

Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Pre-Submission Modified Plan 2014 - 2029

Policy SB6 Design and Heritage in Hermitage

Supporting Evidence SB6.EV1 Hermitage Character Appraisal (September 2022)

Introduction

Hermitage forms a significant part of Southbourne Parish. To those passing through the A259, known as Main Road, appears to predominate but there are a number of distinct character areas whose individuality reflects the incremental growth which has taken place mainly during the last 120 years.

Location

The area apparently derives its name from a 16th Century hermit who resided in the vicinity and may have been responsible for maintaining the bridges crossing the water between Chichester and Emsworth.



Fig.1 c1700

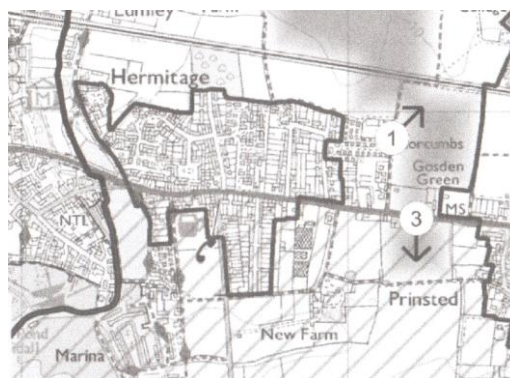


Fig.2 c2015

It is defined in the Chichester District Council Landscape Gap Assessment Map as being the area bounded by Lumley and Lumley Mill Farm to the north west extending to the edge of the developed area north and west of Penny Lane. The eastern boundary is Penny Lane on the north side of the A259, and Gordon Road on the south side where it abuts the area known as Gosden Green. The southern boundary, for the purposes of this Character Appraisal, is the southern end of the development in Gordon Road and the original Hermitage settlement area along the A259 to where it meets Slipper Road, which is included. The area further south extending to the Thorney Island causeway and including Eames Farm and the boatyards, is generally recognised to be Thornham.

Topography

The land is generally level and low lying, sloping gradually down from a height of approximately 15 m to less than 5 m (the land to the south west can flood at high tide)¹.

Land use.

Mainly residential, with one specialist shop remaining. This one-time butchers is now Ivy Wines.

¹ ref. OS Map 120

Layout

The original settlement was linear, following the road now called Main Road (A259). Over the years it has expanded to fill much of the land between the old settlement and the adjoining named areas: Lumley to the north, Gosden Green to the east and Thornham to the south. To the west is the County boundary. Blocks of development have taken place over time so that now Hermitage does not appear cohesive, having a wide variety of dwellings grouped in distinctive areas. As a result the layout is diverse with some parts laid out in terraces with long, narrow gardens, sometimes to the front, sometimes to the rear, occasionally both. Other houses are set on more open plots, especially where bungalows are more prevalent. Residents' roadside parking is common in the older more densely developed areas. In some of the later developments, eg Sadlers Walk, partially concealed parking and some garaging is provided off road making a far more attractive street scene.

Roads, Streets and Routes (see Figs.1 and 2)

Main Road is the central spine of Hermitage. It has continued the pattern of roadside development to the east, which began with the original settlement, but later roads have been built more or less at right angles, or parallel to it. To the south west development has followed the line of Slipper Mill Pond where a series of cottages look across the water to Emsworth. A residential caravan site is tucked away behind the frontage, with more substantial buildings to the south, including a former Mill store converted to residential use. Later building, in an easterly direction, is in two cul-de-sacs which are linked at the southern end by a footpath and at the northern end by Main Road.

The northern side is more complex. The western boundary is a mill pond (Peter Pond) and has mainly 20th Century development along an old road via Lumley Mill to the village of Westbourne. This road becomes increasingly rural in character, with footpaths leading off across bridges to link with Emsworth. A further road leads off to the east, winding up an incline through development dating from about 2006 and then through a linear 1960s development of bungalows. Mill End, a further separate development of 1960s houses lies to the south, linked directly to Main Road by a footpath giving easy access to bus stops and Emsworth.

Spaces

There are few public spaces other than around the mill ponds but the whole area is bounded by rural landscapes with the exception of the area west towards Emsworth from Main Road. This, however, is alleviated by the open views across the two ponds, one of which includes woodland and easy access to protected wildlife areas especially on the Emsworth/Hampshire side of the northern pond which forms the Brook Meadow Local Nature Reserve. Some attempt has been made to incorporate green areas and existing trees, for example within the 2006 Sadlers Walk development which includes a landscaped attenuation pond, and the central green within the Mill End development.

Fig.3



Sadlers Walk



Mill End

Buildings

The buildings vary considerably from Georgian to post war and more recent 21st Century developments eg Sadlers Walk. It is an eclectic mix of bungalows, 2-3 storey buildings, in most forms: detached, semi-detached, terraces, mews style and apartments. The main materials of vernacular buildings in this area are brick, flint and clay tiles but other imported materials appear to have become more widely used from the 19th Century onwards, presumably because of the proximity of the railway and the harbour. Many buildings of both early and later construction have been rendered. Probably the most distinctive buildings are those seen from the A259 which include some of the oldest buildings such as The Sussex Brewery (pub c.1740), early cottages and brick-built terraces of around 1900. One timber framed, corrugated iron clad place of worship (known locally as a tin tabernacle) stands surrounded by fields within a small fenced plot adjoining Thorney Road. It is no longer in use but appears to be in a reasonable state of repair. It is proposed to include it in the Neighbourhood Plan Local Heritage Assets List due to its heritage interest.

Development in the 1950s and 1960s was extensive with many bungalows and a development of two storey houses at Mill End built around a green (Fig.3). Lumley Road has mainly late 20th Century dormer bungalows. Woodfield Park Road includes mid 20th Century bungalows, brick-built, semi-detached council housing, recent housing association flats and some former MoD quarters. Slipper Road has the old mill building, now converted to domestic use. Penny Lane consists primarily of bungalows of varying ages including a row built about 1956, some houses and access to a Park Home site which stretches northwards and eastwards behind a large storage building and a roadside residents' car park. There are four buildings in Hermitage listed by Historic England (see Appendix 2).

Landmarks

The most obvious are the two adjoining mill ponds (Slipper Mill Pond to the south and Peter Pond to the north) which are crossed by Hermitage Bridge (shown as Stakes Bridge on the 1870 OS map) connecting West Sussex and Hampshire. The western bank of Slipper Mill Pond marks the County boundary, and is also the boundary of the Emsworth Conservation Area, an important historic settlement which contains some fine Listed Buildings.

Fig.4



Slipper Mill Pond looking south



Peter Pond looking north

Lumley Road to the north has an older building, a former pub, at the junction with Main Road/A259 and also noticeable are a pair of older, slightly more ornate, flint semi-detached, lodge style, houses. On the south side, at the top of the rise from the bridge, is a Georgian pub (The Sussex Brewery), with a long, low building formerly a bakery, close by. In Lumley Road there is a sluice gate controlling a ditch feeding into the mill pond. A strainer for debris has been constructed here by the householder owning the land.

Fig.5



Sluice Lumley Road



Former public house



The Sussex Brewery public house

The buildings that cluster around the Main Road, Lumley Road and Slipper Road form a focal point with the ponds (Figs. 4 and 5) and these older buildings continue up the rise on the A259 towards Thorney Road.

Green and Natural features

The most obvious are the mill ponds and the land bordering the northern pond which is wooded on both sides and is fed by streams and the River Ems. Main Road rising from the bridge east to Thorney Road is very noticeable given the otherwise flat nature of the landscape. The whole of Hermitage south of the A259 forms part of the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are views towards the harbour and of other surrounding countryside from most points on the area boundary, and a network of footpaths runs alongside the open fields providing easy access (Fig.6). Some of the later developments have tried to incorporate various forms of 'green and natural' features such as an attenuation pond (Fig.3), and to retain established trees and open green areas such as those at Mill End. However, there are very few places within the built-up area where residents can sit and relax in the open air.

Fig.6



Footpath on southern boundary, Gordon Road and Thorney Road with views over open country.

Streetscape

Probably due to being so close to the A259 and much of the development having taken place mid 20th Century, there seems to have been little interest in creating a streetscape of any distinction; the best attempt appears to be in the 2006 Sadlers Walk development where several areas of green, public spaces have been incorporated. Some of these are related to drainage management but mature trees have been retained in places. There appears to have been no attempt to encourage recreational use of these areas, for example, little seating is provided. Mill End is a development around an open green. Lumley Road depends on its semi-rural location but most roads seem to have been seen simply as access to the specific development that they serve with little amenity space.

Fig.7



Main Road/A259 looking west



Sadlers Walk



Orchard Lane

At the north east end there has been a better attempt at creating a greener streetscape. Southbourne Avenue has some older properties with later infill and is lined with mature trees. A development around the late 1990s (Thistledown Gardens) has been planted with ornamental trees and shrubs with pedestrian access between different areas which relieves the hard landscaping. There are also some mature trees at the western end. A small children's playground has been provided.

Russet Gardens is a mix of late 20th Century and recent housing, partly in a leafy setting. One very small area has been set aside for recreational purposes with a bench seat (no ball games allowed!). Penny Lane is one of the original lanes that fall within the current Hermitage area. It does not retain any of its original character but, at its northern limit, has views over open fields.



Southbourne Ave.



Bramley Gdns. - Thistledown Gdns.



Russet Gdns.



Russet Gdns.



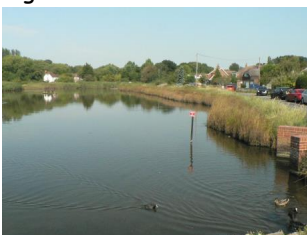
Penny Lane.

Fig.8

Views

The principal views are along or across the ponds (Figs.4 and 9). From Hermitage Bridge (Stakes Bridge on the 1870 OS map) west towards Emsworth; north towards Lumley Mill, mostly wooded with an old building just visible; east up the rise of the A259 looking at the original settlement line and older buildings with the Georgian pub as a focal point (Fig.9); and south along the Slipper Mill Pond to the former mill building and boatyard beyond. Views from the footpaths on the boundary of the area are over flat fields, farmed to the north, the poorer land to the south mainly being grazed by horses (Fig.6 and 7). From the Emsworth side of the bridge, Hermitage gives the impression of a smaller, more compact settlement. To the north the views are very restricted due to housing built along the boundary.

Fig.9



Peter Pond looking north



Slipper Pond looking south



Main Rd/A259 looking east



View from S W boundary
Looking west from Thorney Rd.

Summary of key defining characteristics

Hermitage is an early settlement that has seen most development since about 1900. The development appears to have been piecemeal, building taking place on large parcels of land at any one time. Little remains of the earliest buildings in Hermitage so that only a few Georgian and Victorian buildings now form the oldest examples. There are brick terraces which date from about 1900 and inter-war and post-war council housing, but much of the development in the 1950s, 1960s and later, took place away from the A259. From the 70s and 80s (and ongoing) there has been a lot of infill building along the A259 and to the north of it (Fig.8). The area is given over to residential use with a wide variety of building styles; in this respect it reflects the character of Southbourne Parish as a whole. The residents naturally look to Emsworth for everyday needs, as it is within walking distance for most people and

there is a regular bus service along the A259, but residents clearly wish to be identified with Hermitage and for it to be recognised in its own right. Accordingly, local residents were keen to have a separate Hermitage sign and this was supported by Southbourne Parish Council and put in place on the A259 (Fig.10).



Fig. 10

Conclusions

Hermitage is one of a number of separate communities within the parish and is the second largest. It does not have a discernable centre but it does have a number of distinct residential areas. These each have their own characters, some being at a relatively high density, which are closely aligned to the period when they were built. It is considered important to retain their individuality. However, there are a number of new buildings which are distinctly modern but fit in well with the local environment. They show that it is not always necessary to copy historic vernacular. Any further new building should take the opportunity to be bold, provided its scale and height fits in with neighbouring properties, by adopting the best of current design practice and making a modern, sustainable contribution to the area.

There appears to be a shortage of open space for recreation and leisure within the built-up area although local footpath links to the nearby countryside go some way to compensating for this.

Planning Policy

It is recommended that the existing character of the individual residential areas within Hermitage identified in this Character Appraisal is recognised and incorporated in designs for new building, including extensions and other alterations in full accordance with Policy 47, especially sections (1) and (2), in the Local Plan: Key Policies 2014 - 2029. It should also be noted that while it may be appropriate to acknowledge period features and materials, there is also scope for modern design incorporating the highest standards of sustainable building. In some areas, where residential properties are close to each other, particular care should be exercised to ensure that new development is neighbourly.

There appear to be few opportunities to provide new open space within the built-up area but there is scope for improving some existing open spaces by new planting and the provision of seating where local residents support it.

Building styles in Hermitage (Appendix 1)

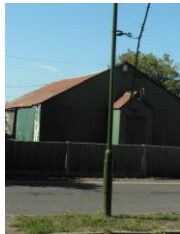
Main Road/A259



Thorney Road



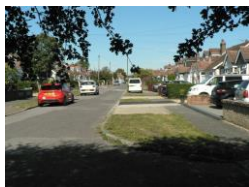
Tin Tabernacle



Gordon Road



Woodfield Park Road



Lumley Road



Sadlers Walk



Southbourne Avenue



Russet Gardens



Thistledown Gardens



Listed Buildings (Appendix 2)

Watersedge/ Waterside Lumley Road

Grade II c.early 19th Century. Lodge-like building forming two dwellings. Brick,faced with flints, dressings and quoins.



Slipper House Slipper Road

Grade II c.early 19th Century. Two storeys, flint with red brick dressings. The southern end is a former warehouse section now part of the house. The former hoist is still in place.



The White House Main Road

Grade II early 19th Century. Formerly known as Bridge House. Stuccoed, corniced eaves and parapet. Two curved bay windows on ground floor.



The Sussex Brewery Main Road

Grade II early 19th Century. Two storeys, faced with grey headers with dressings and quoins. Tiled roof.



This footpath (Footpath 203.1) is shown as a ropewalk in the 1870-9 OS map.