



Liss Village Neighbourhood Development Plan
Making the plan:

Protected Gaps

Submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority

Liss Parish Council
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1. The need to protect gaps between different parts of the settlement that make up Liss stems from the particular character of Liss. It is not a single compact settlement but has a dispersed pattern with significant countryside gaps between entirely separate parts of the settlement and fingers of countryside that lead into the area of the settlement. This gives the built-up area of Liss a close relationship to its rural surroundings and gives importance to the interface between development and countryside. These characteristics are set out in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment which describes the landscape character of parts of Liss and relates that to the built form.
2. As a settlement in the South Downs National Park Liss is bound by strong policies to protect landscape, views and the rural character of the park, which are reinforced by policies of the neighbourhood development plan. Outside the settlement policy boundary for Liss development is therefore severely restricted by various policies related to the landscape and countryside.
3. These policies will help to conserve the character of Liss, but that is not their primary objective. The policy on protecting gaps (Liss Policy 2) is intended to ensure that development maintains the character of Liss, particularly by preventing coalescence and maintaining the separate identity of parts of Liss. Its origins are in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment which suggests development principles that follow from its analysis of the character of Liss Parish and these have been taken forward in the Liss Village Design Statement (VDS) which has been adopted by the South Downs National Park Authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2014. A general commitment in the VDS is "Open spaces and green corridors that contribute to the rural feel of the settlements should be retained and enhanced wherever possible." (para 5.3) and "Developments should be of a size and scale that do not dominate any part of the settlements, impinge upon their character or their relationship with the countryside" (para 5.6).

Separating the two parts of Liss Forest and Liss Forest from the centre of Liss

4. The Liss Landscape Character Assessment identifies the importance of maintaining the rural character of Liss Forest particularly by conserving its characteristic settlement pattern of loose agglomerations (para 8B33) and resisting development impacting on the area between Liss Forest and the railway, and between Newfield Road and Rotherbank Farm Lane (para 8B34). The Village Design Statement states " In Liss Forest the characteristic loose settlement pattern should be retained" (para 5.9). It also states that "Countryside gaps between settlements should be protected from development. The meadows that separate Liss from Hill Brow and Liss from Liss Forest should be retained as Countryside gaps." (para 1.3).
5. The Wealden Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) adjoins Liss Forest. Government guidance is that development should be severely restricted with 400m of an SPA and should be carefully considered in an area up to 5 km. The Strategic Environmental Assessment accompanying the plan concludes that there are no impacts on the SPA but an important reason for that conclusion is that no housing sites are proposed in or close to Liss Forest.

Separating the settlement of Liss and low density development along the Hill Brow ridge

6. A significant theme of the Liss Landscape Character Assessment is the maintenance of the character of the Hill Brow Ridge. Much of that concern is over the maintenance of woodland and the features which give it its particular countryside features. It is also over the need to maintain the characteristic loose conglomerations of the loose settlement and to avoid infill and extensions that would create a more compact, solid settlement form (para 9A23). Para 7A46 of the Liss Landscape Character Assessment states the meadows that separate the built environment of Liss from Hill Brow should be retained. In the Village Design Statement paragraph 1.3 has been quoted above, which highlights the need to separate Liss from Hill Brow.
7. It is also worth noting that the importance of retaining the wooded appearance of the hillside leading up to the Hill Brow ridge is also behind concerns over restricting development higher than the 75m contour unless it can be integrated into the existing tree cover. This is particularly set out in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment (paras 7A33 and 7A45) and also in the Village Design Statement (para 2.6).

Separating Liss from the A3.

8. A bypass for the A3 trunk road around Petersfield, Liss and Liphook was built in the early 1980s. That bypass is of significant benefit in keeping traffic out of Liss, but there is a clear separation of the A3 from Liss by fields and woodland, except at West Liss where the tip of the settlement reaches the A3. That separation is important in keeping the character of the village which has no major roads through the village. Also, development close to the A3 would be affected by significant traffic noise. The benefit of separating the A3 from the settlement is recognised in the Liss Landscape Character Assessment (para 7A49) and the Village Design Statement which states "The open countryside between the A3 and the settlements should be protected in order to retain the characteristic of a hidden village from development" (para 2.4)

Separating West Liss and development along Station Road

9. West Liss is the oldest part of the village, much of which is covered by a conservation area. It is connected to the village by a ribbon of development along Station Road, but otherwise is separate from the rest of the village. There is a significant gap in the development along the north side of Station Road close to the main area of West Liss which significantly contributes to that separation and a sense of separate identity for West Liss. It is therefore important to protect that gap from development and maintain its contribution to the character of West Liss.