

Bembridge

Design Character

Appraisal

October 2013

INTRODUCTION

The 2003 Bembridge Village Design Statement (VDS) is now out of date due to the accompanying development plan policies being superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Island Plan Core Strategy.

As part of the preparation of the Bembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan, this Design Character Appraisal document has been produced by the Working Group to identify the design characteristics of development throughout the Parish. The document draws on information contained in the VDS but is presented in an updated form.

The Design Character Appraisal document is intended to be used to inform planning applications for proposed development on the design characteristics within the Bembridge Parish and is to be used in conjunction with the Island Plan Core Strategy and the Bembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan.

DESIGN CHARACTER AREAS OF BEMBRIDGE

The Parish of Bembridge has four main character areas:

- The Village Settlement
- The Rural Area
- The Harbour
- The Coastal Fringe

Each character area has its own distinct set of architecture and/or distinguishing features which contribute to the general sense of composition of that area. This document seeks to identify and promote those features with a view to guiding development proposals towards schemes which reflect, enhance and protect the existing character and quality of the area to which they relate.

1. 18th and early 19th century
2. Victorian/Edwardian
3. Large Victorian/Edwardian “Gentlemen’s” residences
4. Inter-war and 1950s
5. 1960s and 70s
6. Late 20th century through to present day

In terms of commercial development, the shopping centre of the village has a distinct character.

18th and early 19th century

Description and location

Examples of residential development dating back to the 1700s survive around the Parish. Built of Isle of Wight stone rubble many have been subject to later alterations and/or extensions.



Locations tend to be within the rural part of the Parish (Stanwell and Longlands) or towards the fringes of the built settlement (Howgate, Hillway, The Point or near Bembridge Windmill). However, cottages of this era are also located in Lane End and the High Street.

Dwellings dating back to the early 1800s are also in evidence within the Parish, again some subject to later alterations and/or extensions.



These may be found in the form of larger houses (Bembridge Lodge, Steyne House and Bembridge Farm as well as houses in Ducie Avenue) or smaller houses in the High Street and Station Road.

Roofs

Either thatched or tiled on earlier buildings, slated for the later ones.

Doors and windows

Original mullioned or small paned windows still exist. Later windows of varying designs are in evidence including Georgian sliding sashes. The oldest of these properties retain the original heavy oak studded doors inset under tiled or thatched porches. Doors elsewhere are either solid wood with small light above or half glazed.

Walls and gateways

Some original stone boundary walls and gateways still remain.

Landscaping

Mature trees and shrubs within the gardens of these properties enhance the wooded character surrounding the village.

There is still some of the original 400 year old boundary hedgerow existing in Forelands Field Road (dating from 1570) which should not be removed by virtue of its historic status.

Victorian/Edwardian

Description and location

Victorian/Edwardian town houses of red brick with bay windows, decorative brickwork and



in many cases decorative bargeboards are found in Foreland Road, Steyne Road and Dennett Road.

The fishermans cottages in Kings Road are of a smaller and less ornate design.

Roofs

Finials in terracotta or wood and some original decorative terracotta ridge tiles in evidence. There is a pleasing mixture of clay tiles and Welsh slates.

Doors and windows

The doors and windows form a key element in the street scene. Many properties have ornamental doors, some with original glass inserts. Many properties have replaced the original timber box sash windows with UPVC units, the design of which reflects the trend which was current at the time of installation. There is clear evidence of the more recent replacements seeking to replicate the character of the originals.

Walls and gates

Low walls of matching brickwork, some with iron railings and capped brickwork gatepiers, and ornamental wrought iron gates are the most obvious characteristic feature of the housing in this group, particularly in Foreland Road.

Landscaping

Small to moderate sized front gardens, in some cases given over to provide off road parking.

Large Victorian/Edwardian “Gentlemen’s” residences

Description and location

Large detached houses built to individual specifications reflecting either the Victorian or Edwardian era and occupying large landscaped grounds and located mostly around the wooded peripheral parts of Bembridge within The High Street, Love Lane, Ducie Avenue,



Beach House Lane, Hillway, Swains Road and Swains Lane. Most have fine prospects out over the Harbour, The Point or Under Tyne.

Roofs

Majority are red clay tiles or Welsh slate. An exception is “Eastcliff” in Love Lane which has a grey/green Spanish tiled roof. Most of the properties have retained their chimneys.

Doors and windows

The doors are in period, some with ornamental porticos, some with glazed arches above heavy Edwardian doors. Some doors are recessed beneath overhanging tiled porches. The older of the properties retain their six, eight or ten small paned windows whilst others have period box sash windows and bays uniformly painted white. There is evidence of dormer windows within the roof planes serving attic rooms. All these features give a pleasing variety and character to these imposing houses. Modern replacement UPVC doors and windows are in evidence.

Walls and gates

Most the properties have high boarded wooden fences backed by mature hedges (in some cases over a hundred years old). Estate style metal fencing is also in evidence. Where there are gates, there is a variety of elaborate wrought iron, paddock style or closed boarded wooden gates. All have weathered well and blended into the surrounding sylvan character.

Landscaping

The houses are mostly set in the wooded periphery of the village and these trees form an important characteristic of the area and the local ecology.

Inter-war and 1950s including former local authority housing

Description and location

Individual dwellings of the inter-war period may be found within the village but do not form clearly defined groups. Individually designed substantial detached dwellings were constructed throughout the village post WW2 and into the 1950s.



However, there are defined groups of circa 1950 (running through into the 1960s) former local authority housing development in the form of semi-detached houses located in Egerton Road, Brooks Close, Howgate Road and Steyne Road. The houses are constructed of red brick or

concrete artificial stone blocks with some examples of rendering. The houses are of a uniform and functional design but the passage of time and changes to the external appearance as introduced by successive occupiers has wrought a softening and mellowing of this appearance.

Roofs

Roofs are constructed of clay or composition tiles. Roofs are either hipped or gable ended. Most have chimneys.

Doors and windows

Most properties have now replaced the original doors and windows with modern UPVC units and design reflects the trend which was current at the time of installation. The replacement doors tend to have retained a half glazed style. Porches are clearly in evidence with either a canopied porch or a brick and open sided covered porch with timber upright supports. Some have been enclosed.

Walls and gates

There is a mixture of low brick walls or hedges and shrubs. Gates tend to be simple, with wooden picket styles. Some original wrought iron gates remain. Boundaries originally defined with post and wire fencing reinforced with hedge planting remain in places but others have been replaced with more modern fencing such as larchlap panels or closeboarding.

Landscaping

The original front garden layout of a concrete path to the front door, often sub-dividing the lawned area, is still in evidence. However, many houses have incorporated driveways to provide off-street parking. In some areas, occupiers have dispensed with front gardens altogether in favour of hard surfaced drive-in parking.

1960s and 70s

Description and location:

In Crossways, Barnfield, Wavesound Close and Copse Butt the former local authority constructed modest sized bungalows for pensioners and some of these properties are still Housing Association owned.



Built during the 1960s these properties were constructed of concrete artificial stone blocks with occasional red brick inserts.



Elsewhere, private developers commenced construction of large estates of residential development with curving roads, verges and areas of open space. The concept of open plan layout is much in evidence. These areas of development are located in various parts of the village, eg Woodland Grove and its environs, Meadow Drive and its environs and Downsview Road and Lincoln Way and its environs and comprise distinct groups of different types and sizes of residential development covering houses, bungalows and chalet style houses with the first floor accommodation within the roof space. There are detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings as well as flats and maisonettes.

Development in the form of cul-de-sac arrangement (Paddock Drive, Poplar Close, Willowdene Court) or frontage development (Forelands area) also took place. In most cases, each road or close displays a general conformity of style and design but with some variation. A variety of housing types and styles throughout the village resulted from this boom in development which considerably expanded the population of the village.

Roofs

Roofs are a mixture of hipped or gable ended depending on the locality. Some groups display steeply pitched roofs. The groups of chalet style houses have dormer windows. Roof coverings are mostly interlocking concrete tiles.

Doors and windows

Doors and windows tend to be standard large paned types mostly all double glazed in UPVC materials with a predominance of white finish. The development in and around Trelawney Way incorporated neo Georgian style windows which are still clearly in evidence. Elsewhere, the style of windows and doors reflects the trend current at the time of installation.

Walls and gates

Within these areas there is either an open plan layout with wide grassy verges and pockets of open space or enclosed gardens with low boundary walls constructed of brick or artificial stone blocks with wrought iron gates.

Landscaping

The open spaces incorporated into these residential areas provide attractive areas of greenspace. Some are planted with trees which have matured and give the area a pleasing visual appearance.

Late 20th century through to present day

Description and location

The village has continued to grow through the latter part of the 20th century into the present day with new development taking place either in the form of individual infills or small groups of new housing developments on previously developed land or sites of demolished large houses.



These are represented by The Lanterns (Sherbourne Street), St Lukes Drive (off Lane End Road), Holmwood Close and The Brambles (off Forelands Farm Lane), Nansen Close and Sandpipers (off Howgate Road), Ruskins and Kings Close (off Kings Road), Berrylands (off Heathfield Road), Nightingale Close (off Swains Road).

Design details

Each of the above named developments has its own particular design character and style, representative of the trend current at the time of construction.



Current development trends favour the “New England” style with gables, self coloured weather boarding and traditional style windows although examples of individual modern designs may be found.

Village Shopping Centre

The village centre is regarded as the area of shops and businesses in the High Street and Sherbourne Street which developed in the late 1800s when the commercial centre of the village moved up the hill from The Point and Station Road.



Bembridge has a thriving shopping centre with individual shops offering a range of services. Almost without exception, the individual shops in the High Street between the top of Sherbourne Street and Foreland Road are small with a uniformity of size, stall riser heights and window style. Much of the original architecture is retained

including some Victorian columns and pillared and porticoed entrances still in evidence.

Signage is mainly timber fascia signs illuminated with externally mounted lighting. Set off against the presence of the Village Hall and the 1920s telephone box, all these features combine to produce a village centre with a traditional, slightly old fashioned air which is both charming and attractive.

THE RURAL AREA

This comprises the mainly undeveloped area of the Parish (excluding The Harbour and the coastal fringe) and could be said to fall within three distinct characters:

- The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the south of the parish
- The low lying marshland in the north of the parish
- The area of land sandwiched between the above two

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Land to the south of the B3395 Sandown Road, Hillway and Howgate Road is within the AONB together with some smaller sections to the north of the B3395 at south western extent of the Parish (to the north of Yaverland) and to the north of Longlands. (A further small portion of AONB at the north eastern end of Howgate Road lies within the Village Settlement). The AONB is predominantly farmland and downland (some with open access) with scattered and dispersed residential development at Peacock Hill, Culver Down, and on the southern side of Hillway and the Sandown Road. Also located in this part of the AONB are holiday parks (camping and caravans) and the Kingswood educational centre.

The residential dwellings within the AONB are long established. There is no predominant design style character and the buildings exhibit a range of materials from natural stone and thatching to brick, slate and tiles.



Recently, the restoration, reconstruction and conversion of the Longlands Farm buildings has taken place to create a small residential enclave on the eastern side of the N3395. These buildings are constructed of natural stone with some thatching.

There are buildings of note within this locality including the Grade II listed stone and thatched cottages on Hillway (Merryweather and Stone Cottage) and the stone and clay tiled buildings which comprises Stanwell Farm. This latter Grade II listed building is of considerable age with parts dating back to the 1693 and 1697. Bembridge Farm (Grade II listed) is located on the south side of the B3395 and comprises an attractive range of stone farm buildings and a farmhouse circa 1830.

The holiday parks provide extensive areas of static caravans and associated services and facilities with areas set aside for camping and touring vans. The sites operate on a regular programme of replacement and renewal for the static units.

A regular feature of the farmland in this locality is the Boys Brigade summer camp with its traditional white bell tents.

The development on the northern flank of Culver Down comprises some former single storey summer chalets originally constructed of timber or asbestos sheeting with asbestos tiled or mineral felted roofs. These have been upgraded and improved over the years and some are in permanent residential use.

The top of Culver Down is accessed via a single track road from the B3395 which serves Bembridge Fort (classified Ancient Monument) which is in the ownership of the National Trust. Further along the road towards the headland is a small single storey café building, built of brick with a tiled roof, and the Culver Haven Inn (public house), built of brick with a tiled roof and a stone chimney stack and feature eye-brow window with timber plank cladding. Opposite the Inn and set down into the southern side of the down is the terrace

of former coastguard cottages. These are single storey built of brick with clay tile roof and decorative gables with stone ends. The terrace has been altered and extended in the past and accommodation is now provided within the roof space and served with rooflights on the south facing roof plane. Ancillary garaging, also built of brick under clay tiled roofing is located alongside the road edge. A later pair of semi-detached coastguard houses is positioned at the north eastern end of the terrace. These two houses are constructed to a much simpler, functional design than their older counterparts alongside. The Yarborough Monument opposite occupies a prominent position on the downland and is a local landmark. This grand edifice is constructed of granite blocks and was raised in 1849 by public subscription.

At the end of the headland the remains of the wartime gun emplacements can be seen amongst the grassland. A rough surfaced car park is located here.

Low Lying Marshland

The northern section of the Parish is low lying marshland forming Bembridge Marshes which has national and international designations (Ramsar, SPA, SSSI). The RSPB Nature Reserve is located within this area.



The River Yar flows through the marshes and forms the north western boundary of the Parish. There is little development in this area with the exception of the Harbour Farm complex of buildings accessed off the Embankment Road.

Much of the track bed of the former railway line remains intact and runs parallel with and to the south of the Embankment Road. This track has been in use for many years as an unofficial footpath and affords good views of the lagoons and reserve.

Central Section

Sandwiched between the low lying marshland to the north and the AONB to the south is an area of agricultural land, Bembridge Airport and woodland.

Bembridge Airport comprises a concrete runway, brick built control tower and extensive aircraft hangar buildings on the north side but set back from the B3395. Immediately adjacent to the B3395 opposite Bembridge Farm is the Propeller Inn (public house) which occupies part of a former aircraft works building. The Inn sits within a block built, rendered flat roofed extension to the corrugated metal sheeting clad aircraft building with its corrugated sheeted roof. A glider club operates from here.



Located to the south west of the top end of the High Street is Bembridge Windmill (circa 1700) which is a Grade I listed building owned by the National Trust and an iconic local landmark.

Located on the north side of Hillway is Steyne Battery which is one of the former Palmerstone defences. The adjacent house became the home of Sir John Thornycroft and sited within the grounds is a building housing a naval boat testing tank which he built in the early part of the 20th century.

Housing in this area is scattered and dispersed and can be found on the northern side of Hillway, as well as adjacent to the Windmill, on the northern side of the top end of the High Street and at Steyne Cross. Located off the B3395 is the large imposing dwelling of Steyne House (Grade II listed) and its roadside lodge which occupy land sandwiched between the B3395 and Hillway.



With the exception of a handful of recent infill development schemes or replacement dwellings on the northern side of Hillway, the residential development is long established and has no consistent character.

Steyne Wood and St Urians Copse are located in this area and are rich in wildlife and plantlife and are protected with national designations (SSSI).

THE HARBOUR

This character area comprises the Harbour, the Embankment Road and the existing frontage development to the south of the Embankment Road.

The Harbour is tidal and provides safe mooring. Bembridge Marina, located at the western end of the harbour provides pontoon and marina facilities. The Harbour Master office is a two storey timber clad building located within the Marina. The Brading Haven Yacht Club premises, pontoons and facilities are also located at the western end of the Harbour (with a car park on the southern side of the road) while the Bembridge Sailing Club premises, pontoons and its facilities are located at the eastern end of the Harbour with its car park on the southern side of the road. The original building at Bembridge Sailing Club was built in the late 1800s and has a sense of style and place which contributes significantly to the locality.

The Harbour is dominated by an eclectic mix of houseboats on permanent moorings, and a



range of boatsheds with those at Redwing Quay comprising buildings of uniform size and shape constructed of corrugated iron sheeting and painted dark green. Along with the Sailing Club building, the Redwing Quay buildings and the housesboats contribute significantly to the visual qualities of the Harbourside character of this

locality. Commercial fishing still operates from Fisherman's Wharf.



On the southern side of the Embankment Road there is a mix of light industrial and boatbuilding and storage premises together with a Chandler's store and marine products retail premises. There is no defined design character to these buildings. Pockets of car parking areas for the houseboat

residents are provided along this side of the road.

At east end of the Embankment Road is a single storey café premises occupying the site of the former Tollgate building. Adjacent to this is an informally laid out car park and the entrance to a mineral extraction company. The sand spit which has accumulated at this location is known as The Point and is a popular destination for beach lovers in the summer months.

The residential development within The Harbour locality forms three distinct and discrete groups. At the far eastern end facing down The Embankment Road is the prominent building called Solent Landing.



This was built in the 1990s on the site of the former Spithead Hotel and is arranged as a block of 3 storey townhouses, using render finish to the ground floor with buff brick elevations above under a composite slate roof. The design includes dormer windows and two feature octagonal end units and central courtyard. Garaging is integral and the building is set within an open plan site virtually on the sand dunes.

Close by is the Grade II listed Palmer memorial drinking fountain constructed of stone and polished granite and recently restored.

On the opposite side of the road is Harbour Strand which comprises three blocks of terraced houses constructed in the late 1960s on the site of the former railway station terminus.



The houses, arranged in blocks of six or seven units, were originally built as two/three storey accommodation under flat roofs with extensive glazing to the front facing units and raised terraces. In the early 2000s, the occupants in the southern

block facing Embankment Road collaborated to design a new upper floor for the whole block which would provide an additional floor of accommodation within shiplap clad elevations under a curved roof and incorporating a balcony. The resulting alterations transformed the terrace.

Adjacent to Harbour Strand is an old and semi-derelict red brick building which was formerly used as offices and stores. There is an extant planning consent to redevelop this site with a new development comprising a building to form three light industrial units at ground floor with three flats above.

The third group of housing development is Port St Helens which is located at the western end of the Embankment Road adjacent to the Bembridge Marina.



This housing development comprises three blocks of four and five terraced units, originally constructed in the 1980s of brown brick and white shiplap cladding with flat roofs, integral open ended car ports and first floor balconies. Successive alterations to the properties have seen the enclosing of the car ports with garage doors or

conversion into additional living space, the enclosing of some of the balconies and most radically of all, the recent addition of an entirely new floor to the western end block providing additional accommodation, balconies and a pitched roof and incorporating self-coloured weather board cladding.

THE COASTAL FRINGE

This comprises the north east and south east fringe of the Parish and has a varied character ranging from a sandy spit at The Point in the north, gently shelving shingle beaches with a back drop of a wooded fringe at Under Tyne, sea walls, pumping station and RNLI station at Land End, an artificially constructed shingle bank to protect the base of the low cliff fronting the Bembridge Coast Hotel and coastal protection walling and rocky ledges around the Foreland culminating in high sandstone and limestone cliffs at Whitecliff Bay.

Within this coastal fringe are located a variety of beach huts and boathouses, the inshore and off shore lifeboat station buildings, the Southern Water pumping station, the coastguard station and several café premises.



Apart from the lifeboat station complex which has recently been rebuilt, the buildings have no consistent design style or form but are, in the main, functional buildings designed for their purpose. The Architect designed lifeboat station complex comprises lifeboat housing, RNLI shop, education room and public toilets.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

New development within any of the Character Areas detailed within this document will be expected to be of a design and appearance which reflects, enhances and protects the existing character and quality of the area to which the proposal relates.