



# Conservation Area Appraisal Management plan

## Weldon



February 2009

# WELDON VILLAGE 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 the village, within the defined boundary of the 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. One of the most important aspects of Weldon village area is that its present road system preserves the original medieval lay-out of the village that has survived through to the present day. This aspect is of particular interest with two quite separate manor house sites dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, one in Little Weldon and the other in Great Weldon that were not only separate hamlets, but separate manors with different landholding; this has resulted in quite distinct and different character areas, where the roads appear to follow the lay-out on an important Elizabethan map of 1585.

1.1.2 **Great Weldon** hamlet is a linear settlement with a cluster of thatched cottages and Georgian stone houses built mainly on the south side of the road to either side of a bend in the road opposite from the fine parish church with its lantern tower that is set well back from the road within its church yard on the north side of Church Street; the church appears somewhat over large and grand for such a small settlement. The Willow Brook forms a division running across the landscape from west to east rising along its course to the north as it flows out of the village. It is crossed by two road bridges and other small footbridges one of which, Church Walk, leads directly to the church from the north of the settlement through an area of significant woodland.

1.1.3 **High Street:** The West Bridge leads directly into the end of High Street, at its junction with the Corby Road; High Street too is a long straight street with a linear settlement of older houses along it, this time built on the north side of the road quite close together, the building density increasing to form a continuous frontage where the road becomes the Stamford Road. By contrast the south side of the road is largely open devoid of houses; **The Green** is a small triangular shaped village green with some encroachments on to its south side; these form an attractive group and include the former village school, the school master's house, and the *Round House* the former village lock-up. On the approach from the East Bridge the Oundle Road retains its older village character with a tight cluster of houses built on both sides of the road, including a thatched cottage that juts out into the road on a blind bend. A road leads off to the north-east Deene End that skirts the southern boundary of the cricket ground, a large area of open green space, with a few thatched cottages built at its eastern boundary.

1.1.4 **Little Weldon** is a quite distinct area to the north of High Street approached down Bridge Street, which as its name suggests crosses over another small brook in the valley bottom, after which the road rises again and the settlement is set along the ridge of the hill on either side of the narrow Chapel Road with some significant older stone farmhouses and thatched cottages. In addition there is the

Congregational Church and its former chapel school that are built in one of the old fields that run off to the south of the road; this adds a historical element to the settlement. A little further to the west is an ancient, probably medieval in origin, green-lane footpath that runs down hill retaining its rural character with bushes along its edge until it meets the east end of the Dash Farm Close housing estate, and then continues across the stream via a small footbridge up hill to a stile on the Corby Road.

1.1.5 The antiquity of the settlement is worth comment with substantial evidence for Roman settlement in and around the village who exploited the mineral resources of the natural stone and iron ore close by; an important Roman villa site was discovered here in the past with a mosaic pavement. This is explained in more depth in Part 1 of the Conservation Area Appraisal that more specifically identifies its special interest. The last Chapter 8 provided a summary of issues of the proposed 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.

#### 1.2.1 Present and potential future threats

The expansion of Corby due to the dramatic growth of the steel industry during the 1930s to 50s in particular, made an impact on many of the local villages in the Corby area, including Weldon. During this period new housing was built in the fields below Little Weldon and High Street to accommodate the increased population drawn to Corby by its steel works that was one of the few places in the country to show growth and expansion during the depression of the 1930s. This impacted on Weldon in other ways, the small village school built on the Village Green proved inadequate to cope with the increased number of pupils and eventually closed when a new C. of E. Primary School was built on the edge of the growing estate, close to Rose Avenue, to cater for the children of the enlarged population. Council housing was also built along the south side of the Corby Road (Hillside Crescent) on the outskirts of the older village area only a mile or so from the Corby Works further to the west, thus not damaging the historic heart of Weldon too much. In June 2008 the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) was adopted; this is a key LDF document. In particular Policy 13: 'General Sustainable Development Principles' provides guidance on the aspiration for raising design standards of new developments, both in architectural terms and in their landscape setting so as to respect and better protect assets including the 'townscape of towns and villages'. Policy 7 of the document identifies proposed sustainable urban extensions (SUE) to the North East of Corby, with a target in excess of 5100 dwellings. Figure 13 was amended at the request of Corby Borough Council to give flexibility to be larger than Priors Hall. Related to this, a mixed use development, including 1,000 dwellings is proposed to the north-east of the village settlement, spreading from the Stamford Road beyond the current north entry point into Weldon village, coming down to the edge of the Oundle Road two fields away from the Manor House that is an important listed building, given the high grading of Grade 2\*. Should this development go forward there are several issues that need carefully addressing such as how it will relate to the existing village settlement; how its road system will connect with the existing and its legibility. Rather than be a stand alone development it will preferably need to be integrated into the existing village both in terms of its architectural design and the areas existing character as

defined in the accompanying Conservation Area Appraisal of Weldon. The Joint SPD on Sustainable Design is now in place (North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit: Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document; adopted July 2008) that provides not only advice and guidance on key planning issues, but sets out the contribution that needs to be made by those involved in designing and constructing new developments and provides an SPD check list that is a framework for applicants in completing Sustainable Design and Energy Statements to accompany planning applications. In Little Weldon the *Shoulder of Mutton* public house is currently closed, and as such the building may be vulnerable from proposed development of the site that may involve its demolition. It is however protected in part by Policy V4: *Preferred Option for Provision of Small Scale Retail Development and Other Facilities to Meet Local Need* of the SSP (North Northamptonshire LDF Corby Borough Site Specific Proposals Preferred Options, 2006, p.40) that states “proposals involving the loss of existing village shops, post office or public houses will be resisted unless it can be evidenced that all reasonable efforts have been made to continue existing uses”.

**1.2.2 21<sup>st</sup> Century Development:** Much of the old medieval village with its 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century houses remained largely untouched until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when two significant housing developments were permitted, Church View and King’s Road on the south side of High Street, and more recently along Deene End with Cricketer’s Green, that has set a new higher standard for housing developments in conservation areas within the Corby Borough. The Little Weldon area has also seen much new housing; on Dash Farm Close in the conservation area, and to the north of Chapel Road just outside the conservation area boundary where a greater density of dwellings has been permitted; few of these new houses were built with conservation in mind, but follow national trends to be built as economically as possibly using brick, concrete and artificial roofing materials. In more recent times the introduction of UPVC glazing has affected an increasing number of the older properties in the village, even affecting some of the listed buildings. This has had a deleterious effect on the character of the village and is likely to continue with the loss of more of the remaining historic sashed and casement windows in the village; those in listed buildings have greater protection in that an alteration such as changing windows requires Listed Building Consent; to alter them without consent is a criminal offence that can lead to prosecution, even retrospectively.

**1.2.3 Village Confine boundary maps:** The introduction of such maps initially in the Corby Local Plan and then identified in the SSP (North Northamptonshire LDF Corby Borough Site Specific Proposals Preferred Options, 2006) helped to protect certain identified rural villages of special interest by providing policies for development within defined boundaries; this included Weldon. In the section on ‘Villages and Rural Areas’ in the SSP explanation of these ‘village confines’ is given (in paragraph 3.89) stating that they show “where development would normally be permitted” adding that “areas outside the village confines would normally be subject to strict development restraint policies.” This is supported by PPS3 that considers such developments more sustainable by re-using previously developed land within existing village facilities, rather than outside it, proposing a growth strategy that is urban rather than rural based. Weldon is specifically mentioned in the SSP

(paragraph 3.90) stating that most of the “previous housing allocations have now been developed” except for two sites, one on Oundle Road (R17) and a site at Chapel Road (part R16), the document explaining that these “are proposed to be retained for a housing allocation”. The Village Confines map for Weldon Conservation Area also usefully defines open green spaces that were excluded from development areas, giving them the status of ‘Environmental and Nature Conservation Site’; these include areas identified in the appraisal document, such as the field and woodland to the east of the church that is thus protected by policy, and is in addition protected by PPS7: ‘Sustainable Development in Rural Areas’ (2004) that encourages the protection of the countryside and the character of rural settlements.

**1.2.4 Scheduled Ancient Monument site:** The site to the south of the A427 Bypass, close to the roundabout at the junction with the Stamford Road that provides a north-eastern access into the village, lies within the conservation area boundary and is further protected as a special archaeological site, being the location of the small Roman village and the Roman villa site where a mosaic pavement was discovered in the past; permission is unlikely ever to be granted for development on this identified field.

**1.2.5 Corby Road:** The open green field area to the east of Gander Close on the north side of Corby Road may provide a potential housing site. However, if this is accessed off the main road it is likely to result in significant loss of some of the fine avenue of trees that line this side of the road for some distance, and currently contributes to the character of the conservation area. It may be possible to access this land off Dash Farm Close and in addition the long rectangular field to the south of the chapel burial ground; these would be so hidden from view as to have marginal impact on the conservation area, unlike the opening up of a new access off the Corby Road would have. Permeability of access is an important feature of housing requirements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it would be possible to provide footpath links to the main road and also directly to the school grounds to satisfy that requirement without compromising the character of the conservation area.

1.2.6 This appraisal has identified a number of important areas of open green space (see 4.4.15 to 18 of the conservation area appraisal), to be specific the triangle of land bounded on the north by Willow Brook, the Church yard to the west, East Bridge to the east and Church Street to the south; this adds much to the rural character of the hamlet of Great Weldon. In addition the area of the former Great Weldon Manor House site set between no. 15 Church Street, to the boundary with Kettering Road and the Willow Brook. Here no development of the land should be permitted in the future; these should be regarded as constraint areas.

1.2.7 There is very little further opportunity for housing on High Street or the Stamford Road, other than in-fill plots.

1.2.8 Within the area of Great Weldon there is little or no opportunity for further housing development (see 4.4.28); it has been compromised in the past by the various bungalows built at the west end of Church Street. None of the open green areas particularly to the east of the church, between Church Street and Willow Brook, which are protected by policy, should ever be developed for housing; this would have a damaging effect on the special character of the area, and the setting of the church.

1.2.9 The conservation area boundary currently runs very close up the south-east side of the Manor House, one of the finest listed buildings in Weldon. The Manor Farm and field immediately adjacent should be brought into the conservation area to better protect the setting of the Manor House and to act as a buffer zone to any new development (such as the proposed Weldon Park development referred to in 1.2.1 above). Any housing proposals immediately next to the Manor House itself should be strongly resisted as this is likely to have a deleterious affect on the setting of the listed building at this important entry point from the east, into the conservation area, where its rural character is at its strongest. This rural character is defined by the trees and hedges to the west of the field and along the edge of the brook with the older cottages set behind it on the north side, and the open field close to East Bridge on the south side, where the road crosses over a stone bridge into the heart of the old village, and by the setting of the Manor House itself. This is a fine Jacobean small mansion house set well back from the road, down an approach drive but visible through its open gateway; this leads directly to the centre of the front of the building, its tall 3-storey porch drawing the eye towards it and acting as a focus and landmark.

The last Chapter 8 of Part 1 identified a number of negative characteristics of the proposed conservation area, including public realm areas and private property issues (please refer to Part 1).

### 1.3 Objectives of the Management Plan

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. The designation of Weldon as a conservation area for a number of years past may have been taken for granted by the general population; however, one of the aims of this current appraisal document will is to better inform the general population, developers, builders and staff of CBC Planning Department and Elected Members and Parish Councillors to better appreciate Weldon's special interest, that it is worthy and matters, and that any new proposal for change should be carefully considered.

## 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 area, and the number of Listed Buildings and buildings identified as of Local Interest within its boundary. 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). Currently, 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 CBC's Development Control officers in determining planning applications within the conservation area.

#### Buildings at Risk

3.2 No buildings within Weldon 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 Corby Borough Council's enforcement strategy with regard to unauthorised development to listed buildings and works in Conservation Areas is to seek resolution by mutual agreement with the parties concerned, where ever possible, avoiding the service of formal notices or prosecutions; this is in accordance with the Enforcement Concordat that provides a best practice guide for local authorities. This was published in March 1998 when the Cabinet Office, in partnership with the Local Government Association, published the central and local government 'Concordat on Good Enforcement Action: a voluntary, non-statutory code setting out best practice. see:-[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/)

enforcement/enforcement.htm website, [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk) Enforcement (the Enforcement Concordat).

3.4 Inappropriate advertisements and signage do not in general pose a threat within the Conservation Area, except for banners on the side of one of the village inns, but these are of a temporary nature.

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. Article 4 (2) directions if introduced can help to control inappropriate alterations to windows and doors caused by the removal of traditional timber sash windows and timber panelled doors and their replacement with white plastic UPVC double glazing and doors; the principle use of Article 4 (2) direction would be to ward against inappropriate changes to historic buildings, such as those identified as such in the appraisal; however, their introduction would have resource implications for the Council and may require additional enforcement officers to fully implement such a policy; it is not the current intention of the Council to introduce this measure. However, this does not preclude the possibility of the Council introducing such measures in the future should the character of the Conservation Area be damaged by further alterations to 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; Northamptonshire County 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 Weldon, 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 Weldon 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 percentage of listed buildings; but also of the value local people place on the historic fabric of their village.

4.5 A number of traditional windows survive in Weldon that varies in style according to the date of the building; most of these are listed buildings. The earliest windows are stone mullioned windows with leaded-light windows as seen on the 17<sup>th</sup> century Manor House that has diamond-shaped panes, called 'quarries'; these catch the light in a way that flat-glass never does and is part of the character of the building. Here the outer lights are fixed, the central one being a metal-framed side-hung casement that opens.



4.6 Similarly on no. 12 Church Walk the windows are similar, only being a 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement with rectangular leaded-lights and metal casements shown here in the attractive stone gabled dormers that rise through the eaves of the building; notice too how the roof slates over-sail the eaves that never had a gutter, to throw the water clear of the building.

4.7 The stone mullioned windows on the 1930s *Shoulder of Mutton* public house are similar with rectangular leaded-lights. Many of the other notable 17<sup>th</sup> century houses such as Haunt Hill House have altered single-paned glazing with fixed lights and top-hung metal casements (see below) catch the light in an odd way; those on the Corby Road are similar but with traditional side-hung casements.



4.8 The tradition of using diamond-paned leaded-light windows gained a revival in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as at no. 13 Deene End; they are also popular stuck on to double-glazed windows, where they are in questionable taste.



4.9 Many of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century thatch roofed cottages in the village typically feature windows with thin wooden lintels and small-paned timber glazed side-hung casements such as at no. 11 Deene End (see below) that has a thin central vertical glazing bar dividing the window into 8-panes.

4.10 In the course of time such windows were modernised by leaving out the central bar and dividing the window into 3 square panes, as at no. 37 Chapel Road.



4.11 In the 19<sup>th</sup> century such windows were replaced with ones with larger square panes such as on the old thatched cottage no. 16 Church Street, where also some external wooden shutters are .

4.12 There are a number of 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian properties on Church Street and Stamford Road that retain their original sash windows of several types and sizes. Rectory Lodge provides an interesting mix of 12-paned sashes with small-paned casements to the attic dormers (see right).



4.13 No. 1 Stamford Road provides one of the very few examples of a Georgian tri-partite window on the ground floor left; its windows feature some of the largest number of panes seen in the village 6 wide totally 24 panes, but again with small-paned casements to the attic dormers (see below).

4.14 Another example but without quite as many panes can be seen on no. 7 High Street that



features tri-partite windows, with 24-paned sashes above in the raised walling that is dated 1844, demonstrating that this continued well into the Victorian period (see below).



4.15 Slightly earlier the Regency Old Rectory features quite large panes of glass in 12-paned sashes with very fine glazing bars, some of them with curved frames in the bay window (see below). Of a similar date are the 16-paned sash windows on nos 3 & 5 Chapel Road.

4.16 The second-half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the use of even larger panes of glass, such as on nos. 20-24 Chapel Road that has 4-paned sashes and 3-ove-3 paned windows to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor; the building is dated 1865 (see below).



4.17 On the cottage properties in the same period a more simple 2-paned light was generally adopted, usually with a central casement and fixed lights to either side as at nos. 6 & 7 School Lane (see below). Such styles of windows have been adopted on many of the better housing developments in the village.

4.18 Sadly many properties in the village have lost their original windows replaced in recent years with UPVC glazing with top hung casements, some with stuck on glazing bars. These have been installed differently to traditional windows and doors that are normally set back from the front of the building in a frame, whereas modern replacements often appear to be set too close to the front, virtually hung off the façade. This detail dramatically alters the visual nature of tradition buildings and the streetscape; see no.1 Church Street (below). The promotion and support of good standards of repair and maintenance will help to retain these distinctive features.



4.19 Repair is preferable and cheaper than replacement; old timber is usually of much better quality than modern softwoods and will last longer, some times hundreds of years. New pieces of preservative treated softwood can be 'spliced in' to replace the lower sections of a rotten frame where the sill may be all that needs replacing, removing the need for a complete new window.

4.20 Badly fitting windows that won't open and are draughty can be re-hung after accumulated layers of paint have been removed, vertically sliding sash windows will usually require new sash cords, parting beads and sometimes new pulleys, and can be fitted with brushes to exclude the draught.

4.21 Old glass was hand made and full of character, and is not flat and flawless like modern sheet glass; it should always be saved where possible. Care should be taken when repairing windows not to damage old glass as it is thin, it should be protected when using chemical paint stripper on the window frames by taping the edges, or removed and replaced later (though this is likely to lead to damage and replacement).

4.22 Traditional windows should always be painted and not stained a dark brown mahogany colour; except on converted farm buildings where a natural timber (oak is best) treatment appears appropriate. Micro-porous paints should be used as they allow the timber to 'breathe' and so the paint is less likely to peel or blister. As a general rule windows should be painted light colours such as white or cream or green. Strong colours can be used successfully on doors, and sometimes window frames; the use of modern paints and methods can lengthen the time between redecorations.

4.23 A few traditional braced-and ledged vertically boarded timber doors exist within the village, such as at no. 10 Church Walk where the oak door has timber cleats over the joints between the adjacent boards; unfortunately the iron nails holding it together have caused staining to the lower part of the door (see right).



4.24 There are also some 4-panelled cottage doors, as at no. 10 School Lane (see below) and some 6-panelled Georgian-style doors with raised-and-fielded panels. Many have been replaced with UPVC white-plastic doors that spoil the traditional character of the village. This makes the several surviving original doors all the more precious and every effort should be made to retain them or replace them with good copies.

## Rainwater Goods

4.25 Rainwater goods are another traditional feature that when replaced by modern plastic detracts from the character and traditional appearance of the building. In Weldon the main materials used are cast-iron gutters, with cast-iron down-pipes and hoppers, particular seen on High Street and Stamford Road; there are also some timber gutters with cast-iron pipes. It is important to carry our simple basic

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 or ogee, 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. Unfortunately many have been replaced with plastic, 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 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. Bird/leaf guards can be fitted to the tops of soil pipes and to rainwater outlets to prevent blockages.

## **Roofs and Chimneys**

4.26 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 and subsequently in the last 50 years with modern artificial and concrete roofing materials, often pantiles. Due to the problems of availability and the cost of materials many owners may be tempted to replace stone slate and Welsh slate with modern synthetic alternatives.

4.27 Maintenance is essential to keep roofs weather-tight and prolong life expectancy. A common problem particularly with blue 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 have no roofing felt and were weather-proofed by torching the underside of the slates with 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.

4.28 Cement/sand mortars should never be used as it will not allow any expansion of the roof covering and will soon crack and fall off. External coating of roofs with bitumen products should be avoided; it is unsightly and prevents the roof from 'breathing' which will lead to decay of timbers and slates. Due to the exposed position of chimneys, re-pointing will often be required. Chimney stacks are most

commonly found in the Old Village area on gable ends in either dressed stone with aprons and corniced caps, or in hand-made brickwork.

4.29 Many of the defects visible in stone roofs are attributable to the method of laying the roof rather than deterioration of the roofing material. The most common failures occur in the wooden pegs, which shrink and dry out with age and allow slates to slip and laths that tend to give under the weight of the stone slates. In many instances roof timbers have bent under the weight of the roof and unless the timber is cracked or badly infested with Death Watch beetle or dry rot there should be no cause for alarm. If a single stone slate has slipped, the adjacent slates can be raised and wedged to allow the slate to be removed, the area uncovered; the slate must be thoroughly cleaned to remove all dust and moss, it can then be re-fixed by bedding the slate in mortar on the slates at either side below. On no account should the slate be bedded at, and under, the tail as the mortar attracts moisture through capillary action and the repair will be unsightly. On no account should cracked or broken slates be re-used, nor should slates be reversed or hung from the tail.

## **Walls**

4.30 It is important that maintenance of walls uses traditional techniques and materials. Strap-pointing and the use of hard mortar mixes will usually lead to problems, such as damp inside the buildings and eventually cause failure of the stone or brick fabric. Inappropriate pointing and material treatments, such as cladding, will also damage the appearance of the building.

4.31 Stonework and brickwork will deteriorate as a result of natural weathering, exposure to damp and structural defects. Lack of maintenance will accelerate the rate of decay. Walls should be kept dry by maintaining gutters, downpipes 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 ground level and install land-drains around the building.

4.32 Painting of stonework should be avoided at all costs as it is difficult to remove without damaging the stone and requires regular maintenance; it also seals the surface and does not allow moisture to evaporate naturally. Cleaning stonework using high-pressure water jets or more destructive sand blasting will remove the surface of the stonework allowing accelerated deterioration to begin.

4.33 Re-pointing should only be carried out where the mortar is soft and can be easily scraped out with a screwdriver. Never fill an eroded joint without raking out first. Never 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 stone/brick. Mortars should preferably use a matured lime putty of hydraulic lime mixed in 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 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/stone-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

## **Temporary Works or Scaffolding**

4.34 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 will erect scaffolds; as usual on-site practices may not be acceptable when working on or near historic buildings. The aim is to avoid scarring and damage to any features.

4.35 Where fixings are made to stone or brickwork there is increase 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; this avoids damage by corrosion that causes 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; old glass should not be smashed to make ties.

## **Reinstatement**

### **Windows and Doors**

4.36 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 would enhance individual buildings, the streetscape and promote local characteristics.

4.37 New windows should be exact replicas of the old; the shape of window openings should not be enlarge or changed unless it reflects the age and character of the house. Windows should not project in front of the frame and should not have an integral projecting timber sill. Appropriate sill and lintels to match the existing should be used i.e. a thin oak beam with stop-chamfered front edge, or natural stone lintel or brick arch to match the rest of the building. Where no original windows survive, to provide a pattern for replacements, neighbouring houses should be studied for detail.

4.38 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 own property and contributes to the sense of place.

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

- Proportion and subdivision – The glazing pattern of the original windows ought to 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 its original construction.
- Mode of opening – The introduction of top hung or tilt-and-turn opening lights is always visually jarring and harmful to historic character. Overlapping ‘storm-seal’ type details are an entirely modern introduction and are unnecessary if flush fitting units are properly made. Spring loaded (spiral-balance) sashes are an inferior replacement mechanism compared with properly weighted double- or single-hung sashes.
- Glazing – Traditional glazing bar profiles, properly jointed and glazed with putty, (or glazing compound), rather than beading, will give a genuine appearance.
- Thermal insulation – Double glazing cannot be achieved within traditional multiple pane designs without bars being either much too thick or fake. Beading is nearly always added which further detracts from the appearance. Attempting to introduce double glazing into a traditional design usually means a small air gap that hugely reduces the insulation properties anyway. The use of internal shutters and thick curtains, the lining filled with ‘bump’ (insulation material) can greatly reduce heat loss without the need for window replacement.
- Draught-proofing – The most significant heat loss through old windows is due to poor fitting and lack of draught-stripping. There are proprietary systems that fit draught excluders, and greatly reduce the amount of air changes and so heat loss.
- Sound insulation – In noisy locations people often replace windows with modern double-glazed units to reduce the problem. In fact 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.
- Sills – Traditional sills should be retained unless beyond repair; it is a relatively simple job to replace or scarf new timber in; many windows are condemned by contracting joiners due to a defective sill where the rest of the window is still serviceable.

## Doors

4.40 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. Unfortunately many owners choose to express their individuality by replacing a serviceable vintage door with an off-the-peg unit in stained hardwood, or UPVC, often with an in-built Georgian fan-light that is never acceptable. Traditional braced-and-ledged vertically boarded doors are an appropriate design for most of the cottage and farmhouse properties within the Weldon Conservation Area. Where properties have a more balanced symmetrical facade a traditional Georgian-style 6-panelled door is likely to compliment the style of the building.

## Roofs and chimneys

4.41 Due to the problems of availability and the cost of materials many owners may be tempted to replace stone slate and Welsh slate with modern synthetic alternatives. The reinstatement of traditional materials is important for retaining the local character of Weldon. Today there are a much wider variety of products available. Artificial slates should be avoided when ever possible, as they inevitably damage the quality of the roofscape. Natural blue slate is still produced in England, Wales and Ireland, but cheaper products are now available from abroad, and are being imported from Spain (often very brittle), South America and China (an excellent alternative to British slate), great care is needed when specifying real blue-slate. Some of these are suitable for replacements on non-prominent buildings or new-build, but they are never a satisfactory replacement for historic slate roofing. New slate should be fixed using nails – clips are usually specified to compensate for poor slate that splits when holed and should best be avoided as whole rows of slates can be blown off in high winds; using a correct lap will prevent wind-lift so that is not a justification. It is important at a time of climate change where sever weather can punish roofs with torrential down-pours of rain and almost hurricane strong winds, to ensure that roofs can stand up to such weather without leaking; the use of traditional roofing materials advocated here is a sound investment for the uncertain future given the examples of recent years where severe flooding has occurred in places for the first time.

4.42 Owners of buildings with traditional Colleyweston slate must be aware that much of the slate will actually have a lot of life left in it, but may be suffering from nail rot. Opportunistic contractors will often offer such owners a cheap price to re-roof in artificial or imported slate, knowing that the Colleyweston slate they reclaim can be sold on or re-used on much more lucrative work elsewhere. The Council within the limitations of its powers will resist all attempts to replace such traditional roofs with modern roofing materials; such a change on a listed building will require consent.

4.43 When stripping a roof at least one-third wastage should be allowed for slate; however, if greater care is given by those stripping roofs, using for example an elevator instead of throwing the slates off on to an old mattress, then a greater survival of original slates can be achieved, sometimes in excess of 90%. If not enough matching slates are available, then the original slates should be re-used on the most visible slopes. 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 preferably at the eaves rather than using vents on the ridge. Surviving traditional ridge tiles should be re-used and re-pointed. Slates should be re-fixed in the same pattern using copper or alloy nails. Where chimneystacks and pots have been removed or reduced in height they should be reinstated to their original height with clay pots to match.

## Shopfronts

4.44. There is only one shop in Weldon, the *Londis* Supermarket and village Post Office; this has a traditional timber shop front and long fascia board



on this traditional stone building (see below), so shop fronts do not present a problem in the village.



4.45 Signage – The use of internally illuminated signs will be discouraged; the Council will encourage the use of traditional timber shop fronts framed by simple pilasters in any existing or any proposed new shops. Where existing properties currently have shop fronts these should be retained in any change of use to purely domestic so as to retain the diverse character of the village buildings.

4.46 Lettering on signage should follow traditional lettering styles and not be too prominent. It is noted that there are two inns in the village, one with a traditional sign supported in a metal frame on the top of a timber post; the other with its painted sign projecting from the face of the building, and with its name on a fascia board on the building.

- Design – Should any new shops be proposed in the Weldon Conservation Area, such new shop fronts and signage will require planning permission; the LPA will expect these elements to be competently designed to suit their context.
- Blinds – Traditional awning type blinds are a useful and attractive feature of many old shop fronts and add to the street scene in many villages and towns permitting the display of goods outside of the shop window. By comparison modern ‘Dutch’ blinds appear a strange introduction, and will be resisted due to their artificial stiffening. These items are often introduced on frontages that have broken awnings and they frequently obscure original features and fail to relate to the entablature and design of the shop front.

## **New Design**

4.47 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.

4.48 Attention has already been drawn to the Rockingham Forest Trust's "Building on Tradition" booklet (mentioned above); developers may find its section on 'Building Form and Scale', layout and style of particular value. In Weldon most properties are a mix of 2-storeys, and 1 ½ storeys with 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.

### Building Materials

4.49. New build within the conservation area will be preferred to be built of local coursed stone with natural stone rather than of artificial stone, and using natural slate roofing materials, rather than artificial materials.



4.50 Off the south side of Chapel Road is a recent development illustrated here (photographed in 2008) built of natural stone for walling, similar to grey Weldon stone, and the lintels and sills of the windows combines with the natural grey-roof slates to fit in well with the older buildings in the village.

### Public Realm



4.51 In Weldon the streets and roads are uniformly covered in tarmac with a mix of stone curbs or replaced concrete curbs, with some protective concrete bollards as barriers to the road edge.

4.52 The aim is to create a distinct, attractive, safe and clean pedestrian environment that enhances the experience for residents, local workers and visitors and helps to control the speed of vehicles in the village 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, which 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 are areas of green space with seating: on the south side of Corby Road overlooking the Kettering Road close to the road junction.

4.53 There is also a bench of a different design in a quiet corner of the village green, opposite from the War Memorial, where a simple area of public realm has been created with flagged paving bounded by a dry-stone wall; this modest piece of public realm is both successful and safe.



## 5 Education and Training

5.1 Training and education will be necessary to sustain a conservation-based approach to managing the conservation area 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 March 2005 HELM finished 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 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 and further specialisms within each craft. The NHTG is an English Heritage Initiative <sup>16</sup> 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 discussion with the Chair of the Parish Council took place concerning the existing boundary of the conservation area, and some proposed amendments where support was given for the proposals. In addition the owners of several of the more important listed buildings 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.

6.3 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 Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009. An information evening was held at the village hall on Friday 27<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.

6.4 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 village 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

7.2.1 Street surfacing – there are almost entirely tarmac roads and paths throughout Weldon village, and the designated area of the conservation area. Where this is damaged or in poor condition such as identified on stretches of Church Street where there is considerable patching 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 historic buildings within it.

Consideration could be given to introducing traditional full-sized (rather than small square flag stones) riven (preferable to cut) York-stone flags in certain historic areas.

7.2.2 Curbs to edges of roads – currently these are stone, blue-granite in certain locations (such as in front of the George Hotel), or concrete. Consideration could be given to replacing the concrete curbs on High Street and Stamford Road with new curb stones; ‘Conservation Curbs’ (produced by Marshall’s and manufactured in Northamptonshire from the local limestone) would appear to be a suitable product that would fit in well with the area and its buildings; particularly useful for any new developments in the area.



7.2.3 Telegraph poles and overhead wires - these do not appear to pose a problem in this village, except for the Little Weldon area on Chapel Road where there are some over-head cables fastened onto the fronts of buildings that are unsightly. Consideration could be made to persuading utility companies to laying cables underground, especially in this area where the main street is much narrower than on High Street.

7.2.4 Street lighting – some of the present lighting poles look dated being standard highway lamps of a grey colour, or un-painted and galvanised. Those outside of the principal 17<sup>th</sup> century listed buildings on the Corby Road in the village look particularly obtrusive.



7.2.5 Consideration should be given to their replacement with a more suitable ‘heritage’ lamp, the post painted black or green rather than left grey showing the galvanised finish of the metal post. The church is externally lit at night and its lantern as well that produces a stunning effect when seen from Church Street. On Church Walk is an example of a modern version of a traditional lamp-post that could be introduced in other areas as well (see below).

7.2.6 Metal barriers on paths, to green spaces, and used as cycle barriers are normally galvanised metal poles; consideration should be given for these to be replaced with a ‘heritage’ product more in-keeping with the setting within the conservation area. Similarly separating off The Green from the Stamford Road is a row of ugly concrete posts that run up to the School Lane. These should be replaced in due course with something more appropriate, e.g. stone posts, or

wooden posts (stained brown) with square wooden rails laid at an angle strengthened by black-painted metal straps and brackets.

7.2.7 Public Benches – the two areas of green space have a single bench that in the course of time could be replaced by another bench or more to provide an L-shaped arrangement; these could be traditional wooden benches or a mix of black-painted metal with wooden slated seating (such as is widely available – see Marshal’s, or other, public realm catalogue for various possible solutions). Similarly waste-paper bins should be uniformly of a cast-iron black drum shape (see 4.48 above).

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

7.3.1 The designation of Weldon as a conservation area has an impact on the village community within it in that certain works to family houses that would normally be “permitted development” now require planning approval from the Council. 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; to clarify the situation this is detailed below.

#### Permission will be required for:

- Boundary treatments will be carefully considered. These should try and match other walls in the village, or use hedges or coppiced hedges like hurdles, especially appropriate to rural boundaries. Timber paled fences, or metal railings and gates because of their suburban character are considered inappropriate within the Weldon Conservation Area and will be discouraged. However, traditional 5-bar timber and some metal gates have been successfully incorporated into properties within the conservation area and the use of these will be encouraged.
- 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.
- Trees are given additional protection in a conservation area, particularly those on property boundaries, as affecting the character and setting of the village and the conservation area. 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 – traditionally using gravel or stone chippings in combination with stone (not concrete paving) paths. The use of tarmacadam and brick/concrete pavements will be discouraged, their use will be carefully considered by the Planning Department.
- Traditional doors and windows – a number have been replaced with inappropriate white UPVC double-glazed windows and doors. The Council would wish to reverse this trend and encourage the retention of historic joinery and single-glazed sashed and wooden-casement windows. The installation of secondary glazing will be encouraged; this gives a superior performance in terms of thermal loss to rooms compared to factory double-glazed units. Various companies offer secondary glazed units; *Storm Windows* have produced an almost invisible product that is particularly suited to historic buildings and has been endorsed by English Heritage. Solid timber doors of either panel construction (typical 6-panelled Georgian style door) usually painted appropriate for larger dwellings, or vertically boarded braced-and-ledged doors, usually natural oak, oiled or stained brown rather than painted, more suited to cottage properties. Where farm buildings such as stables have/ or are intended to be converted to dwellings a split stable-type door with small-paned glazed upper section hung on side hinges, and a lower vertically boarded door often is the most appropriate solution.
- Dormer windows and roof lights – similarly UPVC dormer windows will not be permitted on the front roofs of historic buildings within the conservation area; particularly listed buildings (which will need Listed Building Consent) and those identified in the appraisal as Local Interest Buildings. There are various types of dormers within the village and the region. Gabled dormers in Weldon are mostly confined to the larger gentry elite residences, such as Manor House. Farmhouses tend to have hip ended dormers whereas, cottage properties mostly have flat-roofed dormers where the roof slopes back to the main roof, sometimes referred to as a 'cat-slide' dormer; these will be encouraged where appropriate especially in any new build properties, or on extensions built-on to existing houses; such dormers also appear on Haunt Hill House. Regarding roof lights, these should be cut-in to the existing roof slope, rather than sat like a box on the roof, such 'Conservation Roof Lights' come in a variety of sizes and applicants should check the availability of specific sizes before submitting applications; only accurate drawings, rather than indicative ones will be acceptable; such windows are only available from specialist suppliers. **N.B** Roof lights will only be permitted on rear roof pitches, not on roofs facing towards the public highway.
- Roofs – where traditional roofs have survived i.e. graduated stone slate, or Colleyweston roofs, or thatched roofs these should be retained and not replaced with new artificial roofing materials, including Bradstone, concrete tiles, pantiles and resin-cast tiles. Where such roofs have been lost in the



past owners will be encouraged to consider 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 - houses in gardens, both to the side and behind (back-land) existing houses; threats of demolition to existing houses and replacement with greater densities will require careful consideration by both the local community and the LPA (see additional section below).
- Blocks of flats – any new development should be of an appropriate design.
- Farm buildings – do offer possible opportunities for conversion to dwellings.
- Porches and canopies – on both existing and new buildings will require permission within the conservation area.
- 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;
  - Not 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 the Weldon 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 dwelling house 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 dwelling/house with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles;
  - e) The enlarged part of the dwelling/house would extend beyond a wall forming a side elevation of the original dwelling/house; or
  - f) The enlarged part of the dwelling/house would have more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling/house”

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.

## 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 Extensions on to existing properties – the style and scale 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 be set back slightly from the front of the property, or with a steeply pitched gabled roof also set back; these shall be single storey structures only

permitting extensions of the ground-floor of the building (example below shows a lean-to rear extension built on to an earlier extension at the Manor House in the village of Stanion a few miles away).



7.5.2 In some local villages such as Lower Benefield some properties feature side extensions with additional lower roofed extensions built on to them providing an organic development character that is considered a suitable model. If taller 2-storey, or preferably 1 ½ storey, extensions are required these should only be added on to the rear of the property at right-angles to it (preferably at a mid-point so as to obscure it from the front) forming a T-shaped plan with the main house, ensuring that the ridge-line is set below the main ridge of the house. Any new windows should match those on the principal property using for instance timber lintels above 3-light or 2-light timber casement windows, with above dormer windows cut-in to the eaves line. The building material, including the roofs, should match as closely as possible the existing be it stone or brick; manufactured artificial stone (such as *Bradstone* should not be used). Page 21 of *Building on Tradition* usefully provides a checklist for new extensions with diagrams of appropriate sized extensions.

7.5.3 Porches -solid porches will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances; hooded gabled open timber porches are considered more acceptable being based on a local tradition.

7.5.4 Garages – these are better constructed as free-standing stone-built gabled structures either at the rear of the building or towards the outer edge of the property boundary; often with their backs to the road the entrance facing towards the house where space permits this. Dual-purpose garage buildings with living accommodation above, using dormers in the roof have been built in the area in recent years; these will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Where garages exist on the sides of dwellings it will not be permissible to raise the roofs of these to permit living accommodation above. Garage doors shall be traditional side-hung timber boarded doors rather than up-and-over doors; there are many examples in the villages nearby that feature small glazed windows set in the upper section of the doors – these will be acceptable, though solid boarded doors are more traditional giving the impression of a cart-shed rather than a suburban garage. The walling and roofing material should match the existing property as closely as possible and be of real stone rather than artificial.

7.5.5 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 often in covered in clay-pantiles. Stone (or thatch) will be preferred for barn roofs; consideration will be given to use of composite materials such as *Bradstone* (other manufactures also produce similar products), who have produced an effective Colleyweston type of large roofing slate of a variegated dark brown colour with nibbled edge, though nothing can compare to an actual real Colleyweston stone-slate roof. However, only clay pantiles will be permitted rather than concrete or other materials. 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; 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 paviments or red bricks in enclosed yards. Tarmacadam should be avoided in preference to natural stone chippings or gravel, which should be used instead for any new access roads.

### 7.5.6 New Dwelling Houses

Introduction: the Weldon Conservation Area sits within the larger 'Village Envelope' as defined by Fig. 3.6 of SSP (Corby Borough Site Specific Proposals Preferred Options, 2006) identifying two specific sites: 'Part R16' on Chapel Road where 15 dwellings have been allocated 'up to 2011', and site R17 on Oundle Road where some 43 dwellings have been phased for the period 2011 to 2021. However, opportunity may be available for some small developments in some gardens immediately adjacent to houses, or in gaps in street frontages, especially in a village characterised by continuous frontages. Back-land developments will be opposed as these some times cause the demolition of an existing house, usually introducing new roads and cul-de-sacs that are urban in character and alien to historic settlements, damaging the character of the village conservation area. Where gardens are a significant feature that contributes to the setting of any listed buildings, or buildings identified in the conservation appraisal as of Local Interest, any proposed new dwellings within such gardens will have to take careful account of this so as not to damage the setting of the principal residence, by carefully designing a style of building that would compliment the principal building, such as an ancillary outbuilding, a coach-house, barn or stable block, rather than large semi- and detached houses; such applications will be carefully scrutinised by the Development Control Section of CBC Planning Department and are likely to be refused if they do not conform to the advice given in this document.

7.5.7 General requirements: it is important that any new proposals shall respect the traditional settlement form of the village, and the character of adjacent buildings by:

- Being set back from the frontage rather than forward of it; however, if on a street it may be better to be in-line with it.
- Subservient to adjacent properties as a small cottage property, rather than a larger farmhouse-type of building.
- Respect the local vernacular style utilising simple casement windows with timber lintels.
- Being no larger than 2 storeys but probably 1 ½ storey with dormers cut through the eaves of the roof.
- Built of a suitable material to match its historic neighbours; this is probably going to be in natural limestone with a blue-slate roof. Artificial stone walling materials or roof materials, or brick, will not be acceptable – even if adjacent properties have used them in the past.
- Carefully considered car-parking provision, or spaces defined within the layout of the drives and landscaping.

Note should be made of the high quality of recent developments within the Weldon Conservation Area, at *The Cricketer's Green* and a smaller one at no. 28 Church Street. However, the large developments are unlikely to provide the most appropriate design guidance for cottage properties built in gap-sites alongside existing properties.

7.5.8 There is one recent example of a new house built in a gap-site in nearby Stanion village that stands as an exemplar of good conservation practise, where great care has been given in the design and setting of the new dwelling, which is

built immediately adjacent to a listed building at the bottom of Little Lane (see the photographs below). It ticks many of the boxes outlined in this section by:

- Placing the building back from the listed cottage behind a well constructed stone wall that continues the front property line.
- Using small casement windows with wooden lintels matching the listed cottage
- Using only two eaves dormers of the same type as the adjacent property.
- Constructed in similar thin coursed natural stone.
- Using a tall fairly steeply pitched blue-slate roof, that is better than the concrete-pantile roof on the adjacent listed cottage; though it would have looked better if the eaves had been lower and the roof steeper.
- Incorporating a gable-end chimney-stack
- Only being of 1 ½ storeys.



- Using dressed stone quoins at its corner angles and framing its door-case that has a vertically boarded door inset with a small glazed panel.
- Placing an attractive gabled open porch above the door of the type recommended in this document.



- Placing a side entrance to its rear yard furthest away from the listed cottage using gabled stone gate-piers, traditional double timber gates, set back permitting screening of the wheelie-bins
- Gravel drive surface and garaging set behind the property as a farm building with clay pantile roof inset with roof-lights, and with twin boarded doors.



7.5.9 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 Weldon Parish Council.

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