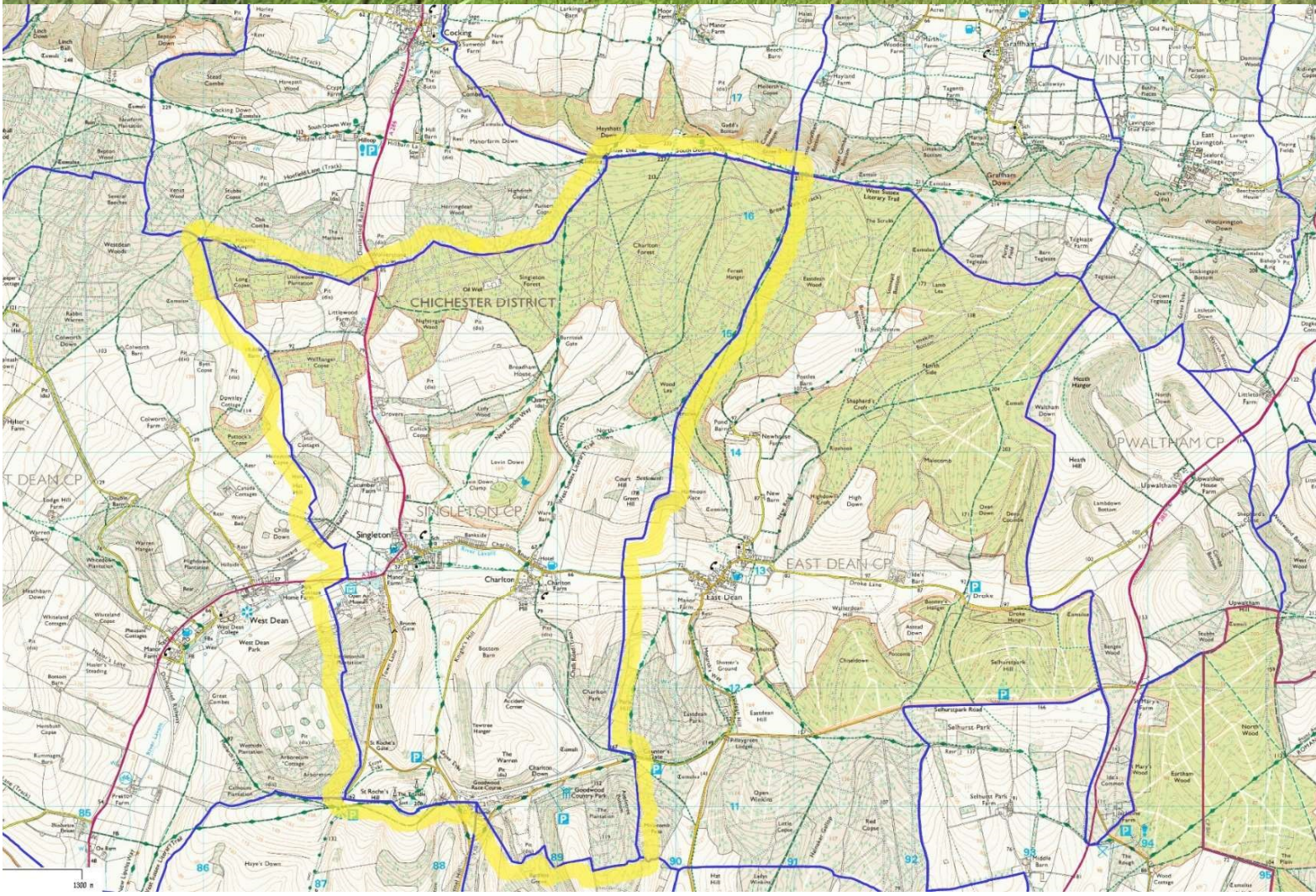




SINGLETON and CHARLTON PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT



Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

The Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement sets out clear and simple guidance for the design of all building within the parish. It has been prepared by the parish community and is intended to influence the statutory planning system with the purpose of ensuring that new building is in harmony with the parish setting and distinctiveness, and makes a positive contribution to the immediate environment.

The Statement identifies key features in the parish that need to be protected, including important viewpoints, open spaces and characteristics of settlements, together with building materials and styles to be respected in any new building.

Note that while the Parish Council is invited to comment on all planning applications, their views carry no statutory weight and are merely intended to represent the views of the community.

Recent images of specific properties are given as examples of traditional styles and/or well designed modifications.



The Cemetery Gate

Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Why a Parish Design Statement?	2
3. Who should use the Design Statement?	2
4. About Singleton and Charlton.....	3
5. The Design Guidelines.....	16
6. Design Guidelines – The Landscape	16
7. Design Guidelines – The Neighbourhood.....	20
8. Design Guidelines – The Property	21
Appendix 1 – Protection of Green Spaces	24
Appendix 2 – Cherished Views	25
Appendix 3 – More recent development	27
Appendix 4 - Then and Now: a few snapshots of history.....	28

Cover photo: Looking east from Hat Hill – Singleton in the foreground, Charlton beyond

1. Introduction

This Parish Design Statement was prepared from a draft produced by a group of parish councillors and villagers, obtaining a wide range of views from many villagers. It has been reviewed, amended and updated by the present Parish Council, and adopted to represent the views of those who live within the Parish of Singleton and Charlton.

2. Why a Parish Design Statement?

Singleton and Charlton are what might be described as ‘quintessential South Downs villages’. While the Parish currently has no development quota as such, in the absence of such a Design Statement, any development that does take place, such as extensions and alterations, could impair the character and ‘feel’ of the Parish. We believe that this would not only be of detriment to local residents, but to the many who visit the area for recreational purposes, to enjoy the natural environment.

The Design Statement sets out local residents’ views as to the distinctive character of our parish and its buildings in terms of size, shape, proportion and materials, as well as some of the challenges that local conditions present.

Our hope is that it will help to conserve and enhance the qualities within the Parish that both residents and visitors enjoy.

3. Who should use the Design Statement?

We believe our Design Statement will guide and inform all those involved in shaping the built environment:

- a) Householders and local businesses, both when planning a specific project and when making long-term plans.
- b) Architects, builders and developers, when advising those who engage them.
- c) The Parish Council, to assist it in commenting on planning applications.
- d) Planning Authorities and Highway Departments, to make informed decisions on planning applications.

4. About Singleton and Charlton

4.1. Geography

Nestling in the chalk hills of the Upper Lavant Valley, in the county of West Sussex, Singleton and Charlton Parish is at the heart of the South Downs National Park; it was in Singleton that the creation of the New National Park was announced. It is made up of 4,063 acres and stretches 2.5 miles East to West and 3.5 miles North to South.



View from Hat Hill to Singleton and to Goodwood Racecourse on the hill beyond.

The Lavant in March, flowing past The Leys

The villages are built on the alluvium of the winterbourne River Lavant, one of only two chalk rivers in West Sussex. As the water table rises in late autumn, the Lavant begins to flow in Singleton, followed about a month later from springs at Charlton, East Dean and Cucumber Farm.

At Charlton, it is believed the river has been diverted slightly from its original course in places. Many ancient sheep dips are found along the stretches of the Lavant along with remains of historic sheep farming on the Downs. There are several ponds in Singleton and the potential for flooding within the parish is an ever-present consideration.



The major hills in the parish are St Roches Hill (also known as The Trundle, after the Iron-Age fort that sits at the top); Levin Down, a Site of Special Scientific Interest or SSSI; Hat Hill, which also has an SSSI, as well as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Knights Hill, Green Hill and Court Hill.

The chalkland is mainly Seaford chalk which has tabular flint seams. Both Singleton and Charlton have ancient forests.

Goodwood is believed to be the largest organic estate in Europe, with mainly beef cattle and sheep.



Walkers on The Trundle in the late afternoon sun

4.2. Natural environment



Levin Down, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust for its fauna and flora, including rare butterflies and Juniper trees. Three Exmoor ponies are also occasionally kept on the Down, and occasionally rare-breed sheep.

Levin Down from the south

Singleton Railway Tunnel is a SAC and a SSSI due to rare bats; Cocking Tunnel has similar protection. The tunnel sites are the 5th most important in Britain and the most important in the

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

South East for bat conservation. They are the last remaining stronghold in Britain of the Greater Mouse Eared Bat, and is also home to rare Barbastelle and Bechstein's Bats.

4.3. History

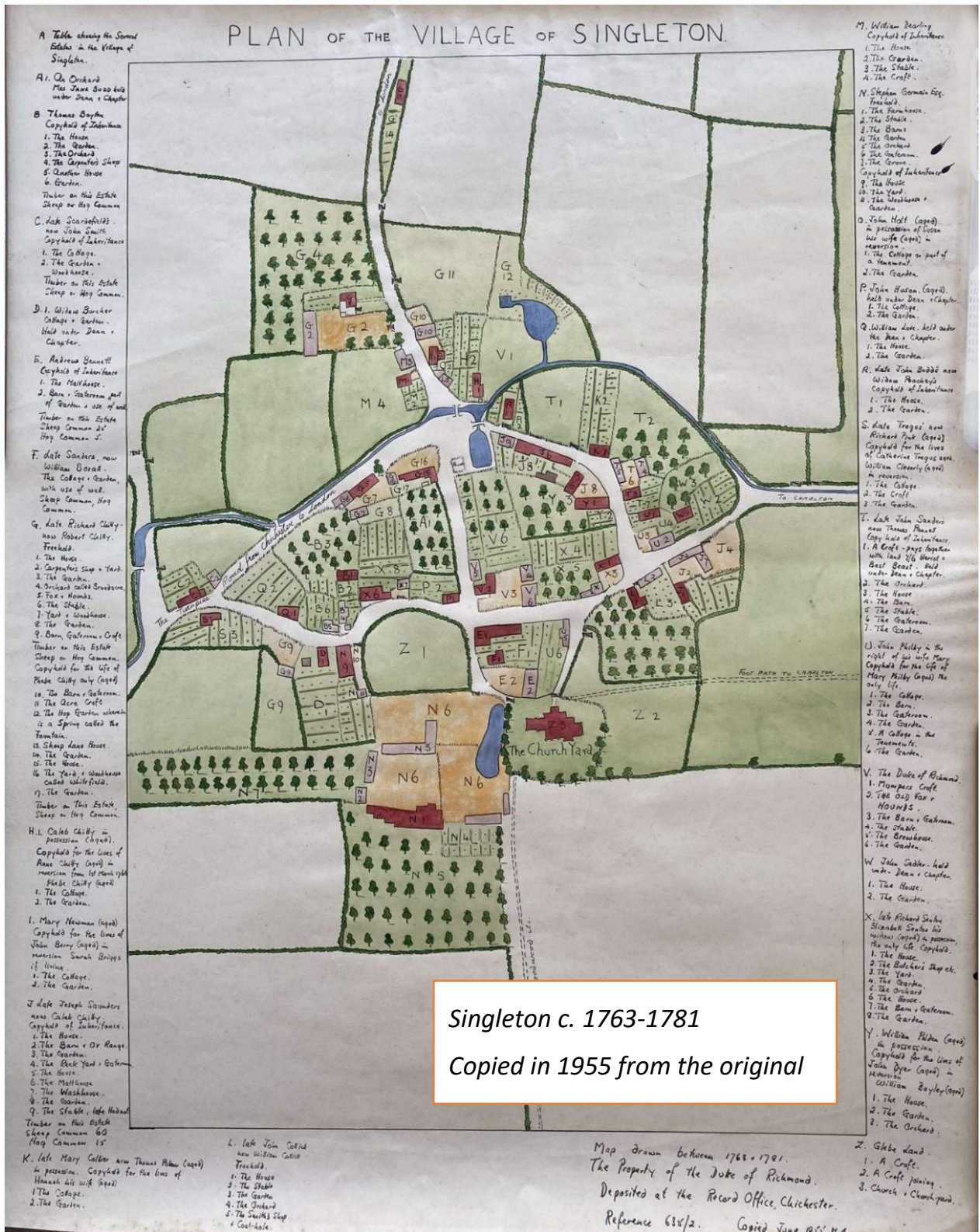
The name Singleton is derived from 'sengel', a burnt clearing; Charlton derives from 'churl', a free peasant; in both cases, 'ton' is from Roman or Saxon times, meaning settlement. A Roman Encampment was discovered near the cemetery springs in Singleton in 1963 when the new school was being built.

The earliest (and main) part of the Grade I church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Singleton was built over 1,000 years ago, under the auspices of Earl Godwin the father of King Harold (and the origin of the name Goodwood). Part of its original moat still remains.



The Church of St Mary, Singleton's Saxon church

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement



Singleton c. 1763-1781
Copied in 1955 from the original

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

On Hat Hill, Downley House (a hunting lodge) was built in the late 1400s by the Earl of Arundel. Charlton was the home of the legendary Duke of Richmond's Charlton Hunt; the grand lodge of Foxhall, now a Grade II* building owned (and let) by The Landmark Trust, was built as a hunting lodge. It is said the river Lavant is dedicated to Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt and moon.



The road from Chichester (now A286) Singleton, 1915

The villages are mainly surrounded by Goodwood Estate land and many properties were built to house the estate workers. To the north and north west is The National Trust land of Cucumber Farm, Littlewoods Farm and the Drovers Estate originally belonging to Lord Leconfield (as did many houses in Singleton).

To the south and within the parish boundary is St Roches Hill, topped by The Trundle, rising 677ft above sea level. Trundle (derived from the medieval word 'Tryndel' meaning a hoop or circle) was a Neolithic causeway and later an Iron-Age fort. In the 15th Century a chapel measuring 11'x14' was built there and dedicated to the French saint of St Roche. The 14th century saint is associated with control of the weather and protection of animals; also as a healer, having survived the Black Death.

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

Sitting below The Trundle to the east is Goodwood Racecourse, created in 1802, when the third Duke of Richmond moved the horse racing from Petworth Park.



Singleton has the Village Hall, gifted by Goodwood Estate to the Parish in 1956 and managed by an independent charitable trust.

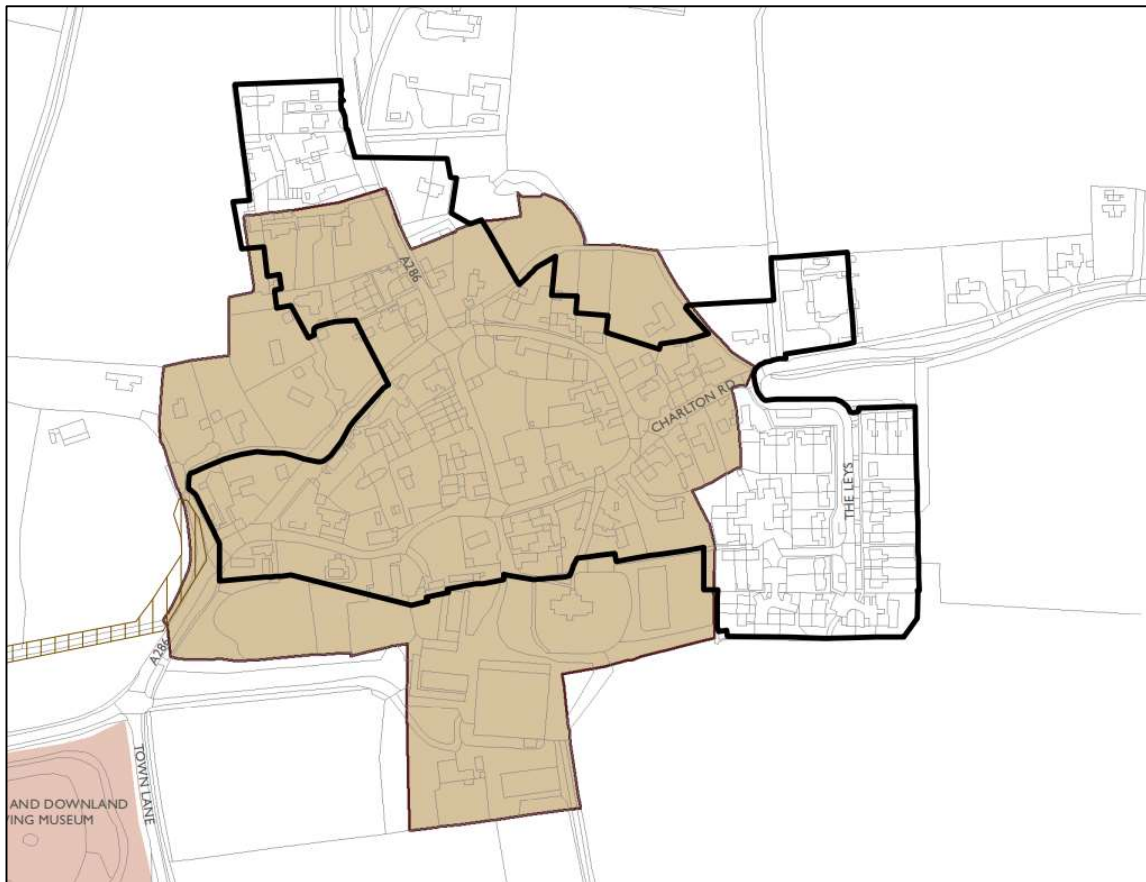
The parish school was established in 1828 in a building opposite The Partridge, before moving to its current location in 1964. The old school was leased for a 'peppercorn' from Lord Leconfield, along with Two Ways as the headmaster's home.

4.4. The Villages Today

Of the properties on the 1780 Singleton map, most still remain; most of the former outbuildings have since been turned into cottages.

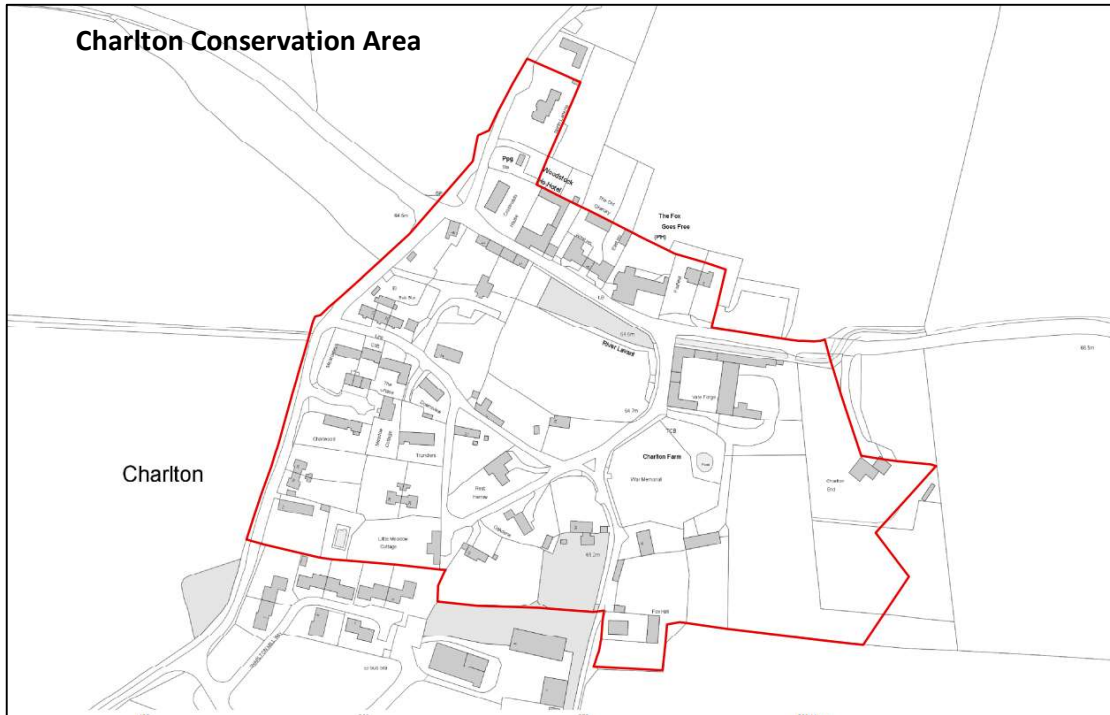
Both Singleton and Charlton have Conservation Areas; there is one grade I property, one grade II* and 63 grade II properties in the parish. Singleton also has a Settlement Policy Area.

Singleton Conservation and Settlement Areas



Black Line = Settlement Policy Area Shaded = Conservation Area

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement



Most homes are owner occupied; most are lived in full time, but some are holiday homes. Many have had extensions and/or conservatories added.

There is a lack of single storey housing for the elderly within the parish to downsize to, whether to buy or rent. Likewise affordable housing for young people and young families.

Generally, householders in the Parish consider themselves to be conservators of their properties and to have the same responsibilities for the heritage, wildlife and countryside around.

The Lavant, looking east from near the pond



*Nos. 21 & 22
Charlton (there are
few street addresses
in Charlton)*

4.5. Services

The villages do not have a shop, the nearest being West Dean or Cocking. The parish has high speed broadband and online shopping deliveries are used by many. A Post Office van visits once a week, parking in the car park of the Partridge Inn in Singleton.

The villages do not have mains gas.

There is a small playground for children, with a grassed area for ball games.

Television signal is generally poor, although a boosting station to the North West of Singleton helps some.

The parish has two thriving pubs: The Fox Goes Free in Charlton and The Partridge Inn, Singleton. Both provide food and drink and occasional entertainment.



Singleton Church has a Rectory nearby; the incumbent covers the three churches of Singleton, West Dean and East Dean.

The Church of England school at Singleton, established in 1828, became a primary school in 1948. Children from East Dean joined the school in 1958 when theirs closed, and the school moved to its current premises in 1964. The number of children varies, typically between 50 and 80.

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

At the time of writing, the Parish Council are in discussions with the Highways authority aimed at improving parking and general road safety outside the school. This will be incorporated into the Community Highways Scheme (more details at 4.8 below).

4.6. Commerce

For many years, the village of Charlton was owned by the Goodwood Estate and occupied by the families of the men working at the sawmill. The sawmill still operates to this day, although most of the properties are now in private hands.

Near to the centre of Charlton are Charlton Barns, occupied by several small local businesses.

In addition, there are several busy farms in the parish.



Manor Farm barn

4.7. Tourism

The South Downs attract many walkers, cyclists and others enjoying the scenery and outdoor life. In addition, nearby Goodwood, with its racecourse and motor racing circuit, attracts visitors from far and wide. On a smaller scale, there are various attractions for visitors from nearby towns and cities.

The Fox Goes Free and The Partridge Inn are both 'destination' pubs. The Fox was the location of the first Women's Institute meeting in England and our thriving branch is the oldest in the country. They celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2015.

The Cricket Pitch was moved to its current site in the late 1960s and the Pavilion erected in the 1980s. It has been described as one of the most beautiful cricket locations in England.

Singleton's Saxon Church features in Sussex guidebooks. The earliest part, the tower, dates from before the Norman conquest. The church originally had upstairs rooms and priests of the brotherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who were sent from this church to preach in neighbouring parishes.

Levin Down attracts nature lovers interested in its unique combination of fauna and flora.

Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

Drovers, part of the National Trust, has a much-loved walk from Hat Hill to Levin Down, with wonderful vistas, flora and fauna.

The Weald and Downland Museum provides a sanctuary for the rebuilding of valuable heritage properties that have to be moved or demolished. They hold many special events during the year and have won many awards.



Weald & Downland Open Air Museum

The Trundle is a much-visited ancient site with a rich and diverse history.

This parish is crisscrossed by many footpaths and bridleways giving stunning views – of the downs, of the valley and also out to the Isle of Wight.

Fox Hall in Charlton, built in 1730 as a grand hunting lodge for the Duke of Richmond's Charlton Hunt, is now a Grade II* protected building, owned by the Landmark Trust and let as a holiday home.

4.8. Transport and roads

Running roughly north/south through the western edge of the parish is the busy A286, linking the towns of Midhurst and Haslemere to the north with Chichester to the south.

There is a half hourly bus through Singleton to Chichester or Midhurst. A free school bus brings Singleton Primary children from East Dean and also takes children to the High Schools in Chichester.

Chichester has seen considerable growth in housing; many people, young and old, are coming to the South Downs to enjoy the open air, walking and outdoor pursuits on offer. While it would be great if they cycled, walked or came here by bus, many will arrive by car, putting ever more pressure on our minor roads as well as the A286.



Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

With the support and cooperation of local residents, our County Councillor and West Sussex Highways, the Parish Council has taken a number of steps to calm the traffic flows through the villages and increase safety for non-motorists using the roads:

- In 2021 the Parish Council raised funds to instal village gateways on the A286, north and south of the village, and on Town Lane, as well as purchasing a SID (Speed Indicating Device), which is moved regularly within the villages of Singleton & Charlton, by a team of volunteers.
- In July 2022 the Parish Council submitted proposals for a Community Highways Scheme (CHS), aimed at calming traffic flows along the A286 and throughout the village. This includes a speed limit of 20mph throughout Singleton village. At the time of writing (August 2024), these proposals are at an advanced stage and we expect to see changes implemented in early 2025.
- In 2023, a proposal to erect village gates for Charlton and reduce the speed limit throughout to 20mph was submitted to Highways. This is also at an advanced stage and changes are expected in 2025. The gates will again be funded by local donations and maintained by volunteers.
- In 2023 the Parish Council raised funds to improve parking near to the Village Hall (within The Leys), providing a more durable surface in order to provide more parking for visitors and parents dropping children at the school.



All of these projects are aimed at reinforcing in the minds of drivers that, as they drive through the villages, this is someone's home and they are driving through our 'back garden' – thus encouraging them to drive more carefully.



In addition to improving the lives of local residents, it is hoped that by encouraging more people to get out of their cars and become involved in outdoor activities, this will help to support local businesses and hopefully regenerate some that have sadly disappeared in recent years.

4.9. Surface water management

The unusual geology of the upper Lavant valley requires an imaginative approach to surface water management and flood protection. Rainwater readily soaks into the surrounding chalk hills and slopes; however, this absorbent upper layer sits on a lower layer of less permeable chalk, trapping the water below the surface. Due to the geology of the South Downs, the less permeable chalk extends beneath the hilltops to the north of the parish, bringing groundwater into the valley from beyond.

During the summer months the chalk soaks up the water – and the river remains dry. However, in the winter, when rainfall is greater and evaporation reduced, the chalk can no longer hold the weight of water and it seeps towards the valley bottom. There the water rises from a number of springs – many within the course of the river, but others in the nearby flood plain.



December – the Lavant is just starting to flow from Charlton

As a result, the risk to property from springs in and around a property is as much as, if not more than, from flooding of the river. As a result, one property may have a history of flooding, while a neighbouring property – possibly closer to the river – does not.



1994 Floods – Village Green

5. The Design Guidelines

Parishioners and other stakeholders have identified the key characteristics of the parish, how it has evolved to its current style and character, and what guidelines are needed to ensure that this character is not eroded by future development.

These guidelines have been grouped into three broad categories:

- The landscape;
- The neighbourhood in which the property sits;
- The property in question.

Accordingly, any development proposals should take these design guidelines into consideration.

While there is currently no planning commitment to allow new housing within the parish (a situation that has overwhelming support within the parish), should this change, these guidelines would also apply to such new housing.

6. Design Guidelines – The Landscape

This is the impression one gets from either viewing the parish from a distance (perhaps from the neighbouring downland), or from passing through, as a ‘day-tripper’ might when out for a Sunday drive in the South Downs.

- 6.1. ***Respect the existing landscape and do not adversely impact upon views from publicly accessible areas or views to and from important landmarks.***

For a list of cherished local views, see Appendix 2.



- 6.2. ***Conserve and enhance existing public open spaces that contribute to the local landscape setting.***

For a list of cherished open spaces, see Appendix 1



Singleton Church, viewed across the meadows from Charlton

6.3. Conserve and protect the open countryside between Singleton and Charlton.
Although a single community in many respects, Charlton and Singleton each have their own character and are regarded locally as two distinct villages; furthermore, the open space between the two is a vital element of the character of the parish as a whole.

6.4. Use boundary walls, fences and hedges that reflect traditional styles within the existing landscape.

Typically this will be flint walls with brick dressings, simple post and rail or paling fencing or mixed hedging of predominantly native species: anything that would not look out of place in a 'snapshot' of the parish.



6.5. Demonstrate due regard for the South Downs' status as an International Dark Skies Reserve.

This includes both light spill from within buildings and exterior lighting.

- 6.6. **Limit the impact of agricultural, commercial and industrial development so as to preserve the rural and generally calm nature of the parish.**

Economic activity within the parish is to be welcomed; however, this should be sensitively designed / located and not be at the sacrifice of the character of the parish as it stands.

- 6.7. **Take into account any impact on the River Lavant and its tributary springs.**

A rare chalk winterbourne, which can go from dry in the summer to torrential in the winter, the River Lavant is both an asset and a potential hazard.

The River Lavant, Singleton.

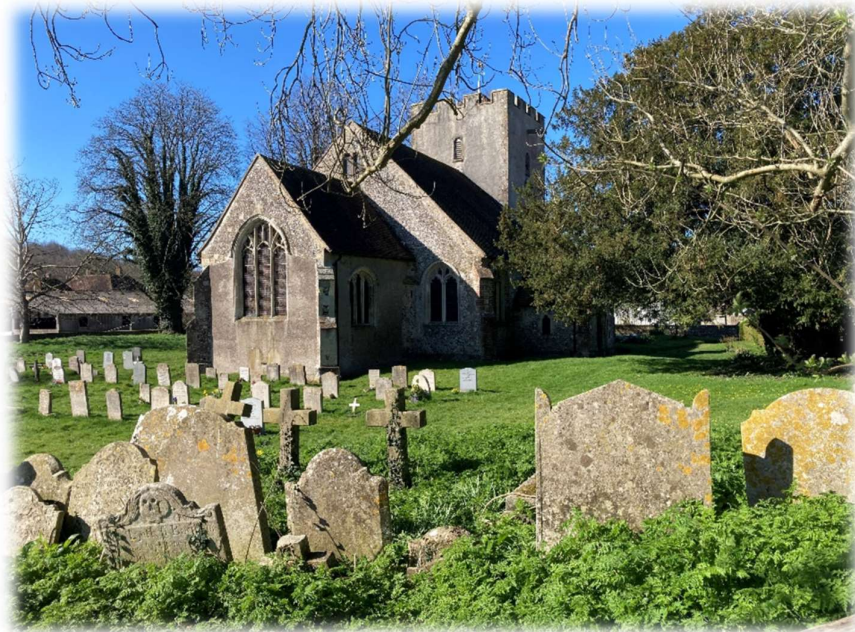


- 6.8. **Maintain the rural feel of the parish by avoiding any increase in roadside parking.**

Cars 'here and there' can act as a form of traffic calming; however, when they line the roadside(s), they become a hazard and a nuisance.

- 6.9. **Conserve existing archaeological sites and other heritage assets.**

The principal sites locally are St Roches Hill (also known as The Trundle) and the Saxon church, both of which are described in more detail at 4.3.



Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

Levin Down looking towards Summersdean Bottom, West Dean Arboretum and Town Lane road which leads to St Roches Hill and Goodwood.



The view from Knights Hill footpath to Manor Farm and Singleton church 1920's

The same view today, little changed, except for more trees...



7. Design Guidelines – The Neighbourhood

The Neighbourhood Guidelines deal both with the impression an outsider might gain when perhaps walking through the neighbourhood, and with the impact on others who live in the neighbourhood.

- 7.1. **Site new development where, visually, it sits comfortably with existing properties and the rural nature of the settlements.**
Any new development (including extensions and outhouses) should reflect the layout, grouping and scale of other buildings in their vicinity, avoiding any sense of overcrowding and maintaining the rural feel of the neighbourhood.



- 7.2. **Use boundary walls, fences and hedges that reflect traditional styles in the vicinity of the property.**



In addition to the considerations as regards the Landscape, it's necessary to consider the impact on neighbouring properties of any boundaries that may not be so noticeable (or even visible) to the casual observer, such as those between rear gardens.

- 7.3. **Limit the impact of agricultural, commercial and industrial development on other properties in the vicinity.**
The aim should be to minimise any negative impact on village life, including traffic, noise and pollution, to maintain the tranquillity of the village.
- 7.4. **The design of infrastructure to support new or redevelopment should be unobtrusive and in keeping with the local setting and character.**
In particular, the design of new access roads, parking and driveways should be traditional in appearance, respecting local character.
- 7.5. **Make adequate provision for resident and visitor parking.**
As well as the detrimental effect on the character of the parish as a whole, any expansion of on-street parking can become a problem to other local residents, due to the generally narrow streets. At the same time, loss of front gardens to parking can be detrimental to the rural nature of the parish. A balance will need to be struck.

8. Design Guidelines – The Property

Having considered how any proposal might impact on the landscape and the immediate neighbourhood, we now stand in front of the property (or the plot) and consider the desirable features of the finished design.

The following guidelines apply to all residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial buildings:

8.1. *Demonstrate respect for the character of the property.*

Whether listed or in a Conservation Area or not, every effort should be made to retain and develop the character of the property in a way that captures and reflects its history, including its origins, its usage in the past and its current use.



8.2. *Particular attention should be given to the general shape, size and proportions of the building and how it sits within its plot.*

Consider the positions and proportions of items such as doors, windows, porches, lighting, flues and ventilation, gutters, pipes and other rain water details, ironmongery and decorative features

8.3. Extensions should either blend ‘seamlessly’ with the existing or be identifiable as complementary to it.

‘Seamlessly’ is generally only possible where the exterior is repainted and the roof re-tiled – otherwise it’s virtually impossible to avoid a potentially messy join. Far better to set the new build back a few inches, which enables the eye of an observer to make allowance for minor differences in materials and dimensions. (Or in exceptional circumstances, it may be better to bring it forward from the existing.)

8.4. Walls should be of traditional materials.

Whether the property is visible alongside others in the vicinity or not, materials should reflect the character and traditions of the South Downs. Typically this would be flint or handmade/ reclaimed brick, perhaps with small amounts of weatherboarding and/or hung plain tiles.



8.5. Roofs should be of traditional materials, such as plain clay tiles, natural slate or thatch.

In particular, concrete interlocking tiles should be avoided.

8.6. Dormer windows should be small, with pitched roofs in proportion to the rest of the roof

Dormers should be used for the purpose of increasing natural lighting rather than increasing floor space.

8.7. Respect the Dark Skies status of the Park

In order to minimise any impact on the South Downs’ status as an International Dark Skies Reserve, skylights/rooflights must be avoided or kept to a minimum. As well as tending to shed light upwards, they are less likely (than windows) to be covered at night, because it’s harder to see into them.

Exterior lighting should have measures in place (such as timers/ movement sensors) to avoid unnecessary illumination, and shielding to avoid unnecessary upward light-spill.

- 8.8. **Contemporary architecture may be appropriate provided its scale and materials are consistent with its context and siting and the quality is high.**

Contemporary materials and design may well be precluded by the need to respect both the Landscape and Neighbourhood Design Guidelines. However, where the property is secluded or for some other reason does not impact on either of these, there is no reason why it should not have its own style, provided that quality of design and construction are high enough to justify deviation from the 'norm'.

- 8.9. **Place cabling and services for utilities out of sight wherever practicable.**

This would also include television: satellite dishes are to be avoided in Conservation Areas. Likewise solar panels, which should be kept out of site, particularly in the Conservation Areas.

- 8.10. **The use of energy-efficient design, processes and materials should be encouraged, providing their use conforms with the other design guidelines in this Design Statement.**

- 8.11. **Use appropriate flood protection measures.**

See section 4.9 concerning surface water management and flood protection.



Appendix 1 – Protection of Green Spaces

Cherished green spaces within Singleton and Charlton include:

1. The Village Green
2. The Cricket Pitch (National Trust)
3. Summersdean Bottom.
4. The Jubilee Plantation, donated to the parishioners as a place of calm.
5. Glebe Field, playground and amenity area.
6. Open amenity land in The Leys, beside the River Lavant.
7. The Cemetery.
8. The Fountain Pond and surrounding area, which belongs to Goodwood Estate and has protected species.
9. The Leys Meadow, an historic water-meadow and a strategic gap between the two villages.
10. Open amenity land in Charlton Mill Way.
11. The paddocks in Charlton.



Appendix 2 – Cherished Views

As the villages sit in a valley, they can be seen from all angles, particularly:

1. Looking south from Levin Down, whether towards Charlton or Singleton:



Or from some spots where both villages can be seen in a single panoramic view:



2. Looking north from Knights Hill:



Whether heading down the footpath towards Singleton

Or looking towards Charlton from either the road or the footpath.



3. And east from Hat Hill, with Singleton in the foreground, then Charlton, with East Dean in the distance:

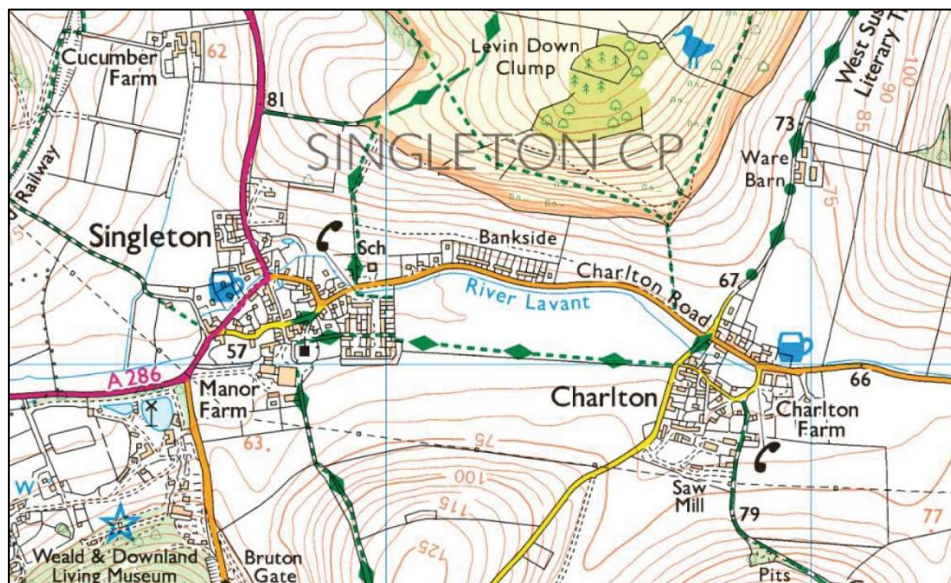


Singleton and Charlton Parish Design Statement

As a result of the multitude of views, most homes within the villages have views to the surrounding hills on one or more sides; and any development within the villages is likely to be visible from the surrounding hills. We recognise that it's not possible to preserve all these views completely unchanged; however, due to the value that most residents and visitors attach to these views, it is important for anyone planning any kind of development to consider the impact it will have on views, both from afar and for those living in – and visiting – the immediate vicinity.

Other specific views to add to the list:

4. Across the Leys Meadow between Singleton and Charlton; the meadow forms both a visual break and a visual link between the villages.
(see, for example, the photo on page 17)
5. South from the Glebe Field, towards Knights Hill and The Trundle.
6. West from the Cricket Pitch to Hat Hill and its approaches.
7. North from the school and its play areas to Levin Down.



Appendix 3 – More recent development

This list is provided merely as a useful chronology of development within the villages.

Charlton

c 1977: Three 4-bedroom houses and 3 bungalows built around a restored flint cottage (Meadow Cottage).

c 1987: Charlton Mill Way: 8 craft homes with attached workshops.
(Now almost entirely converted into an extension of the private dwelling).

Singleton

1926 - 2008: During this period a total of 73 homes were built for social housing (many of which are now owner-occupied):

1926 – 1935: Bankside, Charlton Lane: 24 semi-detached houses.
Originally red brick, mostly now pebble-dashed.

1949 – 1958: The Leys: 25 houses, built of Midhurst white brick, later painted white. Outshot tiled roofs reflect local style.

The Leys



1979 – 1980: The Leys: 3 houses and 8 bungalows.

2008: Church Way: 3 houses and 2 bungalows.
Downley Close: 8 homes.

1960s: 3 houses, 4 bungalows.

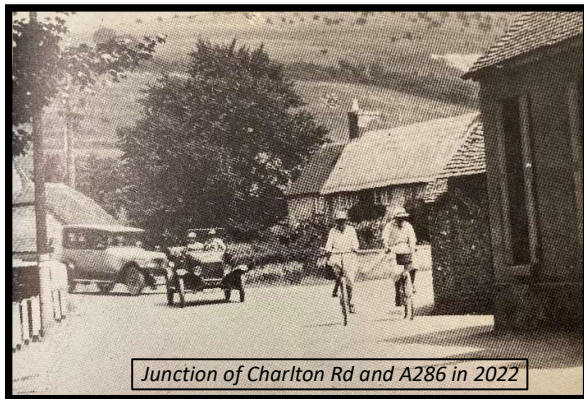
1980s - 2000s: 14 properties within the Settlement Policy Area, being infill on gardens.
12 converted to residential use from commercial and ancillary properties.

2005: Pearman Court: flint faced properties, built in traditional style.

Appendix 4 - Then and Now: a few snapshots of history



Bridge by the pond, looking west



Junction of Charlton Rd and A286 in 2022



Junction of Charlton Rd and A286 in 2022

The turning from Midhurst, looking northeast



Southwest, from the old Post Office