appears to be more dense than it really is due to mature vegetation in gardens.**





## House siting and design.

4.4 There is no one style or type of building in Stillingfleet, all are subtly different but within an overall framework of design principles. No two neighbouring units are the same, but common themes create a pleasant similarity that bonds the village together and makes it so attractive.

4.5 Houses are a maximum of two storeys high, in a horizontally-emphasised elevation ie: the houses are wider than they are tall, and often double-fronted. They are largely unadorned by architectural flourishes apart from a brick dentil course under the eaves. Walls are made in a rough-faced hand made red/orange brick, but colours vary between buildings so that no neighbouring properties are the same.

4.6 Roofs in Stillingfleet are traditional gables of around 45 degree pitch in varying shades of red and orange pan tiles. Some occasional use of dark grey slate adds variety to the roofscape. Eaves face forwards towards the street, while one or two short chimneys with one or two round clay pots are found at the apex of the gable walls. All the eaves and ridge heights vary to prevent a regimented line of houses, but none differ by more than around 30cm from the neighbouring property so as to maintain a common height.

4.7 The front roof pitch rarely features windows, only occasional conservation lights are found and these do not add to the quality of the roofscape. Projecting windows such as dormers are not appropriate so as to maintain the low, wide building type.

4.8 The ratio of windows to brickwork is an important aspect of houses in Stillingfleet. Care should be taken to ensure that elevations are neat and balanced with evenly sized and spaced windows, each made in white timber with multiple panes of glass. Side opening or sliding sash are most common. Modest arched brick headers and stone cills are used. Doors are timber with a small white decorative surround.

**No two neighbouring units are the same, but a max of 2 storeys, wider than tall, unadorned by architectural details. Rough-faced red/orange brick and pan tiles, but neighbours slightly different shades. Gabled roofs where eaves face the street, but eaves and ridge heights vary**



## Landscaping

4.9 Existing trees and hedges form a significant part of the village's appearance and those in the Conservation Area are subject to strict controls over felling and pruning. The maintenance and retention of this vegetation is of utmost importance, and additional planting using native species will reinforce this detail and strengthen the character. The village also features significant views in to and out of it and is a spacious open environment. Wide roadside verges, large gardens and large gaps between houses reinforces this open airy feel.

4.10 Plot boundaries are made in well-tended hedges of native species such as quickthorn, beech and holly. This maintains the rural character as well as providing vital habitats for wildlife. Occasional wrought iron gates and brick boundary walls have introduced an "urban" attribute that is alien in the village and should not be replicated. Entrances onto the village green should be open or have timber gates of modest proportions.



**Semi-natural green blends well with the dense vegetation of gardens throughout the village**

# Appendix A: What is a Village Design Statement and how do I use it?

## **Appendix A: What is a Village Design Statement and how do I use it?**

A1 This Village Design Statement (VDS) is intended to give advice and guidance to anyone who is considering any form of development in the village no matter how large or small. It covers simple works such as replacing doors and windows as well as more significant works such as extensions and new buildings. It is not only concerned with housing, but covers all types of development with the intention of improving the quality of design in new development.

A2 It is not about whether development should take place, instead, the VDS is intended to expand upon the policies in the *Adopted Selby District Local Plan* in order to explain it and give greater detail as to what is meant by the Policies within it. This helps developers and Planning Officers agree on some details that are not specifically set out in the policy itself: in this case the VDS sets out how development should be undertaken so as to respect the local identity.

A3 The VDS is a "Supplementary Planning Document" (SPD) which is a legal document that sits in a hierarchy of plans and strategies called the Local Development Framework (LDF).

A4 The different types of document in the LDF cover topical issues as well as area-based issues, and contain policies for making planning decisions. This is a relatively new system that replaces the old Local Plan system, however this is a period of transition and so the 2005 Selby District Local Plan has been "saved" as a '*Local Development Document*' until such time that newer documents can replace it.

A5 This Village Design Statement SPD is therefore based on Policy ENV1 of the Saved Selby District Local Plan 2005, which states:

*"ENV1: Proposals for development will be permitted provided a good quality of development would be achieved. In considering proposals the District Council will take account of:*

*the effect upon the character of the area or the amenity of adjoining neighbours*

*the relationship of the proposal to the highway network, the proposed means of access, the need for road/junction improvements in the vicinity of the site, and the arrangements to be made for car parking;*

*the capacity of local services and infrastructure to serve the proposal, or the arrangements to be made for upgrading, or providing services and infrastructure;*

*the standard of layout, design and materials in relation to the site and its surroundings and associated landscaping;*

*the potential loss, or adverse effect upon, significant buildings, related spaces, trees, wildlife habitats, archaeological or other features important to the character of the area;*

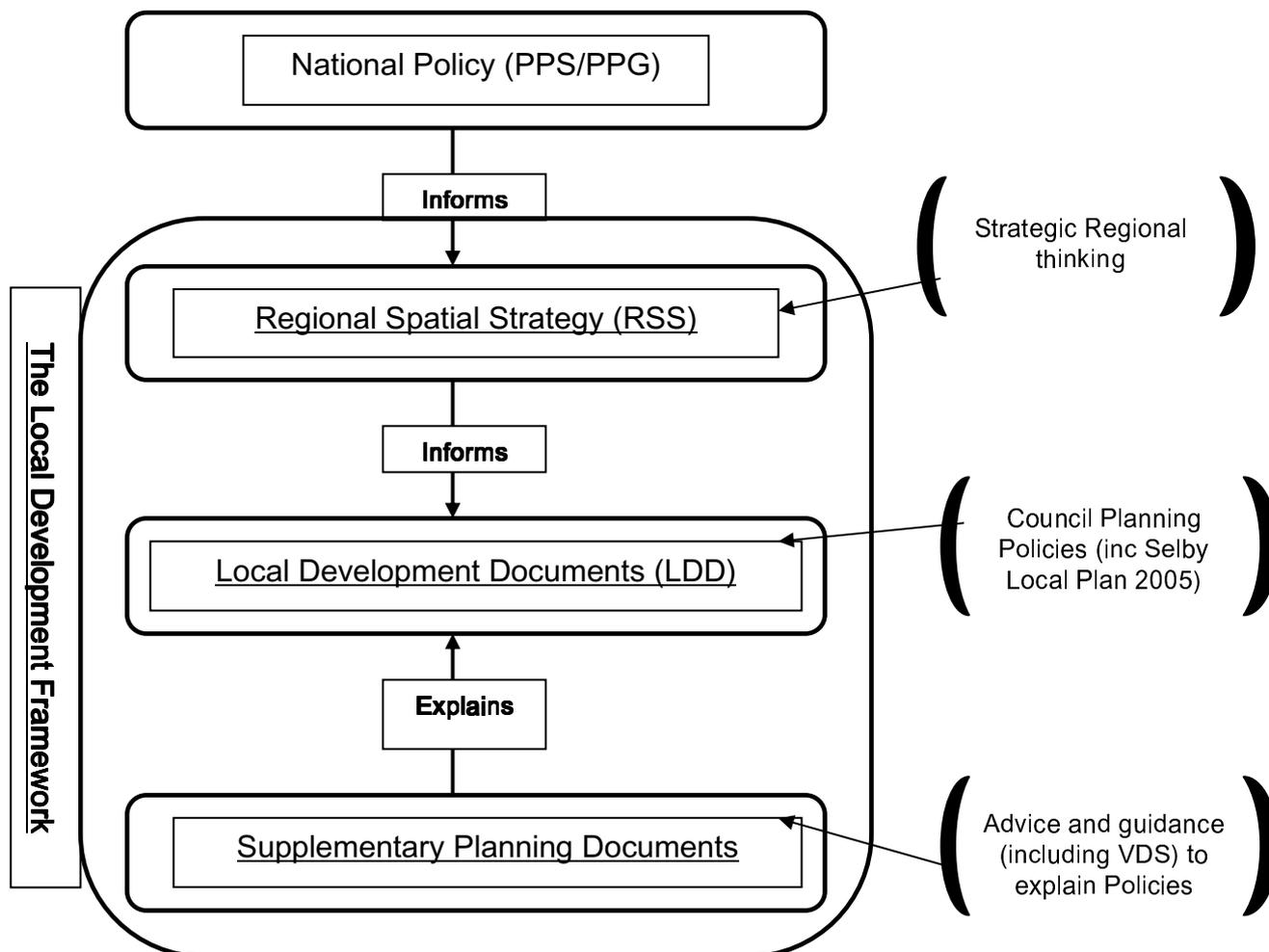
*the extent to which the needs of disabled and other inconvenienced persons have been taken into account;*

*the need to maximise opportunities for energy conservation through design, orientation and construction; and*

*any other material consideration"*

# Appendix A. What is a Village Design Statement and how do I use it?

The diagram shows the hierarchy of plans.



A6 When preparing development proposals, the developer should refer to this VDS in a “Design and Access Statement” to demonstrate how its advice and guidance has been used. This will help people understand how a particular design for the development has come about. Where a site lies on or near the “border” of two or more character areas, the advice of each should be taken in to consideration and used appropriately.

A7 If planning permission is required, the District Council’s Planning Officer will also use the VDS to assess the design of the application. If it cannot be demonstrated that the advice has been used, or it is considered that it has not been used correctly, it could result in the refusal of planning permission.

A8 Even if planning permission is not required, it is still very much in the interests of the village to undertake any development work in sympathy to the village’s character. It will increase the appeal and the value of the development and ensure that the aesthetic qualities of the village continue for future generations to enjoy.

# Appendix B. General Advice For Prospective Developers

## **Appendix B: General advice for prospective developers**

B1 This section considers more than just the aesthetic issues and offers advice and guidance for prospective developers in achieving a suitable development proposal.

### **General good design**

B2 There are lots of conflicting issues in considering new development, but whatever the compromise, the village character should always be maintained.

B3 The character described in the VDS does not restrict new designs or materials or insist that everything is designed to “look old”. Instead, it is the job of the developer to design and build a modern building that satisfies modern needs, exploits new technology and building methods, and uses them to create a desirable, profitable development that works with its environment to seamlessly integrate with the local area. Modern, but appropriate development is encouraged.

B4 It is helpful to consider the visual impact of developments from all angles and from longer distance. Accurate perspective (isometric) drawings or street scene views to show how new developments would appear in relation to their neighbouring properties and in the wider street scene could be very useful.

B5 There is an emphasis on evolution not revolution in the village, and so multiple smaller developments will have less impact than a single large-scale development. This approach reflects the way the village has grown in the past.

B6 Examples of inappropriate designs, materials and layouts within the village should not be used as a precedent for further inappropriate use of these features.

### **The Planning Process**

B7 Anyone considering development should contact the District Council for planning advice before submitting an application. This will help to iron out potential issues and lead to a

smoother planning process. The Parish Council would also welcome early discussion and to help wherever they can.

B8 Discussion with neighbours before applying for planning permission will give them an opportunity to discuss any concerns, and that may avoid unnecessary neighbour disputes.

B9 Some development does not need planning permission, but the need for good design remains. Understanding of the local character and applying it may increase the value of a development and ensure that the important local character remains.

### **Repairs and maintenance of buildings**

B10 Many buildings in the villages are old, having been built long before building regulations came in to effect, before plastics were invented, and before cars began damaging structures through impact, chemical attack via exhaust gases, and water damage from splashing through puddles. The need to maintain and repair our older buildings is never more apparent, but it is essential that the correct materials and methods are used to maintain character, but also to ensure that the building continues to live.

B11 Bricks and stone may be bonded together using a mortar, but up until the Great War, most buildings used a lime mortar mix rather than a sand-and-cement mortar used today. Cement mortar is extremely hard and does not flex which can lead to cracks appearing, particularly where foundations are shallow or soft. The rain cannot penetrate cement easily and so it is found that the bricks and stone wear out faster than the mortar joints leaving the mortar exposed. This accelerates wear and buildings will become damp, unstable and ultimately collapse. A lime mortar is no more expensive and no more difficult to use than cement, but it is the better choice for many buildings in the district. Where stone is used, a sand and cement mortar should never be used.

B12 When installing modern features on a traditional building such as satellite receiver

# Appendix B. General Advice For Prospective Developers

dishes, conservatories, replacement guttering and fascias etc, new windows and doors, and damp proofing can all seriously affect the integrity of both the appearance and the way traditional buildings function. Modern materials are often cheaper to buy, but may have a shorter operational life, and also lack the physical qualities that are needed in traditional buildings. However advice is available from HELM (English Heritage's Historic Environment Local Management arm) who offer a wealth of information to help make an informed choice about materials and methods of repair to older buildings. See [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk).

## Highway and parking advice

B13 Safety is paramount, but modern standardised road designs do not always sit comfortably within historic areas. When designing road layouts it is important that a balance is achieved to allow safe access without detriment to the local character. This means that a bespoke design will be needed.

B14 Historic areas were never designed for the private car and so these environments are spoiled by inappropriate and ill considered parking arrangements. Rural villages often feature heavy machinery such as combine harvesters and on-street parking is therefore problematic. Bespoke solutions will be required to minimise highway disruption and to maintain local character and amenity.

B15 New accesses should be designed to minimise the loss of boundary vegetation and achieve an appropriate balance between highway safety and amenity.

## Energy conservation and sustainable development

B16 New development can play its part in reducing the risk and impact of climate change. Installing modern environmental systems in an attractive setting can have a serious detrimental impact on the character of the village. Therefore domestic wind turbines, solar panels and photovoltaic cells should be carefully sited to reduce their visual impact. If

they cannot be placed sympathetically to limit their visual impact, then consideration of alternatives should be made. Ground source heating and better insulation may be just as effective by reducing consumption instead of generating more power.

B17 In order to reduce carbon emission, it is not only the ongoing costs that should be considered, as methods in construction may also limit environmental impact. Timber, stone, slate and labour from local sources will reduce the amount of travelling required overall thus cutting emissions and maintaining local employment. More information about sustainable construction can be seen at [www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk).

## The natural environment

B18 Any new development on the edge of the village should conserve or enhance the soft landscaped edge by the provision of appropriate tree and hedgerow planting. Hard edges of walls, fences or other structures should be avoided. Selby District Council has a landscape Character Assessment that will assist in understanding the landscape around the villages.

B19 Hedges and trees within the village are an essential part of the character. These should be conserved and reinforced through new planting in any new development whether small or large.

B20 Even small areas of hard landscaping can lead to a sharp decline in local wildlife with the removal of nesting, breeding or feeding habitats. This has a drastic effect on our natural ecosystems and so hard landscaping and removal of vegetation is strongly discouraged.

B21 Many plant and animal species that have declined in the wider landscape in recent years are increasingly dependent on the opportunities provided to them through the built environment, such as putting up bird and bat boxes, making ponds, and planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Indirect actions

# Appendix B. General Advice For Prospective Developers

such as using peat free or home-made compost also benefit wildlife. Further information can be found from the Natural England website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk).

## **Flooding**

B22 Much of the District lies in the severe flood risk area, but it is not just those areas that are susceptible to flooding. Flooding can include short term flash flooding after a heavy downpour which can cause localised damage. There are two considerations when designing out flood risk: a) the impact of flooding on a development, and b) the impact of the development on flooding. The following advice is generic, but does not imply that all areas are at risk of severe flooding. Detailed advice about how to cope with flood risk - including maps showing those areas most at risk - can be found on the Environment Agency's website [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

B23 To reduce the impact of flooding on a development, consider the plot in relation to slopes, water courses and known flood risk areas. If a flood is likely or possible, how would the water affect the development? Building on stilts and raising the ground floor level of the building may not be the answer, as the dry occupants would still be trapped because they would still be surrounded by water.

B24 Water storage capacity is particularly important; hard landscaped areas such as paved parking areas and driveways should be avoided, instead a permeable surface such as gravel is able to absorb water much more easily and hold it, prevent it escaping and building up elsewhere. It will also slow any flowing water down, and this will reduce the risk of impact damage. Collecting water from the down pipe in a butt may also assist in reducing the amount of water that the ground has to cope with. Trees and large vegetation help to bind soil together to prevent land collapse, so in areas where there are no trees, consider planting some to make sure the land can take the weight of water it holds.

## **Crime prevention**

B25 Selby is generally a low crime area, but there are simple steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of crime further still in new development. For example, clear definition between public and private spaces, siting buildings to prevent areas that are not overlooked, removing potential hiding places, and designing buildings that are not easily broken in to.

B26 "*Secured by Design*" is a publication by the Association of Chief Police Officers that sets out these and other simple but effective methods of reducing the opportunities for crime. Schemes that meet the criteria set out are eligible for awards, and may attract lower insurance premiums. A copy may be obtained here:

### **ACPO CPI**

First floor,  
10 Victoria Street,  
London  
SW1H 0NN  
Phone: 0207 084 8962  
Email: [acpocpi@acpo.pnn.police.uk](mailto:acpocpi@acpo.pnn.police.uk)

B27 In addition, North Yorkshire Police Community Safety Partnership have specialist Officers who would be pleased to help prepare development proposals. They may be contacted on 01757 341 029.

**Selby District Council**  
**Development Policy**  
**Civic Centre**  
**Portholme Road**  
**SELBY**  
**YO8 4JB**

