



Rippingale Village Design Statement

October 2001

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RIPPINGALE

VILLAGE · DESIGN · STATEMENT



WHAT IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT?

The Village Design Statement describes Rippingale as it is today, and highlights the qualities valued by its residents. The Statement has been written by residents of Rippingale so that their knowledge, views, and ideas may contribute to the growth and prosperity of the village, and to the high quality of its environment. The aim is to ensure that further development and change will be based on an understanding of the village's history and present situation. In this way it is hoped that such development will make a positive contribution to the future of Rippingale and protect and enhance those aspects of the village which create its particular character.

WHO IS IT FOR?

The Statement is for the attention of anyone proposing to make changes which alter the appearance and character of the village, be it large scale development, or smaller changes

to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths and hedges.

Therefore, it is addressed to:-

- ◆ statutory bodies & public authorities;
- ◆ planners, developers, builders, architects, designers, engineers;
- ◆ local community groups;
- ◆ householders and businesses.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

The Statement was adopted by South Kesteven District Council as supplementary planning guidance on 9th October 2001, and its recommendations will be taken into account when planning applications and appeals are assessed. In this way it will support the Local Plan as it affects Rippingale and assist the work of the Parish Council.



Rippingale is a small, peaceful village nestling in a shallow valley, with open farmland on all sides. It sits on the edge of the Fens five miles to the North of the market town of Bourne, and is approached along tree-lined roads, through agricultural land free of development. There are long views from many areas of the village and from many properties, giving an open feel which is highly valued by the residents.



St. Andrew's Church from Doctor's Lane

The village can be approached from four directions, from the West by two roads leading from the main A15 Bourne to Sleaford road, and from the East and South each by roads leading from the B1177.

All these approaches lead to the centre of the village, with no through route suitable for regular heavy traffic. Normally, the only heavy vehicles using these roads are those requiring access to the village farms. The roads are all bounded by ash or lime trees with some oaks and chestnuts, and are free of development until well into the boundaries of the village.

The centre of the village has an interesting lay-out, the main roads being in the form of an "H", and each of these older roads are bounded by a footpath on one side and a drainage gully on the other.

A particular feature of Station Street, on the Northern edge of the village, is a stream bordering its full length, being open for the most part, and crossed by small bridges providing access to the houses.



The stream on the south side of Station Street

The focal point of the village is the Church of St. Andrews adjacent to the small village green. The church tower is of the perpendicular style of the early 15th century and is in every way the outstanding feature of the church, and a prominent land-mark of the district.



St. Andrew's Church and the Village Green

The Green has many lime trees that were planted in the 1850s, and a stone column that is thought to date from the 13th Century when Rippingale was granted a fair and a market.

HISTORIC FEATURES

The village possesses no designated ancient monuments. However, the entrance porch to the Church dates from about 1200, and survived the rebuilding of the church in the early to mid-14th century.



The Church Porch

An unusual feature of the village is a “pinfold”, located in Station Street, dating from the 12th century, and which has been carefully restored and maintained. It consists of a small enclosed area which was originally used for the retention of stray animals until the owner was found.



Station Street from inside the Pinfold

LISTED BUILDINGS

There are several listed buildings in the village. These include the stone column on the Village Green, three farm houses, the Old Rectory, the Church and the War memorial.

WILDLIFE

The village fringes, large gardens, and the few remaining green areas within the village boundaries are home to all the most common species of birds, and other wildlife that one would expect in a rural community.

Of particular note are the Tawny owls that are resident within the village itself, while Little owls, Kestrels, and Barn owls all breed locally. It would be difficult to find an area of the country with a greater population of Barn owls than on the nearby Fens.



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Barn Owl and chicks

Wild deer range through the locality, particularly in the more undulating and wooded countryside to the West of the village. Pheasants also abound in this area, thus it hosts many shooting parties in season.

All new developments in the village should give high priority to landscape design, particularly where developments could affect views in and out of the village.

ACTION BY DEVELOPERS

Any future house-building should be confined to existing developed areas within the village boundaries in order to maintain the open views in and out of the village, and to retain its traditional shape.

Great attention should be paid to the buildings/ green ratio in the village. This has been seriously eroded over the past 15 years, and further erosion of this ratio will begin to change its character to that of a small town.

The church is the dominant feature on the village skyline and should remain so. Any development should not create strong visual impact, but should blend into the existing skyline.



Rippingale from the Kirkby Underwood Road

ACTION BY LANDOWNERS, COMMUNITY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS.

Existing mature trees and hedges should be preserved wherever possible. However,

where this is not possible, native species should be planted to retain the landscape character of the area.

The existing verges should be maintained and preserved as an essential contribution to the character and ecology of the village.



Broad verges on the Station Street approach from the Fens

NEEDS OF WILDLIFE

Barn owls breed so successfully in this area, because of the plentiful food supply, in the form of small rodents that live along the edge of dykes and ditches. This success is also due to the existence of old farm buildings and nest boxes where they can breed.

All forms of wildlife need a regular food supply and somewhere to breed. Intensive farming, crop spraying, and the loss of hedgerows has had an adverse effect on wildlife nationally. Thus, large gardens and green spaces in village communities such as Rippingale have taken on an even greater importance.

Future residential developments, therefore, should include all possible measures to maintain the rural character of the area and to encourage the retention of the local wildlife.

It seems likely that a settlement existed on the current site of Rippingale prior to the arrival of the Romans who built the great Carr Dyke Canal, that runs across the Eastern end of the village, and Mareham Lane, the old road to Sleaford. This road is now partly covered by the A15 running to the West of the village, linking Sleaford with the market town of Bourne.

The name Rippingale may be of Celtic origin, and in that language it would describe the situation of the village as being "on rising ground between the Fens and the forested land to the West". However, the earliest documentary reference to Rippingale does not occur until the year 806, when mention is made of the granting of land in the village to Crowland Abbey. The Domesday survey records that Hereward the Wake rented lands in Rippingale from the Abbot of Crowland Abbey.

Rippingale is one of a number of villages in the area with land that once formed part of the Ancaster Estate. Several houses bearing the Ancaster Coat of Arms still exist, as do many examples of Ancaster iron railings.

Rippingale is a farming village which has five working farms still within its boundaries. However, in recent years there has been an influx of people who live, but do not work, in the village.

There has also been a large increase in the number of retired people moving into the community. Despite this increase in the population, the economy of the village has not benefited, to the extent



The Ancaster Coat of Arms

that only one shop remains.

Further development on the scale of recently completed estates will threaten the very characteristics which give Rippingale its identity.



The Bull Inn, High Street

However, for its size, Rippingale is still well served with amenities, that include a school; a shop with Post Office counter; a doctor's surgery; a nursery; a garage and petrol station; a hairdresser; public house; village hall, and two churches. St. Andrews Church is used regularly for services within the Ringstone-in-Aveland group. The Methodist Church is similarly well-attended and both churches serve as places to meet and socialise.

Unlike many other local villages, Rippingale has retained its primary school, and thus is able to keep children at the heart of the community until they reach secondary school age.

The low traffic levels allow children to walk to or cycle to school, have the freedom to visit friends, and socialise in a way that is unthinkable in many other parts of the country. This is a way of life that is valuable to the whole community and would be spoiled by indiscriminate and unsympathetic expansion, and a consequential increase in traffic.

The Village Design Statement reflects the views of the community, and should be consulted by developers at the earliest possible stage in the planning process.

New Developments should not alter the basic shape and character of the village.

- ◇ Whereas the residents accept that some development is inevitable and necessary, it should be in such a way as to maintain the character of the village and its community.
- ◇ Any future development should be restricted to in-fill which will maintain the basic traditional shape of the village. The number of houses on such developments should not exceed ten.

New Developments should take into account the social needs of the community. They should:

- ◇ include some housing of a kind which will be affordable to young local families who wish to stay in the village;
- ◇ avoid using lay-out designs which would result in the creation of small enclaves and result in the isolation of small groups from the rest of the village.
- ◇ ensure that the social facilities are adequate for a range of ages, and not overloaded not overloaded by an imbalance of the population.

In this way the social mix of the community will be enhanced

Developers and public authorities would benefit from seeking the advice of local groups such as the Parish Council with regard to the facilities likely to be needed as a result of new developments.

- ◇ It is essential that the infrastructure, particularly sewerage and drainage, is improved to keep pace with increased housing.

- ◇ It is important that the village school is kept viable but is not overloaded.



Farm buildings in Station Street

Rippingale's character as a working village must be retained.

- ◇ It is important to attract small businesses which are compatible with a rural community, and those associated with country crafts.
- ◇ Planning policies should be sympathetic to the conversion of unused farm buildings to small business use.
- ◇ Any such developments should be designed to harmonise with the local farming and residential setting.
- ◇ Rippingale is considered totally unsuitable for large scale industrial development.

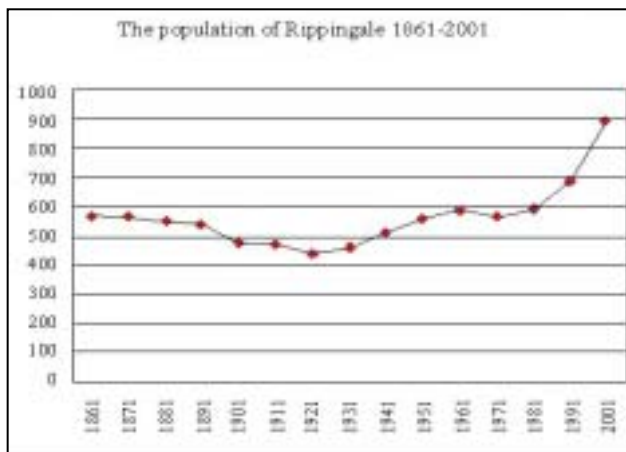


HISTORICAL

The shape of the village of Rippingale changed very little over a period of several hundred years. It seems that, apart from replacement and modernisation of existing properties no real development took place until the 1950's. The map on page 9 illustrates this point by indicating, in different colours, the known developments over the years. The effect of developments since 1950, on the shape and character of the village, can be seen clearly. It also serves to demonstrate how, in the future, such large-scale development could affect the rural way of life which the village has enjoyed.

Until the second half of the 20th century many people lived and worked in the village, with sufficient housing affordable to young married couples. Reduction in farm employment has resulted in more people leaving the village to seek employment, and being replaced by commuters to the larger towns.

The result has been a reduction in lower-priced houses, and a gradual change in the population balance of the village. The diagram * below demonstrates the way the population has fluctuated over the last 140 years **.



* figures from Government census returns.

** There are no returns for 1871 or 1941 so median values have been calculated.

APPROACHES AND VIEWS IN AND OUT OF THE VILLAGE



The eastern approach from the Fen Crossroads

A major attraction of Rippingale are the unspoiled approaches to the village. All the approaches are lined with a variety of trees, but with no buildings of any sort until one enters the village boundaries.

These open approaches create some fine views both in and out of the village. The church tower stands out from all directions, especially when floodlit. It can be seen rising above the Western hills from far out on the Fens.

Travellers on the A15 in both Northerly and Southerly directions have attractive views of the village across the fields, obstructed only by the profusion of trees on the Western margins.

The best overall view is obtained from a public footpath which crosses Doctor's Lane. From this vantage point, on a clear day, it is also possible to see all the way to Pinchbeck and Spalding.

Some spectacular skies and sunsets can be viewed from the other side of the village above Station Street, and from the old railway track which crosses Rippingale Fen.

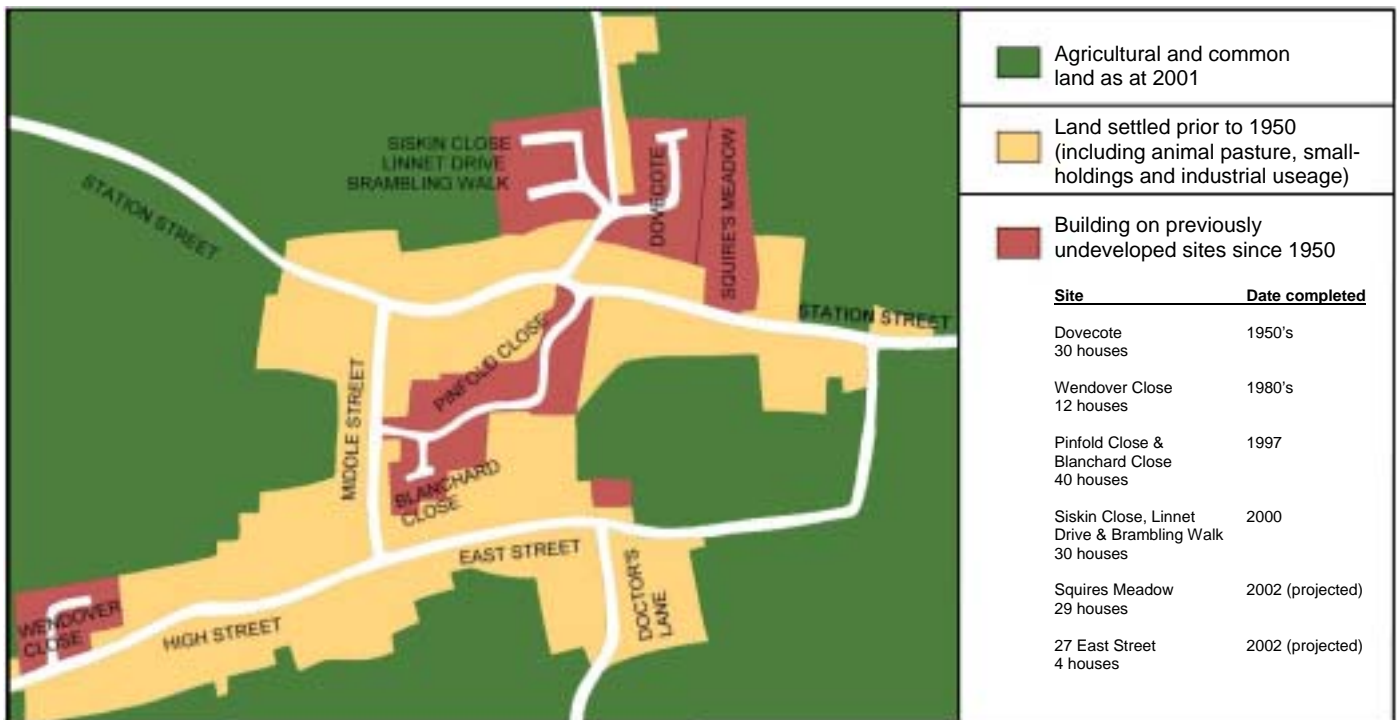
As a result of recent housing development, views out of the village have become restricted, but panoramic views of the Fens can be seen from East Street and the playing field.

STREET LAY-OUT AND CHARACTER

Although the basic road configuration is that of an “H”, the two legs of the H are joined at the village boundary as East Street joins Station Street. The village has no formal centre, but its natural focal point is at the Southern end of Middle Street, where it joins High Street. Here we find the Church, the Public House and the Green, with the village shop close by.

All the internal roads built prior to 1980 are referred to as “Streets”, but roads built after this date, to service new residential developments, have rather less utilitarian names. Although all the main roads in the village follow the tradition of pavements on one side only, provision of modern utilities on new developments has seen its demise in favour of modern pavements and drainage gullies.

Station Street forms the Northern upright of the “H” formation and extends from the A15 to the B1177, leading to the now unused Rippingale railway station. A natural water course follows the line of the street, which was originally named Water Lane. An open stream borders the road at its upper end, running underground in a constructed culvert at its lower end. The small bridges, over the stream, leading to houses at the upper end of the street add considerably to its attraction. However, with excessive rainfall, this stream and culvert occasionally overflow, causing flooding at the lower end of the village. Recent housing developments have not helped the situation. It is therefore essential to ensure that the basic infrastructure is capable of supporting any new development in the future.



A map showing settlement and development patterns in Rippingale

OPEN AND CONNECTING SPACES

With the exception of two recent housing developments the general appearance of the village is one of spaciousness, as houses are well separated by large gardens, the roads are bordered by wide grass verges, and there are numerous open areas around the village. The village is, of course, surrounded on all sides by open farm land, but recent developments have begun to encroach on the areas within the “H” configuration.

The main open area in the village is the central Green, outside the Church, on which stand several large old lime trees. This is an area for which the village is noted and around which stands traditional housing. In the centre of the village also is a playing field, which is used for football, tennis, and village social events. It also includes a children’s playground. This field can be reached from many parts of the village by a series of footpaths which enable children to reach the playground without the need to use roads.

Other footpaths from within the village lead to areas of countryside around the village and connect directly with neighbouring villages.

These paths are well used by villagers and rambles, providing easy access to open countryside, and giving relaxation and pleasure to many people.

TREES

The destruction of trees is a world-wide problem. but Ripplingale has been fortunate to have suffered only minimal loss. Whilst many trees and bushes have been planted over the years, more planting is required when circumstances permit.

An avenue of Lime trees frames the approach into High Street. The churchyard hosts several very old Yews, Hollies, and Laurels along with a large Weeping Ash, whilst 150-year-old Lime trees dominate the Village Green. There are many well-established trees scattered around the village, and, in keeping with its agricultural

setting, the large well-stocked gardens are home to some important native trees, encouraging a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

STREET FURNITURE AND LIGHTING

Street furniture is generally modern and does not sit well in a traditional village environment. The two telephone boxes are of a modern “B.T.” design and there is a strong desire to reinstate the traditional red phone boxes.

Road signs at junctions, once elegantly old-fashioned, have been replaced by modern, clean-lined and characterless signs. Inadequate and ugly, plastic litter bins, do nothing to enhance the appearance of the village

There are several public benches on the streets of the village, of various designs and in average states of repair.

The older areas of the village have sodium street lighting, normally attached to poles carrying power cables, which is considered adequate. However, it is at sufficiently low levels of output to afford villagers magnificent views of the night sky, that are no longer available to town dwellers. Newer developments include modern steel lamp-posts, with considerably higher light intensity, thus devaluing this asset.



The footpath from East Street to Doctor's Lane

The street layout, views, and the access to open spaces create the distinctive character of the village.

Developers should recognise this and pay attention to it. They should:-

- Create Residential developments as in-fill only to maintain the overall shape of the village;
- Avoid housing developments of more than 10 units ;
- ensure that any new streets are in sympathy with the original street design of the village;
- ensure that the traditional streets are retained, and not upgraded in a way which would encourage heavy traffic to use the village as a short cut to the B1177.
- ensure that the network of footpaths is retained, and improved where possible, to maintain access to playing fields, the school etc.;
- protect the existing approaches and views of the village from surrounding areas;
- protect existing views within the village and into the countryside;
- maintain and improve footpath access to the countryside;
- avoid the destruction of existing trees, and plant new ones wherever possible;
- provide street lighting and furniture in keeping with the older parts of the village.

It is essential that in-fill developments and extensions to existing properties maintain gaps which provide views out of the village

The open spaces within the village and on its approaches are a major contributor to the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The feel of openness in the village is created by the wide verges and the various open spaces within and around the village. To date this benefit has been reasonably maintained, but increased development will either use up valuable open spaces or cause them to be inadequate for the population size. This applies particularly to the recreational areas.

At present the playing field at the centre of the village is the only recreational area and is barely adequate for the existing population.

Developers and planners should, most importantly:-

- ensure that no building takes place along any of the approaches to the village boundary from the A15 and the B1177;
- ensure that existing open spaces are retained;
- create open spaces within new developments, in keeping with the village character;
- either extend the existing playing field or create new recreational areas to accommodate the increased population.



Middle Street from the churchyard

BUILDINGS

At first sight, Rippingale seems to be a village with a wide variety in building style and character, and with no obvious theme to its development. The explanation for this can be found in the historical evolution of the village.



18th Century Stone farmhouse on Station Street

Rippingale has always been, and still is, a working village, based on farms contained within the village itself. Hence its development in the basic shape of an “H”. Currently, there are five farms based within the village boundaries, although the areas to be farmed are situated around the village, and on the Fens. Apart from the Church, few buildings have survived for more than 200 years. It appears however that the early buildings were designed on a functional basis, and positioned to provide appropriate accommodation for farm staff and equipment. In fact, the village was served by no fewer than [] ale houses. Surviving examples of such buildings can be found in the areas around the farms situated on the Western edges of the village. Many old farm buildings are still in use, but others have been converted into residential homes.

This trend can be seen through to the 1950's, any development being based on the needs of people who lived and worked in the village

or on farms in the surrounding area.

The trend in the early 20th century seems to have been to build houses, and other buildings, in red brick rather than the earlier stone. Houses tended to be constructed mainly for working families (in 1970 50% of the population were children), hence comparatively small, and sometimes terraced.. However, terraces tend to be of no more than 4 houses, and the groups well spaced .



Terraced houses in Station Street

Many of the older houses have little or no front garden, opening directly on to the pavement or grass verge. Later houses have generous gardens both to the front and rear, and are well spaced. These houses have front gardens with boundary fences of natural hedging or railings.



The distinctive design of Ancaster railings

The railings, known as Ancaster railings are a traditional feature of the village, and one which should be revived in new developments. In general, the houses are of two storeys, some being of a dormer bungalow style. With the exception of some of the oldest, where steep roofs are in evidence, houses are low in height, and there are no buildings of more than two storeys. However, developments, since 1970 have included many bungalows.

There is no set roof style in the village. There are few flat roofs, and the majority of older houses and other buildings are roofed with pantiles, mainly in red. Recent housing developments have followed the trend towards pantiles, although colours vary considerably.



A fine example of pantiled roofing

A noticeable feature of the village houses is the window design. The frames are wooden and many are topped by arched brick lintels. Although many older houses have sash windows, others are hinged but most are relatively small. The glazing is almost wholly of plain glass, only three houses in the village having leaded windows.

It is very evident that recent developments have begun to change the character of the village

The types of housing currently being built are designed to cater for the needs of commuters to the nearby towns, and for those moving from the cities to retire. This has meant a trend towards very large detached houses with small gardens.

Two recently completed developments are typical of this trend, being small estates of similar (but not identical) houses and bungalows, in close proximity to each other, and with small gardens to front and rear. Although the houses are of a pleasant design, and have followed the village trend of being low in profile, the colour of the bricks is often in sharp contrast to the rest of the village, and the frontages are open-plan.

If this trend is allowed to continue, such developments will not only change the traditional 'H' shape, but will alter its character from a farming village, to a rural residential area. It is essential, therefore that future development ensures the maintenance of the village shape, and reflects the main features of the original houses, particularly those in the immediate area of the proposed development.



The recently completed 'Goldfinch Rise' development

BUILDINGS GUIDELINES

All new developments and changes to existing buildings should have regard to the general village style and in particular to the building style in the immediate area.

ALTERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

When being renovated, extended or maintained, materials sympathetic to the original design should be used where possible.

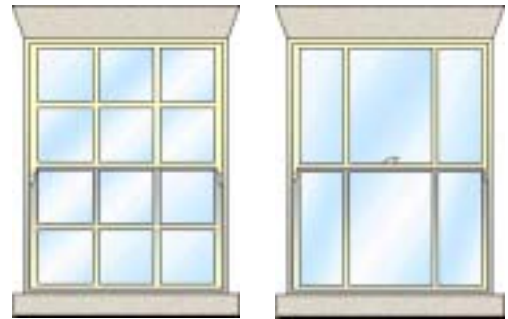
- ◇ Roof tiles should be matched in colour and style.
- ◇ Replacement windows and doors should match as closely as possible those of the original building.
- ◇ Brickwork and stonework should be matched as closely as possible to the original.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

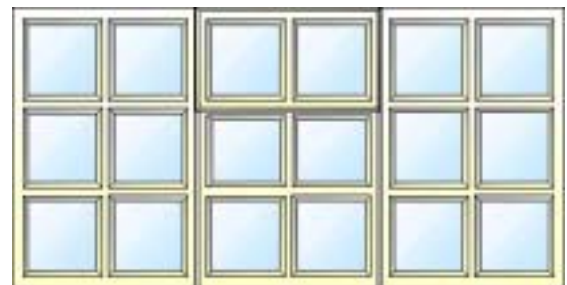
Encouragement should be given to well-designed buildings on appropriate in-fill plots. Buildings in new developments should reflect traditional Rippingale designs, particularly with regard to the following:-

- ◇ Refer to settlement patterns in layout, particularly with the aim of, maintaining the "H" design of the village.
- ◇ Respect local characteristics and building forms of the particular site.
- ◇ Construction materials should match existing older buildings as closely as possible. For example stone or red brick predominate in the village.
- ◇ Roofs should be pitched with pantiles or other similar suitable material to be compatible, with those of neighbouring buildings;
- ◇ Houses should be no higher than two storeys, with dormer style housing limited to one and a half storeys.

- ◇ Windows should be of wooden construction (or good imitation in PVC) with arched brick lintels, where possible; and glazed in plain glass.



Two of the many variations of late 18th and 19th Century Box Sash frames



These frame styles are found throughout the village, particularly in older properties such as farmhouses.

- ◇ Front gardens should not be open plan but enclosed by natural hedging or traditional Ancaster style railings.

BARN CONVERSIONS

Provided that the original format of the barn is preserved, these can integrate well with the character of the village.

Developers should provide drawings, computer images, or artists impressions to justify how their proposed developments will blend with the surroundings.

Rippingale Village Design Committee was formed by local residents after two open meetings initiated by Toby Forbes-Turner of the Community Council, to explore ways in which to improve any future housing developments in the village.

The Village Design Statement has been endorsed by the people of Rippingale through a process of public meetings and exhibitions, held in 2000/2001. It encapsulates the major points raised as a result of a questionnaire distributed to all villagers in May 2000.

It has to be noted that the majority of villagers are opposed to further large scale developments. Whereas the Village Design Committee has reflected this view strongly in the Village Design Statement, it has also made recommendations with regard to future large scale developments in the event that the villagers' view is not upheld.

The draft of this document has been on public display at Rippingale Manor House and Rippingale Post Office to enable villagers to comment and suggest amendments. South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) Planning Department examined the draft to ensure that it did not conflict with existing planning policy guidelines. Copies of the draft were also sent to Lincolnshire County Council Highways and Planning Directorate, Anglia Water and the Environment Agency for their comments. In September 2001, SKDC ran a public consultation exercise for the Design Statement, and the finished document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by SKDC on 9th October 2001.

The Village Design Statement is intended to be a practical tool to be used in the consideration of matters affecting the future design and development of the village.

The Village Design Committee will remain in being to monitor future planning and design issues, and to provide assistance and advice to the Parish Council on such matters.

This document was written and produced by the Rippingale Village Design Committee. They are Tim Bladon, Lynn Hall, Mike Hallas, Heather Gadsby, Gill Rippingale, Phil Rippingale and Nick Williams.

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Mr. Alan Morris,
Folkingham Village Design Committee.

Mrs Barbara Henderson,
Rippingale Post Office and shop.

Rippingale Parish Council

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Our thanks to Mr. Nick Williams, professional wildlife photographer and resident of Rippingale, for allowing us to use his portrait of Barn Owls on page 4.

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We would like to say a special thank you to the many residents of Rippingale who have assisted in so many ways at our various fund-raising events and public displays.

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