Wildernesse Estate Sevenoaks
Design Statement February 2018

Introduction

The purpose of this Design Statement is to provide and set out the qualities and characteristics of the Wildernesse Conservation Area that shall be maintained and embodied in any developments undertaken by the owners of properties on the Wildernesse Estate.

“The Estate was conceived as a composition of fine buildings in an open spacious, landscaped setting and strict legal controls were put in place to ensure that these concepts were carried out and retained. The effect of the Covenants is vital and has been to retain the principal characteristics of the Estate, maintaining the high standards of design quality and spaciousness and the retention of hedges and woodlands. This should be given some weight by decision-makers today”

(Wildernesse Conservation Area Appraisal 2010 p22).
The Wildernesse Estate Design Statement

This Design Statement provides, in simple terms, the objectives of the 1925 Covenants and Conservation Area requirements when granted in 2003.

The Wildernesse Estate lies in the districts of Sevenoaks Town and Seal Parish.

The Estate comprises of four private roads and adjacent properties on the boundary roads:

- Parkfield, Woodland Rise, Wildernesse Avenue and Seal Drive (Private roads)
- The north side of Blackhall Lane
- Part of Seal Hollow Road to the east side lying between Blackhall Lane and the Trinity/Grammar Annex Schools
- Houses in Park Lane opposite the Wildernesse Golf Club entrance

This document has been prepared in conformity with the District Council’s Core Strategy. Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy states that:

“All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. Account should be taken of guidance adopted by the Council in the form of Kent Design, local Character Area Assessments, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Village Design Statements and Parish Plans.”

Example of Replacement House in the Arts & Crafts Style

TO BE NOTED
The intentions of the Restrictive Covenants of the Wildernesse Estate, from a conservation perspective, are supported in this document. However, they are in fact a legal requirement and a separate matter to Planning Policy.
The delivery mechanisms for the policy include:

“The Council will work with local communities to produce Village Design Statements, Parish Plans and Character Area Assessments to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents to provide detailed locally-specific guidance to support the general policy”

The Wildernesse Estate Design Statement is intended to fulfil the role identified for Village Design Statements in Policy SP1 in providing detailed locally specific guidance on the design of new development.

Policy EN1 of the District Council’s Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) provides a detailed framework for assessing planning applications against the Core Strategy policy SP1. It gives criteria in outlining which proposals would create high quality design

History

The Wildernesste Estate, as it exists today, was laid out in 1925 on the Garden City concept in the grounds of the Grade 2 listed Wildernesste House. (The House and grounds are currently being developed (as of November 2017) into retirement apartments and facilities.)

The original roads and plot layouts remain today, together with a large proportion of the original Arts and Crafts houses and two notable gardens. Because of this, the Wildernesste Estate, in its present form, is now widely identified as being important and very unusual. It was the recognition of this unique character that led to the Wildernesste Estate being granted Conservation Area status in December 2003.

![Baillie Scott Designed Grade 2 Listed House](image-url)
Overall Character Appraisal

**TO BE NOTED**
The Restrictive Covenants of the Wildernesse Estate legally require "one house per plot" and the retention of the 22.86m (75 feet) building line as set out in 1925.

- The very large proportion of the original houses, many designed by leading Arts and Crafts architects, including M.H. Baillie Scott (14 houses designed by this famous architect alone, one being Grade 2 listed) remain in their very largely original form to this day, with updating having been undertaken in an in-character manner.

- Replacement houses and extensions have generally retained the predominantly Arts and Crafts style, which varies with each individual house. The external characteristics include Kentish bricks, oak beams and doors, leaded lights, clay tile roofs and tile hanging.

- Separate or conjoined garages, which in some cases include accommodation, are sought to be styled sympathetically to the existing house or, for example, in a Kentish wooden barn style.

- The retention of woodland, trees, hedges, grass verges, country-style five-bar oak gates and meandering country style roads enhances the rural wooded landscape of the Estate as was the stated intention when the Estate was set out in 1925.

- The gardens throughout the Estate are maintained to a very high standard, including two designed by Vita Sackville-West in the 1930’s.

- All development should accord with the stated objectives of the Wildernesse Conservation Area and with the relevant Local and National Planning Policies.
Key Requirements and Objectives (KRO)

KRO1 Extensions should not exceed the height of the main house. They should not be disproportionate to the main house, so that it retains a similar scale to neighbouring houses.

KRO2 Replacement houses, where the original does not contribute to the Conservation Area, should be of similar height and scale to neighbouring houses.

KRO3 Extensions and replacement houses should follow or be designed to be in harmony with the Arts and Crafts style of the original Estate.

KRO4 Extensions and replacement houses should not encroach visually on neighbouring properties to avoid the appearance of “over-development” or “terracing”, nor should they intrusively overlook or shade neighbouring properties.

KRO5 Extensions and subsidiary ancillary buildings should complement the existing house style and materials likewise. Brickwork, tile hanging, roof tiles, half timbering and matching window/front door styles should all be incorporated into the new works, sympathetic to the existing house.

KRO6 Garages, including where accommodation is incorporated over, should be in a similar style to the main house or of a rural style e.g. Kentish wooden barn.

KRO7 The natural cover including hedges, trees, shrubbery between houses and the shielding of buildings from the road shall be retained together with the avoidance of solid fencing and excessive hard landscaping.

KRO18 Hard standing at the front of houses in the Estate should be kept to a minimum and any hard landscaping should complement the overall character and setting.

KRO9 Large front metal and solid wooden gates, set between brick piers, should be avoided. Five-bar oak wooden gates, as defined in the original 1925 documents, remain the much preferred option in order to maintain the rural idyll objective of the Estate. Boundaries fronting roads should be formed of natural hedging.

KRO10 The existing entrance/driveway locations shall be retained
KRO11 New/relocated/additional entrances are not permitted in the private roads as both the roadway and verges are owned and maintained by the respective Road Trustees.

KRO12 Tennis courts, swimming pools, large garden buildings should be sited out of view from the road and located such that they cause minimal intrusion on neighbouring properties. Similarly exterior lighting of all forms shall be designed to minimise overall light pollution and intrusion on neighbouring properties in accordance with policy EN6.

Examples of Houses that have been Sympathetically Extended