



*Basingstoke  
and Deane*

# Conservation Area Appraisal **Steventon**



...making a difference



*View south into Conservation Area*



*View north into Conservation Area*

## Introduction

The Steventon Conservation Area was designated in 1992 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the village.

Having designated the Conservation Area, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that those elements that form its particular character, or appearance, should be preserved or enhanced, especially when considering planning applications.

It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities or elements that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area and to assess how they combine to justify its designation as a Conservation Area. Such factors can include:

- its historic development;
- the contribution of individual or groups of buildings to the streetscene and the spaces that surround them; and
- the relationship of the built environment with the landscape.

They can also include the less tangible senses and experiences, such as noise or smells, which can play a key part in forming the distinctive character of an area.

The Appraisal takes the form of written text and an Appraisal plan. In both respects every effort has been made to include or analyse those elements key to the special character of the area. Where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value to the Conservation Area. The document is intended to be an overall framework and guide within which decisions can be made on a site-specific basis.

This Appraisal of the Steventon Conservation Area follows its review in 2003 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and explains what its designation means for those who live and work in the area.

This document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane on 17 July 2003 and complements the policies of the Borough Local Plan (review).

It has been subject to consultation with Councillors, the Parish Council and local amenity groups. A full list of consultees, copies of their responses, and details of the Council's consideration of the issues raised during the consultation period are available for inspection, by appointment, at the Civic Offices, during normal office hours.

## Location and Population

Steventon is a small village situated eight miles to the west of Basingstoke and south of the main B3400 Andover Road. The settlement lies in the base of a shallow valley on the chalk of the North Downs, close to the source of the River Test.

The population of the Steventon Conservation Area in 1998 was approximately 141 (projection based on the Hampshire County Council Planning Department Small Area Population Forecasts 1995).

## Historic Development

### Settlement Origins

The name 'Steventon' means the 'farm at the place of grubbed up trees'. The settlement of Steventon today has two foci. One is the church and manor house. The other is the linear settlement of dwellings along the roadside to the north-west, designated as the Conservation Area.

It is likely that the area centred on the church was the medieval (possibly earlier) focus of the settlement. The population possibly shifted to the linear settlement in the 18th century. To the south-east of the manor is the site of a Roman building. The early 13th century St Nicholas Church contains a 9th century Saxon Cross shaft, found in the Old Manor House, now demolished. Other medieval masonry fragments are also incorporated into a Victorian garden building on the same site.

At the time of the Domesday Survey, two estates were recorded at 'Stivetune', but these soon merged. Following a dispute over land ownership, the estate became the property of the des Roches family in 1260. In 1337 the manor passed, by marriage, into the Brocas family, with whom it remained until it was sold to Thomas Coteel in 1625. The Brocas family re-purchased the manor in 1635, but it later changed hands several times. At one stage it was owned by Richard, younger brother of John Evelyn the diarist. In 1794, Steventon was left to Edward Austen, elder brother of Jane Austen, who changed his name to Knight in 1814. In 1855, the manor was bought by the second Duke of Wellington.



*1 and 2 Elm Tree Cottages*



*Green End*



*Lythe House*



*1 and 2 Park Cottages*



*Views southwards including  
3 and 4 Park Cottages*

## Settlement Development

Steventon developed as a farming community and it forms a narrow strip in an agricultural landscape. Evidence of this is still a significant factor in contributing to its historic, as well as present day, character.

The early development of the linear settlement is unclear, although it is speculated that it developed as the population shifted away from the church after the medieval period. From external evidence, no properties date before the 18th century.

From the turn of the 19th century, however, the history of the development of the settlement is better documented, particularly, the influence of Edward Knight (born Edward Austen). He was brother to Jane Austen and second son of George Austen, Rector of Steventon. Austen, who changed his name in 1812, and inherited the manor and estate in 1794, from his kinsman, Thomas Knight. At the turn of the 19th century, Knight was involved in a lawsuit which, before being won in 1810, cost him a great deal of money. During these years, the buildings in the village became very dilapidated and in need of repair, culminating in the demolition of some houses in 1813.

In 1826, Edward Knight built the rectory (now called Steventon House) on rising land to the north-east of the settlement. He demolished his father's parsonage and the adjacent cottages. Records indicate that the houses to the north of the village, adjacent to the railway, were built at the same time. This may have been to relocate the residents of the demolished cottages. These were the first 'freehold' houses in Steventon and include Lviad Cottage and Green End.

Further expansion of the settlement, to the south, took place in the late 19th century. This included a new farmyard, now Bassett's Farm, which incorporated an existing building as part of the farmhouse, a school and New Manor House, adjacent to the church.

Steventon, however, is probably best known for being the birthplace of Jane Austen, who lived in the village between 1775 and 1800. Her father was Rector of Steventon for more than 40 years, but unfortunately, nothing remains of the rectory where they lived. Jane Austen wrote both 'Pride and Prejudice' and 'Northanger Abbey' while she lived in Steventon.

## An Appraisal of the Conservation Area

### An Overview

The Appraisal plan identifies those buildings, views and key features considered essential to the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In addition to the listed buildings, it also includes unlisted buildings of particular individual or group value, which are indicated on the plan as notable. This is not to undermine the value of other unmarked buildings or structures that reflect the historic development of the village without detracting from its special qualities.

Individual hedgerows have not been included on the Appraisal plan. However, their contribution, to the character of the Conservation Area, should not be underestimated and their significance is implicit in the Appraisal.

The settlement pattern of Steventon is essentially linear, following closely the north/south line of the C167. It comprises a small, regular cluster of buildings to the north, changing to a dispersed line of buildings to the south. Despite this elongated shape, it does have a distinctive and cohesive appearance, given the overall similarity in age, arrangement and building materials of its built form. It is these characteristics that contribute significantly to its special historic appearance.

The special historic character of Steventon is a mixed residential and farming-based community. The open arrangement and simple vernacular form of the buildings are set in the context of the surrounding dominant agricultural landscape. The established, and visually dominant, native hedgerows that encompass both the buildings and the surrounding green spaces, unite the two forms and reinforce this verdant character.



*Steventon House (former Rectory)*



*Village Hall*



*Long vista of 1 and 2 Elm Tree Cottages*

## Built Form

Steventon House is the only building located in the Steventon Conservation Area that is included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, and is Grade II listed. However, the church and Manor House to the south-west are Grade I and Grade II listed respectively, and should be considered as an integral part of the village.

Steventon House, formerly the Rectory, dates from the early 19th century and is a substantial two-storey stuccoed building. Its principal architectural character is derived from the regular arrangement of the large, sash windows on the principal south-west and south-east fronts. Set apart from, and overlooking, the main core of the village, it is particularly dominant in views from the south.

The similarity in age, form and materials of the buildings that comprise the Conservation Area, is consistent with the two periods of expansion in the village. These were the post-medieval development, away from the church, and the more planned building work in the 19th century.

## Key Individual Buildings

The special interest of the Conservation Area is mainly derived from the combination of groups of buildings. But there are a few buildings noteworthy for their individual contribution to the historic character or appearance of Steventon.

Located at the village triangle are 1 and 2 Elm Tree Cottages, a long two-storey range of cottages. These form an important visual link between the group of buildings to the north, and the dispersed line to the south. They are also an important focal point in the long-range termination of views from the west. Constructed of narrow bands of brick and flint, they have structural brickwork around the jambs and quoins (now painted). They are a well-preserved example of traditional Hampshire vernacular cottages, with distinctive outshots at either end. The long, uninterrupted continuous roof slope, is punctuated only by two chimney stacks. This feature, in conjunction with the sweeping line of the hip slopes, is a principle characteristic of the cottages and reflects the former use of thatch as a roof covering.

Opposite the cottages, is the Village Hall, formerly the Church Hall. The simple arts and crafts design is characteristic of the 1920s although built in 1932. It complements the prevailing vernacular building traditions of Steventon and provides a symbolic community focus for the village, in association with the village triangle. The village stocks were apparently located on this site, until 1825.

To the south of the 1 and 2 Elm Tree Cottages is Jasmine Cottage, formerly two cottages. Although extended significantly to the rear, the original longitudinal form of the brick and flint cottages is still discernible.

Located adjacent to the road, on land rising to the south, they are prominent in the Conservation Area. In association with 1 and 2 Elm Tree Cottages, they reinforce the simple vernacular appearance of the historic core of the village.

The farm complex that forms Bassett's Farm, including the adjacent brick house, is an essential component in contributing to the character of the Conservation Area. It reflects both its agricultural past and present. The combination of late 19th century brick and slate ranges of buildings in association with the earlier, but extended, house form a strong group. This is particularly prominent in views south-east from the road.

Home Farmhouse lies to the north of the farm. It is isolated from adjacent buildings by two key areas of open fields, penetrating the middle section of the Conservation Area. Given additional emphasis by its isolated location, it is a substantial brick building of late Victorian date and conscious design. Although set back from the road, the roof slopes and outbuildings are prominent in views from the north and south.

## Significant Groups of Buildings

The group of buildings immediately south of the railway embankment creates an area of predominantly planned character and appearance. This character is, to some extent, derived from the regular arrangement of the buildings on both sides of the road, sharing similar positions in the plots in relation to the road and each other.

Although an apparent mix of architectural styles, the group does have a cohesive appearance. In addition to their overall arrangement, they also predominantly date from the late 19th century and are mostly of brick, or rendered brick construction. Slate is used as the predominant roof covering.

Located between Wheatley's Close and Bassett's Farm is a series of buildings which, given the straight and open character of the road, is viewed together as a linear group. Approaching from the south, the lateral chimney stack, hip end and gabled rear views of Yew Tree Cottage are important in the villagescape. Their position on the curve in the road punctuates the view. The glimpse of the School House roof, behind, suggests further visual interest beyond. There is a varied mix of building forms. However, the similarity in appearance of several of the buildings, located throughout the group, create a distinctive and homogeneous character. Of simple vernacular form, the buildings share the decorative use of red brick dressings. These define larger areas of either grey brick, used in the School House, or coursed flint work, used for Pond Cottages.



*September Cottage and The Laurels*



*Patience Close*



*Bassett's Farm*



*Yew Tree Cottage*



*Verdant semi-rural character of the lanes*

## The Importance of Public and Private Spaces, Trees, Hedges and other Natural or Cultivated Features

The form, character and location of open spaces whether public areas, fields, or private gardens are essential elements in defining the special interest of the Conservation Area. This is due to the inherently rural location and historically linear development of Steventon.

The two open areas to the north end of the settlement emphasise the more residential and nucleated character of this part of the Conservation Area. The rectangular gardens and ditch, to the east of Stonehills, create a space of open, but ordered, character, defined on all four sides by development. The village triangle forms the physical and historic focus, or meeting point, of the settlement.

The open layout of the settlement provides significant views of the surrounding countryside which punctuate the Conservation Area. An example is between the gap formed by 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 Pond Cottages.

However the setting of, and views to, significant buildings in the Conservation Area are also dependent on certain key open areas. These include the area of land north of the east/west road, leading to the church drive. This area allows prominent views of Quintons and Steventon House. The fields and gardens to the south of Patience Close provide an appropriate rural setting for, and good views of, these former farm buildings. The dip in the ground in front of the buildings also has historic significance. It was a puddled pond, used to replenish the traction engine boilers, until the 1930's.

Open land to the north and south of Home Farmhouse provides the building an isolated position, its robust form dominating immediate views. The field to the north also allows views of the Bassett's Farm complex, and longer views of the striking farmland setting beyond.

Generous front gardens to properties are a distinctive characteristic throughout the Conservation Area. Unlike many Hampshire villages, no buildings are set on the back of pavement. This characteristic serves to emphasise the spacious and rural appearance of Steventon.

Hedges are the predominant forms of boundary treatment, both in residential gardens and farmland. They are a fundamental feature of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Given their widespread existence, they have not been identified individually on the Appraisal plan.

The trees in the Conservation Area exist in significant numbers along the northern border of the parkland around Steventon House, along the ridge to the south-east, and a high verge to the east of the road to Deane. There are several large well spaced trees in the open areas.

## Other Features of Architectural or Historic Interest

There are two visually important boundary walls in the Conservation Area. The first is the low flint wall and brick gate piers to the former Bassett's Farmhouse. The second is the brick and flint wall, which is a remaining feature of the former farm buildings, now called Patience Close. The section along the roadside is significant in framing views west of the village triangle and Elm Tree Cottages. The eastern and northern sections define the boundary of the development with the surrounding fields.

The red K6 telephone kiosk, adjacent to the access drive to Stonehills, is also a prominent feature, in both north and south views, in this part of the Conservation Area.

## Building Materials

The predominant building materials are brick and flint. These are often effectively used together, as a decorative treatment for, otherwise simple vernacular building types. Some buildings have rendered or painted brickwork. Both clay tiles and slates are used as roofing materials. However, there are also a few cedar shingle roof slopes, generally replacing thatch.

Given the domestic scale and simple vernacular architecture of the buildings in the Conservation Area, historic joinery (such as timber casement windows, doors and door hoods) are often the features that define the appearance of properties. Although some buildings have been modernised, the use and overall effect of inappropriate replacement windows and doors is limited.

## The Setting of the Conservation Area

Steventon lies in a small, dry valley. The wooded escarpment of the railway dominates the northern entrance to the Conservation Area and its immediate setting. This is in strong contrast to the unrestricted, long-range views of open landscape, which characterise the rest of the Conservation Area. The escarpment terminates the views north.

The experience afforded to the Conservation Area when approaching from the north via the railway tunnel enhances the sense of place and identity of Steventon.



*Flint brick boundary wall, Patience Close*



*Railway embankment setting to Stonehills*



*Estate railings with Patience Close  
in the background*

## Areas of Archaeological Significance

Every settlement contains within it archaeological evidence of its origins and development, for the economy and industry of the community and for the lives and life-styles of past inhabitants.

It is in the Areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) that it is most likely that such archaeological remains will be encountered.

Where a development is proposed, the impact that it might have on these remains is a material consideration within the planning process. This may occasionally result in the need for archaeological recording in the case of some developments.

The church and the Manor House do not lie in the Conservation Area, but are in an Area of High Archaeological Importance. However, the Conservation Area is not included, based on existing assumptions of the settlement's post medieval development.

## Conservation Area Planning Controls

The following controls apply within the Conservation Area in addition to normal planning controls:

- Conservation Area Consent is normally required for the demolition of buildings or structures over a certain size within a Conservation Area.
- The Council must be given six weeks notice of any intention to undertake works to, cut down or uproot any trees over a certain size in the Conservation Area.
- Planning applications which, in the opinion of the Borough Council, would affect the special character of the Conservation Area must be advertised and the opportunity given for public comment. This may include proposals outside the Conservation Area which nevertheless affect its setting.

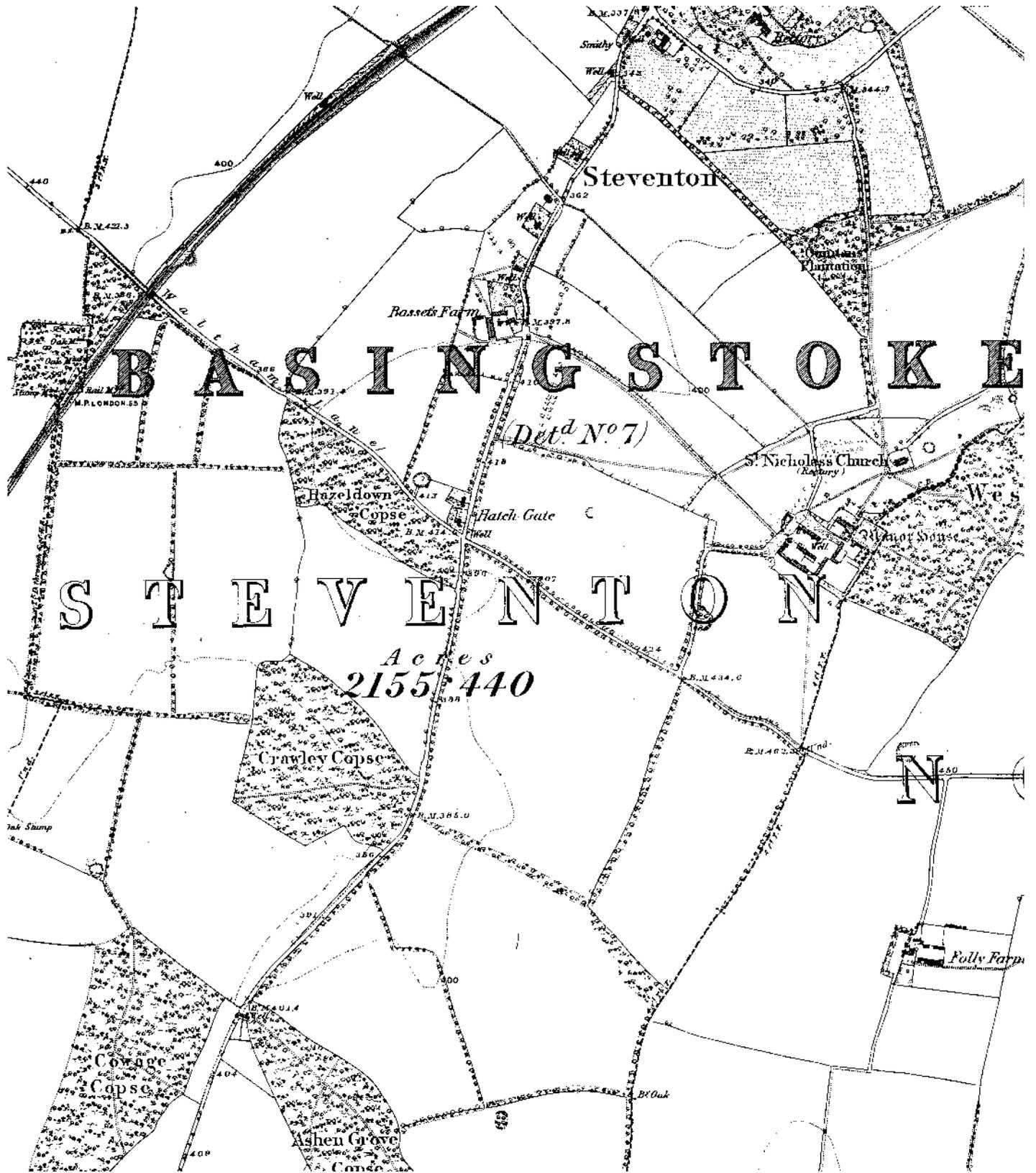


**1 Stonehills**

Statutory policies relating to Conservation Areas and listed buildings are set out in the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan. These policies reflect the statutory duty on the Local Planning Authority to have regard to the preservation of historic buildings or their setting, and to the enhancement of areas designated as being of special interest. These policies seek to ensure that particular attention will be paid to the scale, height, form, materials and detailing of proposals including boundary treatments and other features of note. In order to consider the implications of development and given the detail required, the Borough Council will normally require proposals within the Conservation Area to be submitted in the form of a full, and not outline, application. The Borough Council's Conservation Officers are available for advice and information on all matters relating to development proposals in the Conservation Area.

## Grants

The Borough Council provides grants for various types of work. These include Historic Buildings Grants, Environment and Regeneration Grants, and Village and Community Hall Grants. Leaflets are available explaining the purpose and criteria for each grant and an approach to the Council is recommended for further information on any grant.



# Conservation Area Appraisal

# Steventon

...making a difference

**Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

Civic Offices London Road Basingstoke Hants RG21 4AH

**Telephone 01256 844844 Fax 01256 845200**

[www.basingstoke.gov.uk](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

Produced by Graphics/Corporate Information Division

April 2004