

# Weekley Conservation Area

(As reviewed March 2007)



Produced for Kettering Borough Council

by

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Weekley Conservation Area was designated by Kettering Borough Council in 1981. In the years since it was designated, attitudes towards the conservation of the historic environment have become more sophisticated, and the threats to the survival of the special character of the conservation area have changed.
- 1.2 Boughton Estate has preserved much to the character of Weekley as a rural settlement. Nevertheless the Borough Council considered it desirable to commission a conservation area appraisal to ensure that this special character is conserved for the future and appointed Donald Insall Associates to undertake this task.
- 1.3 This appraisal begins with a summary of the statutory planning context, and of the special interest of Weekley Conservation Area. It continues with a more detailed analysis of the setting and historical development of the village, and spatial and character analyses. A summary of key issues affecting the conservation area and management policies adopted for these then follow, with a list of sources of further information.
- 1.4 No appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive and omission of any particular building, feature or space in this conservation appraisal should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.



*The Village Green*

## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This Appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the English Heritage publications, *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* and *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*.

2.2 The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” The Act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and from time to time to review the extent of Conservation area designation within their districts. It also requires the local authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

2.3 The designation is seen as the first step in a dynamic process, to quote English Heritage “the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area – and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management policies”. Designation gives the local authority additional powers to stop for example removal of significant features and to encourage sensitive new development. This particular study needs to be seen as part of the series of planning documents which already exist serving Kettering: These include the *Kettering Local Plan* 1995; *Kettering Development Framework*, *Kettering Masterplan*; 2005, the *North Northamptonshire Statement of*

*Community Involvement* and the Borough Council’s *Issues and Options for Urban Extension*.

2.4 Government policy set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.15 (PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment). Includes that, “The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.” This appraisal reflects the values identified by English Heritage in *Power of Place- The Future of the Historic Environment*; 2000 and by the Government’s Urban Taskforce in *Towards an Urban Renaissance*; 1999.

### 3.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

3.1 Weekley is one of a small group of former estate villages, with Warkton and Grafton Underwood, associated with the Duke of Buccleugh's Estate at Boughton. Parts of the village are no longer in Estate ownership, but there are areas where the presence of the estate is strongly felt.

3.2 The village has early medieval origins and possesses a good collection of historic buildings largely dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There are substantial traces of the earlier history of the village in the form of settlement remains within the conservation area.



*Weekley Wood Lane*



*Wash Well Lane*



*Church Walk*

### 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

4.1 Weekley falls into that category of villages that have a nucleated (c.f. Warkton) as opposed to a linear plan (c.f. Grafton Underwood). There are three distinct cores: the Green in front of St Mary's Church, Hall Yard and the Green in front of the Manor House.

4.2 Boughton House is situated about a mile and a half north east of Weekley, and Boughton Park occupies the northern and eastern parts of the parish.

4.3 Weekley is rich in archaeology from the iron age to the eighteenth century. The partially surviving avenues and rides created by the second Duke of Montagu have left significant and impressive landscape traces.

4.4 The village possesses a good selection of buildings including a substantial collection of seventeenth and eighteenth century cottages. In addition to the mediaeval Parish Church there are two buildings which are of primary architectural importance: the Montagu Hospital (1611); and Parson Latham's School (1624).

## **5.0 LOCATION AND SETTING**

- 5.1 Weekley is a parish of 640 hectares situated approximately 1 mile north east of Kettering, located at between 65m and 100m above OD.
- 5.2 The village sits astride the main A43 Kettering to Stamford trunk road. There are good road communications to the Midlands and East Anglia via the nearby A14, and Weekley is 15 minutes by car from Kettering station on the Midland railway main line. Weekley is served by daily bus services to Kettering, Geddington, Stanion, Brigstock and Corby.
- 5.2 The parish is bisected by the River Ise flowing from north to south along an undulating course in a broad open valley. For part of its course, the river has been diverted to form the three canals running through Boughton Park.
- 5.3 There is a population of 242 living in 85 households in the parish (2001 Census).

## **6.0 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **6.1 Archaeology**

- 6.1.1 A large Romano British settlement north of Kettering was located partly in the modern parish of Weekley. Extensive archaeological remains are known to exist at Weekley Hall Farm about a mile west of the present village. Other sites within the parish are known to have been occupied in the Roman period.
- 6.1.2 Domesday Book records Weekley as Wiclei (Wic= settlement Lei= woods). The medieval village had 3 open fields (North Field, Middle or Wood Field to the west and Windmill Field to the south), as well as commons and woodland (Weekley Hall Wood). In 1715 there were 58 homesteads in the parish, and 5 farmers held 79% of the open land. The common fields were enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1807. Remains of ridge and furrow survive in Boughton Park and elsewhere.
- 6.1.3 The deserted village of Boughton was located in the north-east of what is now Weekley parish. Boughton was recorded in the Domesday Book as two separate manors, but even in the 11<sup>th</sup> century was little more than a hamlet. The village had vanished by the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.1.4 The medieval village clearly evolved in an ad-hoc way around several nuclei. The impressive remains of a formerly moated site in Hall Yard are the site of a manor house, and

the present Manor Cottage is partly of 16<sup>th</sup> century date. The northern part of the medieval village was cleared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Boughton Park was extended and there are settlement remains, and a hollow way, connecting with the road to Geddington immediately to the north of the church. The hollow way was originally the main road, replaced by the present road to the west. There are further settlement remains in the paddock between Main Street and Wash Well Lane (both medieval sunken lanes) and more to the south of Wash Well Lane.



*Wash Well Lane*

## **6.2 History**

- 6.2.1 The parish church of St. Mary has a 14<sup>th</sup> century tower and spire but is otherwise largely 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.2.2 In the 15<sup>th</sup> century much of the land formerly belonging to Boughton village was enclosed by Richard Whitehall to create a deer park, enlarged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Sir Edward Montagu, who had acquired Boughton in 1528 and again by his descendents in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The present Boughton House was built around a medieval core in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century by Ralph Montagu, the first Duke of Montagu (d.1709), who inherited the estate in 1683. The first Duke also commenced the process of landscaping Boughton Park continued by his son John Montagu, the second Duke (d.1749).
- 6.2.3 The second Duke also created the immense and elaborate system of avenues and rides which spread out across the surrounding countryside. A total of 36km of avenues, of which there are fragmentary survivals, were laid out around the park and extending into the modern parishes of Newton, Geddington, Warkton, Corby, Stanion and Grafton Underwood. In Weekley parish there are significant remains of these avenues within Boughton Park, immediately to the west and along the parish boundary with Kettering to the south-west of the village.





*Parson Latnam's School*



*Montagu Hospital*

- 6.2.4 The former Montagu Hospital (1611) and the former Parson Latham's School (1624) are both buildings of more than local architectural and historical significance. The village also retains a number of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century estate cottages. There are also a number of later buildings of architectural significance, including the former Vicarage (1873) and Burdyke (late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century).
- 6.2.5 The village has changed little in the last century, with former Council housing in Wash Well Lane and infill along Weekley Wood Lane being the only significant developments.

## 7.0 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The physical character of Weekley is complex, being organised around a series of greens, with a radiating pattern of streets, a number of which are sunken lanes. Individual holdings back onto one another, making surprisingly efficient use of space and resulting in interesting and complex views.



*Church Walk*



- 7.2 Although there are now no active farms in Weekley, the village remains linked to its historical rural surroundings, with many holdings backing onto fields. There are paddocks amongst the houses (e.g. to the rear of Upper Farm, to the north of the Village Hall and south of Cedar Lodge). The pastures south-east of the village are also significant to settlement morphology.



*Upper Farm: Paddock*

- 7.3 Boughton Park is a feature to the north east of the village and the red brick wall around the park is a significant presence in Hall Yard and to the open area around the Church. Being within the Park the cricket field is somewhat divorced from the rest of the village spatially.

- 7.4 Property boundaries, many of which are probably medieval in origin, remain substantially as they were three hundred years ago. A number of houses, including some quite humble cottages (Nos. 1, 2 and 28), have large front gardens. Abbots, Cedar Lodge and Burdyke (the latter, at least, being a late addition at the edge of the village) have gardens of over an acre in extent.



*No. 28*

- 7.5 The church spire is visible only intermittently as one moves through the village and does not form a landmark within the wider landscape.

- 7.6 Within the village buildings are grouped informally, with some houses being conjoined (Corner Thatch and No. 11, Nos. 12 and 13) and others built as pairs or rows of cottages (Nos. 1, 6 and 7, 22 and 23, 32 and 34). A significant number of the houses are orientated with principal elevations facing east and west, and a number are therefore at right angles to the road (Nos. 13, 28, 39, Abbots).



No. 39



Nos. 22 and 23

- 7.7 There are significant groups of mature trees, notably to the green near the Church, in the Churchyard and in front of the vicarage. There are also a number of specimen trees, including the Yew tree in front of No. 39 and the large oak tree in the field south of Burdyke.

- 7.8 The extensive stone walls between and in front of the buildings help to define much of the spatial character of the village. These walls include some significant 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century garden walls (including to the rear of the Old Vicarage, to the south of Willowstocks and the garden wall to Abbots along Weekley Wood Lane). Fortunately, the walls along the village streets remain largely intact. Only in a few places (e.g. to 'Old Orchard' in Weekley Wood Lane,

and to No. 31) have they been taken down, to the detriment of the spatial character of the village, to create access for off-street car parking.



Main Street: boundary walls



Abbots: Garden Wall

- 7.9 In addition to the boundary walls, hedges - sometimes in conjunction with walls - and fences also play an important role in defining the character of the village. Hedges are particularly important along the sunken lanes (Main Street and Wash Well Lane), in Weekley Wood Lane and in Hall Yard.



Weekley Wood Lane:  
Nos 52 and 53



Main Street: General View

## 8.0 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### 8.1 Generally

8.1.1 The appearance of the village as it is in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has evolved over a period of over 1000 years. Three periods of development can be traced which contribute to the character of Weekley familiar today:

- The medieval settlement plan. This developed around three distinct nuclei associated with the Church, with the moated site in Hall Yard, and the green in front of the later vicarage
- The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings including the Almshouse and the School, as well as cottages and agricultural buildings, significant both in themselves and in terms of the spatial relationships between them as a group
- The 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century additions, which include the vicarage, Upper Farmhouse, the Estate Office and Burdyke.



*The Old Vicarage*

### 8.2 Character

8.2.1 The special character of Weekley today derives from its nucleated medieval plan and from the large number of buildings that survive dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, increasing traffic on the main road with associated highways improvements have effectively divided the village in two, with the smaller western part having a character distinct from that of the main eastern part.

8.2.2 The following distinct areas can be identified:

- The area around the Parish Church and the former Montagu Hospital, where the presence of the Estate is strongly felt
- The main part of the village east of the main road, including Main Street and Wash Well Lane, where the majority of the Estate cottages are located
- Hall Yard, which shares many characteristics with the rest of the village east of the main road, but which is spatially discreet
- The area west of the main road, including along Weekley Wood Lane, where the most significant 20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the village are to be found.

8.2.3 This characterisation is a subjective assessment and, with the exception of the main road, there are no clearly demarcated boundaries between these areas.

### 8.3 Land Use and Building Types

- 8.3.1 Despite its proximity to Kettering, Weekley possesses much of the pastoral character traditionally associated with rurality. Agricultural activity, and those crafts necessary to support that activity, have determined the use of the land and the forms of many of the village buildings. The governance of Boughton Estate over the last four centuries has meant that human energy has been channelled with particular focus, and the Estate's careful husbandry of its assets contributes much to the pleasant character of the village at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 8.3.2 It is significant that Weekley is the nearest estate village to Boughton House. The Parish Church and Churchyard, the former Montagu Hospital, the former Parson Latham's School, the War Memorial, the Village Hall and the Cricket Club form an impressive group of buildings and land uses of a communal nature associated with Boughton Park as much as they are with the village. Montagu Hospital and Parson Latham's School are monuments to the status of their founders, as the architectural embellishment of both buildings testifies.
- 8.3.3 Elsewhere in the village, the presence of the Estate Office and of the NFU office today continues an administrative tradition of building use.
- 8.3.4 The majority of the buildings in the village are domestic. Many of these date from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, or have early origins, and include some quite substantial houses

(Willowstocks, Abbots) in addition to the large number of thatched cottages of a more humble nature. Probably from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards the cottages were each provided with a wash house and privy. The brick stacks which terminate many of the chimneys are replacements, also made at this time, for earlier stone stacks.



*No. 10 (Corner Thatch)*



*Willowstocks*



- 8.3.5 There are a number of farm buildings in the village, but with the exception of the barn at Upper Farm (possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century with later alterations) and the former barn adjacent to No. 13 (18<sup>th</sup> century) these all appear to be of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date. The agricultural buildings at Upper Farm appear to include a granary and stables. Wood Yard includes single storey open sheds for carts and farm implements. There are also a number of two storey coach houses and stables of domestic character (Upper Farm, Willowstocks, Abbots), including the late and architecturally embellished example at Burdyke.



*Upper Farm: Former Coach House*



*Upper Farm: Farm Buildings*

- 8.3.6 Buildings in the village associated with craft uses include the former workshops adjacent to No. 12. The early 19<sup>th</sup> century extension to No. 10, formerly the village Reading Room and Library, appears also to have been built for this non-domestic purpose.
- 8.3.7 There are several 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses in the village of note. These include Upper Farm House, the Estate Office and the Old Vicarage (by Sir Arthur Blomfield, 1873). Other 19<sup>th</sup> century work includes the remodelling of

Abbots. Burdyke along with its stables previously mentioned is probably of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date and is certainly by one of the very capable Kettering architects active at that time. Also noteworthy and of the same date are Nos. 52 and 53. The charming mid-19<sup>th</sup> century porch to the front elevation of No. 4 is a delight.



*Upper Farm House*

## 8.4 Building Materials and Construction



*No. 10 typical cottage window detailing*

- 8.4.1 All of the buildings described in this appraisal are of traditional construction. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings are in the post medieval tradition of masonry work associated with the ‘great rebuilding’ that took place across England from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.
- 8.4.2 In addition to the Church, the former Montagu Hospital and the former Parson Latham’s School, both dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, have significant architectural pretension, combining stone mullioned windows and four-centred arched door heads with renaissance decorative detailing, of which the door surround and overpanel to the former Hospital is a highly accomplished example. It is significant, too, that the latter building is of ashlar construction, which is associated with the most prestigious buildings of this date.
- 8.4.3 Buildings in the post-mediaeval tradition are characterised by non-symmetrical plan forms and by the use of locally

sourced building materials. Their design and construction is essentially utilitarian. They are generally of one or two storeys only with low floor to ceiling heights.



*No. 3*



*No. 28*

- 8.4.4 The ubiquity and the uniformity of the built form and detail of these buildings lends the village as a whole an homogeneity, whilst individual buildings still have their own character.
- 8.4.5 Buildings of later date including the Old Vicarage, the Estate Office and Burdyke are to be considered apart from the earlier ‘vernacular’ post-medieval buildings. Generally a named designer can be associated with these later buildings, and they have architectural features that signify their status and the social standing of their owners and occupants.
- 8.4.6 Whatever the architectural sophistication of the buildings in the village as a whole, a simple palette of building materials prevails throughout. This palette includes limestone and ironstone rubble for walls to buildings and for boundary walls, limestone dressings for quoins, window surrounds,

gable parapets and other architectural features, bricks for chimneys and for walling, with thatch, Collyweston slate, Welsh slate and clay tiles (pantiles and plain tiles) for roofs. Walls of cob construction are also described in the listing descriptions of a number of the cottages (Nos. 1, 21, 22 and 23). Windows are typically side-hung casements, either iron or of wood.



*No.1*

- 8.4.7 Limestone and ironstone were both formerly quarried within the parish. Given the complexity of the local geology it is probable that most of the different stones are locally sourced. Some ashlar limestone, however, clearly came from Weldon and Stanion. Ashlar may have come from Kings Cliffe. Ketton and Clipsham further afield. Chimneys of ashlar with moulded capping (Montagu Hospital, Parson Latham's School, Willowstocks, the Old Vicarage), ubiquitous in North Northamptonshire are not common in Weekley, although fragmentary survivals are found where chimneys

have otherwise been rebuilt in brick. It is perhaps significant that ashlar chimneys are only found today on the higher status buildings.

- 8.4.8 Rubble limestone used without quoins is typical in buildings from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Upper Farm House). The practice from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards of laying coursed limestone as a tabled coping to boundary walls, much in evidence at Weekley, appears to be a Boughton Estate speciality.
- 8.4.9 The use of cob as a building material in an area abounding in very good building stones is curious and possibly represents the survival of a medieval building tradition locally. Cob buildings are rare in North Northamptonshire and the collection of cob buildings in Weekley is the largest group of such buildings locally. All of the cob buildings are finished with stucco and it is probable that many of the stone buildings in the village were finished similarly prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 8.4.10 Bricks include orange bricks made locally from Oxford clay and yellow bricks made with Gault clay, probably from Cambridgeshire. Bricks were not used before the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the preponderance of red brick chimneys on earlier buildings presumably represents the result of an Estate campaign of rebuilding works to cottages throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The substantial wall around Boughton Park is of red brick in notable contrast to the boundary walls of the village, which are all of stone construction. Yellow bricks were used as an alternative to



dressed stone for quoins to window and door openings (e.g. to the Estate Office) from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards.



*Wood Yard*

- 8.4.11 There are a number of interesting gate piers, including the 18<sup>th</sup> century examples to Boughton Park near the Church, and adjacent to the former Montagu Hospital (the gates themselves in both instances are modern). The short length of iron and timber fence in front of Upper Farm House, and the cast iron gates with brick gate piers to Burdyke are also interesting 19<sup>th</sup> century boundary features



*Gates to Boughton Park*

- 8.4.12 The handsome Arts and Crafts War Memorial is notable, as is the plaque set in the wall to the former Hospital recording the names of those who served in WWI and survived. There is a good collection of headstones in the Churchyard, including many with Celtic crosses, presumably of Estate workers who came to Weekley from the Buccleuch estates in Scotland.



*War Memorial*

- 8.4.13 Thatch was used predominantly for roofing in rural locations, including to higher status buildings throughout North Northamptonshire until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when other roof coverings became more widely available. Many formerly thatched roofs were then re-covered in Collyweston slate or (after 1850) Welsh slate. The survival of so many thatched roofs in Weekley is no doubt due to the management policy of Boughton Estate.
- 8.4.14 Clay pantiles are of various different types, and do not pre-date the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They include single and multiple-roll, natural and black finish. The jazzy angular multiple-roll type is probably a local variant. The use of pantiles other than on wash houses and the rear or secondary roof slopes of buildings is uncommon. Pantiles have

however been used to form copings on garden walls in many instances, including on 18<sup>th</sup> century garden walls where they are a replacement for earlier stone copings. The 19<sup>th</sup> century garden wall to Abbots has a rather smart coping of black pantiles.

- 8.4.15 A number of roofs were re-covered with concrete plain tiles in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century. In some instances chimneys have been rebuilt in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century facing bricks.
- 8.4.16 Windows are typically iron casements, sometimes with glazing in lead came in oak frames, but in many instances the casements are wooden. Stone window surrounds, which are glazed directly, are only found in higher status locations.
- 8.4.17 Paving to footways is generally of macadam with a bound gravel topping and granite kerbs, giving an entirely sympathetic finished appearance. In front of the former Hospital there is a section of footway finished with limestone setts, an interesting pre-macadam survival.



*Brick paviours to the footway in Weekley Wood Lane*



*Stone setts paving to the footway in Church walk*

## **9.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **9.1 Public Consultation**

9.1.1 Public consultation has followed the ten Principles enumerated in North Northamptonshire's *Statement of Community Involvement*. The Parish Clerk having convened a meeting at which parish councillors and Boughton Estate gave their views on issues affecting village life and the special interest of the conservation area, including:

- History and evolution, including farms, market gardens, local crafts, industry;
- Estate policy and development;
- The village as a community – local organisations, clubs;
- Commerce (or lack of) – post office, shops, pubs, cafes;
- Housing, old and new;
- Provision for the young – schools, playgroups;
- Recreation space;
- Provision for the elderly – sheltered housing, care homes;
- Accessibility – public transport, roads, footpaths, bridleways;
- The street scene – bridges, trees, boundary walls, hedges and fences, street furniture, paving materials.

## 9.2 Community Facilities and Activities

- 9.2.1 Weekley Parish Church is one of two in the benefice of Geddington-with-Weekley, part of the diocese of Peterborough, with regular services.
- 9.2.2 The former Montagu Hospital and Parson Latham's School have both ceased to function as such, and the buildings have been converted to residential uses.
- 9.2.3 The Village Hall was built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the third Duke of Buccleuch and was extensively remodelled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are plans, now, to finance a refurbishment of the Village Hall by converting the rear part to private residential use.



*The Village Hall*

- 9.2.4 The Montagu Club is a social club. Opinions are divided as to whether it constitutes an asset or a liability to the village

community, one of several emotive issues being the floodlighting of the building.



*Montagu Club*

- 9.2.5 Weekley and Warkton Cricket Club competes in various County leagues and has a junior section. The club is very active and also holds social events.
- 9.2.6 Weekley Post Office has, with the support of Boughton Estate diversified by opening a popular tea room, thus ensuring its survival at least for the time being. The tea room is popular both because of the proximity of the village to Kettering and because it is on the main road. The presence of residential homes for the elderly in the village also ensures a steady stream of visitors for elevenses and light lunches, but closing at 4pm makes it less convenient for afternoon tea.



*Weekley Post Office*

- 9.2.7 The group of bungalows in Washwell Lane (Nos. 54-57 and 58-61) provide accommodation (not sheltered) for the elderly. The Old Vicarage, and Country View (in Warkton Lane) are residential homes for the elderly.



*Nos. 54-57*

- 9.2.8 There is free access to Boughton Park for walkers, a bridleway from Weekley to Warkton and a footpath towards Geddington.

## **10.0 BOUNDARY CHANGES**

- 10.1 The 1981 Conservation Area Appraisal noted that the boundary of the Conservation Area had been drawn “to include all the buildings and significant features which contribute to the character of the village”. Similarly, it also noted that “areas of open land have also been included where these provide a significant setting for the village, when viewed from beyond, or for individual buildings, such as open land to the west of St. Mary’s church”
- 10.2 The area between Main Street and Wash Well Lane within the 1981 Conservation Area boundary excludes pasture that contributes greatly to the character of the village and also preserves significant settlement remains (see 6.4 above). The boundary also excludes the lower end of Wash Well Lane, which is a medieval sunken way.
- 10.3 There are more settlement remains in the pasture between Wash Well lane and Stamford Road, north-east of Well Cottage. This area of lower lying open land is also prominent in the views of the village as one approaches along Stamford Road.
- 10.4 The 1981 conservation area boundary cuts across Weekley Wood Lane, excluding Burdyke and adjoining pasture which preserves remains of ridge and furrow.



10.5 For these reasons the conservation area boundary is extended to include these features. The extended conservation area boundary is drawn along existing field boundaries except where it passes between Well Cottage and Wash Well Lane.

10.6 Beyond this, it would be unrealistic for more land to be given conservation area protection, but if medium density development approaches from the direction of Kettering a 'buffer zone' of economically viable farming land should be maintained around the village.

## **11.0 LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE**

### **11.1 Generally**

11.1.1 It is important that consistent policy guidance should be available for all the villages in the borough, varied only by special circumstances in any particular village.

11.1.2 With little historical information published on individual buildings, the significance of historic fabric of the villages is not always recognised when proposals are put forward for their alteration.

11.1.3 Although the statutory lists of buildings of architectural and historic importance in all of the villages have been updated periodically, there are buildings that meet the criteria for listing outlined in PPG15 that are currently unlisted.

### **11.2 Pressures for development outside the village envelope**

11.2.1 Pressures for the expansion of Kettering threaten the landscape setting of the villages to the east of the town. The proposed Kettering East Relief Road would form a boundary for most of the urban area expansion. The significant remains of the second Duke of Montagu's extensive landscaping in Grafton, Warkton and Weekley parishes will also help to define areas of open land in the wider landscape.

11.2.2 Light pollution from Kettering has a negative impact on the special qualities of the villages at night. New street lighting associated with the proposed Kettering East Relief Road, and with the eastwards expansion of Kettering generally should be designed to minimise light pollution.

### **11.3 Pressure for new development within the village envelope**

11.3.1 With little historical information published on individual buildings, the significance of historic fabric of the villages is not always recognised when proposals are put forward for their alteration.

11.3.2 Although the statutory lists of buildings of architectural and historic importance in all of the villages have been updated periodically, there are buildings that meet the criteria for listing outlined in PPG15 that are currently unlisted.

### **11.4 Infill development**

11.4.1 There has been an unfortunate trend in recent years for many

of the larger gardens and paddocks that were formerly such notable features of the villages of North Northamptonshire, to be identified as suitable sites for infill development. The villages east of Kettering are all fortunate still to possess a number of these open spaces; however their survival as such cannot be taken for granted.

11.4.2 The many and varied views between one part of a village and another, from a village to the surrounding countryside and of a village from outside contribute significantly to the character of the conservation areas in the villages. These are at risk from insensitive development within the village as well as from large-scale new development in the surrounding countryside.

11.4.2 There are sites within some villages' envelopes where limited infill could advantageously be permitted, but only if the scale, form and materials are appropriate, repeating and echoing values already established in the conservation areas.

## **11.5 Changes of use**

11.5.1 Changes in farming practices have left a number of redundant sites with agricultural buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area but are consequently now at risk. Dereliction obviously detracts from amenity, but there are also issues in bringing these buildings back into new uses (see 11.4.2 and 11.6.1 below).

11.5.2 Conversion of former agricultural buildings to residential use often involves extensive modification to building fabric

and it is therefore preferable to find business uses for redundant farm buildings. Frequently, however, the business cases for such conversions are hard to make and residential conversions may be considered if it is demonstrated that they are the only viable options.

## **11.6 New buildings**

11.6.1 Recent examples of infill development in the villages include examples of buildings of a sensitive design constructed of appropriate materials, but other examples where the lack of considered design (which is a failing in itself) has included scant regard for the special character of the conservation area. This failure is characterised by:

- **Large size:** expectations of domestic accommodation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are for more and larger rooms than traditional building forms can often contain. Modern construction can deliver buildings that meet these expectations, but at the cost of introducing architectural forms that are alien to the special character of the conservation area. This problem is compounded by popular equation of status with building size rather than built quality. Furthermore the scarcity of building land means that even small sites command high values, making the building of small houses uneconomic. The results of these pressures erode the subtle hierarchy between cottages and the larger houses that characterise the historic settlement pattern.



- **Accommodating cars:** There is a need to balance the impact of on-street car parking with the impact of creating garaging and hard standings for cars which is at odds with the forms of traditional village housing.
- **Poorly articulated composition:** Contrived and fussy proportions combined with a lack of consideration of the formal relationships between the different parts of a building to one another are at variance with the robust and straightforward quality of clear, restrained and unambiguous formal composition associated with traditional rural building forms. The lack of consideration of seemingly small matters such as window sightlines and joinery details can have a hugely detrimental impact on the overall composition.
- **Inappropriate materials:** The presumption for any extension or new development within the conservation area should be for the use of appropriate materials and a very strong case should be required for any departure from such guidelines. Whilst there is a general acceptance that new construction in the context of a conservation area will be in natural stone or in quality facing brick as appropriate, with roofs in natural slate or clay tiles, less thought is given to the particular sourcing of these materials or how they are laid. Modern work often fails to replicate the use of different and particular stones for dressed work and for the rubble walling that characterises traditional

construction. Where bricks are used, often these are non indigenous types laid in stretcher bond, rather than in traditional Flemish or English bond. Inappropriate materials such as concrete imitation stone and interlocking concrete tiles are not acceptable.

Whilst good modern design has its place, domestic buildings should generally follow one of the forms of good existing housing, either conjoined or detached. Individual buildings of a 'suburban' character should not be permitted.

## **11.7 Alterations and extensions to existing buildings**

- 11.7.1 Even minor alterations to historic buildings can significantly affect the presentation of a conservation area if they are inappropriately designed, whilst extensive alterations can have a significant and direct impact on the historic fabric of the village. Much of the special character of the villages derives from the traditional architectural forms of the buildings. Cottages are long, low, and narrow buildings with small windows. Offshuts and extensions are traditionally small and single storey additions. Traditional agricultural buildings are larger, and in the case of barns have large door openings. However other openings in the walls of these buildings are designed solely for ventilation. Agricultural buildings are difficult to adapt to other uses, and often the interests of conserving the traditional appearance of them requires some compromise in the expectations of the accommodation which they can provide.

Pressures for the following are additional matters for particular concern:

- **Replacement windows and doors:** The fashion in recent decades for the replacement of traditional joinery with modern items results in both the loss of traditional features that contribute to the special character of the conservation area and in the introduction of inappropriate materials and forms. Traditional windows are specially made, with careful consideration given to sightlines and proportion. Replacement of finely moulded traditional sash windows with (for example) rather crudely detailed plastic casements, results in a loss of architectural interest and historic authenticity and its substitution with the ubiquitous and banal.
- **Replacement roof coverings:** There have been significant increases in the costs of some traditional roofing materials including Collyweston stone slates and long straw in the last few decades. This has resulted in pressures to substituting traditional materials with alternatives including artificial stone slates, machine made clay tiles and Norfolk reed thatch. This has occurred less frequently in the villages in the Borough than elsewhere locally, but is nevertheless a significant threat to the character of the conservation area.
- **Satellite dishes and television aerials:** these installations can be highly detrimental to the

presentation of traditional architectural fabric. Satellite dishes should be positioned on secondary elevations and in back gardens where they are not generally visible.

- **Conservatories:** Whilst the desire to maximise daylighting is perfectly understandable, the modern fashion for conservatories is alien to the traditional forms of village buildings. There should be a presumption against constructing conservatories on the front elevations of buildings.
- **Off-street car parking:** Pressure for off-street car parking results in front gardens being given over to car parking with consequent loss of mature planting, and of stone walls, fences, hedges and other traditional boundary features. Front gardens, and the boundary features that define them, give a sense of enclosure and their loss is detrimental to the special character of the conservation area. Boundary treatments are often continuous in front of a row of cottages, and the disruption of these strong linear elements by the creation of even a single new opening can be particularly visually disruptive.

These concerns apply equally to new development as they do to the alteration of existing buildings.

## 11.8 Trees

- 11.8.1 Where individual trees, groups of trees and large hedges contribute to the character of the conservation area these should be maintained, including re-placing aged, diseased or fallen specimens. Loss of horse chestnut and elm trees due to disease is a major issue. Action should be taken now both to manage the decline of failing and older trees, and with planting of new trees so that replacements for those that are now reaching maturity will be properly established when the existing trees are gone.
- 11.8.2 The planting of *Cupressus Leylandii* should be discouraged because of the negative impact that these trees have on the traditional appearance of rural areas and because of the potential that they present for structural damage to buildings.

## 12.0 PARTICULAR ISSUES

The survey and research work undertaken in the course of preparing this appraisal has identified a range of particular issues and trends which threaten the unique historic and architectural character of the conservation area. These are summarised below.

### 12.1 Changes of use

- 12.1.1 Appropriately designed development of Wood Yard, the builder's yard to the rear of Nos. 17 and 18, and of Upper Farm might be considered as beneficial to the character of the conservation area. Proposals for change of use on these

sites would be regarded favourably if problems of access and car parking could be overcome. Buildings at risk would be brought back into use and unsympathetic land uses concluded. Sheltered housing might be the most appropriate form of new residential development, should residential development be proposed here.



*Builders Yard to the rear of Nos 17 and 18*

### 12.2 Highway issues and landscaping

- 12.2.1 The noise and disruption of the main road are detrimental to the amenity of the Weekley, but the visitors that it brings contribute to village life. Highway engineering (paving and hard landscaping) currently has a negative impact on the presentation of the conservation area, as does the signage and pollution.



*No 7: Stonework decay caused by road traffic pollution*



*Bus Shelter*

- 12.2.2 Village roads generally, and Wash Well Lane and Main Street in particular, are considered to be too narrow and the junctions with the main road too dangerous to accommodate any additional traffic associated with new development in the form of an extension to the village. The character of these roads makes a vital contribution to the special character of the conservation area, and up-grading these roads would therefore be considered unacceptably detrimental.
- 12.2.3 Highways maintenance of the village streets is poor, with paving generally requiring resurfacing.
- 12.2.4 Signage and street furniture generally have neutral or negative impacts on the character of the conservation area; however the wooden bus shelters are considered to be successful in their own way.

## **12.3 Street lighting**

- 12.3.1 The modern street lighting in Weekley has not been designed to enhance the quality of the conservation area, but neither is its appearance over assertive. Consideration should be given to its replacement with a more sympathetic energy efficient installation that minimises light pollution.

## 12.4 Trees



*Weekley Wood Lane: Oak tree*

- 12.4.1 The demise of the large specimen Horse Chestnut tree on the Green must be anticipated and steps taken for its replacement with another tree of appropriate species.

## 12.5 Car parking

- 12.5.1 The village suffers from a shortage of appropriately located car parking space, particularly on the Green and on the grassed areas around the church where street parking is recognised as a particular problem. Existing car parking at the Church Hall is under used. New car parking should be provided in a discreet location that is convenient for visitors to the Post Office and the Old Vicarage residential home.

## 13.0 USEFUL INFORMATION

### 13.1 Planning Guidance

For further information on the Weekley conservation area contact:

Kettering Borough Council,  
Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road,  
Kettering, NN15 7QX  
T: 01536 410333  
F: 01536 410795  
E: [customerservices@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@kettering.gov.uk)

### 13.2 English Heritage

For further information on listed buildings and conservation areas contact:

English Heritage Eastern England Office  
East Midlands Region  
44 Derngate, Northampton, NN1 1UH  
T: 01604 735400

### 13.3 Amenity Groups

For information on the care and maintenance of historic buildings of all periods contact:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
6 Fitzroy Square  
London, W1P 6DY  
T: 020 7377 1644  
E: [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)

For information on the buildings of the Victorian and Edwardian periods contact:

The Victorian Society  
1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
London  
W4 1TT

T: 020 8994 1019

Kettering Borough  
Council

*Kettering Urban Extension Issues  
and Options*, 2005

Kettering Borough  
Council  
North  
Northamptonshire  
Joint Planning Unit  
Pevsner, N and  
Cherry, B  
RCHME

*Kettering Local Plan*, 1995

*North Northamptonshire Statement  
of Community Involvement*, 2005

*The Buildings of England,  
Northamptonshire*, Penguin 1961  
*Northamptonshire: Vol II:  
Archaeological Sites in Central  
Northamptonshire*, HMSO 1981

### 13.4 Further Reading

Author	Title
DETR	Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), <i>General Policy and Principles</i> , 1997 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15), <i>Planning and the Historic Environment</i> , 1994 <i>Towards an Urban Renaissance: The Report of the Urban Task Force</i> Routledge 1999
English Heritage	<i>Power of Place- The Future of the Historic Environment</i> , English Heritage 2000 <i>Streets for All: East Midlands</i> English Heritage 2005 <i>The Future of the Historic Environment</i> English Heritage 2000

## **14.0 MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

### **14.1 Planning Guidance**

This Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the need to manage the significant levels of new development in the area which, if unrestricted, will adversely affect the special character the designation was intended to conserve. In order to mitigate the effects of harmful change, policies set out appropriate standards for new development and for alterations to existing buildings, including specific design guidance.

The policies contained in this appraisal plan accord with Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), *General Policy and Principles*; 1997, PPG15, *Planning and the Historic Environment*; 1994 and *The Future of the Historic Environment*, produced for the Government by English Heritage in 2000.

### **14.2 Buildings at Risk**

The Council will maintain a register of Buildings at Risk, which will include buildings within the conservation area, and seek to secure their repair and re-use as assets which preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Most parts of the conservation area are in a good state of repair and, with continuing regular maintenance, are likely to remain in good health provided that they continue in

sympathetic and active use. However, a few buildings of merit are unoccupied and deteriorating and are therefore at increasing levels of risk. Such decay will not only lead to the loss of important structures, but will also blight the neighbourhood. A Buildings at Risk register will identify buildings for which action is most urgently needed and will set out the priorities for such action. This will provide the basis for a strategy for each building to include urgent works, supported by statutory provisions, where necessary, to halt further decay in extreme cases.

### **14.3 Demolition**

The Council will not normally permit the demolition of buildings in the Weekley conservation area.

### **14.4 Alterations**

The historic buildings of Weekley conservation area are its primary asset. Many are statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest while others contribute to their setting or to the group value of an ensemble of buildings.

Few buildings within the conservation area fail to make a positive contribution to its character and appearance. Those of greater architectural distinction most easily catch the eye but others are of equal importance, because they represent typical building types and construction. All of these factors contribute to the rich architectural and historical character of the conservation area. These unique qualities will be best



maintained by keeping the buildings in good repair and in use. Proposals to alter buildings in ways that diminish their special character pose the greatest threat to the integrity of the conservation area.

There will be a presumption against alterations to buildings that adversely affect their character and appearance or that of the conservation area.

#### **14.5 Historical Research**

The Council will require historical documentary research to be carried out in support of proposals for significant alteration or demolition within the conservation area.

#### **14.6 Archaeology**

Where significant archaeology is known or is found to exist, land should not be released for development (including for the development of social housing to meet local needs) outside the scope of the Borough Council's formal forward planning processes.

#### **14.7 Changes of Use**

The Council will not normally permit changes of use to a building or land where the new use would adversely affect its character, the appearance of the conservation area or the community life of the village.

The Council will promote the re-use of obsolescent farm buildings for small businesses to encourage local

employment, reducing the need for commuting.

#### **14.8 Repair and Maintenance**

The Council will provide guidance on materials, techniques and finishes appropriate for the repair and maintenance of buildings within the Conservation Area.

#### **14.9 The Design of New Development**

Permission for new development will only be granted where it respects the scale, form and density of the historic pattern of development, where it protects views and townscape and where the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced.

#### **14.10 Design Guidance**

The Council will publish a design guide for village conservation areas.

In particular, the Council shall have regard to:

- The scale and mass of new buildings  
*The Council will require new buildings to respect the scale and mass of traditional buildings within the locality.*
- The plan form, elevational treatment and materials of new buildings  
*The Council will require the plan form, elevational treatment and materials to complement the historic*

*and architectural character of the conservation area.*

- The maintenance of the hierarchy of the historic street pattern  
*The Council will require new development to follow the hierarchy of the historic street pattern.*
- The height of new buildings  
*The Council will require new buildings to respect the height of traditional buildings within the locality.*
- Car Parking –  
*The Council will not permit car parking spaces on forecourts or in gardens in front of buildings.*

The presence of uncharacteristic buildings in the conservation area does not provide grounds for allowing more like them and a further erosion of historic character.

By seeking to conserve traditional buildings and adding new ones that reinforce historic character, the relative impact of negative elements will be diminished.

#### **14.11 Links and Views**

Weekley has physical, functional and visual links with the surrounding countryside. These views and links will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. The Council will also seek to protect other key views that contribute to the character of the conservation area.

#### **14.12 A village trail**

To encourage appreciation of the special character of the conservation area, as well as the use of footpaths, the Council will identify a Village Footpath Trail with route markers, and publicise this in a pamphlet illustrating features to be noted along the route.

#### **14.13 The Street Scene**

Policies for the street scene need to pay regard to the character of the area and to historic features. Original features such as the limestone sett paving in front of the former Montagu Hospital should be retained and repaired and new features introduced in sympathy with the original. This includes new paving, and street furniture such as traffic signs and street lighting – which should all be designed or selected to enhance the unique character of the conservation area. In particular, paving should provide at least some of that interest provided by traditional features – such as setts for kerbs and bonded pea shingle for path and road surfaces – effects largely missing from the standardised black macadam finishes.

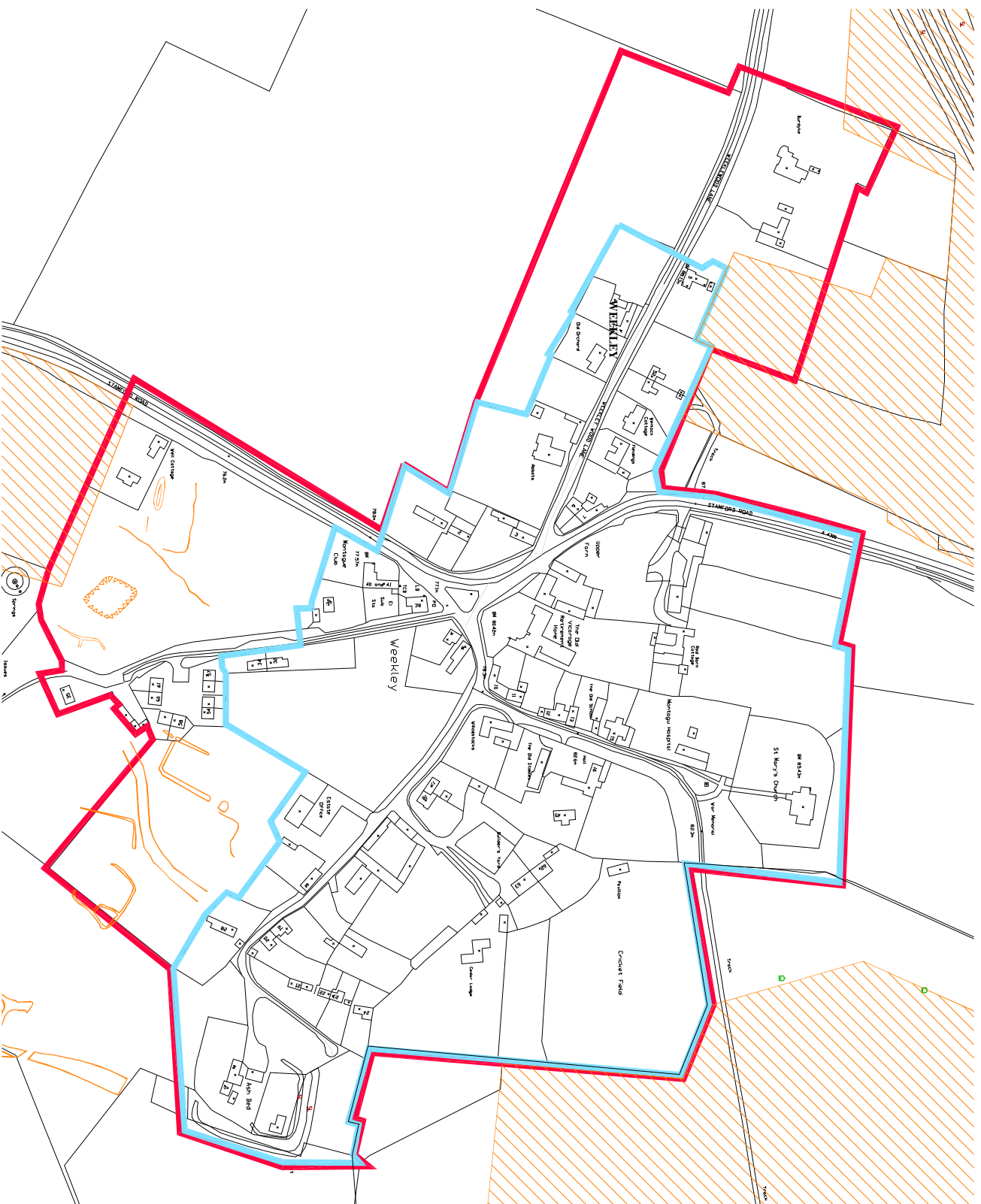
Landscaping strategy and design will recognise the importance of gardens and paddocks, hedges and grass verges to the special character of the conservation area, and seek to preserve and enhance these features. Emphasis will also be placed on the need to retain and repair boundary treatments and avoid loss of front gardens for hard standings for cars.

## **15.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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15.2 Thanks are due to the following persons for their guidance and for the information that they provided:

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**WEEKLEY CONSERVATION AREA**  
**APPROVED 30th MARCH 2007**

