



## Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan

# Rockingham



February 2009

# ROCKINGHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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## Part 2 – Conservation Area Management Plan

### 1 Issues and objectives

#### 1.1.1 The Area's conservation value

The landscape in and around Rockingham, and within the defined boundary of its conservation area, is a result of the complex inheritance of man's past activities. This 'historic environment' is a legacy resulting from the interaction between people and places through time and embraces all surviving remnants of past landscapes; the landscape around the village and the castle is rich in earthworks.

1.1.2 More than most places Rockingham shows its links with its past in several different ways. It is an ancient settlement dating back to before the Norman Conquest, when the Domesday Survey of 1086 records a modest population who worked the land with room for 3 ploughs – this is still shown in the village today that is still surrounded by fields in agricultural use, mainly for grazing now, and by two farms, Castle Farm and Cottons Farm still in agricultural use, fronting its single main street. The road falls downhill from a bend close to the footpath that leads to the church that is hidden from view at this point by the dense wooded landscape surrounding the top edge of the village. This was a nationally important road during the medieval period and after, and explains why William the Conqueror built a castle here. Sitting on the scarp slope above the village and overlooking the Welland valley, Rockingham Castle dominates the landscape above the village as it has done since the 11<sup>th</sup> century; it almost certainly contained a chapel within the castle precincts. It wasn't until the 13<sup>th</sup> century that a new church was built outside of the castle, just under its walls, and above the village; this was eventually to be totally destroyed during the Civil War in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The present church eventually was almost completely rebuilt in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century under the patronage of the Watson family who were by then the Lords of the Manor and lived in Rockingham Castle more as a country house or mansion surrounded by parkland on the west side of the castle precinct.

1.1.3 The expansion of Corby during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the dramatic growth of the steel industry especially in the 1930s, appeared to threaten this small rural village. Just a few miles from the largest integrated iron and steel and tube works in Europe, beginning in 1933/34 in Corby by Stewarts & Lloyds. This led to a huge increase in population the Company providing hundreds of new houses for their workers close to their works year on year, including an area close to the works that has become the Lloyds Conservation Area. Writers in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century feared for Rockingham's survival due to Corby's growing development that was felt would creep almost up to the castle gates. Fortunately due to enlightened planning policies developed in the early years of Corby's existence in the 1970s the village survived largely unscathed, and provides a great contrast to the former steel town, with its stone houses and cottages dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that front on to the main street.

1.1.4 This is explained in more depth in Part 1 of the Conservation Area Appraisal, which more specifically identifies its special interest. The last chapter 8 provided a summary of the issues of the conservation area's special qualities and

characteristics (please refer to Part 1). People value all aspects of the historic environment as part of their cultural and natural heritage.

## 1.2 Present and potential future threats

1.2.1 Paragraph 4.4.29 (onwards) of Part 1 of the conservation area appraisal commented on the extent of intrusion and damage to the conservation area. The last Chapter 8 of Part 1 identified some negative characteristics in the conservation area, including public realm areas and, particularly paragraph 8.2 for private property issues. The village has survived largely unscathed from the rash of alterations, such as the loss of traditional timber and metal windows and their replacement with double-glazed and UPVC windows normally inflicted on houses throughout the county over the last 50 years by virtue of its status as an Estate Village, owned and carefully managed by the Rockingham Castle Estate, and by its designation as a conservation area from as early as 1970, being the first village in Northamptonshire to be so designated. The houses in the village still retain windows of a traditional design, both timber sashes, metal and timber casements, with most of the properties retaining their original glazing.

1.2.2 It is not the intention of the Council to introduce Article 4 (2) Directions into this conservation area, which would remove residents permitted development rights with regards to replacement windows in the future, as this is not regarded as a serious issue due to the control exercised by the Rockingham Castle Estate and their professional advisors. A far greater threat to the character of the conservation area is posed by car parking issues with cars parked on the edges of the grassed verges that add much to the character to this particular conservation area; this is damaging by the physical intrusion of cars in front of houses and on the edge of the street that is largely open to the cottage properties that have no boundary or a small hedge and colourful planted borders between the building and the path. The Estate has introduced a new road that leads off the Main Street on the west side of the road, as a tarmac road, then golden gravel down the side of the Village Hall and along the fenced boundary with the adjacent fields; this provides off road parking to some houses (between the Old Post Office and nos. 20 to 24, and for the users of the hall. This has made minimal impact on the setting of these buildings, or the village. However, there is little provision for visitors passing through the village to stop, most of the lay-bys being used by local people.

1.2.3 The Corby Borough Site Specific Proposals Preferred Options LDF document (SSP) published in May 2006 states: "Rockingham is of outstanding conservation importance and defined in the current Local Plan as a 'Restraint Village'. The existing Planning policy indicates that residential development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances". Therefore there would appear to be no threats to the village from any future development proposals within the revised conservation area boundary (2009). Policy V1 of the SSP suggests that Rockingham will be considered for the designation of village boundaries (Village Confines) and that within it some flexibility will be permitted by the conversion of existing buildings for employment generating uses, in line with PPS7 guidance and accepted conservation principles will be encouraged.

“To help meet this objective:

- Home working will be supported and the sympathetic conversion or extension of houses for the purposes of home working will be encouraged.
- Shared office space in community facilities will be promoted.
- Conversion of some farm buildings for suitable employment/housing purposes will be allowed.

1.2.4 Paragraph 3.108 of the SSP points to the advice given in PPS7, paragraph 10, that makes clear that isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification if planning permission is to be granted. One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work. Stating that “in the Corby context it is considered more sustainable for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or in suitable existing dwellings in the countryside, so as to avoid new and potentially intrusive development in the countryside”. As Rockingham is only 1 mile away from Corby special circumstances would have to be demonstrated to permit new housing for Estate workers to be built within the conservation area.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Management Plan

1.3.1 Conservation has come to be seen as the management of change, seeking to retain what people value about places for future generations. It is important to establish clear planning policy guidance to ensure consistent decision-making of planning applications, and to improve the quality and content of planning applications, discouraging outline applications, and requiring applicants (where appropriate) to provide contextual drawings that show elevations ‘as proposed’ in their setting illustrating adjacent buildings (as suggested in PPG15); this can be done photographically using a photo-montage as well as drawn on plan. New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution related to its context which may be valued in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values of the place identified through an assessment of its significance as detailed in this conservation area appraisal and management plan.

1.3.2 The designation of the village of Rockingham as the first conservation area designated in Northamptonshire was a prime indicator of the importance that the County Council attached to the village, and the significance of the place to the general population as a whole including visitors to the Rockingham Castle that is open during the summer months, that the area is worthy and matters. Any new proposals for change (planning applications) within the village should be carefully considered by the both the Planners, Councillors and the residents themselves through the Rockingham Parish Meeting who are already consulted on planning applications in the village; this accords with the precepts of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2006) where in Corby “Parish Councils are provided with copies of planning applications within their area” (page 28); because of the small size of the village and the scale of the population it is not worth considering setting up a separate planning committee.

## 2 Planning Policies

2.1 The significance of the area's historic and architectural importance is acknowledged through the designation of conservation area status over the whole of the historic village, and its proposed extension to include Rockingham Castle and its Park area, and the number of Listed Buildings and buildings identified as of Local Interest within its boundary; so that in reality virtually every building in the village is one or the other; this demonstrates the exceptional quality of the buildings within it. With such status its special character is safeguarded through established planning legislation, national and local polices and practice.

### Central Government Policy

2.2 Planning Policy Guidance notes represent the Governments policies on development and are given significant weight when determining planning applications and appeals. The key guidance notes for conservation issues are *PPG15 Planning and the Historic Built Environment* and *PPG16 Archaeology and Planning*. Planning Policy Statements (PPS) are the national planning policy statements that will replace Planning Policy Guidance notes over time. Some powers have recently been devolved down to Regional Government Offices. Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) is increasingly important in determining planning applications and policies and enabling the guidance of development in a way that reflects local and regional issues. The key document is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8), in particular Policy 31 provides regional priorities for the Historic Environment and lends support to the preparation of this document by advocating strategies that lead to the better understanding of the historic environment, its conservation and enhancement "retaining local distinctiveness by:

- identifying and assessing the significance of specific and cultural assets (including their settings);
- using characterisation to understand their contribution to the landscape and townscape in areas of change;
- encourage the refurbishment and re-use of disused or under-used buildings of some historic or architectural merit and incorporating them sensitively into the regeneration scheme;
- promoting the use of local building materials; and
- Recognising the opportunities for enhancing existing tourism attractions and for developing the potential of other areas and sites of historic interest."

### Corby Local Plan

2.3 The majority of planning and conservation responsibilities are dealt with at the level of the Local Planning Authority. Corby Borough Council (CBC) is the Local Planning Authority and therefore has statutory duties as well as the discretion to undertake other functions. CBC was required by the Local Government Act of 1985 to prepare a development plan.

2.4 The Corby Local Plan, which was adopted as the statutory development plan for the Borough in June 1997. It contained Environmental Policies for the

'Conservation of the Built Environment' and as stated in the first section of the conservation area Policy P4 (E) concerned with the protection of Listed Buildings and their setting is a saved policy in the LDF.

### The Local Development Framework

2.5 The Local Development Framework is a spatial strategy, rather than a land use plan. It is intended to address a broad range of issues affecting the nature of places and the way they function and will contain spatial as well as land-use policies. This new system places a strong emphasis on working with others and the need for policies to be locally distinctive and able to be implemented by a variety of means in addition to the granting or refusal of planning permission. This broader approach is considered both a challenge and an opportunity for positive protection, management and enhancement of heritage and recognition of its existence and value.

2.6 The *Local Development Framework (LDF)* is a portfolio of local development documents, which together provide a spatial strategy for the Borough. Heritage, by its very nature, is crosscutting and will be relevant to several topic areas. The LDF for Corby Borough is well advanced with various documents (detailed below) already in place or emerging that provides guidelines for conservation and enhancement. '*The North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework (LDF), Statement of Community Involvement*', was adopted in October 2006; and the '*North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy*' was adopted in June 2008; the '*Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document*', produced by the '*North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit*', was adopted in July 2008. '*The Corby Borough Site Specific Proposals Preferred Options Development Plan (SSP)*' document was published in May 2006, providing details of how Corby should be developed up to 2021.

2.7 As stated in the introduction to Part 1 of this document, the new SSP (see above) - LDF document has 'Policies for the Built Environment':

- ENV 3: Preferred Options for the Protection of the Built environment. Concerned with the development of a general policy to support the protection of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas.
- ENV 4: Preferred Options for Design Guidance. Concerned with the development of design guidance as a Supplementary Planning Document
- ENV 5: Preferred Options for Conservation Areas. Provides a commitment to appraise existing conservation areas, and to consider designation of new ones and the production of management plans.

2.8 As part of the LDF process, the Council may produce *Area Action Plans and Concept Statements* setting out more detailed proposals and policies for areas of change or conservation. These will be Development Plan Documents and have much stronger status than conservation plans or supplementary planning documents. Area Action Plans will provide a positive tool for protecting and managing the historic environment, by bringing together appraisals, development control policies, proposals and management programmes. Their purpose will be; to deliver planned growth, stimulate regeneration, and protect areas sensitive to

change through conservation policies, make proposals for enhancement and resolve conflicting objectives in areas facing significant development pressure.

2.9 *Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)* are an integral part of the Development Framework. They have greater status than their predecessor, Supplementary Planning Guidance (which is not produced as part of the Local Plan process). All SPD as with all documents that form the LDF will be subject to a *Sustainability Appraisal (SA)* which considers their environmental, economic and social impacts including the historic environment. The '*Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document*' (SPD) carries greater weight in the consideration of planning applications; it provides guidance on policies within the *North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy* that relate to design and sustainability, and is designed to not only ensure good design for the future, but is intended to speed up the processing and determination of planning applications by providing Sustainable Design and Energy Statements as a framework for applicants seeking planning permission.

2.10 The adopted *Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)* sets out how communities and stakeholders are to be engaged in active, meaningful and continued involvement in the preparation and revision of local development documents and the consideration of planning applications.

2.11 The historic environment makes a major contribution to economic development and community well-being. Corby Borough Council will be supportive of schemes that secure the restoration, repair and sympathetic re-use of historic buildings and areas, supported by Policy 31 of the RSS(8), (see 2.2 above). Policies and proposals in the LDF will maximise the environmental, economic and community benefits of heritage-led regeneration.

### 3 Planning Measures

These provide protective policies to implement the CSS (*North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy*) and SPD.

#### SPD

3.1 The Borough Council could adopt this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance to support conservation policies in the Local Plan and the LDF, but in the meantime this work provides an important assessment of the area, and an element of guidance to support the LDF and the work of Corby Borough Council's Development Control officers determining planning applications within the conservation area.

#### Buildings at Risk

3.2 No buildings within Rockingham village area are considered to be seriously 'at risk'; the council has not undertaken a district wide condition survey of its listed buildings to identify those that could be considered 'at risk'.

## Enforcement

3.3 There have been no recorded instances in the Rockingham Conservation Area where enforcement action has been taken against non compliant works to a listed building. In addition to maintaining vigilance of buildings 'at risk', and unauthorised development, the Council may employ enforcement powers in the existing and proposed extension to the Conservation Area, should the need arise.

3.4 Inappropriate advertisements and signage do not in general pose a threat within the Conservation Area, except for a single banner on the side of the Rockingham Gallery.

3.5 Should it be necessary, the Council may issue discontinuance orders to secure the removal of adverts or signs that it deems have a detrimental effect on the setting of the buildings and the Conservation Area. If a stricter degree of control is then considered necessary the imposition of an 'Area of Special Control of Advertisements' may be sought. Stricter advertisement control would then apply with restrictions on poster hoardings and the size of signs and individual characters.

## Urgent Works and Repairs Notices

3.6 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. The Act gives the Local Planning Authority powers to take action in the following circumstances:

### i) Urgent Works

3.7 Where a historic building has deteriorated to the extent that its preservation may be at risk, the Act enables the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) to carry out urgent works for the preservation of listed buildings after giving notice to the owner. These powers can be used only in respect of an unoccupied building. The powers are confined to urgent works; on other works emergency repairs for example to keep the building wind and water tight and safe from collapse. The LPA may recover the cost of such works from the owner.

### ii) Repairs Notices

3.8 If the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) considers that a listed building is not being properly preserved it may serve a 'repairs notice' on the owner. The Notice specifies the works that the authority considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building.

## Article 4 (2) Directions

3.9 This is a discretionary power given to the LPA to restrict specific permitted development rights in relation to dwellings in Conservation Areas, where the permitted development would front a public area. However, the control exercised by the Rockingham Castle Estate, who own most of the village and lease the cottages and farms to tenants, is such employing their own professional advisors as to render such a requirement largely unnecessary; windows are timber with

small panes painted white, and doors, open porches, gates, fences, are all painted a uniform dark green; this more than anything else establishes the general character of the village as an Estate Village. While it is not the current intention of the Council to introduce this measure this does not preclude the possibility of the Council introducing it in the future should the character of the conservation area be damaged by alterations to the windows of dwelling houses that front onto highways.

#### Article 4 (1) Directions

3.10 This is a means for the LPA to withdraw permitted development rights on non residential properties within the Conservation Area. However, an Article 4 (1) direction requires the approval of the Secretary of State, which is a potentially lengthy procedure. The Council are unlikely to seek the imposition of this measure.

#### Section 215 Notices

3.11 Circular 2/98 – prevention of dereliction through the planning system – promotes the use of Section 215 notices to require owners to maintain their land and buildings properly, if they affect the amenity of the surrounding area. Such notices are very useful and can be used to deal with a wide range of environmental health as well as planning problems including:

- Clearing rubbish and waste materials from open land
- Removal of abandoned vehicles from private land
- Removing the remains of derelict/fire-damaged buildings
- Restoring damaged paintwork
- Refurbishing important features (e.g. porches, door-cases) which have been left to deteriorate to the point where they harm, rather than enhance, a building or the street scene
- Removing fly-posting and graffiti, where they adversely affect amenity
- Tidying up land awaiting redevelopment

3.12 Where land and buildings (through fire damage or general dereliction) are considered to adversely affect the amenity of the conservation area the Council will consider the serving of Section 215 or 'Wasteland Notices'. If work is not done within the period specified in the notice, the local authority can follow it up with prosecution or enter the land and take direct action to carry out the works, in default of action by the owner. Changes to regulations which came into force in January 1998 mean that local authorities can recover its costs if direct action is taken in default, if necessary.

#### Compulsory Purchase Orders

3.13 English Heritage advises that when listed buildings or unlisted ones identified as contributing positively to the special architectural or historic interest of a

conservation area (i.e. those identified as Buildings of Local Interest in the appraisal document), are falling into decay the local planning authority should use its statutory powers to secure their preservation. The Council may consider the serving of urgent works notices and/or repairs notices on listed buildings considered 'At Risk' within the conservation area as a first step to ensuring their emergency repair and/or towards compulsory purchase of the building by the Council. However, as stated above this is unlikely to occur within Weldon where the majority of properties appear to be in a reasonable standard of repair, though some roofs are showing signs of wear and tear through age.

## 4 Framework for design standards

4.1 In new buildings and the public realm high quality design is paramount if the quality of the area is to be preserved and enhanced. *The Manual for Streets* (DFT 2007) shows how the design of residential streets can be enhanced and how street design can help create better places with local distinctiveness and identity; North Northamptonshire Council stated (in 2008) that they are producing a Design Guide to translate the principles of the Manual for Streets into the local context; this is currently unavailable (as at February 2009). The Joint SPD ('*Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document*' produced by the '*North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit*' adopted July 2008) provides clear advice on the creation of high quality developments that have minimum environmental impact, and for new developments to reach a 'Building for Life' Standard. It highlights the need for developments to promote character; reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, and that in historic areas such as Rockingham, urban form characterisation should inform the design of new developments. It advises that "the overall look and feel of a new development should be considered in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally, based on an understanding of the way the local area looks and works"; this new Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Rockingham should be used to answer the questions posed in the SPD.

4.2 The Joint SPD draws attention to the "Building on Tradition – The Country Design Summary' (2000), prepared by the Rockingham Forest Trust; this has already been adopted by Corby Borough Council as SPD. It identifies ways in which new development can be designed to harmonise with and enhance local character in the region, providing advice on all aspects of development, on its built form and scale and use of building materials; there is a link to the document on CBC's web site.

4.3 The aim of this section of the management plan is to provide practical advice and guidance to householders and non-specialist conservation planning officers in the maintenance and restoration of the historic built environment. It is important that proper attention is paid to maintenance and repair of the existing historic fabric, and the traditional detailing of works of reinstatement. This section is set out in six parts:

- Repair and maintenance
  - Windows and doors

- Rainwater goods
- Roofs and chimneys
- Walls
- Temporary Works or Scaffolding
- Re-instatement
  - Windows and doors
  - Roofs and chimneys
- New development and design
  - Building materials
- Public realm – signage, lighting and furniture
- Traffic and pedestrian management
- Shop fronts and signage

## **Repair and Maintenance** **Windows and Doors**

4.4 Windows and doors are important elements in the character of buildings. Often it is windows and doors that stand out as key features from the building structure. Authentic joinery adds to the historic character and visual quality of any Conservation Area. The extent of survival is often indicative of the value local residents and the Rockingham Castle Estate place on the historic fabric of their village, or are the subject of chance, such as two of the oldest farmhouses Castle Farm at the bottom of the hill, and no. 18a at the top of the hill that retain ancient Medieval timber-framed doorways, probably from the original property on the site (see below). That on the left has a distinctive pointed Gothic arch, and has been altered in recent years by the removal of its door to form a glazed window featuring the Sonde's crest etched on the glass; whereas that on the right has a rounded head, almost a Norman arch. Both are on the rear of the property and are opposite the front doors forming a cross-passage plan and are important survivals of Rockingham's historic past.



4.5 A number of traditional older windows and doors in a distinctive style have survived in the Rockingham Conservation Area through to the present day. When refurbishment or extension is proposed the Estate should consider re-instating authentic detailing where its has previously been lost, where ever possible, so as to provide the buildings with their own special brand of distinctiveness that sets them apart from other villages and helps to identify this as an Estate Village.

4.6 The oldest type of glazing to survive in the village is traditional leaded-light windows that appear on the rear of Castle Farm (see below right), the front windows having been altered to a uniform 2-paned window.

4.7 Windows of this type are made of individual small rectangular pieces of glass joined together by lead strips that are fixed directly to the stonework of the window surround or stone mullion without a frame with mortar, though they usually have a central wooden or metal bar set on the inside of the window; only the opener needs a frame that is usually made from galvanised iron with a metal handle, sometimes made of brass or bronze, or even decorative hand-forged wrought iron – as it would have been made in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.



4.8 Many of the older cottages fronting Main Street still feature leaded-light windows set in wooden frames with wooden casements, such as nos. 2, 3, and 4 (see below). Originally this row was thatched, but this caught fire and the upper section of wall shows signs of rebuilding, the eaves dormers dating from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century using a small-paned casement style.

4.9 The oldest buildings in the village appear to date from the late-17<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt some time after the Civil War period after the Restoration in the 1670s, such as no. 18a that is dated 1670. This has stone mullioned windows with contrasting stone surrounds to the walling (see below) with uniform 2-paned glazing set within a thin frame. However, rears of properties often retain older patterns of glazing as also shown here on the hip-ended dormer.



4.10 This type of glazing is similar to the windows on several other of the Estate cottages such as Shire House (no. 19) that has a pleasing 3-bay symmetrical façade with 3-light windows with 2-paned glazing (see below).



4.11 Timber casement windows were used throughout the village during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Sash windows do not appear on any other building than the Sondes Arms, but only on the ground floor. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor retains what appear to be genuine late-17<sup>th</sup> century wooden framed cross-mullioned windows with rectangular leaded-lights that are also used on two of the three dormer windows to the attic (see right).



4.12 The predominant window type is the wooden casement with small-paned glazing, that has been altered in some cases to two larger panes but retain the side hung casements. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Estate cottages on either side of the Village Hall have a mix of diamond-paned leaded lights fostering the Old English style with small-paned timber glazed

windows in the Old School House that is larger than the adjacent properties having a front-facing gabled 'wing' (see left).

4.13 Some time some cottages combine the two types in the same window as at nos. 11 and 12 just off the Main Street where a fixed leaded light is to the right of a 2-paned wooden opening casement; such detailing is the mark of local distinctiveness and should be retained where ever possible (see right).



4.14 It is the mix of house types, larger farmhouses, and smaller cottages, some with thatched roofs, the buildings with different window types that help to give Rockingham its distinctive character. The mostly white painted windows help to establish a uniform character though they are of different designs; they should remain painted white. The use of modern paints and methods can lengthen the time between redecorations.

### **Rainwater Goods**

4.15 Rainwater goods are another traditional feature that when replaced by modern plastic detracts from the character and traditional appearance of the building. In the Rockingham Conservation Area the houses with stone-slate roofs all appear to have cast-iron gutters, with cast-iron down-pipes and hoppers many of which survive and probably were an introduction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, they are painted grey and from a distance they look like plastic (see photo at 4.5 above that also shows typical pipes); closer inspection confirms that they are cast-iron; consideration should be given to changing the colour of the pipes perhaps to black or dark green. Such traditional rainwater goods that are sometimes made of lead on older properties must be retained on all the listed buildings in the conservation

area; there continued use on other buildings within the conservation area, especially those identified as Local Interest Buildings should be encouraged.

4.16 It is important to carry our simple basic annual maintenance of rainwater goods to prevent minor problems that may lead to serious structural damage caused by leaking down-pipes or blocked hoppers that cause water spillage down the face of the building that will erode the stonework and cause staining. Traditional gutter profiles, mostly half round, add to the appearance of individual buildings and collectively enrich whole street scenes. With proper maintenance these items can offer good service for well over 100 years. When replacement is needed there are plenty of suppliers of historic profiles - many are available factory finished and some in cast aluminium that is likely to last indefinitely. Plastic is an inferior product which will not last as well or look as good – especially if it has a modern box profile. It doesn't take paint well but unpainted it soon develops a coating of algae. Like other plastic building products, when it is replaced it has to go to landfill where it will not break down for centuries, so the environmental costs also deserve consideration. Cast-iron down-pipes and eaves gutters can give many years of service if properly maintained by periodic re-painting and rodding to free blockages. Every spring and autumn any plants, leaves and silt should be cleared out of the pipes and the gutters. Bird/leaf guards can be fitted to the tops of soil pipes and to rainwater outlets to prevent blockages.

## Roofs and Chimneys

4.17 The traditional roofing material in Weldon village was long wheat straw thatch with simple flush wrap-over ridges secured by ligers, and graduated stone Colleyweston slate roofs, many still surviving, with several thatched roof cottages and farmhouses with raised parapets capped by coping stones. Thatched roofs do not have gutters and fall-pipes but have over-sailing edges to the thatch that rain-water drip off; it is significant that many of the thatched cottages in the village have lush flower beds next the wall directly below the roof edge; this is part of the character of the village. The coming of the railway in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century permitted the transportation of Welsh blue slate that became a popular choice for roofing; many stone-slate and thatched roofs have been replaced with Welsh slate. There is an interesting mix of traditional roofing materials to be found in the Rockingham Conservation Area on the Main Street. Seen here is a traditional Colleyweston roof featuring a stone-laced valley (without lead) and stone chimney with four-flues at Castle Farm.



4.18 Collyweston stone slates have been used in this region from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards and help define the vernacular style of Northamptonshire and its neighbouring counties. They are the number one choice for traditional roofing and are seen throughout the village. It is important to clear fall-pipes and drain covers to safeguard the underground drainage system.

4.19 Swithland slates (similar to Welsh blue slates in appearance) were available from the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Rockingham Forest area, and are often found on brick buildings in this region. However, there are very few within Rockingham but no. 7 Main Street is an attractive building featuring brick and slate as shown below where the gabled dormer has a white-painted stone surround with an ovolo moulding.



4.20 Estate cottages and farmhouses sometimes feature chimney stacks constructed from a creamy-white brick built in imitation of stone, as seen below on nos. 23 and 24 Main Street and almost certainly a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century improvement by the celebrated Victorian architect Anthony Salvin engaged by the Watsons to improve the Castle and the Estate. The roof covering may be Swithland slate though blue-slate would be available by 1850 from Wales.

4.21 Throughout the village the higher status houses, such as Castle Farm, cotton's Farm and no. 18a have ashlar stone chimney stacks with finely cut cornices; these are likely to be of Weldon stone that was chosen for its durability (see right).



Whereas, the smaller terraced houses and thatched cottages mostly have brick chimney stacks.

4.22 Maintenance is essential to keep roofs weather-tight and prolong life expectancy. A common problem particularly with stone-slate roofs is slipped and or broken slates. Broken slates can usually be removed and replaced with reclaimed slates. Slipped slates can be retrieved and fixed back by making new nail holes and fixing to the battens or by using a copper or wire 'tingle', these should be used sparingly. Most pre-1940 roofs probably lack roofing felt and were traditionally weather-proofed by torching the underside of the slates with a lime-sand mortar, this can easily be re-applied; though to help reduce CO2 emissions it is now essential to add roofing felt and insulation when the roof is re-roofed, and to line the floor of the roof space of the loft with insulation. The reinstatement of traditional materials is important for the local character of the Rockingham Conservation Area.



4.23 Cement and sand mortars shouldn't usually be used on roofs, as it will not allow any expansion of the roof covering and may crack and fall off. However during the survey of the village in August 2008 one property with an original Colleyweston slate roof (referred within this region as Colly roofs) was noted as then being 'repaired' with pointing on its roof. English Heritage (EH, Northampton Office)

advise that this accords with a long standing regional tradition for the repair of Colly roofs that are laid with mortar – either spot-bedded, when using felt to allow slates to breath, or more fully pointed. While this is a highly unusual practice nationally and usually discouraged, the re-pointing of Colly roofs has been part of the local tradition of the Rockingham Forest area for many years past. It is considered by EH a useful measure to extend the life of a roof without the need for stripping and re-slating (which in itself can lead to premature loss of a very scarce material). Most roofers use cement-based mortars, but in recent EH restoration projects (e.g. at Apethorpe) hydraulic lime has been used to good effect. It is interesting to note that the Northants CC Minerals Development Plan (currently out for consultation in 2009) is proposing a new Colly mine specifically for the production of new roofing slate – near Collyweston. If successful this may help to alleviate the short supply of second hand slates that has led to the stripping of Colly slates from lesser buildings for re-use, leading to loss of character; such action will not be permitted in Corby's designated Conservation Areas.

4.24 External coating of roofs with bitumen products should always be avoided; it is unsightly and prevents the roof from 'breathing' which will lead to decay of timbers and slates and will eventually lead to the complete roof being replaced; none were observed in the village. Due to the exposed position of chimneys and the ridges of roofs, re-pointing will often be required from time to time, and chimney pots checking to see if they are stable and fixed to the bedding mortar.

## **Walls**

4.25 It is important that maintenance of walls uses traditional techniques and materials. Strap-pointing and the use of hard mortar mixes (that included concrete) will usually lead to problems, such as damp inside the buildings and eventually cause failure of the brick or stone walling, it also looks unsightly and is now realised to be damaging to the fabric of the building leading to the bursting of the surface of the stone work; though its use was fashionable by builders in the past its continued use should be discouraged, as should hard concrete and sand mixes when lime-based mortar is now perceived as better for buildings allowing them to breath. Inappropriate pointing and material treatments, such as false stone cladding, will also damage the appearance of the building; stone-cladding of buildings within a conservation area requires consent from the Local Planning Authority. Painting of brickwork should be avoided at all costs as it is difficult to remove without damaging the brick and requires regular maintenance; it also seals the surface and does not allow moisture to evaporate naturally.

4.26 Brickwork will deteriorate as a result of natural weathering, and exposure to damp leading to structural defects; lack of maintenance will accelerate the rate of decay. Walls should be kept dry by maintaining gutters, down-pipes and roofs. If a damp proof course has been installed it should be checked for damage and not bridged by piles of soil. If rising damp is a problem it may be more effective to reduce the external ground level to below the internal floor level, and install land-drains sometimes called 'French drains' around the building setting the surrounding soil back from the building with a depth of gravel around the edge of the building; this can also look neat and tidy without any weeds growing next to the building.

4.27 Re-pointing should only be carried out where the mortar is soft and can be easily scraped out with a screwdriver or similar sharp pointed implement. As a general rule never fill an eroded joint without raking out first, nor use a hard cement mortar as this will accelerate the weathering of the brick or stone. Never fill the joints so that the mortar projects in front of the walling material – especially brickwork. In the village there are many interesting examples of pointing where by tradition a soft mix with added aggregate is *slobbered* over the joints between the stones and then cut with a straight line as its is going off to give the impression of a neat joint (see right, an example observed on Cottons Farmhouse)



The example above shows the use of lime mortar, which is white initially before mellowing down to a light grey.

**Mortars** should preferably use matured lime putty or a hydraulic lime mixed in the following proportions:

- 1 part stiff lime putty to 3 parts sand, by volume
- Lime and sand should be well mixed together by hand to form a workable mix, and then left to mature under damp sacking and polythene sheets for not less than 7 days before use – don't add more water, further working will improve plasticity
- **Repair Mix:** 1 part hydraulic lime to 2 parts sharp sand and 1 part soft staining sand with colouring pigment (or brick-dust) to match, by volume
- **Ashlar Stonework:** re-pointing mixes:
  - 1 part lime putty to 4 parts well-graded sand
  - 1 part white-cement to 6 parts graded sand
  - 1 part hydraulic-lime to 3 parts graded sand

4.28 Further information on natural and eco friendly building products is available on-line.

### **Temporary Works or Scaffolding**

4.29 From time to time scaffolding will be required to enable access to maintain or reinstate elements such as roofs. It is essential that care be taken when erecting scaffold, or if other temporary works are required, to ensure that permanent damage is not caused to the building. Fundamental to this is in educating those who erect scaffolds; as usual on-site practices may not be acceptable when working on or near historic buildings in this very special conservation area. The aim is to avoid scarring and damage to any features, and particularly broken glass in windows; old glass should not be smashed to make ties.

4.30 Where fixings are made to stone or brickwork there is an increased danger that fixing could dislodge stone or brick as well as damaging the building, this will endanger the scaffold. All fixings to historic walls must be made of stainless-steel

only, as this avoids damage by corrosion that causes iron-staining of the stonework if left for prolonged periods. Contractors should be aware of the value of historic fabric, plastic end caps should be used to protect walls, windows and personnel.

## **Reinstatement**

### **Windows and Doors**

4.31 Windows and doors are important elements in the character of buildings. Often they stand out as key features from the building structure. Reinstatement of traditional windows replacing poor or modern windows and doors will enhance individual buildings, the streetscape and promote local characteristics and traditions.

4.32 New windows should where ever possible replicate the design of the original on the building, or if previously replaced an identified good example as outlined in Section 3 of the Conservation Area Appraisal. There is now a surprising range of different types of glass of varying thickness and qualities, manufactured by companies such as Pilkington Glass, that are readily available including safety glass, and reinforced toughened glass, and self-cleaning 'Active' glass; thicker glass is also available up to 6mm thickness that is almost as effective as double-glazing with regard to heat-loss. When replacing windows the size of the original opening should not be enlarged, or the shape of window opening changed, unless it reflects the age and character of the house and is based on the advice of a Conservation professional. Windows should not project in front of the frame and should not have an integral projecting timber or metal sill; appropriate thin timber lintels sills to match existing examples in the village should be used. Where no original windows survive, to provide a pattern for replacements, neighbouring houses identified in this report should be studied for detail.

4.33 At present the replacement of windows and doors is not controlled on unlisted buildings. It is always preferable, however, for owners to recognise that sensitive maintenance adds value to their property and contributes to the sense of place.

4.34 When new windows are needed there are a number of issues to consider:-

- Proportion and subdivision – The glazing pattern of the original windows should be retained, (or restored if lost), as that is a critical part of the whole building. It indicates the size of glass available (or affordable) at the time of construction.
- Mode of opening – The introduction of tilt-and-turn opening lights is always visually jarring and harmful to historic character where the original has been side-hung and / or top-hung casement openers.
- Glazing – Traditional thin glazing bar profiles, properly jointed and glazed with putty, (or glazing compound), rather than stuck-on beading, will give a genuine appearance.
- Draught-proofing – The most significant heat loss through old windows is due to poor fitting frames in their surrounds, and lack of draught-stripping. There are proprietary systems that fit draught excluders, and greatly reduce the amount of air changes and heat loss. Similarly draught-proofing can be applied to improve

the performance of external doors and letter-boxes, so as to render their replacement unnecessary.

- Sound insulation – In noisy locations from traffic noise on the busy Main Street in Rockingham, people can be tempted to reduce the problem by replacing windows with modern double-glazed units; however, secondary-glazing is more effective than double-glazing and allows retention of traditional windows. Coupled with draught-proofing, old windows with secondary-glazing will usually perform far better than new units.

## Doors

4.35 Doors are just as vulnerable to insensitive replacement as windows. The conservation principles summarized above can be applied equally to doors. Most traditional door types allow for individual expression by painting and attractive ironmongery etc.

4.36 Where original doors survive these should be retained when ever possible, and carefully refurbished or repaired as necessary, rather than replaced. However, if the door is beyond its serviceable life its replacement should copy any distinctive original detailing observed on the particular door, or in the village, to maintain its distinctiveness. At Castle Farm a traditional 5-paneled door has been modified by replacing the top two panels with diffused glass (see below) to let light into the entrance hall.



## Roofs and chimneys

4.37 When stripping a roof at least one-third wastage should be allowed for clay pantiles or slates of any type if the roof is simply to be re-roofed using the original materials. If not enough matching slates are subsequently available, then the original slates should be re-used on the front roof pitch or most visible roof slopes. To reduce damage to original Colleyweston or Swithland slates during re-roofing it is advised that scaffolding should be installed at eaves level with a suitable back kick-board and up-stand around the edge to aid the storage of slates at the edge of the eaves of the building. Only as a last resort should slates ever be taken down to ground level as they are more likely to get damaged in the process, or even stolen by being left unattended overnight. In such circumstances an elevator should be used (a moving belt) to safely transport slates to the ground; under no circumstances should slates be thrown off the roof onto old mattresses as this will inevitably lead to irreparable damage. Slates should preferably be retained on pallets for ease of movement with a fork-lift truck and stored in containers on-site, that may have to be hired for this purpose, but well worth the expense so as to safeguard the repair or building project; they should never be permitted to leave the site for storage elsewhere as



there is no guarantee that the originals will ever be returned. Re-claimed and new materials should not be mixed on the same roof pitch. If under-felt is used provision must be made to ventilate the roof space using discreet ventilation at the eaves rather than on the ridge where it is visually intrusive. Slates should be re-fixed in the same pattern, in diminishing courses if they were laid that way originally, using copper or alloy nails. Surviving traditional ridge tiles should be re-used and re-pointed. Where chimneystacks and pots have been removed or reduced in height, consideration should be given to their reinstatement to their original height with new or re-claimed clay pots to match. There is often a 3 month waiting period for new clay chimney pots, they are rarely available off-the-peg, so this should be factored in to the development process and ordered at an early stage, and not left to the last minute to try and acquire. Brick chimney stacks should be pointed with a soft mortar mix (see 4.27 above), and chimney pots set in a deep bed of a suitable mortar.

### **Shopfronts**

4.38 There are no shops in Rockingham and the only commercial premise is the Village Shop and Post Office just off the Main Street close to the Sondes Arms, so shopfronts are not perceived as a problem in this village.

4.39 Signage – There are few signs in the village itself other than the public house where the Sonde’s family crest is featured on a sign board on a timber post. There are two large signs at the principal entrance to Rockingham Castle that are traditional painted wooden signs, but with too much information leading to vehicle having to stop and the passengers alight to read the information supplied.

4.40 In the middle of the village below the pub is the small Rockingham Gallery that has a poster sign on the edge of the road with an ‘A’-board advertising the Village Shop and tea room; these are intrusive but necessary for the success of the business operations. However, the gallery is rarely open and seems to do most of its business via the internet, so the need for the intrusive long poster sign on the edge of the road is questioned.

### **New Design**

4.41 Good quality new design can help to promote a vibrant local economy and encourage development to support and enhance the locally distinctive character. The key aims and importance of new design were usefully outlined in PPG 15 (paragraph 15): “Good design can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.” Good urban design is a key concept in delivering the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan (2003). PPS1 (*Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*) states that good design is indivisible from good planning and indicates that the onus should be on developments being good enough for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to approve; the significance of this is that this allows LPAs to refuse applications on design grounds alone; such decisions have been upheld in Planning Appeals. This

concept is reiterated and elaborated on in RSS8 (East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy) which notes that high quality design is a key planning consideration and that issues such as climate change and resource efficiency need to be incorporated into design approaches. The CSS (North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy) provides the context of how new development can be designed to meet the sustainability agenda in the region. The Joint SPD further explains the CSS policies relating to general sustainable development principles, design, energy efficiency, sustainable construction and housing provision, and environmental character and green infrastructure.

4.42 Attention has already been drawn to the Rockingham Forest Trust's "Building on Tradition" booklet (mentioned above); advisors to the Rockingham Estate may find its section on 'Building Form and Scale', layout and style of particular value. In the village there is a mix of heights of properties from single-storey cottages to 2-storey houses, and the larger and taller mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Rectory close to the top of the Main Street. The cottage styles have attic rooms lit by a mix of dormer roof styles that either rises through the eaves cut-into the roof slope, or sits on the roof like a triangular wedge, again with a flat top, or on a thatched roof with a shaped eye-brow rising above the dormer, with on stone and slate roofs attic rooms lit by a mix of roof dormer shapes: gabled, hipped and flat-topped with a cat-slide sloping roof from the main roof pitch, placed either below or at the eaves level, or on the roof built off the 1<sup>st</sup> purlin in the roof. Taller 3-storey buildings, as a building type, do not currently exist within the conservation area, and will be resisted, as will double-pile plans with deep floor plates that create excessively wide gable ends that may dwarf existing older buildings in the conservation area.

4.43 Where extensions are not possible to existing properties many people develop the roof space to provide additional accommodation. These are often lit by roof lights or new dormer windows – sometimes the proportions of these are over large and box dormers as such will not be allowed within the conservation area. Any proposed new dormers will have to follow the local vernacular traditional style found on the existing houses and cottages in the village, and preferably be sited on rear roof pitches not visible from the Main Street.

### **Building Materials**

4.44 The use of appropriate local building materials in new or reclaimed stone in any new developments or on extensions to existing properties should be of a quality to enhance the local character; this supports local craft and construction skills readily available locally from firms such as Weldon Stone. Artificial stone or concrete bricks and synthetic roof materials tend to perform poorly over time and do not weather in the same manner as natural materials. Where these materials are used alongside existing natural materials the visual effect is poor; their use will be discouraged and be strictly limited in this conservation area.

**In the future should any new buildings be permitted within the conservation area these will be required to be built of carefully chosen stone to match other buildings in the conservation area, and roofed with similar complimentary roof slates, or thatch roofed.**

## Public Realm

4.45 The main thoroughfares and pavements are laid with tarmac, with a green strip of grass separating the roads from the paths on the Main Street (see right).



4.46 The aim is to create a distinct, attractive, safe and clean pedestrian environment that enhances the experience for residents and visitors to the area.

The aim of successful public realm in the urban context is to create a network of hard and soft open spaces which are overlooked from adjacent properties and are linked to pedestrian desire lines, create focal points for social activity and use existing landscape elements. Street furniture should be coordinated to minimise clutter and materials should be durable and robust. There is a public notice board in front of the Village Hall that would benefit from being replaced.

## 5 Education and Training

5.1 Training and education will be necessary to sustain a conservation-based approach to managing the conservation area(s) over the longer term. There are potential opportunities related to heritage and the local environment provided by a range of existing national and local training initiatives. In combination these various initiatives address the need for knowledge and skills across the range of stakeholders; individuals and organisations.

### **Elected Members and Officers**

#### Historic Environment – Local Management (HELM) Courses

5.2 HELM aims to provide local authorities with the tools to manage change in the historic environment with skill and confidence. As part of its remit it offers training for councillors and officers in local authorities and government agencies. Seminars aim to identify the resources available to non-heritage professionals and to demonstrate how the benefits of the historic environment can help to achieve targets. Expert speakers explore regional priorities using local case studies. In the past HELM has run a series of continuing professional development seminars on Informed Decision Making, as well as Networking Lunches for chief executives, councillors and historic environment champions. A quarterly HELM newsletter is automatically sent to Champions, but is also available to others in local authorities, both officers and elected members, by email request to [champions@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:champions@english-heritage.org.uk)

5.3 English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) are running a training programme for elected Members in local government who are acting as their authority's Historic Environment Heritage or Design Champion. The Programme is designed to raise awareness of the role of Champions, develop skills and share best practice among authorities. Each event is being delivered by a regional partner organisation. The aim is to have a self-sustaining network of Champions in place across the country. Building in Context Workshops are aimed at both Design and Heritage Champions to promote design solutions in a historic context; they are based on the successful Building in Context toolkit, a programme developed jointly by English Heritage and the Kent Architecture Centre. The events are run regionally and are jointly sponsored by English Heritage and CABE; other elected Members, especially those on planning committees are also encouraged to attend. The HELM 'core' training programme for each year (currently 2009) can be downloaded in January each year by going to the link <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19726>

In addition CABE are running Design Task Group seminars at various venues throughout the country aimed at planning professionals and others tasked with delivering new housing and associated public realm and open green spaces and parks.

#### English Heritage Courses

5.4 English Heritage provides a range of courses aimed at historic environment practitioners and postgraduate students. The courses are offered in partnership

with Oxford University Department of Continuing Education and are usually delivered in partnership with other organisations such as the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) at national and regional levels; this annual programme of short courses goes under the banner of Professional Training in the Historic Environment. In addition Oxford Brooks also offers an interesting range of short residential courses targeted at the conservation professional. English Heritage is currently working on a Councillors guide to championing the Historic Environment, an online learning module aimed specifically at Heritage Champions; this will be launched later in 2009. In 2004 English Heritage launched the Save our Streets campaign and has now published the best “how to” examples from around the country in 10 Streets for All: Practical Case Studies. These showcase examples of councils who have taken the initiative to deal with a particular aspect of street clutter.

## **The Building Trades**

### The National Heritage Training Group

5.5 The National Heritage Training Group (NHTG) is responsible for implementing a coherent strategy for training and skills provision in the construction industry following the recognition that there is a shortage of practitioners skilled in the traditional crafts necessary to conserve and restore our historic buildings. The NHTG have identified ten main specialist skills that are most likely to be used on historic building work with further specialisms within each craft. The NHGT is an English Heritage Initiative in partnership with CITB-Construction Skills (Sector Skills Council for Construction).

## **6 Consultation**

### Public consultation

6.1 In accordance with regulations 17 and 18 of the Regulations this document sets out the consultation and public participation processes associated with preparing and adopting the Conservation Appraisal and Area Management Plan and the statement of adoption. This includes details of the formal consultation exercise undertaken, and in due course a consideration of the comments received, and any proposed changes to the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

6.2 The consultation exercise was devised in accordance with Corby Borough Council’s consultation protocol, guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. It also had regard to the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. Initial engagement took place with the community during the survey of the area in August and early September 2008 when a special meeting was held with the consultant and with the Rockingham Parish Meeting when 8 people were in attendance including a Director of Estate Agents *King West* who manage the estate on behalf of the Rockingham Castle Estate; this took place in the Village Hall on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008, concerning the survey of the village for the conservation area appraisal, the existing boundary of the

conservation area, and some proposed amendments based on previously approved boundary map on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1985, where support was given for the proposals. The minutes of the meeting stated:

“The meeting agreed that the area agreed in 1985 should be the starting point and that this should in fact be extended to include other areas of historic value, including the former mill sites off Cottingham Road and an area to the north of Cottingham Road (B672) and Gretton Road. An area between 6 The Cottons and the telephone Exchange should also be included”. The proposed boundary map of the revised Rockingham Conservation Area has been amended accordingly.

6.3 In addition the occupiers of several of the listed buildings in the village were visited directly, to discuss the survey when they permitted the consultant access to the rear of their properties, and some interior inspections, that proved helpful in identifying the special interest of the building.

6.4. The draft Conservation area Appraisal and management Plan was published for consultation between 2<sup>nd</sup> February and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009, when this was advertised in the Evening Telegraph on 25<sup>th</sup> February distributed with flyer in the village magazine (to 800 households) and on posters within the village. The consultation document was available for discussion at the Parish Council meeting on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January. An information evening was held at the village hall on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February including a ‘drop in’ session where officers explained the proposals to individuals and how to make representations; followed by a presentation and question and answer session.

6.5 The draft document was made available to view at the Council’s offices, at Corby Central Library and on the Council’s website. In addition a number of organisations and individuals were informed of the consultation exercise.

## 7 Putting the Management Plan into practice

7.1 Section 8 of the Conservation Area Appraisal provided a summary of issues within the Rockingham Conservation Area. These will be specifically addressed in this section; these fall in to two sections; one as affecting the public realm and the other private properties:

### 7.2 Public Realm issues

Introduction: The proposals suggested below have been identified following the survey of the area for the preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal. While there may not currently be any finance in place to implement these suggestions they are included here to identify needs and possible opportunities should finance be available in the future.

7.2.1 Street surfacing – There are almost entirely tarmac roads and paths throughout Rockingham village, and the designated area of the conservation area. Where this is damaged or in poor condition it should be repaired or replaced with new. Whilst this provides a uniform neutral character to the village it does not

entirely enhance the setting of the principal historic buildings within it. In recent years a new road has been created down the side of the Village Hall covered in golden gravel; this accords with the advice of Northamptonshire CC who advocates and approves the use of golden shingle or pea gravel for pavements in conservation areas. The trough in front of the Market Cross was very overgrown and not recognisable as such; this should be cleared and the area better presented, perhaps with some stone paving laid around the cross. In general the edge of the road could be improved by the replacement of the concrete curbs found throughout the area with the new 'Conservation Curbs' (produced by Marshall's and manufactured in Northamptonshire from the local limestone), or natural stone or granite curbs.

**7.2.2 Telegraph poles and overhead wires** - these are visually intrusive to the street scene and every effort should be made to encourage the utilities companies to bury these underground. However, they do not appear to be a problem as such in Rockingham and such poles are set back from the street.

**7.2.3 Street lighting** – the village Main Street is largely unlit. In recent years some traditional style lamp posts have been introduced that enhance the quality of the conservation area, such as those on Michael's Walk (see below) or in the car park of the Sondes Arms.



**7.2.4 Public Benches** – there are very few benches in the area along the Main Street, only in front of the Village Hall. The conservation area would benefit from the introduction of some more seating; these could be traditional wooden benches or a mix of black-painted metal with wooden slated seating (such as is widely available – see Marshall's, or other, public realm catalogue for various possible solutions). Similarly waste-paper bins should be uniformly of a cast-iron black drum shape positioned in several places on the Main Street to avoid litter.

**7.2.5 Information Boards and Signs** – the accompanying appraisal has provided details of the fascinating and interesting history of the Rockingham that played its part in national events and was visited by the kings and queens of England. Consideration should be given to providing an information board detailing its history and providing a map showing the boundary of the conservation area and identifying the listed and local interest buildings within it. Thought should be given as to its location: it is suggested that this should be in the village itself close to the front of the Village Hall so as to be able to be read from the pavement outside the boundary wall, and inside Rockingham Castle grounds, close to the public car park that would draw it to the attention of the maximum numbers of visitors. In addition if finance is available consideration should be given to placing distinctive welcome signs similar to those at the entry points into Corby Old Village, stating "Welcome to the Rockingham Village Conservation Area" at its north and south entry points; this would help to further the village's distinct identity.

**7.3 Private Property issues: the requirements for planning permission in a conservation area.**

7.3.1 Certain works to family houses within the designated area, which are normally considered “permitted development”, require planning approval from the Council by virtue of the building being within a conservation area. The overall effect of these additional controls is that the amount of building works which can be carried out to a family house, or within its grounds, without a planning application is substantially smaller in a conservation area than elsewhere.

Permission will be required for:

- Boundary treatments which will be carefully considered; these should try and retain the openness of the original character in Rockingham village without the introduction of new additional fencing or hedges to the cottages fronting Main Street; existing hedges and walls should be retained; new timber paled fences are considered inappropriate and should not be considered. Where properties back onto fields boundaries may be traditional iron fences (or similar), as occurs on many existing field boundaries (see below) throughout the Corby Borough that help to retain the openness of the countryside rather than it being enclosed behind a solid wall
- Demolition of walls and the removal of hedges on property boundaries in the conservation area will be discouraged and normal hedgerow removal notices still apply; the parking of cars in former front garden areas will be resisted

However, where space permits this it may be permissible to create a drive down the side of the properties to a detached garage set back from the house. There are a few examples of garages that have been added to properties. This example (right) is to a building on the edge of Gretton Road that is considered a successful garage.



- Sometimes it is possible to convert older farm buildings, stables and coach-houses to garages. The example below is considered an excellent example of this type where a building has been altered to provide a double-garage with doors on strap-hinges and with additional accommodation for the adjacent bungalow in the roof space above the

garage that is not damaging to the character of the original building or the area in general.

- Trees are protected and those on property boundaries, as effecting the character and setting of the conservation area, will require permission for pruning, or any trees within the conservation area proposed for felling. More specifically anyone intending lopping or felling a tree greater than 100 mm. in diameter, being a minimum of 1.5 metres above the ground, must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the

Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served; this protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are no longer exempt, although slightly different constraints occur where the tree forms part of a managed forest, or is in another agricultural use.



- Treatment of private drives – In general most properties do not have private drives being built on the edge of the street.



- Car parking issues: the distinctive grassed verges are one of the distinctive characteristic features of the Rockingham Conservation Area, on the edges of the Main Street. Lower down the hill are a few car-parking lay-bys that have eaten into the edges of the road reducing the width of the grass verge. Higher up the street,

on the rising hill, the parking problem is more acute with several examples on a daily basis of cars parking on the grass verge itself that causes damages to it in inclement weather; to prevent this a few small bollards have been introduced in the past, but these are not particularly attractive and have proved ineffective in that owners of cars parking between them. There are various possible solutions that should be considered by both the Rockingham Castle Estate and the Local Planning Authority in a joint endeavour to solve this problem and to provide much needed parking for visitors and tourists to the village that would help to sustain the existing village facilities, including the shop and tea room and the public house and its restaurant; it is not that obvious that it offers such a dining facility to passing traffic. There would appear to be three possible solutions:

- The introduction of selective areas of hard standing on the grassed verge utilising a product known as ‘Grass Creep’, that has small mono-blocks of square raised concrete blocks with recessed channels for soil and grass to grow through. This has been successfully used on several National Trust car parks where the desire was to retain the look of an open grassed field without covering it in tarmac or gravel.
- A new off-street car park accessed off the east side of the Main Street close to the middle of the village that would be largely screened by the existing hedge boundaries; Highway Engineers may request a wide splayed entrance that would be intrusive, such a suggestion should be



carefully considered to find an acceptable solution

- The utilisation of the large existing private car park of the public house the Sondes Arms with new additional signage – saying “Public Car Park”. This area is largely empty during the day, especially during non-licensing hours when the pub is closed for several hours in both the morning and the afternoon, and is thus largely wasted; consideration could be made for this to be a Pay and Display car park; it is thought that most visitors would not object to paying for parking so as to be able to have a walk and look around this attractive village. This then would be an ideal location for an information board close by identifying a possible circular footpath trail starting from the inn car park. It also may lead to visitors using the pub's facilities to the benefit of the business and its long term sustainability.
- The introduction of more robust cast-iron bollards to prevent parking on the grass verges higher up the village.
- The introduction of new lay-byes on both sides of the road.



- Traditional doors and windows – as stated elsewhere in this document historic windows and joinery should be retained or replicated where ever possible.

7.3.2 Where original windows still survive the Council will support the introduction of secondary glazing to properties; this gives a superior performance in terms of thermal heat-loss to rooms when compared to factory double-glazed units, and also provides better sound-proofing than standard double-glazed units due to the wider air gap between the inner and outer panes. Various companies offer secondary glazed units; *Storm Windows* have produced an almost invisible product that is particularly suited to historic buildings that has been endorsed by English Heritage. As stated earlier the council will not be introducing Article 4 (2) Directions (to removing permitted development rights for replacement windows) in this village, that on the whole is well looked after and controlled by the Estate. Traditional timber doors will be encouraged.

7.3.3 Dormer windows and roof lights – dormer windows will not be encouraged on the front roofs of original dwellings within Rockingham Conservation Area where they do not currently exist; though consideration will be given for these to be added to rear roof pitches. These should follow the patterns observed in the village that feature flat-roofed, gabled and hip-ended dormers; replacement dormers or new ones on extensions built-on to existing houses, or on new builds properties, should follow this original form.

7.3.4 There are very few if any roof lights in the area. However, where they are proposed to be used the general rule is that these should be cut-in to the existing roof slope, rather than sat like a box on the roof (as old *Velux* roof

lights), such 'Conservation Roof Lights' come in a variety of sizes and applicants should check the availability of specific sizes before submitting applications; accurate drawings, rather than indicative ones, will be appreciated by those determining applications. Such roof lights are only available from specialist suppliers, and will only be permitted on rear roof pitches, not on roofs facing towards the public highway.

- Roofs – many of the original roofs have survived both thatched and stone slated, these should be retained rather than replaced with artificial roofing materials. The change of roofing material in a conservation area is regarded in the same light as demolition and will require conservation area consent from the Local Planning Authority. English Heritage recommends the use of the real thing with regard to Colly roofing slates where ever possible; however where these are not readily available consideration will be given to alternative replacement roofing slates from applicants who should provide actual samples for consideration by the planning department. Where such roofs have been lost in the past consideration should be given to their replacement with traditional roofing materials when they need to be replaced.
- Walling materials – the use of artificial stone and cement render and painted finishes will be largely discouraged. Where they exist and cement or painted finishes are removable, consideration should be given to their replacement with a lime-render or lime-wash (rather than paint) in terms of breathability of the building.
- New development – as already stated in the SSP paragraph 3.92 Rockingham is a 'Restraint Village' where existing policy indicates that residential development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
- New houses – see additional section below.
- Porches and canopies – on both existing and new buildings (see section 7.5 below).
- Satellite dishes - the rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas. These state that the installation of a satellite antenna on any building or structure within the curtilage of a family house in a conservation area is only permitted development if the following conditions are met:
  - The dish does not exceed 90 mm in any dimension;
  - No part of it must exceed the highest part of the roof;
  - It is not installed on a chimney;
  - It is not on a building exceeding 15 metres in height;
  - It is not on a wall or roof slope fronting a highway or footway;
  - It is located so its visual impact is minimised;
  - It is removed as soon as it is no longer required; and
  - There is not a dish already on the building or structure
- Telecommunications masts - the law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in conservation areas without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand. Further information can be found

in the second edition of PPG8 *Telecommunications*. The Council would not wish to see unsightly masts erected anywhere within this Conservation Area.

#### 7.4 New Development within the Conservation Area

7.4.1 Here is a summary of the requirement for planning permission:

Permitted development rights i.e. those allowed without planning permission within Conservation Areas were changed recently, in the amended Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2008 No. 2362, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008; these are now more restricted, and reference should be made to the full order by those planning to alter or add new windows, or roof lights, or extend their principal dwelling house, or build or alter a structure such as sheds, garages, and other outbuildings in gardens within conservation areas. It is briefly summarised below:

- Extensions will not be permitted beyond the side wall of a dwelling house and more than one storey if proposed at the rear
- Roof alterations will not be permitted
- Building structures will not be permitted between the side elevation of the dwelling and boundary

7.4.2 In the past planning permission was needed for external cladding to family houses in conservation areas (referred to as article 1(5) land), using stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles; but excluded cement and pebble dashing that was at that time permitted development. **This has now been changed** the document stating:

- “In the case of a dwellinghouse on article 1(5) land, development is not permitted by Class A if –
  - d) It would consist of or include the cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, **pebble dash**, **render**, timber, plastic or tiles;
  - e) The enlarged part of the dwellinghouse would extend beyond a wall forming a side elevation of the original dwellinghouse; or
  - f) The enlarged part of the dwellinghouse would have more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwellinghouse”

**General Advice:** For the avoidance of doubt those wishing to undertake such works to their dwellings, or construct extensions onto their property, are advised to first contact the Development Control Section of the Planning Department of Corby Borough Council to see if their proposal may require planning permission, for development in a conservation area, or not.

#### 7.5 Design Guidance for New Build in the Conservation Area

Introduction: the Joint SPD (*'Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document'*) is the key document for providing guidance on design issues; this was outlined in paragraph 4.1 earlier that also drew attention to the useful design guide *Building on Tradition*, produced in 2000 by the Rockingham Forest Trust; Corby Borough Council has signed up to this by adopting it as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). In the SPG the emphasis is on protection and the use of

traditional designs and materials; those submitting planning applications within the conservation area should ensure that their proposals follow the guidance contained within that booklet, and also within this document. Prior to submitting a planning application intended applicants are advised to first contact the local planning authority at their office in Corby to discuss their proposals, producing sketch designs and lay-outs, rather than finished plans that then can be easily amended when agreement has been reached in principal.

7.5.1 The Buildings Policy for the Conservation Area Clear guidelines need to be laid down to guide applicants and the planning committee alike.

1. All extensions to buildings shall be built in an appropriate material to match the existing building, or its neighbours; be it in stone or brick or render. Similarly roofing materials shall match existing; artificial materials will not be acceptable.
2. Where visible from the public side of the building all extensions shall have pitched roofs (rather than flat roofs) to match existing properties.

### **Extensions on to existing properties**

7.5.2 The style and scale of an extension will be largely dependent on the size of the original building. In general extensions on the sides of buildings that front the street shall be built against the gable ends with either a lean-to roof, and preferably set back slightly from the front of the property, or with a pitched gabled roof also set back from the front of the existing building and lower than its ridge line.

7.5.3 There are many local examples in the villages around Corby and throughout the Northamptonshire area. Some properties feature side extensions with additional lower roofed lean-to extensions built on to them providing an organic development character that is considered a suitable model. What is required is a design that keeps the integrity of the original design of the house and its façade and clearly creates a new extension that is subservient to the original but compliments the original design and is subtly linked to it.

7.5.4 If 1 ½ -storey or taller 2-storey extensions are required, these will only be permitted if added on to the rear of the property set at right-angles to it, preferably at a mid-point so as to obscure it from the road-side front, forming a T- or L-shaped plan with the main house, ensuring that the ridge-line is set below the main ridge of the house and does not project above the front ridge line. Any new windows should match those on the principal property, with any dormer windows cut-in to the eaves line. The building material, including the roofs, should match as closely as possible the existing material.

7.5.5 Hoods and Porches – Open porches are preferred to enclosed porches and are a feature found throughout the district and particularly in Rockingham village. A new porch will have to be appropriate to the original design of the building it is to be attached on to. There is a particularly distinctive type of gabled open porch with crossed



members, and sometimes with trellis-work, painted green used throughout this Estate village (see below); consideration will be given to add such porches on to properties where they are currently lacking.

**7.5.6 Garages** – these are better constructed as free-standing timber, or brick-built or stone-built gabled structures either at the rear of the building or towards the outer edge of the property boundary; the entrance facing towards the road. Dual-purpose garage buildings with living accommodation above, using dormers in the roof, have been built in the area in the past; these will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Some garage doors observed within the Corby Borough were traditionally side-hung timber boarded doors rather than up-and-over doors; there are a few examples in the village and other villages nearby; these will be preferred on new garages to maintain the traditional character of the area. The walling and roofing material should match the existing property as closely as possible; careful choice of product materials is the essential element leading to the success of such developments; though a timber garage is fairly neutral and fits with most types of properties. Planning conditions are likely to require approval of materials by the Local Authority prior to the construction of the building; where this is ignored the Local Planning Authority may require the demolition of the building and its re-building as per the condition.

**7.5.7 New Dwelling Houses** - Rockingham is protected by policy P4 (V) of the Corby Borough Local Plan (1997), as a Restricted Infill Village.

Policy P4 (V) states:

*“Within the restraint village of Rockingham, planning permission will not normally be given for residential development. Exceptions may be considered where they relate to proposals for the re-use of suitable buildings, where they would be of benefit to the village environment, or for a dwelling required by agriculture or forestry. In considering such proposals, the appropriateness of the materials, design and siting will be fundamental to the granting of planning permission.”*

**7.5.8 General requirements:** Within the criteria of the above policy it will be important that any new proposals respect the traditional settlement form and historic street lay-out of the Rockingham Conservation Area, and the character of adjacent buildings by:

- Being set back from the frontage rather than forward of it; if on a street it may be better to be in-line with it to maintain the property line.
- Subservient to adjacent properties as a small cottage property, rather than a larger detached executive-type of dwelling that would be strongly opposed.
- Respect the local vernacular style utilising simple casement windows copying the pattern of glazing on the adjacent properties.
- Being no larger than 2 storeys, but probably being 1 ½ storey with dormers cut through the eaves of the roof.
- Built of a suitable material to match its neighbours; any new build is probably going to be constructed in stone with a very limited use of brick, stone-slate, or blue-slate or thatched roof. Artificial walling or roof materials are not acceptable.

- Carefully considered car-parking provision, or spaces defined within the layout of the drives and landscaping.
- In many respects new houses should look like those that exist in the village area, with additions and extensions built on to them, rather than individual bulky designs usually associated with housing estates; such designs proposals will be rejected.

7.5.9 New Commercial Buildings – while it is not appropriate for new commercial building to be constructed in the conservation area, consideration will be given to the conversion of redundant farm buildings so as to retain them and bring them into productive use, such as those adjacent to Castle Farm (see below) that appear to offer great scope for development; this would be preferred than for them to be converted to residential properties. It is not envisaged that any other part of the area could be developed for a new commercial building, which accords with Policy V3: *Preferred Options for Conversion of Rural Buildings* in the SSP (see below).

7.5.10 Re-use of existing traditional farm buildings – the redundancy of farm buildings due to changes in modern farming practice threatens their survival. Conversion to domestic use represents a viable economic alternative; barn conversions have become highly desirable alternatives to the traditional dwelling house. This is supported in the SSP in Policy V1, and Policy V3; paragraph 3.114 states “with the decline of agricultural activities within village confines, vacant and underused farmyards could come forward for redevelopment”. However, such a re-use should not compromise any converted building’s intrinsic character; successful conversions should aim to retain its essential agricultural character from the outset. Conversions should:

- Retain and use only existing openings, including any arrow-slit ventilators in the side walls or gable ends where some times a circular owl-hole will be found placed in the apex of the gable, and not insert new openings.
- Retain the roof profile without the introduction of new eaves dormers or chimneys. Traditionally barn roofs were stone with ancillary outbuildings sometimes covered in clay-pantiles, Colleyweston roof slates, or if mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in a blue slate; stone (or thatch) will be preferred for barn roofs; only natural materials will be permitted in this conservation area. Chimneys are not acceptable on farm buildings and metal flue-pipes for wood-burning stoves (not fireplaces), are a preferred option; these should be set on the rear roof pitch below the eaves. Similarly any new conservation roof lights should also be confined to the rear roof pitch (away from view from the public highway); their use being acceptable within these defined parameters.
- Not introduce conspicuous new elements such as garages or conservatories that would look incongruous. Few barns stand alone but usually have other outbuildings attached forming an enclosed yard or a long run of buildings. These should also be utilised, rather than removed, to provide ancillary accommodation, including garaging where possible.
- Where barns are to be converted they often have large central cart-entries. New glazing should be set well back within the opening and use unstained (but oiled) natural oak frames (not painted) that should have (or retain) wooden boarded (oak) doors that can be folded back against the outside wall using appropriate pintols and strap hinges; where it is not possible to open a door fully; bi-fold doors should be used. This will permit the doors to

be closed when the building is un-occupied, and at night instead of using large quantities of curtaining or blinds, to provide greater security and to retain its essential agricultural character. Similarly any hay-loft openings could retain hinged timber boarded doors hung on the outside of the building; where such features survive they should be retained and not removed or blocked up the proposed internal lay-out being carefully designed to incorporate them.

- One of the essential features of barns is their historic timber roofs with rafters carried on purlins supported by substantial roof trusses. Imaginative conversions will consider reversing the living accommodation by providing the main living space at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor level, leaving the roof largely open to view, locating the bedrooms and bathrooms on the ground floor where subdivision of the space will not impact on the roof timbers and trusses.
- The setting of buildings should be carefully handled avoiding subdivision of yards into fenced gardens, retaining any historic surfacing such as cobbles, stones on edge, blue-brick stable pavers or red bricks in enclosed yards. Tarmac should be avoided in preference to natural stone chippings or gravel, which should be used instead for any new access roads.



7.5.11 New shopfronts – within the limited scope of this conservation area shop windows should not be over large and follow local and regional patterns of timber stall risers, side pilasters and painted fascia boards.

7.5.12 Signage - should be appropriate to its location with a careful choice of lettering styles and colours trying to emulate the brand of Rockingham Castle; these are likely to be gold lettering on a dark-green background. Wording should be kept to the minimum with single word names preferred without excessive additional information such as phone numbers, e-mail addresses and lists of services. Any sign boards should be externally lit; internally lit box-signs will not be permitted. Stuck-on plastic lettering should be avoided, but cast individual brass letters may be used on a wooden natural or painted background. Shiny acrylic sign boards are unacceptable and applications for these will be refused. What is required is a sign for a shop that will add quality to the conservation area, not detract from it.

7.5.13 Unauthorised Signage - should any signs be put up without permission the council may take appropriate action for their removal (see Section 3, paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 above); retrospective applications for such signage are likely to be refused.

7.5.14 Design and Access Statements – all new planning applications should now contain a statement explaining the permeability of the proposed development, how its design has been arrived at, and how it is appropriate to its location. The Joint SPD provides a framework for preparing such statements with a sequence of questions posed to aid the preparation. Contiguous with this requirement is the increased need for applicants to provide contextual drawings that show the proposed development within the street scene, showing adjacent buildings drawn

to an accurate scale (usually in outline rather than all the details of window and doors) or using a photo-montage to show how it fits in with them in terms of design and massing; there is a useful computer package called "Sketch Up" which will turn photos into drawings. The provision of such information would greatly assist planning officers and Members of the Planning Committee who determine such planning applications, and members of the public who may be consulted on the applications, such as the Rockingham Parish Meeting.

***The Conservation Area for Rockingham is well established, and is supported by the development guidelines and practical design assistance given in this document, it is hoped the appearance of the area will be maintained and improved to the advantage of the local residents and visitors to the area. It will also mean that Rockingham will be largely protected from development pressures in the future; residents can be assured that it will continue in a form recognisable as it now exists, and that inappropriate developments will not be permitted.***

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